

TERP

WINTER 2025 / CONNECTING THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND COMMUNITY

THE LOST HAUNTS OF ROUTE 1 24

A FRESH START FOR "MARYLAND'S SHAME" 30

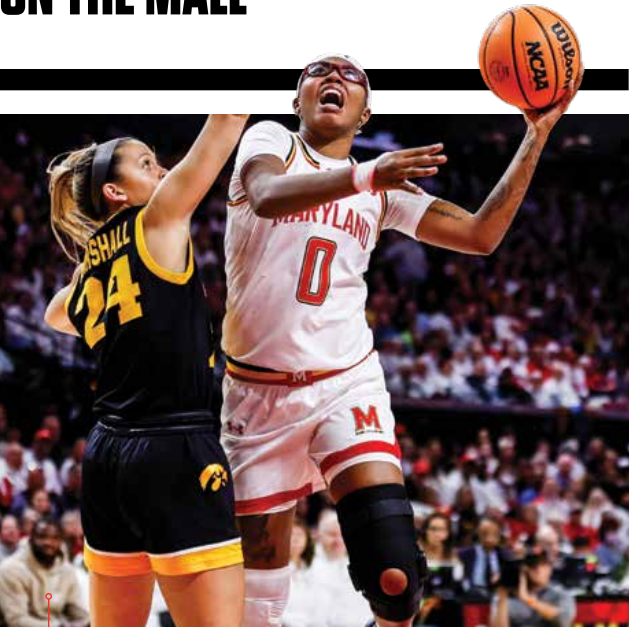
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THE AGE OF SKIN

A UMD RESEARCHER OF A RARE DISEASE THAT
FATALLY AGES CHILDREN HAS DISCOVERED
HOW AN OBSCURE BLUE COMPOUND COULD
HELP US ALL LOOK YOUNGER.

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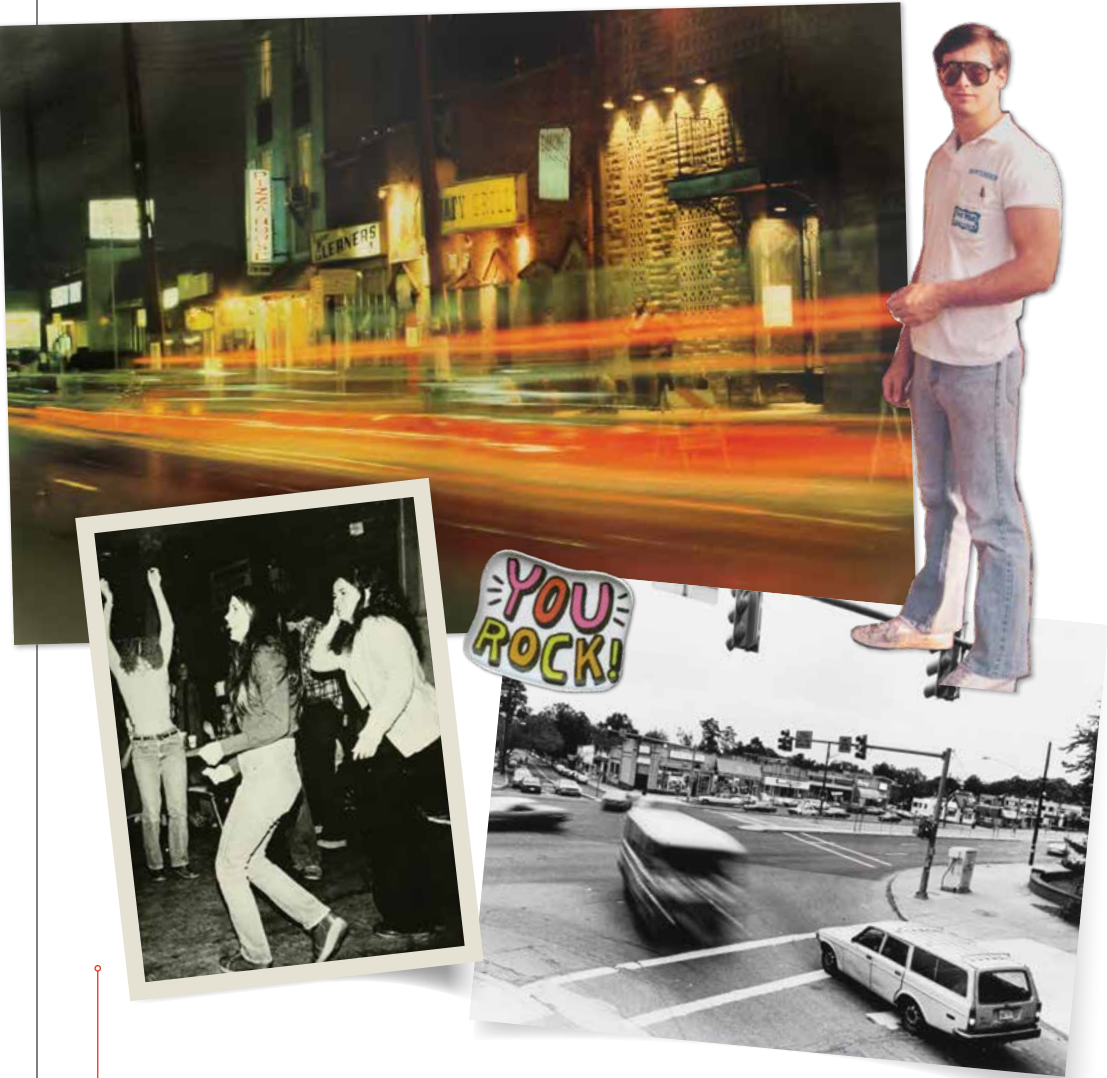
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No matter the decade, Terps found refuges and “Rendezvous” points on College Park’s Main Street.

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An alumna seeks to turn a shuttered, segregated psychiatric hospital into a working farm and wellness site for the Black community.

BY KAREN SHIH ‘09

ONLINE



Terp Stars as “Golden Bachelorette”

As a student, Joan Vassos ’85 took dates to sorority formals at UMD. Decades later, she found love on the popular TV franchise.

Food to “Krave”

A new incubator at the IDEA Factory offers a “DeliXious” testbed for fledgling restaurants.

Brain Waves and Basketballs

A UMD researcher delves into the neuroscience of sinking free throws.



Get the latest on the UMD community by visiting [TODAY.UMD.EDU](https://today.umd.edu).

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AS WE BEGIN a new year and a new semester, I look back on my tenure so far as president of the University of Maryland and see a tremendous amount of progress—progress that is setting the stage for us to continue to address the grand challenges of our time and serve the public good.

The new Artificial Intelligence Interdisciplinary Institute at Maryland is leading the way on responsible and ethical AI use, and will support research projects such as expanding accessibility

and sustainability and opposing inequality.

Our Institute for Health Computing, in partnership with the University of Maryland, Baltimore and the University of Maryland Medical System, recently celebrated its second anniversary, and is working to identify bio-markers of Alzheimer’s disease, better predict stroke and cardiac risks, and create enhanced, immersive training for medical personnel.

And this fall marked the 10th consecutive year that we have been in the top 10 of The Princeton Review and *Entrepreneurship* magazine’s list of the best schools for undergraduate entrepreneurship education, a testament to how our students go on to create life-changing companies and jumpstart our region’s economy.

So it’s no wonder that this fall also marked new heights in rankings. According to *U.S. News & World Report*, the University of Maryland now stands at No. 44 among national universities—a 20-spot leap since 2020 and our best-ever showing—and No. 17 among public schools, its highest placement in more than a decade.

As you read the fantastic stories in this issue of *Terp* and see how we are educating students on philanthropy, innovation and social change; developing technology to prevent food waste; fighting the ravages of disease and age; and helping to turn a site of historical tragedy into one of present-day healing, I hope you see how we are continuing to lead fearlessly forward and taking advantage of a moment made for Maryland.

Sincerely,

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President, University of Maryland
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COVER
Photograph by John T. Consoli



Connie Breaks a Story: Her Own

I was so pleased to see the article by Karen Shih on Connie Chung. It is women like Connie that blazed the trail for other women, like me, to pursue professions that were dominated by men. I was one of very few women to graduate from the University of Maryland dental school in 1982. I started dental school at Temple, and one of my earliest memories there was on the first day of lab when we were mixing alginate (used for making impressions). The instructor came over to me and said, “It is just like mixing a cake.” I was startled, but not surprised. I answered (although not true), “I have never made a cake.” He left me alone then. The environment was much more welcoming at Maryland.

—KIM HASKELL '74, TALL TIMBERS, MD.

It’s wonderful to see women journalists highlighted and recognized for their achievements. Kudos to Connie Chung for her tenacity and resilience building her illustrious career. It would have been nice to mention another UMD trailblazer, Catherine “Cassie” Mackin ’60. She was the

first woman to solely anchor “NBC Sunday Nightly News” in 1976, the first woman floor reporter at the Democratic and national presidential conventions in 1972, and a co-anchor of the Emmy award-winning NBC team covering the presidential conventions in 1976. She also won an Emmy for an ABC “20/20” special report on drunk driving. The Philip Merrill College of Journalism Catherine P. Mackin Endowed Fund was established following her death in 1982 along with a collection of her papers in the UMD Archives.

—KAAREN RUTH '86, POTOMAC, MD.

Connie is one of the reasons Maryland got on my radar early on in my college search. I wanted to be like Connie as a broadcast journalism major.

—MELANIE (LEE) FRANCIS '07, LOS ANGELES (VIA LINKEDIN)

From Ashes to Awe

As a descendant of Italians on both sides of my family and a Terrapin, it fills me with pride to see these students preserving a historical site in Italy. Bravo ... and Go Terps!

—CHARLES ROTONDO '98, PENNINGTON, N.J.

Welcome to the Hotel Influenza

Inspired by the headline of the Fall 2024 cover story, former *Terp* writer Maggie Haslam sent in a letter reworking the lyrics to the Eagles’ “Hotel California.” We couldn’t resist sharing her ode to Dr. Don Milton’s research in Baltimore:

*Off Pulaski Highway,
Harbor breeze in my hair.
A neon Domino Sugar sign,
Rising up through the air.
Up ahead in the distance,
I saw a shimmering light.
My nose got stuffy and my throat grew sore,
I had to stop for the night.*

*There he stood in the doorway,
In a mask so blue.
“My name is Milton,” he said softly,
“It seems you might have the flu.”*

*Then he took my temperature,
And he showed me the way.
There were voices down the corridor,
I thought I heard them say-ay,*

*Welcome to the Hotel Influenza.
Bring your body aches,
And your fever shakes.
We’re transmissible at the Hotel Influenza!
It isn’t monkeypox,
So here’s a Kleenex box.*

Editor’s note: Milton responded that the project underwent extensive ethical review from university and federal officials—in contrast to the Hotel California, you can check out anytime you like, and you can always leave.

WRITE TO US

We love to hear from readers. Send your feedback, insights, compliments—and, yes, complaints—to terpfeedback@umd.edu or to:

Terp magazine
Office of Marketing and Communications
7736 Baltimore Ave.
College Park, MD 20742

Trailblazing NBA Exec Donates \$18M to UMD

Gift From Stephen M. Schanwald ’77 to Endow Sports Management Program

A TRAILBLAZING MARKETING executive with the Chicago Bulls has committed to give \$18 million to his alma mater, the University of Maryland, to support the athletics program that launched his career—and the new sports management program that he hopes will launch many others. The university announced in December that Stephen Schanwald ’77 has directed \$10 million to Maryland Athletics to support its top priorities and \$8 million to the Robert H. Smith School of Business to endow its recently launched Sports Management Program and to provide scholarships for students taking courses in it.

In recognition of his generosity, the program as well as the Xfinity Center pavilion and football practice fields at Jones-Hill House will be named for him; the Stephen M. Schanwald-Russ Potts External Operations Suite in the Xfinity Center will honor him and his former mentor at UMD. “Stephen Schanwald left an indelible imprint on the NBA,” says UMD President Darryll J. Pines. “Now he’s doing the same for the University of Maryland and current and future generations of students, student-athletes and Terps fans.” Schanwald calls the unpaid internship he sought and held in Maryland Athletics for three years under Potts, who in 1970 became the first sports marketing director in the history of collegiate athletics, “the greatest decision I ever made.”



He joined the Bulls in 1987 and over the next 28 years, as executive vice president of business operations, he reimagined the action inside an arena between the whistles. Gone was a halftime spent watching a ball cart “sitting at center court, waiting for the players to come out and shoot around,” as he recalls from his childhood. Inspired by Las Vegas-style magic shows, he recruited acrobats, Elvis impersonators and Blues Brothers-themed acts to transform 48-minute basketball games into two-and-a-half-hour spectacles. Through the sale of suites, naming rights and signage, he funded the creation of the United Center arena in 1994. A pioneer of marketing pillars like corporate sponsorships, community relations, broadcasting and digital advertising, Schanwald was a “trail-

blazer in every sense of the word,” former NBA Commissioner David Stern once said. By endowing UMD’s sports management program, Schanwald wants to give Terps a springboard into the industry. “Nothing feeds my soul more than helping people get ahead in life,” he says. “This transformative investment, combined with our existing strong curricular and co-curricular opportunities, will make the Smith School a truly exceptional place for young people to launch a career in sports,” Smith School Dean Prabhudev Konana says. Adds Damon Evans, the Barry P. Gossett Director of Athletics: “It is an honor to recognize Steve for his philanthropy at the University of Maryland and specifically with Maryland Athletics.”—JT

“Do Good” Vibrations

Interactive Exhibit of Giant Rings Aims to Inspire Service

SOME VOICES POSE QUESTIONS: *What would you do if you had 24 hours to change the world?* Others tout achievements: *We’ve cleaned millions of gallons of rainwater per year before it flows into the Anacostia and Potomac rivers.* The recorded messages from University of Maryland students, faculty, staff and alums now greet those who stroll through five new 12-foot-tall red rings erected in front of Thurgood Marshall Hall. Billed as an interactive audio art exhibit, the “Do Good Rings” feature built-in speakers and motion sensors triggered by pedestrians. Each message encourages passersby to, well, do good. “Terps are ready to be the next generation of leaders for social impact and change,” UMD President Darryll J. Pines said at a ribbon-cutting ceremony in October, calling the rings an “entryway” to UMD as the nation’s first “Do Good” campus. The ringed walkway ushers pedestrians into a plaza also boasting an 8-foot aluminum sculpture of the words “Do Good,” illuminated with more than 300 LED modules. For more than a decade, the School of Public Policy’s Do Good Institute has helped spearhead a campuswide call to action, including courses, internships, mentoring and its marquee Do Good Challenge. In addition to the voices, the Do Good Rings project soothing music. Eventually, the blinking lights that line the rings’ interior will be customized for special occasions, like Pride Month, Independence Day and Breast Cancer Awareness Month. “These rings embody our shared commitment to the values of compassion, leadership and social responsibility,” said Robert Orr, dean of the School of Public Policy. —JT



UMD Climbs to No. 17 Among Public Universities in U.S. News’ Ranking

#44

The University of Maryland rose to No. 44 among national universities in 2025 rankings from *U.S. News & World Report*, its best-ever showing—and a 20-position leap since 2020.

#17

UMD also jumped two spots to No. 17 among public schools, its highest in over a decade, in the influential “Best Colleges” guide. The university now has a combined 71 top-25 undergraduate and graduate programs, according to *U.S. News*. Improved graduation and retention rates, faculty salaries, student-to-faculty ratio, incoming student test scores and graduate earnings all led to the university’s record-high rating.



ON THE MALL CAMPUS LIFE

Freshmen Philanthropists

For 10 Years, iGive Students Have Learned by Awarding Grants to Nonprofits

YOU’RE HANDED \$7,500 to donate to any cause in the world. Go.

Or maybe pause to consider: How do I give?

That’s the question first-year students in Carillon Communities, one of UMD’s living-learning programs, have deliberated each fall for the past decade. They’re in iGive, the community where they learn about philanthropy, innovation and social change—and then make it happen.

In the “Leading and Investing in Social Change” class, students identify and select a pressing social issue in the local community through a multi-step discussion and voting process. Then they design a grant process, research organizations that address their issue, select and interview finalists, and award the \$7,500 grant in partnership with

the School of Public Policy, the Do Good Institute and Carillon Communities.

“The course looks at students as leaders who are interested in creating social change,” says Associate Clinical Professor Patricia Bory, who’s led the community since 2017.

After swarming a whiteboard with their Post-it notes to cast votes on 10 topics, last semester’s class focused on education accessibility for low-income students. Angelique Alphonse ’28 said she was looking forward to awarding the money because it would have long-term effects on the group later selected, the Immigrant & Refugee Outreach Center.

“As much as I enjoy discussing different issues and potential solutions, enacting actual change and staying up to date with it is really important to me,” she says.

Many of the students then go on to take the spring “Do Good Now” course, in which

smaller teams devise an innovative way to support an existing social issue or create their own venture, then have the chance to compete for \$20,000 in funding at the university’s annual Do Good Challenge.

Students from past classes focused on topics like mental health, reproductive justice, domestic violence and climate change. Grant recipients include the Baltimore Abortion Fund, the Adolescent Self Injury Foundation and the Trigger Project. The Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit is dedicated to preventing the spread of gun violence through educational programs for teens and advocacy.

Founder Tia Bell recalls her pride at showcasing what the Trigger Project does and the challenges of chasing funding, and how she felt like the Terps gave her a chance.

“There were so many youth involved and (it was) student-led, which is a part of our mission,” she says.

After taking the course in 2021, Andrew Cullen ’25 has served as a teaching assistant every year since.

“Even if you’re not a policy student, for example, or you’re not studying social change as a direct part of your major,” he says, “you can still find ways to create change.”—RS

Steady Eye on the Target

Hoops Shooters and Sharpshooters Pioneered Terp Women’s Sports a Century Ago

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO was not a good time for a woman to be interested in sports, or even to glisten with sweat.

Proper, ladylike behavior was paramount, so the female Terps who formed the Women’s Athletic Association in 1924-25 to provide a structure at UMD for what were often called “girls” sports might have been considered some nervy dolls.

The organization started out with rifle and “basket-ball” teams, but

even in the suffrage era, the rules governing women’s sports locally and nationally discouraged unbecoming exertions, roughness, competition—or comfort.

While Maryland Athletics today counts hundreds of female student-athletes spanning 12 Division I sports, the pioneers of the women’s athletics movement at UMD had only two sports and faced other kinds of endurance tests. We found these with the help of University Archives. —LB

RIFLE

Members used .22-caliber rifles. Due to initial limitations on space and equipment, only six markswomen could practice at once.

Formed in 1922, the team won the national championship in 1926, 1931 and 1932, led by sharpshooter Irene Knox, who qualified for the 1932 Olympics.



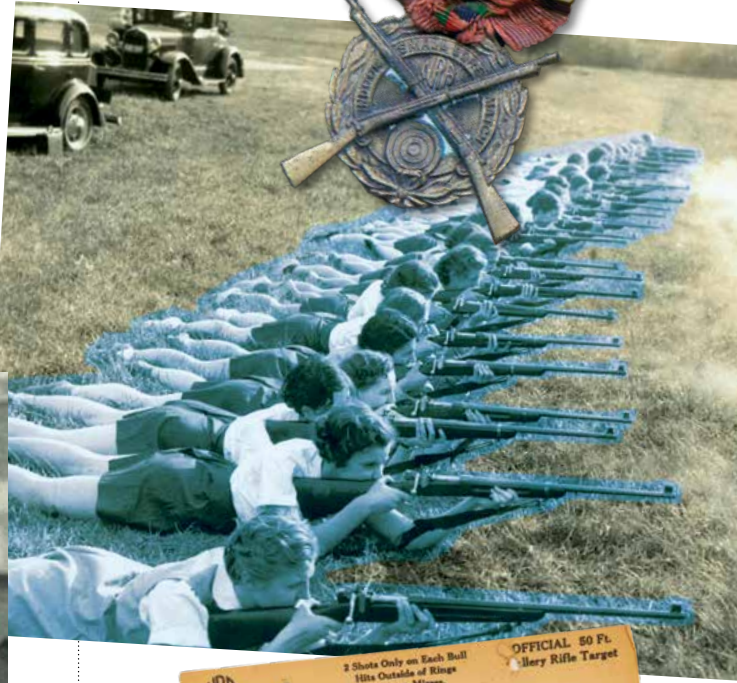
BASKETBALL

Players had to stay in the third of the court assigned to them to prevent physical strain.

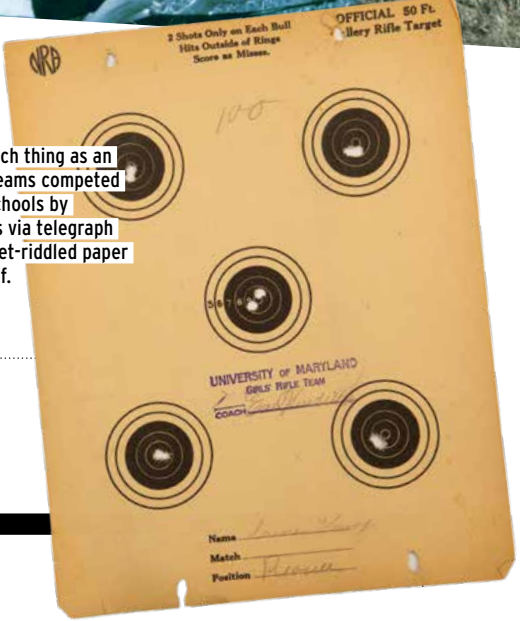


Women in bloomers, Middy blouses with ties and rolled-up hose played in matches between classes (i.e., freshmen vs. sophomores)—but no scores were kept.

Stealing the ball was prohibited; even touching a ball held by an opponent was a foul.



There was no such thing as an “away” match; teams competed against other schools by swapping scores via telegraph and mailing bullet-riddled paper targets for proof.



A “Mind-Blowing” Premiere, 130 Years Later

UMD to Debut Oldest Existing Opera by Black Composer

THE LATE 19TH CENTURY was the golden age of opera, with Wagner, Puccini and Verdi writing scores that are still identifiable even to people who don’t know a *buffa* from a *seria*. But the glow of the era didn’t extend to all composers—and now, the University of Maryland is taking a leading role in bringing a never-before-heard score to the stage.

Next month, composer Edmond Dédé’s 1887 opera “Morgiane, or the Sultan of Ispahan” will complete a three-city world premiere tour at The Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center. Together with companies OperaCréole and Opera Lafayette, UMD will present the French-language work, the oldest extant complete opera composed by an African American.

“Its premiere after 130 years is mind-blowing,” says Terry Dwyer, executive director of The Clarice. “It’s such an exciting project artistically, socially and historically.”

Born to a free Black family in New Orleans in 1827, Dédé was musically inclined from a young age, playing both clarinet and violin. He studied music theory and worked as a cigar maker to earn enough to travel to Europe. In the late 1850s, he settled in France, where he lived for the rest of his life, writing and performing music.

“We are trying to get him his place in the



opera canon,” says Givonna Joseph, founder and artistic director of New Orleans-based Opera Créole, which is spearheading the production of “Morgiane.”

Dédé scholar Sally McKee, professor emerita of history at the University of California, Davis, discovered the manuscript for the four-act “Morgiane” in the archives of a Harvard library in 2010. Inspired by characters from “Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves,” the opera tells the story of Morgiane, wife of the sultan who escapes from his control with their baby girl. Later, the sultan encounters the now-grown daughter and, not realizing it’s his child, falls in love with her.

“It’s a dark comedy,” says Joseph. At the end, in a Maury Povich-esque moment, “the chorus sings, ‘You are the father! You are the father!’”

Joseph and her collaborator, conductor Patrick Dupré Quigley, transcribed the opera from its 550 handwritten pages; Joseph then worked with singers from UC Davis and the

Cincinnati Opera to workshop the score. “It was gorgeous, lush, beautiful music,” says Joseph, who notes that the opera was also progressive for its time. “These powerful women are saying no to the patriarchy and these old ways of doing things.”

For Gregory Miller, former School of Music director who worked on bringing “Morgiane” to The Clarice, the collaboration is a chance to be a part of righting the musical record—literally, as the performance will be recorded for release. “The idea that UMD could be the place where this premiere took place and where a recording could be done was more enticing than anything else.” —**SL**

“Morgiane,” a production of the School of Music and Clarice Presents, will be performed at 7 p.m. Feb. 7 at The Clarice’s Dekelboun Concert Hall. Pay-what-you-wish tickets can be purchased at theclarice.umd.edu. The event will be livestreamed on The Clarice’s website and will be audio-recorded for later release.



A Taste of Adele’s

Panera Opens at Site of Longtime Restaurant—Without the Tin-foil Swans



A PLATE OF TOASTED ravioli swimming in marinara sauce. Leftovers wrapped in a tin-foil swan. A hedonistic 12 scoops of ice cream melting over a bed of warm brownies, topped with caramel, bananas, whipped cream and sprinkles, and served in a University of Maryland-emblazoned goblet.

For Gen X and millennial Terps, these were hallmarks of Adele’s, the sit-down restaurant that operated for 25 years at the Adele H. Stamp Student Union.

It quietly closed in 2018 and reopened in earnest last fall with a very different identity: Panera Bread. The UMD community has welcomed the popular fast-casual destination for breads, salads and a steaming bowl of broccoli cheddar soup.

But no longer can students pass through the Food Court for a white-tablecloth dining experience—or the opportunity to use up their

Dining Points before the end of the semester on upscale Maryland cuisine.

That, it turns out, was a big factor in the shuttering of Adele’s. After all-you-care-to-eat Anytime Dining debuted in Fall 2016, business at the restaurant plummeted.

There’s still a touch of Adele’s in Panera. Its initial ground-floor location had a fireplace that was original to the Stamp’s 1954 construction. That was moved during Adele’s 2002 relocation and remains in Panera, which is known for such cozy decor.

“We feel like we’re carrying on some of Adele’s traditions,” says now-retired Interim Director of Dining Services Joe Mullineaux.—**SL**





Shooting for Success, Fueled by Family

With Passed-Down Perseverance, Shyanne Sellers Eyes Championship Run

STARING DOWN THE ROAD crowd with arms out-stretched, Shyanne Sellers ’25 grinned as her teammates mobbed her to celebrate her buzzer-beating three that took down Purdue her sophomore season.

That “SportsCenter”-worthy skill and swagger run through the Terps basketball star’s veins: Her dad, Brad Sellers, competed alongside Michael Jordan on the Chicago Bulls.

But the tattoo on her left arm suggests another inspiration for her hoops success.

The phrase “living strong, fighting long, ’til MS is gone” is inked on Shyanne’s—and her three sisters’—skin, honoring their mom, Kym Sellers, who’s battled multiple sclerosis for decades. The senior guard

hopes the support and lessons learned from family can help her end her Terps tenure with a title.

“It just made me and my siblings work really hard, just knowing that anything’s possible if you put your mind to it,” she says of her mom’s fight. “People are like, ‘Oh, that’s so sad,’ but she doesn’t make you feel like it’s sad. She’s just grateful for everything she can do.”

Growing up in Aurora, Ohio, as the youngest of four—all of whom played basketball—Shyanne could dribble nearly before she could walk, Kym says, and the family had to hold her back from dashing onto the court at her sisters’ games. And while Shyanne doesn’t remember a time when her mom, a popular Cleveland radio host, could walk, she does recall her efforts to get her started in the sport.

“I told a few fibs. It’s me, I’m the one, I’m that mom,” says Kym, who signed

Shyanne up for a 5-year-old rec league when she was 4. “She was just so into it.”

The early introduction, as well as Kym’s encouragement to play in the Amateur Athletic Union, led Shyanne to become ESPN’s No. 22 recruit in the class of 2021. “Everybody in Ohio thought that she was going to be headed to Ohio State,” says Brad, who played as a Buckeye for two seasons.

But UMD, whose coaches had been following Shyanne since she was an eighth grader, stood out for its program, academics and family atmosphere—and the latter feeling was mutual. Head coach Brenda Frese still thinks back to the Sellers’ unofficial campus visit right after Kym had undergone throat surgery, and how Shyanne helped her use a straw at lunch.

“A lot of kids in high school would be embarrassed by that,” Frese says. “That selflessness, that giver (mentality) ... being able to have that healthy, competitive balance I think is an important piece for Shy.”

A passionate player known for bold moves—she might inbound the ball off the back of an opponent who’s not looking—she’s earned All-Big Ten First Team, Defensive Team, Academic and Sixth Player of the Year honors as she helped UMD reach the NCAA Tournament three times. Last year, Under Armour also selected her as a representative for its pride campaign, spotlighting LGBTQ+ student-athletes.

Her family has been there throughout her journey, traveling to most games, home and away.

“What I love about her parents is they allow me to coach her hard, and through that, you can see that growth with Shyanne,” Frese says. “It’s huge when you have those culture players within your program that want to leave their own mark and leave their legacy.”

Before this season, Shyanne said she’d be “blessed to be drafted” into the WNBA. An early ESPN mock draft suggests she’s a lock, projecting she’ll be the sixth overall pick.

“Now is the time for her to show up and show out,” Kym says.—**AK**

Although Shyanne Sellers’ dad, Brad Sellers (left, center), played on the Chicago Bulls with Michael Jordan, she also credits her mom, Kym Sellers (right), who’s battled MS for decades, with inspiring her game.



Terp Races to NCAA Cross Country Championship



AFTER GARNERING All-Regional honors with an eighth-place finish in November’s NCAA Mid-Atlantic Regional, sophomore cross country runner Rose Coats became the sixth Terp in program history to qualify for the national championship meet.

Coats, who posted a time of 20:18.5 in the 6K championship race in Madison, Wis., was the first University of Maryland runner to compete at that level since Emily Bracher in 2018.

This season, Coats twice set the program record for a 6K. At the Princeton Fall Classic, her time of 19:59.9 was just enough to claim UMD’s first sub-20-minute mark. She shaved off another six seconds to break her own record with a 19:53.8 showing at the Mid-Atlantic Regional.

Men’s Lacrosse Defensive Coordinator Earns Top Assistant Coach Honor

THE INTERCOLLEGIATE MEN’S Lacrosse Coaches Association named Jesse Bernhardt ’13 Division I’s Outstanding Assistant Coach.

Bernhardt, a former Terps standout who was promoted from defensive coordinator to associate head coach this offseason, led the Terps’ defensive unit en route to the program’s 10th Final Four since 2011 and eighth national championship game. In the postseason, UMD held opponents Princeton and Virginia to eight or fewer goals. Overall in 2024, the Terps limited teams to under seven goals in seven of 17 games.

“Jesse does an awesome job teaching the fundamentals and installing fantastic game plans,” head coach John Tillman says. “He is great at making in-game adjustments and is an outstanding role model for our young men.”



Fresh Takes on Fighting Food Waste

Researchers Devise Spoilage-Stopping Tech That Could Change How We Grow, Buy and Store Produce

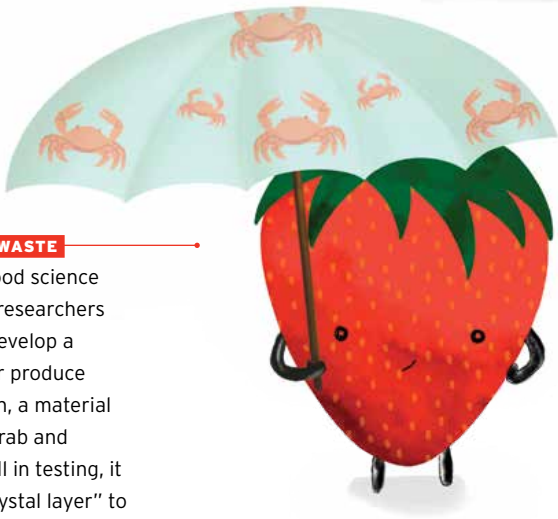
WOULD YOU BUY a dozen eggs and smash four, or open a carton of orange juice and pour nearly half down the drain?

Surely not, but we do something similar every day. Consumers and suppliers waste up to 40% of the U.S. food supply, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. But across Maryland’s campus, a multidisciplinary crop of researchers is exploring innovative ways to prevent this loss on farms, in stores and at home. Here are a few to chew on.—**CC**



GAS UP-OR DOWN-FOR PERFECT PRODUCE

The gaseous hormone ethylene helps plants grow, ripen and eventually, spoil. Department of Cell Biology and Molecular Genetics Professor Caren Chang studies how plants use the substance, and says controlling it is a top priority in agriculture. “Ethylene is the reason that ‘one bad apple spoils the whole bunch,’” she says. Consumer understanding of “ethylene signaling” between plants can help you segregate fruits and vegetables for optimum freshness, for example adding a brown banana to help ripen a bag of avocados. On the other hand, keep your perfect pears away from overripe produce or cooking smoke if you don’t want to see them turn into a pile of mush.



CRABBY ABOUT WASTE

A team of UMD food science and engineering researchers collaborated to develop a spray-on layer for produce based on chitosan, a material harvested from crab and shrimp shells. Still in testing, it forms a “nano-crystal layer” to protect the produce, and also fights spoilage with antimicrobial copper. And when you’re ready to slice a strawberry, it rinses off easily and, best of all, pulls away chemical fertilizer and other residues.

Learn more:
go.umd.edu/shellfish-fresh

People have preserved meat from prehistoric times by cooking it, but the process is not ideal for storage and saps vital nutrients. With their new “flash heating” technique that lasts just one second and reaches 3,140 degrees Fahrenheit, UMD materials science and engineering and nutrition and food science researchers can preserve meat at room temperature for days without spoilage. The process they devised results in a sterilized layer of meat the thickness of a hair, sealing in freshness.

FLASH! BANG! FRESH!

Learn more: go.umd.edu/flashheat



Lost (and Found) in Translation

Migraines Rob Doctoral Student of Words. He Helps Youths Find Theirs.



SIX YEARS AGO, Muhammad Fusenig was watching his Golden State Warriors on television when the announcer mentioned Steph Curry, and Fusenig thought, “Who’s he?” Minutes later, he lost the ability to form words and ideas in his head. When he spoke, sounds came out as gibberish.

His mother rushed him to the hospital, where a doctor said he’d experienced aphasia, triggered by a migraine. Since then, Fusenig has endured a handful of similar episodes that can last as long as two hours. When they occur, he says, he’s been told the cacophonous jumble of sounds he produces is like a “bunch of musical notes, but there’s no music.”

Now the UMD doctoral student in educational psychology is channeling his occasional war with words to address what he calls language inequality in scholastic settings.

With the help of artificial intelligence (AI), Fusenig, his adviser and a collaborator at Google created a website that rewrites academic text to account for things like a student’s reading ability, culture and even worldview. Rather than replace the original textbook language, the tailored version complements it.

High school and college students with different backgrounds read and interpret course material differently, putting some at disadvantage, he argues. A student with Caribbean parents, for example, responds to certain analogies differently than a student whose parents hail from California. Shouldn’t academic text reflect that?

The website, called *advisor.ie*, is being piloted in five college classrooms across the country. Some of its AI algorithms were purpose-built by Fusenig’s team to break language down based on things like syntax and complexity. ChatGPT, meanwhile, allows the team to incorporate key educational psychology principles.

Even during his less severe, more routine migraines, Fusenig finds himself slurring words, mixing up meanings and excusing himself from conversations. The communications barrier can be dismaying, but his website is part of his broader push to foster human connection by acknowledging linguistic diversity. “In my mind, everything’s a translation issue,” he says.—**JT**

Commuter Crunch

Management Researcher Eyes Steps to Improve Escalator Efficiency

DURING HIS RUSH-HOUR TRAVELS on Washington’s Metro, Michael Fu noticed two kinds of people using the escalator: those patiently waiting to board the clogged right side, and the more energetic commuters bounding up the open left lane.

The Smith Chair of Management Science knew the unwritten rule of escalator etiquette—stand on the right, walk on the left—but still, the long line seemed like both a potential safety hazard and inefficient.

Fu, who studies decision-making under uncertainty, set out to determine the optimal times to walk or stand on an escalator. He used mathematical models, adjusting

for factors like platform capacity and escalator length, and relied on queueing theory and pooling methods.

His research, published in the journal *Systems*, found that during high-congestion periods, standers should abandon underground protocol and stride confidently into the left lane for the good of the order. Only later should they slide right to keep the left lane moving.

The approach won’t always get the most hurried travelers out of the station as fast as possible, Fu acknowledges. But adding a minute or two to a commute is a fair tradeoff for eliminating bottle-necks, he reasons.

“If your objective is to clear the platform, then everyone should get on the escalator as quickly as possible,” he says—even if it makes you a temporary left-lane hog.—**JT**



FACULTY Q&A
JILL BRADBURY

Signs of Accessibility in Performing Arts

School’s First Deaf Leader to Expand Options to Guests

UNTIL JILL BRADBURY WAS in her early 30s, attending plays and musicals had left the literary scholar cold for one key reason: She couldn’t understand them, having lost her hearing after a childhood case of meningitis. Then a production of Richard Kalinoski’s play “Beast on the Moon” in American Sign Language (ASL) at the Rochester Institute for Technology’s National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) changed her life trajectory.

“It was such a revelation,” says Bradbury, then an assistant professor in NTID’s Department of Cultural and Creative Studies. “I could enjoy theater for the first time.”

Since then, Bradbury has largely devoted herself to innovating within the long history of Deaf theater, which has used ASL and Protactile, a form of communication in which sign language is articulated into a person’s body, often their hands. In July she was named the first Deaf director of UMD’s School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies (TDPS).

Bradbury talked with *Terp* about being the only person in an audience using a closed-captioning device and how to make TDPS performances more accessible for a wider range of theatergoers.—SL

What are some early examples of Deaf theater?

It goes all the way back to the formation of schools for the Deaf in the 19th century. Those schools did a lot of religious education—signing psalms and hymns, and enacting stories from the Bible. In the 1850s and ’60s, you start to see Deaf people putting on plays by

hearing authors. There are Shakespeare plays by the Deaf dating back to the 1860s in London.

What don’t hearing people know about Deaf theater?

They don’t know what’s possible in that tradition and what’s not, and so they tend to come at it by bringing what they know to the experience: Movement-based physical theater like ballet or dance are the frames of reference they have.

How can traditional performing arts companies make their productions more accessible to Deaf people?

They can use open captioning, which is [a projection of the dialogue or lyrics] visible for everyone in the audience to see. If you put the captioning within the



Jill Bradbury signs “welcome” in *The Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center’s Kay Theatre*.

“It was such a revelation. I could enjoy theater for the first time.”

—JILL BRADBURY
DIRECTOR, SCHOOL OF THEATRE,
DANCE, AND PERFORMANCE STUDIES

field of vision, it’s much easier to take in the whole thing at the same time. If you’re using a handheld system for captioning, you have to hold it for two or three hours—that can be uncomfortable, and I’ve even been yelled at by people who think I’m texting during shows. Plus, it’s hard to look at two things—the stage and the device—at the same time.

Can people expect to see any changes in performances or procedures in TDPS now that you’re at the helm?

I’m very fortunate that The Clarice was looking at their accessibility offerings even before I came on board. My goal is for all TDPS shows to be open-captioned. We’ve talked about outreach to communities that would benefit from accessibility offerings. There are lots and lots of possibilities.

AI Confronts Seagoing “Rogues”

System Can Predict Approach of Giant Waves

ONCE DISMISSED AS SEAFARERS’ tall tales, monstrous waves that seemingly rise out of nowhere to tower over surrounding waters are now thought to be regular culprits in the sinking of large ships.

A new tool from UMD researchers could give mariners and offshore oil platform residents up to a five-minute warning of these “rogue waves” so they can batten down the hatches or position their ships to survive the wild ride.

The new system was developed by postdoctoral researcher Thomas Breunung and Distinguished University Professor Balakumar Balachandran, both from the Department of Mechanical Engineering, and presented in *Scientific Reports*.

To create the tool, they trained a neural network—an artificial intelligence system that mimics human cognition—to distinguish ocean waves that will be followed by a rogue wave from those that will not. The training data consisted of billions of regular waves and thousands of rogues, recorded in 14 million 30-minute-long samples of sea surface elevation measurements from Pacific Ocean buoys.

After training, the system correctly predicted the emergence of 75% of rogue waves one minute into the future and 73% of rogue waves five minutes into the future.

Adding water depths, wind speeds and buoy locations at sea into the data could further boost the system’s accuracy—and it could be applied far beyond ups and downs at sea, Balachandran says. “Our data-driven approach could be useful for understanding and predicting other extreme events associated with, for example, climate change.”—ROBERT HERSCHBACH

Salt Life

Take a Home Tour to Learn How We’re Worsening Salinity Around the World

WE'RE A SALTY BUNCH.

From birth to death, the average American consumes nearly 14 tons of sodium chloride, or table salt, a number that just scratches the surface of the volume of “salts,” broadly speaking, that society uses, says geology Professor Sujay Kaushal. His research shows how humans are making the Earth’s surface saltier by digging up increasing volumes of these minerals.

“Salts of various kinds are used in agriculture, in construction materials—places people don’t necessarily expect,” he says. “The problem is that they hit these thresholds in the environment where they’re hurting aquatic ecosystems, and also affecting human health.”

Just like in our diets, some of this salt is necessary, but Kaushal—who’s called for better management to limit damage—has a few suggestions for cutting back.—CC

CHEMICAL FERTILIZERS

Growing food, not to mention beautiful suburban lawns, frequently involves spreading fertilizers that contain chloride and other salts that leach into waterways. Sparing application and not applying right before heavy rain is forecasted can minimize the harm.

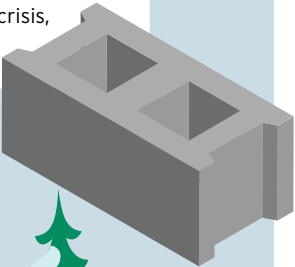
FOOD

Table salt flushed away as a component of human waste creates a measurable impact on the environment, because sewage treatment plants can’t remove salts. This essentially unavoidable effect of staying alive highlights the need to minimize other sources of environmental salts, Kaushal says.



BUILDING MATERIALS

Calcium salts are major components of concrete, and they too leach into the ground and water as it weathers. Inside homes and offices, drywall contains salts that reach the environment following demolition and disposal. Rapid development globally is a major driver of the salinity crisis, Kaushal says.



CLEANING PRODUCTS

Sodium borate, or borax, is one of many common salts used in detergents and cleaning products. These run down our drains and degrade water quality, and the more we skimp—possibly by substituting non-salty alternatives like vinegar or rubbing alcohol—the better.



DE-ICERS

The U.S. uses 20 million metric tons of road salt each year, not counting the smaller amounts spread on residential walks and driveways. “Safety is obviously crucial, but don’t use more than is necessary,” Kaushal advises.



How to Make a Second Language Second Nature

ASK THE EXPERT
ADVICE FOR REAL LIFE

CAN’T REMEMBER MORE than “¿Cómo estás?” or “Parlez-vous français?” from a few years of high school classes? That doesn’t mean all hope is lost for picking up another language, if you’re feeling inspired by the K-pop crooning of the girl group TWICE or iterations of “Love Is Blind” from Sweden and Brazil.

Thomas Sauer, assistant director of resource development for the National Foreign Language Center at UMD, grew up in Germany and has taught and consulted on language acquisition for two decades in the United States. The center develops resources for a wide range of people, from K-12 teachers to government officials, and has created its own app, Lectia. Sauer shares his tips for jumping back into language learning:

PICK YOUR PURPOSE

Want to chat with your in-laws in Chinese? Your jiu-jitsu coach in Portuguese? “Learn language based on things that are interesting and relevant to you,” says Sauer. Beginner classes often start with rooms or colors, but memorizing boring things won’t stick.

Try a TV show in another language or pull up a YouTube video about a hobby like cooking, exercising or fashion in your target

language. “You’ll pick up things just by watching it.”

TAKE A FEW LAPS WITH AN APP

Popular apps like Duolingo can be an addictive place to start because they turn studying into a game, says Sauer, encouraging you to earn prizes by learning lots of vocabulary. “The problem is, they have only taken one aspect of language learning and put it into a device.”

DON’T SWEAT THE GRAMMAR

“You can drive a car without being a mechanic,” he says. “Why do you need to know the mechanics of a second language, if most people don’t know a past participle in English?”

Don’t get bogged down in conjugating every form of a verb—if you know enough to talk about yourself or ask questions, you can learn more grammar in context.

CHAT WITH REAL PEOPLE

Use the words you’ve learned in conversation. Seek out native speakers, such as a peer mentor, Sauer advises. “There’s lots of websites where you can connect with someone who will teach you their language if you teach them yours.”—KS



BY JOHN TUCKER
PHOTOS BY JOHN T. CONSOLI

THE AGE OF SKIN

A UMD researcher
of a rare disease that
fatally ages children
has discovered how
an obscure blue
compound could
help us all look
younger.

WHOEVER SAID “TIME MAY BE A GREAT HEALER, but it’s a lousy beautician” would be stunned by a skin care aisle today. Soft-cheeked girls as young as 8 flood cosmetics stores in search of anti-wrinkle products, spawning the hashtag #SephoraKids. “Skinfluencers” permeate our social media feeds with reviews of \$120 peel pads and \$325 lotions to add to our daily regimens. On TikTok, filters transform our timeworn faces into eerily realistic teenage versions.

For a generation that grew up on selfies and now lives on Zoom, the pursuit of youthful-looking skin has never felt so extreme, yet so accepted. Recent headlines include “Gen-Z Is Already Worried About Looking Old,” “I’d Rather Die Hot Than Live Ugly” and “Kim Kardashian Would ‘Eat Poop’ to Look Younger.” The global skin care industry will balloon 67% in the next eight years to nearly \$200 billion, according to some predictions.



Since Cao launched Mblue Labs, its Bluelene-labeled skin care products have rung up more than \$1 million in annual sales and earned accolades from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

While we can’t stop aging, business opportunists are always hawking miracle bronzers, serums and toners to fend off its effects on our faces, sometimes based on dubious science. But as technology has advanced, research-backed companies have also emerged with real promises.

Mblue Labs, founded in 2018 at the University of Maryland, is touting a splash in the fountain of youth with products featuring a 150-year-old antioxidant called methylene blue that penetrates skin all the way into the cell. By extending cellular life, it appears to slow outward signs of aging.

Mblue says its customer base extends into 42 countries. Kevin Harrington of

“Shark Tank” fame endorsed its flagship face cream. In September, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce named Mblue one of America’s top 100 small businesses, praising its “groundbreaking skin health technology” backed by “rigorous scientific research.”

The person behind the science is Kan Cao, a professor with UMD’s Department of Cell Biology and Molecular Genetics. Since first using methylene blue to turbocharge a skin cell in a petri dish, she has ascended as a national authority on skin aging.

But Cao wasn’t looking for a way to help 50-year-olds look 30 when she made this discovery. She was trying to save teenagers born with a rare genetic disease from dying.

HUTCHINSON-GILFORD PROGERIA SYNDROME is better known as simply progeria—“prematurely old” in ancient Greek. After appearing typical at birth, children with the disease develop skin that becomes veiny and wrinkled like an elderly person’s. Other symptoms include a beaked nose, small chin, fragile joints, hardened arteries and the loss of hair and body fat.

It’s also a killer. The average kid with progeria dies at 14, typically from heart attack or stroke. Symptoms that emerge during the toddler years send mystified parents scrambling for answers until the devastating diagnosis arrives.

For 15-year-old Carlos Silva, the news came at age 3, after his hair had begun falling out and his skin appeared burned in places. “My whole life I knew, because people stare at you,” he says. “My mother taught me from a young age that I was different but shouldn’t feel ashamed.” Still, “the hardest part is others’ reactions,” he acknowledges. Many people ask if he has cancer.

The disease is incredibly rare. Only about 400 cases are thought to exist worldwide, including 13 known progeria patients in the United States. Unsurprisingly, the medical community didn’t prioritize it. Then in 1999, a Massachusetts physician whose son had the disease co-founded the Progeria Research Foundation to seek a cure. Among other things, the organization arranged for patients’ skin cells to be donated to science. That got the attention of a physician named Francis Collins.

In the modern era of genetics, Collins is the LeBron James of his field. The longest-serving director of the National Institutes of Health, spanning three presidencies, he led the team that in 2003 mapped the human genome. By then, he’d met two progeria

“I had no doubts about my career choices. Never.”

—KAN CAO, PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF CELL BIOLOGY AND MOLECULAR GENETICS

patients whose stories moved him, and he made it his mission to search for a treatment, maybe even a cure.

His lab was able to identify the genetic mutation that caused the disease, but questions remained. Among the more than 20,000 genes in the human body, a lone “typo” in one of them—switching a chemical building block of DNA that goes by the letter C to another called T—results in a toxic protein dispatched to a cell’s nucleus, where it wreaks havoc.

Collins’ next step was to hire a researcher to find out why progeria cells deteriorate so quickly: a young cell biologist named Kan Cao.



Cao attends a progeria conference with Sammy Basso. The oldest-known person with the disease, he died last year at 28.

AS A GIRL GROWING UP IN ZHENJIANG, 150 miles northwest of Shanghai, Cao often sat with her grandfather, a traditional Chinese medicine doctor, as he mixed home-made recipes that would stop his patients’ bleeding and lower their blood pressure. During her first year of university nearby, she blissfully observed the changing of autumn leaves and growth of green grass. She decided to study the mechanisms of life.

In 2005, after receiving her doctorate from Johns Hopkins University, Cao submitted her resume for a postdoctoral job studying diabetes in Collins’ lab, but he instead outlined a position researching a disease Cao knew little about. Progeria seemed likely to satisfy her interest in cellular changes, however, and teaming up with Collins made accepting the job easy.

Cao dived into the analysis of progeria skin cells, making quick findings through experiments that were “exquisitely designed and beautifully conducted,” Collins says now. She was the first to discover that progeria cells don’t divide cleanly, creating conjoined daughter cells with dysfunctional nuclei. She also arrived at the curious finding that average people can develop trace amounts of the progeria protein, begging questions that would resurface later in her career about whether it contributed to normal aging.

She also made time for conferences where she met children with progeria. “It felt like a big extended family,” she recalls, motivating her to work harder. Still, she avoided attachment, reminding herself that her role required distance. She also sought to ward off guilt. After all, the advances she was slowly making weren’t ripe enough to prolong lives of preteens who were already afflicted. “They’re all angels,” she says. “I didn’t want to feel solely responsible.”

By the time Cao arrived at UMD in 2010, she’d become a global leader in progeria research, but she was hearing from critics who questioned her devotion to such a tiny population. Securing grant funding was challenging. Still, she says, “I had no doubts about my career choices. Never.”

At the time, most progeria research focused on the cell’s nucleus, where the poisonous protein existed along with most genetic material. One day, Cao decided to explore the mitochondria, which power our bodies’ cells. Inside her lab she squinted through her microscope and saw something peculiar.

A healthy mitochondrion resembles a long worm with numerous folds, providing surface area for chemical reactions. But under her scope, the progeria-warped mitochondria was short and swollen, without folds. If Cao could find a drug to help it, perhaps that could trigger a more profound improvement for patients. She experimented with a few chemicals with no luck. Eventually, she reached for methylene blue, a known mitochondrial catalyzer that can recapture stray electrons.

Two weeks later, a student called her over to the petri dish. “This is so crazy,” he said. “The cells look so much better.”

Cao looked for herself and noticed that the nucleus, typically deformed in progeria cells to look like a popcorn kernel, resembled a healthy sphere.

But a bigger surprise was on the shelf just above, in the control group of normal skin cells infused with methylene blue.

IT’S A BEAUTIFUL COMPOUND, ITS cerulean hue resembling Capri’s sea grotto or a winter twilight. Methylene blue was developed in Germany as a malaria drug in the 19th century. Later, fashion designers found they could use it as a fabric dye. These days you can order it on Amazon as a fish tank antibacterial.

Cao never expected the impact it could have on a healthy skin cell. After its application in her lab, energy production soared. Cells that typically died after three months suddenly lived four. After her discovery, Cao’s research ran on two tracks: methylene blue’s effect on progeria cells and on normal skin cells. While the former ended as new research elsewhere pointed to a cure for the disease, the latter took off. Cao used a 3D bioprinter to create a multilayer skin specimen with everything from carotenoids to connective tissue, then applied the catalyzer. The results were intriguing. Methylene blue stimulated skin proliferation, expanded thickness and healed wounds faster. It jump-started production of collagen and elastin, the hydration fibers that keep skin plump and shiny.

Cao quickly hammered out a journal article, “Anti-Aging Potentials of Methylene Blue for Human Skin Longevity.” She published it in *Scientific Reports* in 2017, intending to get back to her progeria focus.

Instead, calls came pouring in. Journalists asked for comment, including a reporter from *Allure*. Women reached out directly. “Are you guys going to make a cream?” one asked. “Hurry up, I’m in my seventies!”

The idea of creating cosmetics seemed to conflict with her principles. *I’m a researcher and professor!* she thought. *I’m doing my science!* Her colleagues meanwhile were commercializing cancer drugs, not face creams. With two kids in middle school, she also worried about the financial risks of investment.

Her research team, however, nudged her to reconsider, and Cao mulled the idea. After a dozen years committed to a small handful of sufferers, perhaps this was her chance to help more people. What’s more, she recalls thinking, “It can maybe help us understand the general process of human aging.”

She took an online course on skin care formulation, then ordered foundational emulsifiers and mixed them at home with

methylene blue. She applied the concoction to her face and liked the results. One day she arrived at her lab and doled out jars reading “MAGIC CREAM, Cao Lab.” Weeks later, students were asking for more.

Cao contacted UM Ventures, which helps researchers launch products based on lab discoveries. The skin care market was saturated, Cao was warned, but her molecular formula was unique. After securing a patent to use methylene blue as an anti-aging skin cream, she got busy, filling orders, packaging creams and making post office runs. “She doesn’t have the diva complex,” says Alla McCoy MBA ’13, director of venture development for UM Ventures.

Cao needed a CEO, and UM Ventures paired her with Jasmin El Kordi ’83, an executive with a health and beauty background. “This was something brand new,” El Kordi recalls, comparing the product to the glut of exotic-sounding skin care creations that ultimately fail. “They have ingredients like algae, oil of orchids or compounds harvested from trees in Brazil, but they’re not easily patentable. There’s no deep science that focuses on the actual skin cell.”

By mid-2018, Cao’s business was official. She called it Mblue Labs, short for Magic Blue. Its initial cream was a hit on Amazon, selling nearly 1,000 units in three months. Since then, the company has rolled out nine more products under its “Bluelene” label for women and men of all ages, with 20% sold in brick-and-mortar stores like Macy’s, contributing to more than \$1 million in annual sales.

SOMETIMES CARLOS SILVA LOOKS AT his bony fingers and is reminded that he’s different from other boys. He recently dropped out of high school because he could no longer bear the bullying. He’s now homeschooled.

Yet in other ways, he’s a typical teenager. He cheers for the Red Sox and builds a mean Lego train. He envisions a career in science

“She sees a vision of how aging can inform progeria, and how progeria can inform aging, and that’s what we strive for.”

—LESLIE GORDON,
CO-FOUNDER AND MEDICAL DIRECTOR OF THE
PROGERIA RESEARCH FOUNDATION

or law. He calls his life “amazing.”

He’s also undaunted by the average lifespan of progeria patients, which he’s already eclipsed at 15. “Everyone is a different being,” he says. “Progeria shouldn’t tell you when your life should end.”

Carlos has reason to continue beating the odds. The hunt for a cure has taken a hopeful turn, through gene editing technology developed by David Liu, a Harvard University professor and the director of the Merkin Institute for Transformative Technologies in Healthcare in Cambridge, Mass. Liu’s method knocks out individual “letters” of a gene and replaces them with others, mimicking a word processor’s “find and replace” function throughout the body.

After Liu erased the mutant T associated with the disease, correcting it to a C in his lab, Cao helped validate his findings in progeria cells. In 2021, their wider research team tested the approach in genetically engineered mice with progeria. After several weeks, the mice were not just alive, but healthy, with DNA fixes across many organs. Cao co-authored the breakthrough study, published in *Nature*. Cao’s mentor, Collins, played a lead role. With human trials perhaps two years away, Collins, 74, now believes a cure in his lifetime is possible.

Until that happens, though, the pernicious protein will continue to kill, and Cao has sought quicker ways to help. Considering that

patients die of heart attack and stroke, she’s focused on the cardiovascular system.

Recently, she’s relied on a Nobel Prize-winning discovery to reprogram mature cells from progeria patients into artificial stem cells, then convert them into vascular cells, establishing “a playground for us to understand what’s inside the heart of a progeria patient,” she says.

This led to a major new finding published in October in *Aging Cell*. After manipulating a progeria stem cell into endothelial cells—which line the blood vessels and send messages to smooth muscle cells—she noticed an out-of-whack signal system that essentially instructed muscle cells to die. The cause, Cao showed, was a missing signaling

protein. When it was added back, the system normalized, restoring damaged blood vessels in mice to health. It’s a “stunning” discovery, says Collins, “that could prevent or ameliorate the vascular problems that lead to strokes and heart attacks.”

Cao hopes the breakthrough could offer temporary treatment until gene editing becomes a more permanent fix.

Cao’s decades-long research into progeria and methylene blue takes two opposing concepts—aging sped up; aging slowed down—and intertwines them like a double-helix DNA strand. “She sees a vision of how aging can inform progeria, and how progeria can inform aging, and that’s what we strive for,” explains Leslie Gordon,

co-founder and medical director of the Progeria Research Foundation, who now calls Cao a friend.

These days, Cao is returning to questions that vexed her earlier in her career. How do trace progeria proteins find their way into normal people? And are they responsible for premature wrinkles here and there? In this Era of Peak Skin Care, those questions suddenly feel more important.

In the future, Cao thinks science will find more ways to prevent skin aging, sating our desire for a fountain of youth. We are, after all, just a product of our cells, through breakdown and restoration. If the lives of our cells can be prolonged through innovation, then maybe our physical lives can be, too. **TERP**



THE LOST HAUNTS OF ROUTE 1

NO MATTER THE DECADE, TERPS FOUND REFUGES AND
"Rendezvous" POINTS ON COLLEGE PARK'S MAIN STREET

ON SEPT. 4, 1984, Jeanne Yetman Berger '85 stepped onto a national stage to demonstrate a skill she'd learned while at the University of Maryland. It was on "Late Night with David Letterman," and the segment was "Stupid Human Tricks." Berger, in spiky feathered hair and a mauve jumpsuit, rolled a quarter down her nose onto a table where, on her fourth attempt, it bounced into a plastic cup of water.

"How did you learn how to do this?" Letterman asked. "At the Vous," said Berger. "It's a bar at Maryland."

UMD's vibe today is more smarty than party, and the students who long ago put on their "Vous shoes" for a night at the sticky-floored dive on Route 1 in College Park might need to squint to recognize the street today.

The state last fall completed a \$56.9 million makeover of Route 1 in College Park to improve traffic and safety by adding bike lanes, new street lighting, grassy medians, new crosswalks and other features.

The streetscape gleams brighter and the apartment buildings have gotten taller, but the city's main commercial artery is still the scene of many Terps' most cherished off-the-clock

college memories. Maybe it's puckering your lips at a fresh lemonade from Albrecht's Pharmacy, scouring the discount bins at Viscount Records or tucking into a late-night burger at Plato's Diner.

The first hangout on Route 1 in College Park was likely the Rossborough Inn, now UMD's oldest building. More than two centuries ago, it began attracting travelers on the dirt path that linked Baltimore and Washington, D.C. In the 1920s, the road was paved and officially designated State Route No. 1.

Now the College Park segment, known as Route 1, Baltimore Avenue or simply "the strip," is part of a nearly 2,400-mile route from Maine to Florida, the longest north-south road in the United States.

To mark its rebirth, Terp is taking a figurative ride down Route 1, asking alums about their favorite haunts—the spots where they breakfasted on bagels, danced on tables, celebrated snow days and met their future spouses.

By SALA LEVIN '10



BAGEL PLACE

(1984-2021) 7423 BALTIMORE AVE.

Several short-lived businesses succeeded Albrecht's Pharmacy before the Bagel Place moved in. With a coffee bar in the front and a smorgasbord of chewy bagels to choose from in the back, the cozy carb corner was the place for unshowered, bleary-eyed students to go to dissect the details of last night's antics.

Some people treated Bagel Place as fuel for a more productive kind of morning. "We'd go there on our bike rides," says Summer Keosian '18. "My friends and I were all on the triathlon team, so we'd go there for a pit stop."



Albrecht's Pharmacy

(1930s-70s) 7423 BALTIMORE AVE.

A staple on the corner of College Avenue since the 1930s, the soda fountain-drugstore was a destination for cold lemonade or a bargain breakfast. (A 1969 ad in *The Diamondback* touted a meal of two eggs, toast, home fries and coffee for 55 cents.) Don McEvoy '76, whose grandfather, Edward McEvoy, co-owned Albrecht's, worked there starting as a kid and met his now-wife when she applied for a job. He remembers that the anti-Vietnam War protesters who stormed Route 1 in May 1970 left Albrecht's untouched out of love for the establishment. "It was great for business, because it was hot out," he says. "I'd be running up to 7-Eleven to get bags of ice for the lemonade."



The Paragon/ Italian Gardens/ The Cellar

(Late 1970s-80s)
7416 BALTIMORE AVE.

Lovers of live entertainment in the '70s and '80s often congregated at the Paragon, also known as the Attic, in the stretch of Route 1 that's now home to Marathon Deli. Nearly every night, a band or other act took the upstairs stage; Dana Davis '84 remembers seeing the comedian Sinbad there.

On the first floor, the Italian Gardens restaurant offered a low-key alternative to the raucousness of nearby establishments. "It is smaller, more intimate, with an appealing setting that adds to the overall enjoyment to be had there," wrote the student publication *Argus* in 1977.

Downstairs was home to the Cellar, a spot that Steve Walsh '87 describes as "more cozy" than the Vous. "The Cellar is where I met my wife of 37 years," says Frank Nitkiewicz '83. "I was drunk, but somehow I remembered the four-digit for her dorm phone enough to call her for a date the next day."



PHOTOS COURTESY OF
UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES



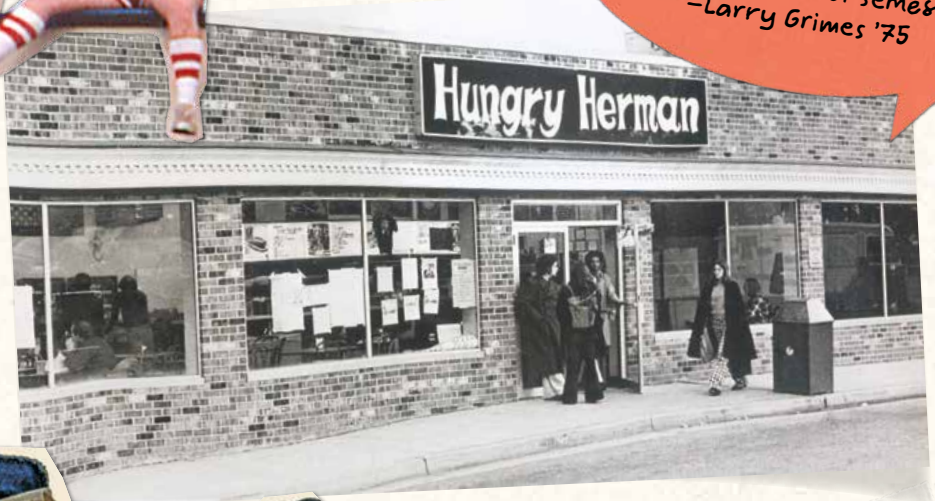


LITTLE TAVERN

(circa 1940-90s) 7413 BALTIMORE AVE.

Famous for its green pitched roof, white walls and diminutive size, the Little Tavern in College Park was part of a chain of hamburger joints in the Baltimore/Washington, D.C., area. Known by students as "Club L.T.," the take-out stand offered a respite for the after-hours crowd—and something to sop up the suds. Little Tavern's slider-sized burgers were advertised with the slogan **"BUY 'EM BY THE BAGFUL,"** which students certainly did.

"I was a freshman in 1966 and lived in the trailers behind Fraternity Row. My new roommate, assorted new friends and I would load a random grocery cart and push it to the laundry. The best part of waiting for the wash and dry was walking to the Little Tavern and getting the bag of burgers for a buck. If we were especially in the money that month, we could get the burgers changed to cheeseburgers." —Mark Zimmerman '70



"HUNGRY HERMAN was the nighttime go-to place for steak and cheese subs. I think I spent my entire summer job's earnings there in the first semester."
—Larry Grimes '75

1975-92 8145 BALTIMORE AVE.



THE RENDEZVOUS INN

(1956-96) 7325 BALTIMORE AVE.

For Terps spanning 40 years, one bar epitomized the image of an "Animal House" college experience: the Rendezvous Inn, better known as the Vous. "The floors were sticky with beer, and it smelled like it hadn't been cleaned in some time," says Sonia Amir-Bowie '96, "but that didn't stop the Greek system from making that one of its permanent hangouts where **dancing on the tables to Pearl Jam was allowed**, as pitchers of beer would make their rounds."

Terps started wearing junky shoes that they didn't mind ruining there. **"This place has always been known for the 'VOUS GOO,'" one anonymous patron told The Diamondback in 1986. "Kids would get a running start and see how far they could slide on the floor. I used to umpire it and see if they were safe or out."**

On snow days, the bar would open early—as in, 8 a.m.—and welcome students ready to fully enjoy their day off. "Snowball fights across the bar, over the heads of the bartenders, and beer slides into the fireplace were legendary," says Randy Goldman '93.

Founder Sam Srour's son attributed its eventual demise in part to UMD's rising admissions standards. "The students became more serious," Mark Srour told The Washington Post. "The party was secondary."



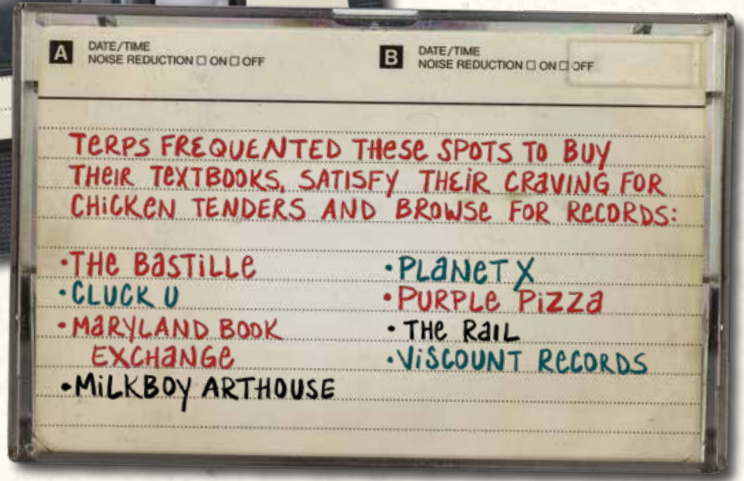
PLATO'S DINER

(1994-2016) 7150 BALTIMORE AVE.

A few blocks south of Bagel Place, another joint served omelets, souvlaki and crabcake Benedicts around the clock. With its chrome exterior and 24/7 hours, Plato's Diner was a haven for anyone looking for a serviceable cup of coffee and greasy-spoon charm.

Rhea Steen '09 and friends in the School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies often got late-night meals at Plato's after rehearsals, she says. Once, assigned by a teacher to choose a 24-hour location and observe how the people there moved, Steen selected Plato's. "At certain times of the day, it was mostly college students, and later at night you'd get people from parties coming in, and early in the morning, it would be a person who'd just gotten off a night shift." Seth Kleiner '03 remembers a slightly more harrowing experience: He was there when an employee had a knife slip-up in the kitchen.

"I DON'T THINK I WILL EVER NOT HEAR THAT SHRIEK IN MY HEAD," he says.





THE VARSITY GRILL & BACK ROOM

(1932-84) 8424 BALTIMORE AVE.

Emanuel Francis Kubak Zalesak III, or "Zal," opened the Varsity Grill on Sept. 21, 1932, seven years after he graduated from UMD. Zal made a name for his establishment by securing College Park's first liquor license after Prohibition.

Doreen Bass '82, M.A. '85 met her future husband of 38 years at the Varsity Grill the night before graduating. Bass and her friends preferred the Vous, "but there was a line that night," she says. "When the bar closed at 2 a.m., we went out and got breakfast at the College Park Diner."

"IF THERE IS A TYPICAL COLLEGE BAR IN THE WHOLE OF THE WESTERN WORLD, THE GRILL IT IS, COMPLETE WITH AN UNIMPRESSIVE ARRAY OF RECORD JACKETS ON ONE WALL AND UNIVERSITY PENNANTS ON ANOTHER."

—ARGUS, 1977



RATSIE'S

(1984-2015) 7400 BALTIMORE AVE.

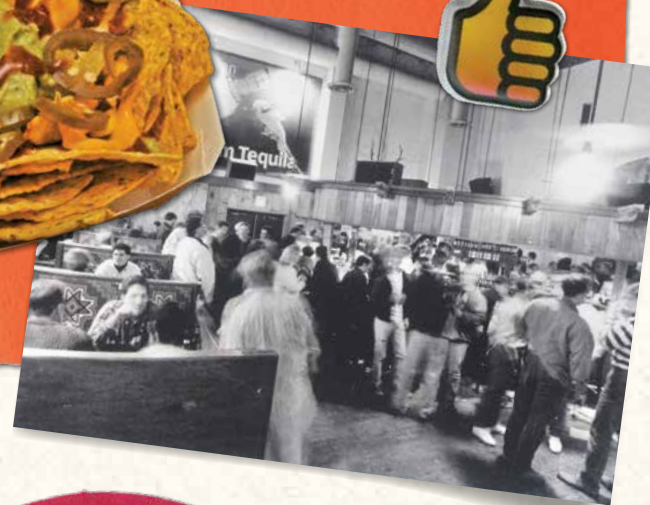
A prime spot for people-watching, with two walls of windows overlooking the intersection of Route 1 and Knox Road, Ratsie's was known for its gooey pizza slices and no-frills ambiance. "Every campus in America has its version: a pizzeria that slings greasy pies and slices late at night, after your willpower and sound judgment have been flushed down the toilet along with a gallon of cheap beer," wrote Tim Carman in The Washington Post when the pizza shop closed in 2015. "Ratsie's in College Park is such an establishment."



Santa Fe Café

(1986-2010) 4410 KNOX ROAD

For Casey Zacher '03 and her friends, the highlight of a Saturday night out was the midnight buffet at Santa Fe (now the home of Terrapin's Turf). It wasn't anything fancy—nachos, mozzarella sticks, wings—but to a bunch of partying college kids, it became something they still talk about fondly. **"WE WERE, LIKE, THIS IS THE BEST THING EVER,"** she says.



TOWN HALL

(1949-2024) 8135 BALTIMORE AVE.

Next to a liquor store of the same name, Town Hall drew more locals and fewer undergraduates than other bars. It was treasured for its lack of pretension and cheap drinks.

NEW SCHOLARSHIPS HONOR BENTLEY'S FOUNDER

John Brown '73 opened RJ Bentley's (7323 Baltimore Ave.) with two partners in 1978, and never left. He was a second dad to generations of students, collector of license plates and Terp jerseys, and a welcoming host to newcomers and regulars alike.

Brown died on Nov. 9, and to honor his impact, daughter Katie Brown and friend Harvey Sanders '72 established two scholarship funds at UMD, one for first-generation college students and one for student-athletes. See more at go.umd.edu/brownscholarships.



END OF THE ROAD (WORK)

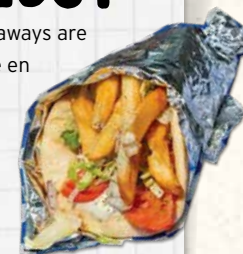
The five-year Baltimore Avenue upgrade is central to Greater College Park, the \$2 billion private-public partnership to revitalize the community and make it a top 10 college town. See more at greatercollegepark.umd.edu.



LIVING, NOT LOST

Some of today's Route 1 hangouts and hideaways are hardy survivors, while a few newcomers are en route to becoming institutions.

- **MARATHON DELI** moved in 2019 to a storefront around the corner from its original location, but's still slicing gyros and pouring its secret sauce.
- **COLLEGE PARK DINER** has been a reliable spot for eggs, waffles and other familiar fare since 1997.
- **CORNERSTONE GRILL AND LOFT** replaced the Vous in 1997 and became a good-time magnet for generations of Terps.
- **LEDO PIZZA** has changed owners, but the iconic restaurant's pizzas are still square and flaky-crust.
- **LOONEY'S**, part of a small chain of Maryland pubs, opened in College Park in 2011 and is a favorite for sports fans and trivia lovers.
- **RJ BENTLEY'S** has a block-long line of Terps waiting to get into the nearly 50-year-old bar and restaurant most Friday afternoons, rain or shine.



Thirsty Turtle

(2007-10) 7416 BALTIMORE AVE.

"My husband and I met at Thirsty Turtle in the fall of 2008, got married in 2013, and now have two little ones who we take back to UMD frequently for sporting events. We always joke that we're probably the only people that met one night at Thirsty Turtle and actually ended up getting married."

—CHRISTINE MACHADO '10



A Fresh Start for “Maryland’s Shame”

JOI HOWARD '03 SEEKS TO TURN A SHUTTERED, SEGREGATED PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL INTO A WORKING FARM AND WELLNESS SITE FOR THE BLACK COMMUNITY.

BY KAREN SHIH '09

ROSALIA DAWSON, a respected Baltimore musician, spent her final years locked away from her four children and husband in a segregated psychiatric hospital outside Annapolis. Her family still wonders what led her there.

Some of her descendants say she fell and hit her head stepping off a streetcar in the 1930s. Others speculate she might have suffered from untreated postpartum depression or perhaps early menopause, which caused her to act erratically. Still others were told she obsessively played piano—the instrument she had taught and performed to acclaim in community concerts, at church and even for silent movies—to the detriment of her family and young kids.

Whatever the reason, her family made the desperate decision in 1939 to commit Dawson, then 46, to Crownsville State Hospital, a place initially called the Hospital for the Negro Insane of Maryland.

Her second-oldest son, 23-year-old Robert Dawson Jr., drove her there. “He regretted that for the rest of his life,” says his daughter-in-law, Mary Ellen Dawson.



Rosalia Dawson (top left), with her husband Robert and a friend in an undated photo.

PORTRAIT BY STEPHANIE S. CORDLE;
INSET PHOTO COURTESY OF MARY ELLEN DAWSON

Rosalia’s two youngest, 6 and 11 at the time, bounced between family members as they grew up, lacking the stability of a mother to hold the family together. She never reunited with her children or husband, and died five years later of pulmonary tuberculosis.

Dawson was just one of thousands of patients who suffered at Crownsville Hospital during its nearly century-long existence. Patients in need of psychiatric care were instead crammed into damp, crowded cells, where children slept two per bed, head to feet; forced to work the property as unpaid laborers; fed rotten food and experimented on without their consent.

This dark history is what inspires one of Rosalia’s descendants, Joi Howard ’03, to pursue a different future for the long-abandoned hospital property. She has worked for years to reclaim portions of the land, now owned by Anne Arundel County, for community agriculture and a wellness center, focused on the needs of its Black residents, to build something positive from a past defined by harrowing abuse and neglect.

“We want to make good on the promise of Crownsville,” says Howard, who created the nonprofit enBloom Collective to bring together Black farmers and health and wellness practitioners to help transform the site. “How can we turn this into a hub of healing, led by the Black community?”

‘The Worst Story Ever Told’

For years, Crownsville Hospital was used as a threat. Parents from Baltimore to Washington, D.C., would tell their children to behave—or the “night doctor” would come and scoop them up.

There was truth to it: African Americans had vanished behind Crownsville’s gates, and not just those with mental illnesses or developmental or physical disabilities, but folks who were picked up for petty crime, homelessness or even just walking on the wrong street at night.



Hospital staff pose with patients in January 1932. Those with developmental disabilities and mental illnesses and even orphaned children shared living quarters.

What should have been a sanctuary and a place for healing was twisted from the very beginning, when the hospital for Black psychiatric patients was constructed in 1911.

“It would be the first and only asylum in the state, and likely the nation, to force its patients to build their own hospital from the ground up,” writes journalist Antonia Hylton in her 2024 book, “Madness: Race and Insanity in a Jim Crow Asylum,” which delves into the hospital’s complicated history.

Overseen by white doctors and staffers in scenes eerily reminiscent of the antebellum South, Black patients laid bricks, wove baskets, cleared fields and planted corn, cabbage and watermelon on the 1,500-acre property—and were even sent to neighboring farms as free labor to harvest crops.

And after the hospital was up and running, smallpox, scarlet fever and tuberculosis tore through the overcrowded population in the 1920s and ’30s, since Crownsville lacked isolation spaces to stop the spread.

In the 1940s, a series of newspaper exposés, including one called “Maryland’s Shame: The Worst Story Ever Told in the Sunpapers,” laid bare the dire conditions. White attendants drank on the job and beat patients brutally, even fatally. Women were placed in “the cage” for punishment—80 crowded

into a space meant for 35, sleeping in their own filth, perpetually dirty because of the facility’s water shortages. Children sat idly in bare rooms all day, receiving no schooling or job training. And just eight doctors were employed to care for more than 1,800 patients.

The recruitment of a new superintendent, Jacob Morgenstern, a Jewish refugee from the Nazis, and the hiring of the first Black psychologist licensed in the state, Vernon Sparks, helped usher in a new era for the hospital as it was desegregated in the 1950s. Newly hired Black staffers introduced recreational activities, taking patients camping and to the beach, while Sparks created a clinical internship program that lasted for a quarter century.

For a few decades, the hospital became one of the area’s top employers, especially for Black workers propelled into the middle class by the steady income. And during that time, some patients were able to get the treatment they needed and returned to society to continue with their lives.

But the disability rights movement, the advent of new antipsychotic drugs and a national shift from large institutionalization to community-based mental health care resulted in drastic funding cuts, and by 1980, the patient population had sunk to about 550. The hospital closed in 2004.

“How can we turn this into a hub of healing, led by the Black community?”

- JOI HOWARD



The 500-acre Crownsville Hospital property is largely vacant today, except for small portions used for a food bank and treatment center for substance use disorders.

Steering Toward History

Had Joi Howard been born a few generations earlier, she could have ended up at Crownsville.

Her life looked successful from the outside. She’d worked for more than a decade in alumni relations and event management after graduating from the University of Maryland with a degree in individual studies, focused on multicultural advertising, and earning a master’s degree from the University of Baltimore. She and her husband were parents of two little girls, and their family had just moved to a community in a great school district in Anne Arundel County.

But in 2018, Howard was struggling. Her father had just died of ALS, which plunged her into a depression. At the same time, she was diagnosed with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder.

One day, she was driving along the back roads near her new home, and nestled between youth soccer fields, an Anglican church and some restaurants, a series of dilapidated red-brick buildings came into view. Howard found herself drawn to the site, where a sign read, “Crownsville Hospital Center.” She discovered tangled vines climbing the walls, weeds bursting from balconies, cracked windows hanging ajar and boarded-up doors

indicating a property long out of use.

“I wanted to dig into, ‘What was going on there? What was it like?’” she says. But she found only a few resources online. “Because of the stigma of mental illness and the fact that people sent away their family members, there was not a lot of incentive for people to tell those stories.”

Then she had a breakthrough. Howard started attending “Say My Name” ceremonies created by noted Annapolis historian Janice Hayes-Williams; they recognized patients who had died and been haphazardly buried on hospital grounds. Naturally chatty and inquisitive, Howard eventually connected with former Crownsville workers who shared their tales of trauma.

Hearing all this, Howard considered how lucky she was to have so many resources to address her own mental health, not only modern medicine, but yoga, acupuncture and healthy, home-grown foods (she’d started a backyard garden, complete with chickens and worm composting, during the pandemic). But these remained too expensive for Black community members who needed help.

The Crownsville site, which was about to be turned over from the state to Anne Arundel County for redevelopment in 2022, could be the key. She didn’t want to see

it turned into recreational fields or solar farms—ideas floated by county officials—that wouldn’t honor the history of those who suffered there. Instead, she started pitching the idea of transforming portions of it into a working farm and wellness center, emphasizing the need for spaces and programs to support Black residents.

A Toolbox of Mental Health Resources

While Black Americans have similar rates of mental illness as the rest of the U.S. population, just one in three Black adults receives the mental health care they need, according to the American Psychiatric Association, either because of lack of insurance or high cost, or a lingering distrust of the medical community.

(One of the most famous cases of Black medical exploitation intersects with Crownsville: Henrietta Lacks, whose cancer cells, taken without her or her family’s consent, have been crucial to biomedical research for some 70 years. Lacks’ daughter, Elsie, was sent to Crownsville and died there a few years later, after doctors drilled into her skull repeatedly as part of an epilepsy study.)

Through enBloom and its team of about a dozen, Howard’s goal is to help Black Americans access a wide toolbox of resources



One of Howard and enBloom's goals is to create a small production farm at Crownsville, as shown in this rendering.

to support their mental health, in addition to seeking medical treatment.

Communities enBloom is one of its programs, which provides low-cost or free pop-up therapy, yoga and acupuncture at wellness events throughout the county, and also creates support groups like a Black women's circle.

"I know what it feels to not be seen and heard," says collaborator Chevon Wright, a traveling yoga instructor who often felt discriminated against in all-white classes in Anne Arundel County. "Joi's goal is necessary. We need more Black and brown spaces in this predominantly white area. ... We want to provide these holistic benefits to all."

Another program, Schools enBloom, is bringing gardens to local schools, teaching students how to plant herbs and veggies, and about sustainability and the nutritional benefits of locally grown food.

"I want to reclaim the narrative that Black people's experiences with agriculture began and ended with slavery. That's not true," Howard says. "Being in nature is healing. Growing your own food is a skill. Our kids need to be exposed to this."

She and Therese High, a University of Maryland Extension-trained master gardener, have now spoken at wellness fairs and

conferences, and are developing a curriculum for kids of all ages.

"If we can teach children math and English and all of that, we can teach them about their health and well-being," says High. "Kids are the gateway. How can we show kids that food is medicine and treat it as such? And teach people how to grow their own food?"



Ready for Change

The county plans to ratify a Crownsville Memorial Park master plan in early 2025 for the now 500-acre property, featuring a museum with historical displays, multiuse trails for biking and recreation, an expansion of existing food bank operations and more.

“I want to reclaim the narrative that Black people’s experiences with agriculture began and ended with slavery.”

- JOI HOWARD

As part of the park's health and wellness committee, Howard was able to incorporate her ideas for mental health services and community gardens.

"Joi has been a strong voice around issues of race and equity on the council," says committee Chair Pam Brown, executive director of the Anne Arundel County Partnership for Children, Youth and Families. "She comes with facts, a clear vision and an understanding of history."

For Brown, who has long worked with vulnerable populations, including on issues of food security, Howard's approach to community gardens is innovative. "She sees the bigger picture. She talks about more than just growing food so people aren't hungry; they're places for social behavior, physical activity, mindfulness and spiritual activity."

But as with all public projects, execution is another story. In an October meeting, a committee member said building out the park could be a "generational" endeavor.

"I don't want to wait five, 10, 20 years," Howard says. "This is something that the community needs now."

To help move things forward, she's partnered with the Office of Public Health Practice and Community Engagement in UMD's School of Public Health on an



Joi Howard (above, center) demonstrates vegetable washing at an enBloom community event. Chevon Wright (opposite page, bottom) leads a community yoga session.

environmental assessment, conducted by M.P.H. candidate Barrie Pasternak, to determine what environmental hazards, such as lead, asbestos and contaminated soil, will need to be mitigated before the site can be safely used.

Howard is also focused on growing enBloom, which has received several grants to pursue its work. While she hopes some of the Crownsville property will be put in a community land trust, enBloom's primary goal now is to acquire land to create a small production farm where schoolchildren can learn not only how to grow crops but also how to prepare dishes, and continue to offer pop-up wellness activities throughout the county at libraries, community centers and more.

"Joi is the catalyst," says High. "She's such a humble person who allows us all to shine in our own ways. Not a week goes by without her texting me to say, 'I made a new connection with so-and-so.' There's no downtime for her."

Land would be cheaper in Baltimore or Frederick, but Howard remains committed to her home county, where she is inspired by those who came before her, including her own family members.

More than a decade after he said goodbye to his mother, Robert Dawson Jr. fought injustice on another front. The avid fisherman had taken his young daughters to Sandy Point State Park on the Chesapeake Bay for a beach day—but they were kicked out because they were Black. He joined the NAACP to sue the state, and by 1955, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the case, leading to the desegregation of all state recreational facilities.

"People were ready for change," Howard says. "And I feel the same way now. There's so much awareness now of the wrongs of the past, and there's now the attention and resources to rectify it. It's all coming full circle." **TERP**

MARYLAND
GIVING DAY

MARCH 5, 2025



24 HOURS. ONE MISSION.

Each year, the University of Maryland community comes together on Giving Day to raise millions of dollars to support scholarships, enhance the student experience, fuel groundbreaking research and innovation, boost Terp pride and so much more.

The clock starts at midnight on March 5, 2025. Your Giving Day gift could unlock matching dollars to boost your favorite programs or initiatives on campus!

#GIVINGDAYUMD > [GIVINGDAY.UMD.EDU](https://givingday.umd.edu)



Letter From the Senior Executive Director

THE PAST FEW MONTHS at the Alumni Association have been truly exhilarating. I am deeply grateful for the warm reception I've received from Terps nationwide as I embrace my new role. A heartfelt thank you to the thousands who have recently joined as members, participated in one of our programs and attended one of our marquee events.

October's Homecoming celebrations were a resounding success, with masses of fans gathering in College Park to cheer on Terps Football, celebrate at our annual alumni tailgate, gather at the Terp Carnival and more. It was also a privilege to meet many new lifetime members during our Life Wall Unveiling Ceremony. Sharing in your joy as you saw your names etched on the walls of the Frann G. & Eric S. Francis Lifetime Member Wall for the first time was truly special. Thank you for your loyalty and for creating a legacy that will inspire future Terps for years to come.

In November, I had the honor of presenting the 2024 Maryland Awards to an outstanding group of alums, and it is a pleasure to highlight our newest Alumni Excellence Award recipients on these pages. Read more at right, and on our website, about these distinguished individuals.

We wrapped up 2024 with our spectacular alumni holiday party at the elegant Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C. It was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate another successful year for the Alumni Association, made possible by your active participation.

I extend my gratitude to those who generously contributed to our student scholarship fund through the holiday party silent auction and to those who supported our student engagement programs on Giving Tuesday. Giving back is a Terp tradition, and I continue to be inspired by the generosity and enthusiasm of our alumni community.

I am excited about what we can achieve together as we move fearlessly forward in 2025.

Jessica K. Roberts

Jessica K. Roberts '02
Senior Executive Director
University of Maryland Alumni Association

RISING TERP AWARD

The following alums are an inspiration to the next generation of Terp leaders. All under the age of 30, they have already made significant professional accomplishments.



CATALINA MEJÍA ARENAS '18
GEN AI BILINGUAL CONTENT MANAGER, META

Mejía uses generative artificial intelligence to reshape consumer engagement, content personalization and advertising at one of the world's biggest companies.



RICK TAMNO '17, M.P.P. '20
PROGRAM ASSISTANT, GLOBAL REFUGE
CO-FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, READERS ALL

Tamno assists immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees through his work with Global Refuge, while also working to teach literacy to underserved children through his volunteer organization.



TYLER DENK '16
CO-FOUNDER & CEO, BEEHIIV

Denk was named to *Forbes'* 2023 and 2025 "30 Under 30" lists for creating beehiiv, a software company that provides businesses with templates for creating email newsletters. It has 7,500 active newsletters with 35 million unique readers.

ENTERPRENEUR AWARD

These Terps are fearlessly disrupting their industries as successful entrepreneurs who have notably contributed to their respective fields.



JOSHUA JEFFRIES MBA '11
MANAGING DIRECTOR, RISK STRATEGIES CO.

Jeffries is an entrepreneur, health reform strategist and employee benefit and human resources system expert. He's managing director of a Bethesda-based risk management consultancy and insurance brokerage.



SUMMER BAZEMORE M.S. '02
SYSTEMS ENGINEER & CEO/OWNER, EY3 TECHNOLOGIES

Bazemore, founder and CEO of a cybersecurity and systems engineering consultancy, has provided internships to and mentored 30 students and young adults from Baltimore, Washington, D.C., and Prince George's County.



JAYSON DUBIN '97
CEO & FOUNDER, PLAYWIRE

Dubin leads a software company that helps online publishers and app developers boost their advertising revenue. Its programs allow businesses to customize ads to users.

The Alumni Excellence Awards

RESEARCH AWARD

The University of Maryland is one of the world's premier research institutions. This award recognizes three alums for their transformational research and its impact.



DANIEL FLYNN '81
PROFESSOR, FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

Flynn is a former vice president for research at Florida Atlantic University. He now helps biotech companies, clinical research practices and universities develop and commercialize intellectual property.



FANG-ZHEN TENG PH.D. '05
PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON, SEATTLE

Teng is a leader in nontraditional isotope geochemistry, considering the role of potassium and magnesium, for example, and their potential impacts on medical innovation and rare metal mining.



COURTNEY GRIMES PH.D. '21
ATMOSPHERIC SCIENTIST, ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE FUND

Grimes is an atmospheric scientist at the nonprofit environmental advocacy group, where she considers the impacts of air pollution on marginalized communities. She is the first African American to graduate from UMD with a doctorate in atmospheric chemistry.

GRADUATES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND are leaders and trailblazers across a wide range of disciplines. Whether advancing knowledge as scholars and researchers, driving innovation as entrepreneurs or shaping the future as educators, our alums have a lasting influence on the state, nation and world. The Alumni Excellence Awards celebrate the extraordinary achievements of a select group of Terps. Meet the 2024 awardees. Learn more at alumni.umd.edu/excellence.

LEGACY AWARD

This distinguished award honors alums who left a positive legacy in their community, celebrating their personal and professional lifetime achievements.



SUE BREDEKAMP '72, M.A. '76, PH.D. '85
FORMER DIRECTOR OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN

Brekdekamp is a pioneer in early childhood education, having authored the seminal "Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs" in 1987. The work continues to inform teachers on the academic and developmental needs of children from birth through age 8.



WILLIAM RYAN '90
BOARD PRESIDENT, BUILDING AFRICAN AMERICAN MINDS

Ryan, an emeritus professor of atmospheric science at Pennsylvania State University, has spent the last decade as a volunteer and board president of an Easton, Md.-based nonprofit that provides academic enrichment in a safe, caring and structured environment.



DOROTHY WEINSTEIN '84
ADJUNCT INSTRUCTOR OF CLINICAL RESEARCH AND LEADERSHIP,
GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE & HEALTH SCIENCES

Weinstein has spent her professional life advocating for local, state and national health policies. She collaborated with the American Diabetes Association in influencing Congress to pass the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

The Maryland Awards

Each year, we honor the exceptional achievements of seven distinguished alums at A Celebration of Terps: Featuring the Maryland Awards. Presented during an intimate ceremony this past November, these prestigious awards recognize exemplary Terps who have excelled in public service, launched innovative companies and made groundbreaking discoveries. Learn more at alumni.umd.edu/maryland-awards.

JOY BAUER '86
Hall of Fame Inductee

JEANETTE EPPS
M.S. '94, PH.D. '00
President's Award

EVAN LUTZ '14
Outstanding Young
Alumnus Award

ONEYDA HERNANDEZ '23
Do Good Award

JIM SPENCER '90
Spirit of Maryland Award

SHARON L. AKERS '78
Tyser Gottwals Award

SYLVIE DELAHUNT
'14, M.S. '16
Elaine Johnson Coates
Award

At Home With a Continent's Cultural Heritage

Alumna's Book Weaves Together African Design Principles and Contemporary Decor

THE MULTICULTURAL AESTHETIC of Nasozi Kakembo's childhood home felt as natural as the groundnut stew her mother would cook for dinner. Impala hides on the walls symbolized her Ugandan-born father's Baganda tribe, Senufo statues commemorated her mother's travels in West Africa, and the overarching minimalism nodded to her parents' time in Germany, where her dad attended medical school and her mom was a fashion model and nurse.

But as Kakembo '05 got older, she realized that the tastes of most of her neighbors in Silver Spring, Md., ran more to the pastel pink sofa her parents eventually bought from BJ's Wholesale Club. As an art history major at UMD, she became interested in understanding how the textiles, furniture and art from her parents' African heritage could be incorporated into homes around the world.

Kakembo's new book, "The African Decor Edit: Collecting and Decorating with Heritage Objects," released by Abrams Books, highlights artisans from across the continent, as well as homes around the world that have successfully blended modern tastes with traditional styles.



"I hope readers take away a sense of empowerment to feel more comfortable decorating with African objects," she says.

Kakembo's artistic bent emerged early. When her cousin gave her a hand-me-down Barbie Dreamhouse, Kakembo immediately began remodeling the pink plastic mansion. "I started taking shoeboxes and adding additions and stairs," she says.



Nasozi Kakembo '05 shows off a featured Juju hat from Cameroon in her Maryland home. Her book, "The African Decor Edit," teaches design-minded readers how to enliven their homes with traditional African objects.

At the same time, Kakembo was immersed in various African cultures. Her father had left Uganda in the 1970s during political upheaval, but

his family still lived there. Her American-born mother worked at an African art gallery and traveled extensively throughout the continent.

At UMD, Kakembo studied art history and traveled to Morocco and Uganda, the latter of which "felt like home." After college, she moved to New York City, where she earned a graduate degree in urban planning at Columbia University and worked for an international human rights foundation. On a trip to Senegal, a visit to a fabric market altered her professional trajectory.

"I just was blown away by the sheer volume" of fabrics, Kakembo says. She bought some pieces and "had this whole creative explosion on the plane ride back," where she came up with designs for pillows.



She taught herself to sew, and soon was selling her pillows at festivals and markets in New York City.

Eventually, Kakembo's pillow business blossomed into XN Studio, a design business that incorporated her work as well as items she'd bring back from her travels in Africa.

For "The African Decor Edit," Kakembo made numerous trips to the continent, visiting artisans she already knew, and discovering new creators in countries she hadn't been to before. That's how she met the makers behind the hand-carved stools, Juju feather hats and wood Bamun shields from Cameroon.

Other traditional objects highlighted in the book include cotton weavings from the Dorze people of Ethiopia, Tonga baskets from Zambia and batik textiles from Ghana. The book also showcases the homes of Kakembo's acquaintances in Berlin, Los Angeles, London and even her own home in Maryland.

"The book breaks down a lot of backstory behind objects that have often been really disconnected from their origin stories," says Amanda McClements, owner of Washington, D.C., home decor store Salt and Sundry, which carries some of Kakembo's products.

Kakembo hopes the book will encourage readers to take respectful risks in their design choices, and to support businesses that work directly with African artisans. "So much has been taken out of Africa without any Africans benefiting," she says. "This is a piece of the puzzle to right the course of what continues to be a really imbalanced economic picture."—**SL**

CLASS NOTES



ANDREW TRAN '19 won a place in The New York Times' Mini Hall of Fame to mark the crossword game's 10th anniversary. The 25 inductees had to solve a week's worth of puzzles as fast as possible. Tran is a software engineer with Microsoft in Seattle.



LUKE GROSSMANN MBA '08 was promoted to chief financial officer and executive vice president of the U.S. Postal Service. He's worked there for 20 years, mostly recently as senior vice president of finance and strategy.



SARA BERNSTEIN '95, president of Imagine Documentaries, was a producer of the film "Jim Henson Idea Man," directed by Ron Howard and released on Disney+. She returned to campus in October for a screening at the Philip Merrill College of Journalism.



JEANETTE EPPS M.S. '94, PH.D. '00 and three crewmates returned to Earth in October after an eight-month mission aboard the International Space Station, setting the record for time spent in space by an African American.



KIMBERLY THOMAS '94 was elected to the Michigan Supreme Court for an eight-year term. She is a graduate of Harvard Law School and a professor of law at the University of Michigan.



A new memoir from **JODY OLSEN PH.D. '79**, "A Million Miles: My Peace Corps Journey," traces her six-decade career with the agency, culminating in her directorship and spanning personal hardships and her struggles as a woman in leadership.

Submit your class notes and read many more at terp.umd.edu.



Pup “Reels” in the Likes

Antics of Alums’ Goldendoodle Bring Joy to Millions on Social Media

HERE’S A LITTLE SECRET: The parents of TikTok-famous goldendoodle Bentley didn’t meet at R.J. Bentley’s on Baltimore Avenue.

Kelly ’13 and Brandon ’14 Madsen first crossed paths at another popular College Park bar, Cornerstone, when their club field hockey and soccer teams had a mixer—but when it came time for the Terp couple to name their new puppy seven years ago, “Bentley” just had a better ring.

Today, @minidoodlebentley has joined the likes of Grumpy Cat and Doug the Pug as a pet influencer, with nearly 2 million followers across social platforms—including about 1.3 million on TikTok and more than 300,000 on Instagram. There, fans might find him teaching his younger (human) siblings tricks, lounging in a comically enormous dog bed and dressing up like a lobster or pumpkin.

“There’s so much negativity in the world,” says Kelly. “We got so much joy out of the dog accounts we followed. They had such carefree, happy, fun posts, so we just started doing that too.”

Some of their most popular ones include Kelly sitting in Bentley’s crate with a book, coffee and snacks—kids and canine on the outside—captioned, “Six years into owning a dog, three years into motherhood and I JUST figured out what this thing is for,” with nearly 2 million likes on Instagram. Or a surprise birthday party for Bentley, featuring a teddy bear cake, which has 9.2 million likes on TikTok. (Bentley bears no small resemblance to a teddy himself.)

The Madsens never imagined he’d go viral when they started posting about their

pup in 2017. But within the first year, an Australian fitness influencer with millions of followers shared a post about the pooch on her account, and the couple woke up to 25,000 new followers. Then when TikTok

“We got so much joy out of the dog accounts we followed. They had such carefree, happy, fun posts, so we just started doing that too.”
—KELLY MADSEN '13

entered the U.S. market in late 2019, the fledgling company invited the Madsens to join the platform, even assigning them a weekly advisor to discuss strategies and trends. The app took off during the pandemic, and by 2021, Bentley had more than a million followers.

Occasionally that online celebrity spills into real life; they’ve been recognized on the street in Baltimore and even at day-care drop-off. Two years ago, a fan reached out with a special request: His mother had late-stage cancer, and for Christmas, her only wish was to meet Bentley. The Madsens quickly agreed, and after a little subterfuge to keep it a surprise, the son and mom arrived at their house in Howard County, where she burst into happy tears.

But doggie influencing is just a side gig for both of them; Kelly is a mathematician, while Brandon is an anesthesiologist. They don’t do grid posts or reels as frequently as they did before kids—just once or twice a week and some daily stories—because while Bentley is a consummate professional, the toddlers are more likely to spill sippy cups of



milk or flop to the ground when they whip out the camera.

The Madsens are often approached about brand partnerships, but they’ve gotten more selective as their reach has grown, promoting only dog (and sometimes children’s) products they like and use, such as their washable white couch. Earning a couple thousand dollars once or twice a month is a great way to kick-start their kids’ college funds, they say.

They hope Tyler, 3, and Rachel, 1, will follow in their footsteps at UMD. The family always attends Homecoming festivities, and this year, they brought Bentley as well—a homecoming of sorts for him, since he was part of the Madsens’ engagement shoot at Cornerstone.

“Maybe one of them will become a doctor,” says Brandon, “and we’ll tell them, ‘It’s all because you used to throw a tennis ball for Bentley.’”—KS

Creating a Cartoon You

Terp Promotes On-Screen Representation by Making Avatars More Customizable

IF CASSANDRA LEWIS '09 ever feels the urge to see how she’d look with a mohawk, instead of grabbing the clippers, she just opens her laptop.

As head of avatar innovation at Meta, she’s also helping billions of users of Facebook, Instagram and more bring their own style to those cute, cartoony online representations, which the company overhauled in October to allow more customization.

“I do think it’s fun to have something that looks familiar and does look like me, but then I get to switch out clothing, change up looks, change up hair,” Lewis says. “I have a passion around digital representation of your physical self in a new paradigm, the metaverse.”

An avid gamer who favors first-person offerings like Final Fantasy, Cyberpunk and Destiny 2, she created apps for Xbox One before arriving at Meta in 2021. The new role envisioning avatars, she says, was the perfect marriage of her computer science background and her affection for 3D art.

Here’s some of what she says helps make a good one.—AK

MIRROR IMAGE OR FANTASTICAL FIGURE

“People go into one of two modes with their avatars,” Lewis says. “Either you want it to look like the idealized version of you, or you want it to look crazy.” She tends to go with the first, but she does love costumes, whether a “Tron” getup or sparkly fairy wings.

VIRTUAL FIT CHECK

As you would in the real world, don’t let your avatar leave the virtual house without one last look, she says: “How do I want to show up in the different version of me, and how do I want people to perceive that?”

SMOOTH MOVES

Realistic animation when avatars stroll throughout the metaverse can improve user experience, she says. “What you don’t want is a robotic walk if that’s not what you were going for.”

REPRESENTATION RULES

Similarly to books or movies, people want to see themselves when interacting online, so Lewis and her team strive to make sure no user has to say: “Well, I did want gray hair, but you didn’t give it to me, so I’m stuck with red hair.”



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Ag Day A-moo-sment

A CENTURY AGO, visitors to UMD could enjoy a day of cow and horse shows, sheep-shearing demonstrations and egg-throwing contests. They can still enjoy many of those activities at Ag Day, long since incorporated into Maryland Day. This April, the event will celebrate 100 years of spotlighting College of Agriculture and Natural Resources students' work with livestock and honoring UMD's roots as the Maryland Agricultural College. To commemorate the milestone, *Terp* found this bovine beaut from Ag Day 1994. Do you recognize any of these smiling dairy queens? Share your memories at terpfeedback@umd.edu, and find the responses in the next issue alongside another unique snapshot of UMD history. —AK

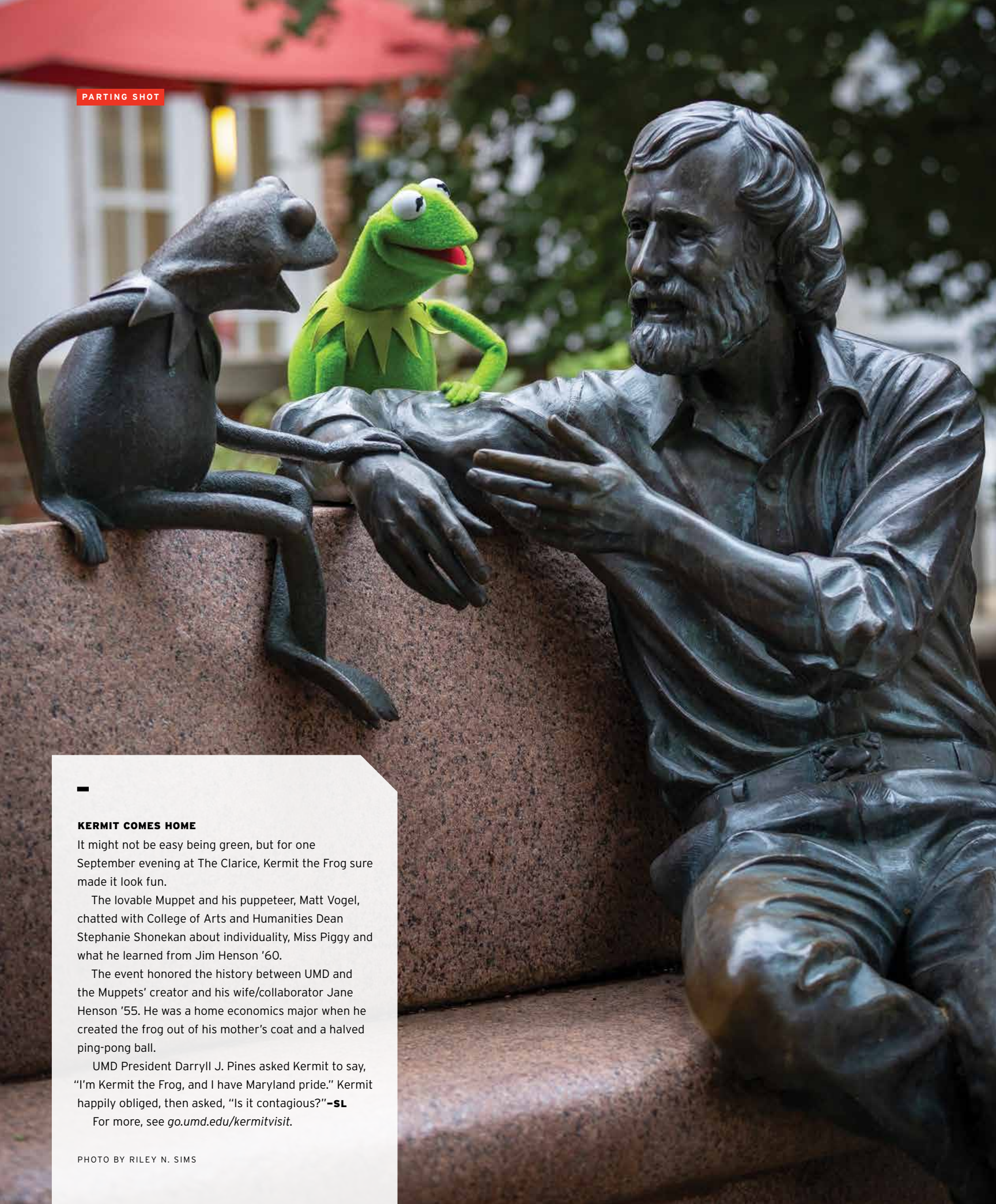
FROM THE LAST ISSUE...



Kenneth A. Gladden '89 sprang forward with information about the leapfrogging Terps featured in Fall 2024's photo. He recognized the students performing the "Nasty Nupe" in the 1991 Homecoming step show as members

of Kappa Alpha Psi. Top row, from left: Tarem Hendricks '93, Pete Johnson '93, Dan Dungy '92 and Rick Younger '92. Bottom row, from left: Alix Leger '91, Tony Harris, Wayne Vincent '92 and Chris Lawrence.

PARTING SHOT



KERMIT COMES HOME

It might not be easy being green, but for one September evening at The Clarice, Kermit the Frog sure made it look fun.

The lovable Muppet and his puppeteer, Matt Vogel, chatted with College of Arts and Humanities Dean Stephanie Shonekan about individuality, Miss Piggy and what he learned from Jim Henson '60.

The event honored the history between UMD and the Muppets' creator and his wife/collaborator Jane Henson '55. He was a home economics major when he created the frog out of his mother's coat and a halved ping-pong ball.

UMD President Darryll J. Pines asked Kermit to say, "I'm Kermit the Frog, and I have Maryland pride." Kermit happily obliged, then asked, "Is it contagious?"—**SL**

For more, see go.umd.edu/kermitvisit.

PHOTO BY RILEY N. SIMS

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