

Bostonia



AI@BU—
FROM A TO Z

THE ALUMNI MAGAZINE
OF BOSTON UNIVERSITY
FALL 2024

+

BU IS
UNLOCKING
THE MYSTERIES
OF CTE,
ONE BRAIN
AT A TIME

AN ALUM'S
MEMOIR GOES
INSIDE THE
BEATLES' EARLY
FAN CLUB DAYS



“NOW IS OUR
MOMENT”

Melissa L. Gilliam Is Inaugurated
as BU's 11th President in a
Historic Day for the University

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tip sheet

FACTS, FIGURES, AND HUMBLEBRAGS



BU women's rowing is celebrating its 50th anniversary.



↑ RISING IN THE RANKINGS

BU climbed two places—to No. 41 overall among 434 national universities—in the *U.S. News & World Report* annual Best College Rankings, released in September 2024.



THE REEL DEAL

In August, the *Hollywood Reporter* published its list of best film schools in the US—and, yep, BU is on it. “These 25-plus institutions are providing the next generation of filmmakers with tools (hint: it’s AI) to shape cinema’s future,” the article said. The magazine pointed to, among other things, producer and director Craig H. Shepherd, professor and chair of the BU College of Communication film and television program, and to the recent renovation of studio spaces for cinematography and directing at 808 Comm Ave.

“ALEXA, PLAY THE BU TREBLEMAKERS”

The *BU Treblemakers*, an all-gender a cappella group on campus, recently released the album *Afterglow* to all streaming services. The group released the EP *CADENCE* in 2023.

HIGH HONORS

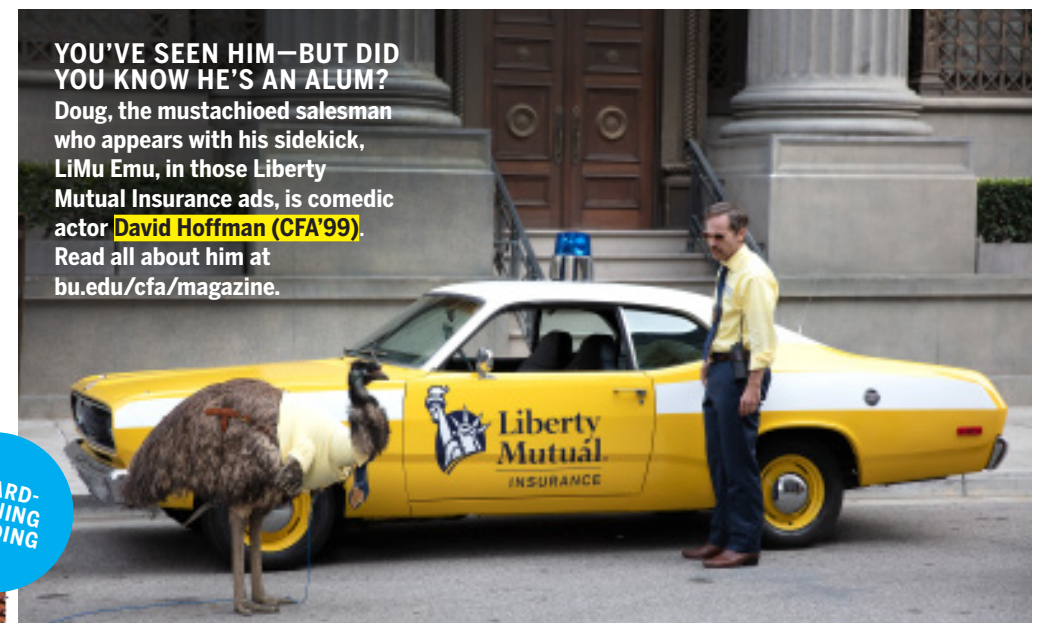
The University's *Center for Computing & Data Sciences* building has won the 2024 Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat's award for Best Tall Building of the Americas.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: ROB BRANNING, COURTESY OF LIBERTY MUTUAL, BOB O'CONNOR



YOU'VE SEEN HIM—BUT DID YOU KNOW HE'S AN ALUM?

Doug, the mustachioed salesman who appears with his sidekick, LiMu Emu, in those Liberty Mutual Insurance ads, is comedic actor *David Hoffman (CFA'99)*. Read all about him at bu.edu/cfa/magazine.



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COVER PHOTO BY MICHAEL D. SPENCER

▶ **ANN MCKEE**, a William Fairfield Warren Distinguished Professor at BU, and her team are world experts in chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), a neurodegenerative disease caused by repeated head trauma. It's why so many families are donating the brains of their loved ones to the University's CTE Center. (See page 40.)



CYDNEY SCOTT

+ ON THE WEB
bu.edu/bostonia

Watch highlights of the inauguration of Melissa L. Gilliam, along with videos about an alum who creates custom pedals for rock guitarists and an alum whose Thai restaurant has become one of the hottest in the Boston area.

Bostonia

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Printed in the USA by Royle Printing, which practices sound environmental policies and is certified by the Forest Stewardship Council. Additionally, 20 percent of the printing ink is made from biorenewable resources, and all of the manufacturing waste is recycled and reused for applications in new products. *Bostonia* (ISSN 0164-1441) is published three times a year at Boston University, 985 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA 02215. Persons wishing to reprint any portion of *Bostonia*'s contents are required to write in advance for permission.

Send inquiries to Cindy Buccini, *Bostonia* Magazine, 985 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA 02215. Telephone: 617-353-3081 Email: bostonia@bu.edu Web: bu.edu/bostonia

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Postmaster: Send address changes to *Bostonia* Subscriptions, 985 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA 02215.

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Fall, Number 3
ISSN 0164-1441



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“An Indomitable Spirit”

I applaud the resilience and positive attitude of Cameron Monesmith (Questrom'24)

(“A Cancer Diagnosis, Two Brain Surgeries, One Experimental Drug—And Now a BU Degree,” Summer 2024). In 2022, I underwent two procedures—a supraorbital craniotomy and an endoscopic endonasal skull base surgery—to remove two noncancerous tumors. I subsequently received six weeks of radiation treatment.

As difficult as it was for me to deal with my own personal health issues, I can't even begin to imagine what Monesmith endured, especially given his age. Big-time props to him and his family for exemplifying an indomitable spirit that more should be emulating.

Douglas J. Gladstone (COM'82) |
Gansevoort, N.Y.

READERS RESPOND ONLINE

A Cancer Diagnosis, Two Brain Surgeries, One Experimental Drug—And Now a BU Degree
Summer 2024

Outstanding reporting and writing by Alene about an outstanding young man dealing with frightening odds and an inspiration to us all.

Gary Larrabee (COM'71)



More Nuance Needed

I HAVE CONCERNS about some of the assertions made by BU faculty members in “Is Our Democracy at Risk?” (Summer 2024).

First, the United States is a *constitutional republic*, a restrained form of democracy with checks and balances among three coequal branches of government, a two-house national legislature, and an electoral system of selecting the president. To simply say the US is a democracy is to raise assumptions our Founders never intended.

Second, no evidence is presented with the assertion of voter suppression. Indeed, required photo ID is easily acquired and is not a barrier to the franchise. While there is no evidence of *widespread* voter fraud, as long as humans and not angels are voting there will be fraud, and voter IDs help in maintaining trust that our votes truly count.

I trust that future articles of this sort published in the *Bostonia* will be more balanced and nuanced reflecting the complexities of our federal system.

Joe D. Marlow (Wheelock'78) | Olathe, Kans.

READERS RESPOND ONLINE

Is Our Democracy at Risk? / Summer 2024

Wonderful well-rounded perspectives from a lot of experts. Bravo. It was worth the time and energy to explore the facets that have been shared here. Tough stuff, but important.

—GD



READERS RESPOND ONLINE

The Next Space Race
Summer 2024

US, Not China, Was First to Destroy a Satellite

THREE CHEERS for BU alum and General B. Chance Saltzman (CAS'91), commander of US Space Force (“The Next Space Race,” Summer 2024). But it's hard to believe, as the article says, that he studied history at BU. The piece cited China's destruction of one of its own worn-out satellites in 2007 as highlighting the need for the recently created Space Force. “A country has demonstrated the ability and an intent to destructively take out a satellite, and you can only draw certain conclusions once that happens,” Saltzman is quoted as saying. “There's no peaceful need for that. The only reason you're doing that is because you want to take out another country's satellites to try to achieve a military advantage. That's the only conclusion you can draw. And we just hadn't seen that activity before.”

For the record, the US was the first nation to blast one of its own satellites out of the heavens in 1985, 22 years before China.

Mark Thompson (COM'75)
Kensington, Md.

I've known General Saltzman, Chance, since he started first grade. I read every article I can find about him or Space Force. Your article captures the essence of his brilliance, integrity and heart. It is the best article I've ever read. His “quiet intensity” makes me feel safe. You write as if you've known him for many years. What a wonderful quality for a writer.

—Kyda West

one moment.

► **NOW PITCHING.** For Boston. Number 11. Ace right-hander Melissa L. Gilliam! BU's new president threw out the ceremonial first pitch at BU Night at Fenway Park on September 27, which closed out the weeklong celebration of her inauguration as the University's 11th president (see page 32). More than 1,500 BU alumni, students, faculty, and staff were on hand for the Red Sox game, their final home series of the season.

PHOTO BY DOUG LEVY





PENNY BISHOP,

the author of seven books on education reform, has a track record as a strategic leader and a gifted teacher.



ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT SCHOLAR IS THE NEW DEAN OF BU WHELLOCK

► Penny Bishop, who came from the University of Maine, succeeds David Chard | BY STEVE HOLT

A **LEADING** adolescent development scholar is the new dean of BU's Wheelock College of Education & Human Development. Penny Bishop, who had been dean of the University of Maine College of Education and Human Development since June 2021, officially assumed the leadership of Wheelock on August 1.

Bishop succeeded David Chard, who was the president of Wheelock College and helped shepherd its historic 2018 merger with Boston University. Mary Churchill, associate dean of strategic initiatives and community engagement at Wheelock, had served as interim dean after Chard's departure July 1.

Prior to joining the University of Maine, Bishop was a professor of education at the University of Vermont, where she was later associate

dean of the school's College of Education and Social Services and directed the Tarrant Institute for Innovative Education. Bishop is a ninth-generation Vermonter.

Bishop is a foremost scholar on the intersection of adolescent development and education. She is the coauthor of seven books on education reform, including *The Successful Middle School: This We Believe* (Association for Middle Level Education, 2020) and *Personalized Learning in the Middle Grades* (Harvard Education Press, 2019).

"Dr. Bishop's strong track record of strategic leadership, her impressive scholarly work, and her reputation as a gifted teacher and community builder are an ideal fit for the needs of the Wheelock College

of Education & Human Development," says Gloria Waters, BU provost and chief academic officer.

When asked what drew her to Wheelock, Bishop says, "There's no denying its overt social justice mission. I'm excited to be part of a community that puts that out front and leads with the mission to disrupt inequity. That's hard work. I also see such a strong community here of scholars and teachers who are already doing that in so many ways. I was also drawn to the opportunity to continue this work post-merger. Under Dean Chard's leadership, the transition that he led between historic Wheelock and BU helped the college come out stronger after the merger.... So that's an amazing time to be able to join a community."



I'm excited to be part of a community that puts [social justice] out front and leads with the mission to disrupt inequity. That's hard work. It's daunting work."

PENNY BISHOP

CYDNEY SCOTT



GLORIA WATERS
previously served
as BU vice presi-
dent and associate
provost for research
for 11 years.



Gloria Waters Appointed BU's New Provost

► The second-ranking officer at BU will create “a collaborative, nimble, and proactive” office, says President Melissa L. Gilliam | BY DOUG MOST

GLORIA WATERS, who led BU's expansive growth in academic and scientific research for a decade, has been appointed the University's provost and chief academic officer by President Melissa L. Gilliam.

As provost, Waters is the second-ranking officer within the University's hierarchy. She works closely day to day with the faculty, staff, and students in BU's 17 schools and colleges and the Faculty of Computing & Data Sciences. And she is a pivotal voice in identifying and helping to execute Gilliam's strategic priorities.

Previously, Waters served as vice president and associate provost for

research for 11 years. During that time, BU's research expenditures—the amount spent on research—grew from \$343 million to \$554 million. Under her leadership, BU instituted external reviews of the University-wide research centers and restructured and added several new centers to BU's portfolio. Waters has been instrumental in strengthening BU's membership within the Association of American Universities, a consortium of 71 leading research universities—including Stanford, Harvard, Yale, MIT, and Northwestern—that “transform lives through education, research, and innovation.”

Gilliam says Waters has built “a responsive and agile administrative operation focused on advancing the work and careers of our researchers,” adding that “as provost, Gloria will focus on creating a collaborative, nimble, and proactive provost's office that will enhance the experience and academic excellence of our faculty and ensure a high-quality experience for all students.”

Prior to her research role, Waters was dean of BU's Sargent College of Health & Rehabilitation Sciences and a professor of speech, language, and hearing sciences. She led dramatic increases in the size, quality, and selectivity of Sargent's undergraduate and graduate programs, enhanced student and faculty support, and doubled the volume of its research funding.

JACKIE RICCIARDI

JENNIFER GUNTER KING NAMED ASSOCIATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN FOR SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

JENNIFER GUNTER KING'S vast domain includes nearly 12 miles of archival boxes holding papers such as a handwritten blue book by Martin Luther King, Jr. (GRS'55, Hon.'59) for a BU class, hundreds of letters between Ethel and Julius Rosenberg penned at Sing Sing prison before their execution, African Ajami manuscripts, and Florence Nightingale's handwritten letters to military generals about the importance of sanitation. There are more than 45,000 BU theses and dissertations, open access scholarly articles, research publications, and other works by faculty, students, and staff.

King was hired effective April 1 as associate university librarian for special collections, overseeing

the Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center and all other special collections and directing the BU Libraries' new Digital Ventures program. She's tasked with improving access to the special collections and better integrating them into the University as a whole.

King was previously director of the Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library at Emory University and director of the Harold F. Johnson Library at Hampshire College, and she's held special collections positions at Mount Holyoke College and Virginia Tech.

—Joel Brown

Among Jennifer Gunter King's goals: improve access for scholars, researchers, and the entire BU community.



JACKIE RICCIARDI

“[T]wo years after the arrival and wider use of generative AI, it's inarguably clear that, at every level of education, these tools represent nothing short of an existential threat to the writing classroom—undercutting the very way we formulate, develop, and express our intelligence.”

Michael Dowding (MET'85, COM'90), College of Communication Master Lecturer
National Review
“AI in the Writing Classroom: Professor, Beware”
August 25, 2024

CBS News
“Massachusetts Income Gap One of Largest in Country, New Census Data Shows”
September 25, 2024
Jay Zagorsky (GRS'87/92), Questrom School of Business
Clinical Associate Professor

New York Times
“In the Sean Combs Case, Echoes of the Tack Taken Against Other Powerful Men”
September 19, 2024
Julie Dahlstrom, School of Law Associate Dean and Clinical Associate Professor

Business Insider India
“The Science Is In: Big Sisters Are Good for Everyone”
September 19, 2024
Lenette Azzi-Lessing, School of Social Work Clinical Professor

>>

Leader of BU's Fundraising Efforts and Alumni Engagement Steps Down

► Karen Engelbourg praised for her “optimistic spirit and her fundraising acumen” | BY RICH BARLOW

KAREN ENGELBOURG, who led Boston University's fundraising to new heights, including its ascent as one of the nation's top-20 private universities for philanthropic cash revenue, will step down as senior vice president for development and alumni relations after January 2, 2025.

Engelbourg, who assumed her role in 2019, says that wrapping up her 14 years at the University makes perfect sense now, with the arrival of BU's new president, Melissa L. Gilliam (*see page 32*).

“It's an opportunity for Dr. Gilliam to partner with new Development & Alumni Relations leadership to engage alumni and donors around her strategic priorities,” Engelbourg says. “Thanks to trustees, alumni, and friends of the University, BU has built a culture of philanthropy that will further advance Dr. Gilliam's strategic vision. It's a privilege to have been part of this journey.”

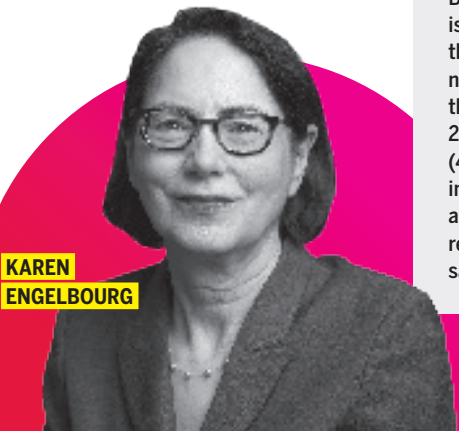
“A valued friend of many in the BU community, Karen is a thoughtful and dedicated member of the University's senior leadership team,” Gilliam wrote in a letter to the BU community. “On a personal note, I have enjoyed getting to know Karen and appreciate her warmth, her optimistic spirit, and her fundraising acumen.”

Among Engelbourg's achievements, Gilliam wrote, was leading BU in raising more than \$1.2 billion in new commitments during the past four-plus years.

BU also has created “a strong international development strategy and enhanced alumni relations,” the president wrote. BU's William Fairfield Warren Society, founded to honor those whose lifetime giving to the University is above \$1 million, today stands at more than 260 members—“a sevenfold increase since 2010,” Gilliam wrote.

“For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, [Development & Alumni Relations] achieved a record-breaking 30 percent increase in philanthropic cash revenue designated for key initiatives including financial aid and endowed scholarships, professorships, and faculty research,” Gilliam wrote.

Engelbourg joined BU as director of development for the Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine. As the University's vice president for development, she had a key hand in its first comprehensive campaign. She helped the campaign surpass its initial \$1 billion target and ultimately raised more than \$1.85 billion.



KAREN ENGELBOURG



COLLEGE STUDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH IMPROVING

FOR THE second year in a row, the Healthy Minds Study of 100,000-plus US college students, which Boston University coleads, shows an improvement in their mental health—and a decrease in symptoms of depression, anxiety, and thoughts of suicide—compared to previous years. What's more, an increased number of young people are seeking out mental health care and support.

Healthy Minds principal investigator Sarah K. Lipson, a School of Public Health associate professor of health law, policy, and management, says that while it is promising to see two consecutive years of improved mental health outcomes—this year, 38 percent of undergraduates experienced moderate or severe depression symptoms, down from the peak of 44 percent in 2022—“we will need a few more years of data showing changes in the intended direction before we feel confident pointing to a definitive trend.”

The study was administered online during the 2023–2024 academic year through the Healthy Minds Network, an annual national project Lipson coleads with researchers at the University of California, Los Angeles, the University of Michigan, and Wayne State University. Students from 196 universities responded in 2023–2024.

When asked which factors might be contributing to the improvements in students' mental health, Lipson starts with the fact that there is more stability and opportunities to socially connect compared to life during the pandemic, when classes and club meetings happened via Zoom. Moreover, she believes colleges and universities have done an excellent job prioritizing student mental health in the last five years.

Kara Cattani, director of behavioral medicine at BU's Student Health Services, says that the University is seeing trends similar to the Healthy Minds Study: the number of students seeking services and the number of treatment sessions offered climbed until the pandemic, then held steady, increased in the 2021–2022 school year, and finally decreased slightly (4 percent) this past academic year. She says it's important to keep this recent decrease in perspective and note that the current demand for services represents a 60 percent increase from what her office saw a decade ago. —Amy Laskowski

DAVE GREEN (BOTTOM), MARINA ZLOCHIN/ADOBE STOCK



Cynthia Cohen (left), vice chair of the BU Board of Trustees, with Siobhan Dullea, executive director of Innovate@BU, which works to equip students to become innovators.

NEW GIFT SUPPORTS INNOVATE@BU STUDENT INNOVATION CONFERENCE

► Alum and entrepreneur Cynthia Cohen says the conference is an “accelerant” for collaborative thinking | BY JULIA SERAZIO

“**MORE THAN** anything else, I think you need to make an impact in the world.”

Cynthia Cohen is so serious about impact, she named her strategic consulting firm IMPACT 2040—with an eye on the future, and on young founders in particular. An entrepreneur, a Metropolitan College alum, and vice chair of BU's Board of Trustees, Cohen was one of the earliest supporters of Innovate@BU, drawn to its mission to equip as many BU students as possible to become innovators by providing mentorship, teamwork, skills building, and access to funding.

When Innovate@BU launched in 2018, Cohen made a significant gift to support the program's Innovation Pathway, which guides students through the phases of launching and growing a new venture. Now, she has made a \$1 million gift to sponsor Innovate@BU's signature IDEA Con for five years, allowing its executive director, Siobhan Dullea, and the Innovate@BU team to expand and enhance the annual event, which is already the largest university-run multicollge innovation conference in the nation, drawing hundreds of students each year.

“I know the power and the alchemy of bringing people together to share ideas and learn,” says Cohen. “The conference is one packed day of great sessions. Because of all the exposure that these young people get, it's an accelerant for their innovative and collaborative thinking, so they can innovate in everything they do, whether in the start-up,

corporate, or not-for-profit world.”

The first IDEA Con funded by Cohen took place in October and welcomed students from BU and universities in the Northeast, including MIT, Babson, and the University of New Hampshire. Attendees heard keynotes from young founders, participated in networking workshops—including Networking for Introverts—and practiced business pitches.

Cohen, who has also endowed a scholarship at BU's Questrom School of Business, says there was another factor in her decision to support IDEA Con: “I was thinking about how my name can show the next generation of young innovators that the start-up and

innovation world is not just for one demographic profile. It may look imbalanced today, but there are people like me, of my generation, who are changing it. I want them to see that it's not just the usual suspects funding and naming these things.”

Dullea (CAS'91) says Cohen's support for Innovate@BU goes well beyond the financial.

“She also gives with her time and talent, and regularly holds face-to-face mentoring meetings that are always booked or over-booked,” Dullea says. “For Cynthia to make this new gift really shows what kind of leader she is. She said she wanted to make a big difference for as many young people as possible, even students at other universities—putting BU at the center, of course, but also acknowledging that innovation happens when you get rid of boundaries. I thought that was inspiring.”

Cohen's new gift was the first of \$1 million or more to be made since President Melissa L. Gilliam took office in July—something Cohen, who spoke on behalf of the Board of Trustees at Gilliam's inauguration, intended. “There's a symbolism in saying right away, ‘I support you and the new path we're on,’” she says. “Sometimes I think you have to lead by example.”

>>

COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATION

PODCAST LOOKS AT A FORGOTTEN CHAPTER OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS STRUGGLE

EVERYONE KNOWS about Selma and Birmingham, but what about St. Augustine? In the early 1960s, the racial climate in that Florida city was as bad as any of those more famous civil rights battlegrounds. Amy Geller (COM'16), a COM assistant professor of film and television, has created a seven-part podcast to surface the story of the activist rabbis who joined Martin Luther King, Jr. (GRS'55, Hon.'59) in the summer of 1964 to march for desegregation of St. Augustine.

The Rabbis Go South is produced, written, and hosted by Geller and her husband, Gerald Peary, award-winning filmmakers who codirected *The Rabbi Goes West* (2019).

The rabbis, Geller says, marched “hand-in-hand with African American activists down the streets of St. Augustine.” Some historians believe that their actions, publicized by the press and one Miami TV station, had an impact on the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, she says.

“But it’s important—this is not a white savior story,” Geller says. “The rabbis were very much soldiers in a movement that was led and run by Martin Luther King, Jr., the local African American leadership, and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. They performed a really important duty. They were incredibly courageous to go there and put their bodies on the line, but they were not the real heroes, although they’re appreciated and valued by the St. Augustine community to this day.” —Joel Brown



AMY GELLER (COM'16)



ANTHONY ABRAHAM JACK

BU WHEELOCK COLLEGE OF EDUCATION & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

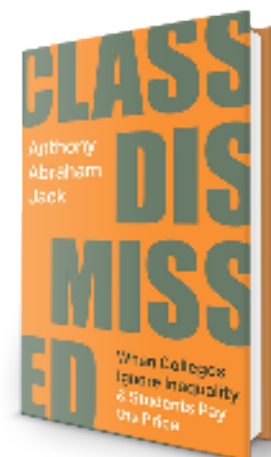
A NEW BOOK EXPLORES CAMPUS INEQUALITIES

AS AN AMHERST COLLEGE freshman in the early 2000s, Anthony Abraham Jack had to deal with a problem that never blips on an affluent student’s radar: the closing of the dining hall during spring break. Coming from a low-income Miami family, Jack couldn’t afford the plane fare home and was staying on campus. How would he eat? He lucked out, getting a job at the college’s gym to earn money for his meals—and for his mother, who asked him for whatever he could spare to help pay bills back home.

“While Amherst had opened its doors to welcome poor students like me, they forgot to keep the doors open for those of us who couldn’t afford to leave,” Jack writes in his new book, *Class Dismissed: When Colleges Ignore Inequality & Students Pay the Price* (Princeton University Press, 2024). As part of his research for the book, Jack, a BU Wheelock associate professor of higher education leadership and faculty director of BU’s Newbury Center, which supports first-generation college students, interviewed 125 Harvard University undergraduates, “from families across the economic spectrum,” to reveal the daunting problems—aggravated by COVID-19 campus closures—that still confront disadvantaged students.

While commendably diversifying admissions beyond traditionally wealthy, white students, Jack writes, academia too often fails to help disadvantaged students—for whom college often seems as culturally alien as Mars—succeed in school and after graduation: “It is not just about financial aid. Colleges remain woefully unprepared to support the students who make it in.” —Rich Barlow

“It is not just about financial aid. Colleges remain woefully unprepared to support the students who make it in.”



CHRIS D'AMORE (TOP), KATHERINE TAYLOR (INSET)



Lydia Evans (COM'25) (left) and Lynn Asare-Bediako (COM'25) founded BlackBox, a society for Black filmmakers, in 2023.

COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATION

BLACK STUDENT FILM FESTIVAL HEADS TO THE BIG SCREEN

WHEN THE LIGHTS dimmed at the Coolidge Corner Theatre on September 23, it marked a signature achievement for two COM seniors. Lynn Asare-Bediako and Lydia Evans founded BlackBox, a Black film society, to create a space for Black filmmakers to share ideas, develop their skills, and network. That night they hosted the second BlackBox Film Festival, featuring short works from Black student filmmakers from across New England.

Asare-Bediako (COM'25) and Evans

(COM'25) were inspired to create BlackBox by their own experiences in a field that’s predominantly white and male. “I wanted to make a club where, at the forefront, there were Black voices and Black stories—both in front of and behind the camera,” Asare-Bediako says.

“It was necessary,” Evans says. “Most of the [projects] that I’ve been on, there weren’t many Black people. It can feel a bit isolating.”

In spring 2023, the two filmmakers found a faculty advisor—Tunji Akinsehina, a COM associate professor of

the practice of production in film and TV and cinematography. They recruited an executive board and began planning events. BlackBox has hosted film screenings, workshops for Black film and television students, and—for the broader community—master classes in lighting Black skin tones and a casting session with actors of color. The film festival, however, is the club’s marquee event. Asare-Bediako says they received about 30 entries this year, a third of them from BU students. —Marc Chalufour



Drummer Gareth Dylan Smith playing with his band at Bar Freda in New York City.

COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS

CFA PROF RELEASES FIRST SOLO ALBUM

IT DOESN'T SOUND like Buddy Rich or a certain Beatle’s All-Starr Band. But somewhat to his own surprise, drummer Gareth Dylan Smith released his first solo album, *Permission Granted*, in June. “I didn’t know what a solo album would look like,” says Smith, a CFA assistant professor of music education. “I don’t play piano or guitar sufficiently well, so I don’t write songs in the way that people write songs.”

But during COVID, when musicians everywhere were shut up at home with their instruments and maybe a digital recorder, things happened. “A big thing, actually, was recording my drums for the first time,” says Smith, who has played in plenty of bands—lately the new-wave outfit Black Light Bastards and the Blondie cover band Dirty Blond, both based in New York City—and on plenty of albums.

Permission Granted is a wildly eclectic series of duets, the majority improvisations, some started by Smith, some by another musician, some by happenstance. When a friend left him a voicemail, Smith “liked the cadence of her voice,” so he played along, and the short number that resulted made the album. At the other end of the spectrum, there’s a performance of Adagio Cantabile from Ludwig van Beethoven’s Piano Sonata No. 8 in C Minor, Op. 13 (“Sonata Pathétique”) with his collaborator, Austina Lee (CFA'23), on piano.

On the album, Smith often plays with brushes, which he says is freeing. Besides his drum set, *Permission Granted* features spoken word, piano, tabla, rap, saxophone, conch, poetry, song, leaves, violin, electronics, bodhrán, and pandeiro. “I approached each collaboration on its own terms,” he says. “I said to people, ‘Hi, I want to do a duet with you. What does that look like?’” —Joel Brown

SARGENT COLLEGE OF HEALTH & REHABILITATION SCIENCES

TERRIER FUELING STATION POWERS BU ATHLETES

IN ONE WEEK, the Terrier Fueling Station serves more than 500 protein-packed smoothies to hungry student-athletes. “And that’s just our most popular item,” says Sarah Gilbert, the station’s director and a dietitian specializing in sports nutrition for BU student-athletes.

Gilbert (Sargent'18) says the station also goes through, on average, 10 pounds of granola and 40 boxes of Honey Stinger Energy Waffles, another favorite.

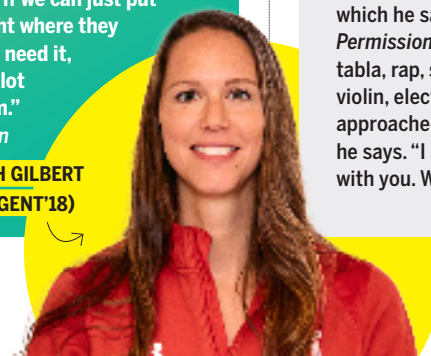
The station, at BU’s Strength & Conditioning Center, was established in 2018. A collaboration between Sargent and BU Athletics, the Terrier Fueling Station offers free pre- and post-workout snacks to the more than 600 athletes who drop by a few times a week to lift weights.

In 2020, it also spawned an outpost at Agganis Arena for the men’s and women’s ice hockey teams.

Pre-workout offerings include bananas, apple sauce, pretzels, the energy waffles, and fruit snacks. After their practice or workout, athletes can enjoy foods like smoothies, Greek yogurt with granola, cheese sticks, and Clif bars.

Gilbert says athletes appreciate the convenience. “Our athletes have high needs and busy schedules,” she says, “and if we can just put something right where they are, when they need it, it makes life a lot easier for them.” —Mara Sassoon

SARAH GILBERT (SARGENT'18)



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: ARIANA MERLINE, ALAN RAND, CIARA CROCKER



Former US Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers (left) was interviewed by Harvard Business Review's Curt Nickisch (Questrom'13), capping inaugural events for the Questrom School of Business Mehrotra Institute.

Lawrence Summers, Former US Treasury Secretary, Helps Launch Questrom Institute

► Ravi K. Mehrotra Institute for Business, Markets & Society will study the role of business in “lasting prosperity” and “solving global challenges” | BY RICH BARLOW

A NEW BU INSTITUTE—devoted to promoting an understanding of the roles that business and markets play in creating lasting prosperity and solving global challenges—is essential today, former US Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers said at the institute's formal launch in September.

The Questrom School of Business Ravi K. Mehrotra Institute for Business, Markets & Society also strums a familial chord for Summers, whose mother pioneered the academic study of business and society interactions, he told an interviewer at BU's Center for Computing & Data Sciences. “My mother, who died at the age of 98 just a year ago, was a Wharton

[School] professor,” Summers, a former president of Harvard, told *Harvard Business Review* senior editor Curt Nickisch (Questrom'13). “The thing she was most proud of was inaugurating business and public policy courses in the early '80s,” in the belief that businesses needed to understand sentiments in the broader society. The goal of the Mehrotra Institute, Summers said, is “actually very personal for me.”

The Summers interview capped a daylong celebration that included a public conversation between Ravi Mehrotra, founder and executive chairman of the Foresight Group, and Susan Fournier, Questrom's Allen Questrom Professor and Dean; a

ceremony dedicating the institute, led by BU President Melissa L. Gilliam; a lunch hosted by Marcel Rindisbacher, Mehrotra Institute director and Questrom's inaugural Ravi K. Mehrotra Professor of Business, Finance; and a panel discussion among businesspeople, academics, and policymakers about corporate obligations to people beyond their shareholders.

Mehrotra endowed his namesake institute, which raised more than \$50 million from him and other donors. Its mission statement is to “help others understand and appreciate the role business and markets do, can, and should play in creating lasting prosperity, advancing societal goals, and solving global challenges.” The institute will have about a dozen affiliated faculty, who will conduct research, participate in public discussions (including a global crowdsourcing platform), and redesign some courses.

Fournier said that the institute aspires to lead in studying the role of business in a global economy.

“If business schools are to deliver on their missions, we need to confront the realities of public perception of business and the competitive markets in which they operate, especially among young adults,” she said. “This negativity—the simplified and overarching assumption that business leaders are inherently bad actors in competitive markets that always fail—manifests in suboptimal policies and regulations, ignores the complexities and trade-offs required in the complex web of stakeholder relations in which businesses operate, and cancels business as a value-creating partner in the ecosystem that attempts to resolve societal grand challenges.” ■

DAN WATKINS



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How can we improve MRI technology to enable clear imaging that's also affordable, accessible, and tolerable for patients? This is a practical problem I've been interested in."

XIN ZHANG,

an ENG Distinguished Professor of Engineering, and her team have developed an "intelligent metamaterial."



MAKING MRI MORE GLOBALLY ACCESSIBLE

► Studies demonstrate how precisely engineered, low-cost structures can be used to boost the power and speed of medical imaging | BY KAT J. MCALPINE, PHOTOS BY JACKIE RICCIARDI

BY ALLOWING clinicians to look noninvasively inside the human body, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) has become a medical mainstay. But not everyone has benefited equally: the most powerful modern MRI tech is typically bulky, rigid, and expensive, limiting its use and impact in low-resource and remote areas.

BU engineer Xin Zhang is leading a team that's working to democratize access to MRI, developing devices that can make scans faster, cheaper, and more accurate. To do it, they've turned to metamaterials—precisely engineered structures that use ordinary building blocks, such as copper, fabric, and plastic, to manipulate electromagnetic waves and radio frequencies.

Their work has led to a string of breakthrough devices that can sharpen and speed up MRI imaging of knees, ankles, spines, and other parts of the body. Each new metamaterials tool and method—from resonators that manipulate magnetic fields to wearable, jewelry-like bracelets that cut background noise—is capable of dramatically boosting the power of

MRI. The researchers have reported their findings in a series of recent journal articles.

"How can we improve MRI technology to enable clear imaging that's also affordable, accessible, and tolerable for patients?" says Zhang, a College of Engineering Distinguished Professor of Engineering. "This is a practical problem I've been interested in for a long time."

Zhang, who has studied the use of metamaterials in a range of fields, began focusing on their potential to improve medical imaging in 2016. Within a few years, she and her team had developed what she calls an "intelligent metamaterial" to speed up scans,



as well as a tunable helmet to channel an MRI machine's magnetic field to deliver clearer images of the brain and drastically cut scanning time.

In one of the latest papers, published in *Advanced Science*, they build on that work with computationally designed, wearable metamaterials that can be fitted to any part of the body. In the article, the researchers show examples of how the metamaterials could be used to improve scans of the ankle. Because they "readily conform to a patient's knee, ankle, head, or any part of the body in need of imaging...while ensuring an optimal resonance frequency," the researchers write, the new tech could facilitate "the widespread adoption of metamaterials in clinical MRI applications."

In their earlier work, the team was able to manually design the helmet to fit over the human head. But in the latest study, says Ke Wu (ENG'23), first author

The BU team's freestanding metamaterials could be used to enhance scans of a range of body areas, including wrists.



One of the ultracompact, lightweight coils engineered by BU researchers to wirelessly and passively enhance MRI imaging.

of the paper and a postdoctoral fellow in Zhang’s lab, “we recognized that free-form deployable metamaterials fitted to other parts of the body would require computational aid.”

Wu developed algorithms and programs capable of analyzing a 3D scan of a part of the body and, within less than a second, calculating the geometry and arrangement of helical resonators—structures made of plastic and thin copper coils—that can manipulate the magnetic field of MRI. Critically, these arrays of coils help to improve the signal-to-noise ratio (SNR) of MRI of the target area, reducing the fuzziness of imaging that’s caused when background electromagnetic signals seep into view.

In related work published in an *Advanced Materials* paper, Zhang’s team demonstrated an alternative wearable metamaterial design for MRI that replaces copper and plastic coils with loops made from coaxial cables—the same cables used to bring you the internet. Coaxial cables are designed to transmit and shield high-frequency electrical signals from their surroundings, preventing unintended loss of signal. “This material has inherent advantages because it is lightweight,

flexible, and restricts the electrical field to exactly where you want it,” says Xia Zhu (ENG’26), first author of the paper.

Zhu created fabric-based wearable metamaterials—each using only about \$50 of supplies—designed to bring loops of coaxial cables as close as possible to the part of the body undergoing a scan. In the paper, the team illustrates a potential knee scan: a pad of lightweight fabric, covered with a handful of coils, bending to the curve of the patient’s leg as they lie in the MRI machine.

Pushing even further, the team sought to develop an entirely wireless, formfitting wearable metamaterial that could boost SNR and passively tune and amplify the MRI signal.

In a paper published in *Science Advances*, Zhang’s team demonstrated that the coaxial cables can be arranged into freestanding cuffs without additional support materials—no fabric needed. They prototyped rings and cuffs sized to enhance MRI scans of the spine, the wrist, and a single finger—and in every experiment proved their seemingly simple design could amplify SNR and enable crisp MRI.

Zhang says this thin, lightweight, and flexible metamaterial, embedded in textile, ensures a comfortable and unrestricted MRI experience. By manipulating the magnetic field of MRI, the tech can improve the quality of scans.



A STARTLING DISCOVERY IN THE DEEP SEA

► Rocks are generating oxygen in the dark, raising questions about extraterrestrial life

BY JESSICA COLAROSSO

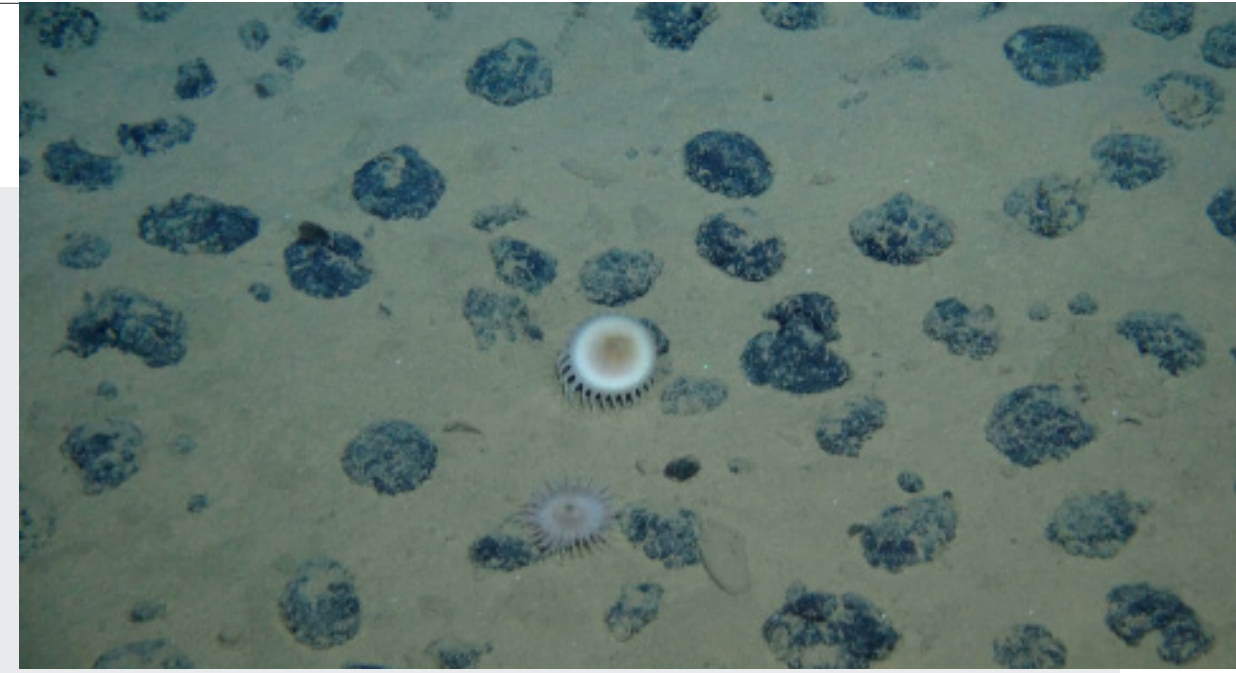
MORE THAN 12,000 feet below the surface of the Pacific Ocean, in a region known as the Clarion-Clipperton Zone, million-year-old rocks cover the seafloor. These rocks, known as polymetallic nodules, seem lifeless. But nestled among the nooks and crannies on their surfaces are tiny sea creatures and microbes, many uniquely adapted to life in the dark. A team of scientists that includes BU experts has discovered these deep-sea rocks are also producing oxygen.

The discovery is a surprise, considering oxygen is typically created by plants and organisms with help from the sun. About half of all the oxygen we breathe is made near the surface of the ocean by phytoplankton that photosynthesize just like land-dwelling plants. Since the sun is needed to carry out photosynthesis, finding oxygen production at the bottom of the sea—where there is no light—flips conventional wisdom on its head. The discovery was so unexpected that scientists involved in the study first thought it was a mistake.

“This was really weird, because no one had ever seen it before,” says Jeffrey Marlow, a College of Arts & Sciences assistant professor of biology.

As an expert in microbes that live in the most extreme habitats

Polymetallic nodules, also called manganese nodules, on the floor of the Pacific Ocean. Surprising new research suggests deep-sea rocks are capable of producing oxygen without help from plants or the sun.



on Earth—such as hardened lava and deep-sea hydrothermal vents—Marlow initially suspected that microbial activity could be responsible for making oxygen. The research team used deep-sea chambers that land on the seafloor and enclose the seawater, sediment, polymetallic nodules, and living organisms. They then measured how oxygen levels changed in the chambers over 48 hours. If there are plentiful organisms breathing oxygen, then the levels would normally decline, depending on how much animal activity is present in the chamber. But in this case, oxygen was increasing.

“We did a lot of troubleshooting and found that the oxygen levels increased many more times following that initial measurement,” Marlow says. “So we’re now convinced it’s a real signal.”

Marlow and his colleagues were aboard a research vessel tasked with learning more about the ecology of the Clarion-Clipperton Zone (CCZ)—which spans 1.7 million square miles between Hawaii and Mexico—for an environmental survey sponsored by

The Metals Company, a deep-sea mining firm interested in extracting the rocks en masse for metals. Marlow and the team, led by Andrew Sweetman at the Scottish Association for Marine Science, concluded the phenomenon isn’t primarily caused by microbial activity, despite the abundance of many different types of microbes both on and inside the rocks.

Polymetallic nodules are made of rare metals, including copper, nickel, cobalt, iron, and manganese, which is why companies are interested in mining them. It turns out, according to the study, that those densely packed metals are likely triggering “seawater electrolysis.” This means that metal ions in the rock layers are distributed unevenly, creating a separation of electrical charges—just like what happens inside of a battery. This phenomenon creates enough energy to split water molecules

into oxygen and hydrogen. They named this “dark oxygen,” since it’s oxygen made with no sunlight. What remains unclear is exactly how this happens, if oxygen levels vary across the CCZ, and if the oxygen plays a significant role in sustaining the local ecosystem.

The CCZ is also the perfect environment to study the planet’s smallest organisms, such as bacteria and archaea (single-celled organisms) found in sediments and on the nodules. Marlow and his coauthor, Peter Schroedl (GRS’25), a PhD student in BU’s ecology, behavior, and evolution program, are focused on using microbes found in extreme environments like the CCZ as templates for finding single-celled life on other planets and moons—since deserts, volcanoes, and seafloor vents are the most similar places we have to Mars and Saturn’s many moons.

Saturn’s moon, Europa, for example, is covered with layers of ice with no sunlight reaching the water trapped underneath. “If these types of rocks are under the ice making oxygen, that could allow a more productive biosphere to exist,” Marlow says. “If photosynthesis isn’t required to make oxygen, then other planets with oceans and metal-rich rocks like these nodules could sustain a more evolved biosphere than we’ve thought possible.”

BU researcher **JEFFREY MARLOW** says the new oxygen findings could shift conventional thinking about life and habitats in the deep ocean.



PHOTO VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS/GEOMAR BILDDATENBANK/ROV KIEL 6000, GEOMAR (TOP); CYDNEY SCOTT



NEW AI PROGRAM COULD PREDICT LIKELIHOOD OF ALZHEIMER'S

► A machine learning model designed by BU researchers analyzes speech patterns | BY ANDREW THURSTON

TRYING TO FIGURE OUT whether someone has Alzheimer's disease usually involves a battery of assessments—interviews, brain imaging, blood and cerebrospinal fluid tests. But by then, it's probably too late: memories have started slipping away, long-established personality traits have begun subtly shifting. If caught early, new pioneering treatments can slow the disease's remorseless progression, but there's no surefire way to predict who will develop the dementia associated with Alzheimer's.

Now, BU researchers say they have designed a promising new artificial intelligence (AI) computer program, or model, that could one day help change that—just by analyzing a patient's speech.

Their model can predict, with an accuracy rate of 78.5 percent, whether someone with mild cognitive impairment is likely to remain stable over the next six years or fall into Alzheimer's-associated dementia. In addition to

allowing clinicians to peer into the future and make earlier diagnoses, the work, the researchers say, could also help make cognitive impairment screening more accessible by automating parts of the process—no expensive lab tests, imaging exams, or office visits required. The model is powered by machine learning, a subset of AI where computer scientists teach a program to independently analyze data.

"We wanted to predict what would happen in the next six years, and we found we can reasonably make that prediction with relatively good confidence and accuracy," says Ioannis (Yannis) Paschalidis, director of BU's Rafik B.



IOANNIS (YANNIS) PASCHALIDIS

Hariri Institute for Computing and Computational Science & Engineering. "It shows the power of AI."

The multidisciplinary team of engineers, neurobiologists, and computer and data scientists published their findings in *Alzheimer's & Dementia*, the journal of the Alzheimer's Association.

"We hope, as everyone does, that there will be more and more Alzheimer's treatments made available," says Paschalidis, a College of Engineering Distinguished Professor of Engineering and founding member of the Faculty of Computing & Data Sciences. "If you can predict what will happen, you have more of an opportunity and time window to intervene with drugs, and at least try to maintain the stability of the condition and prevent the transition to more severe forms of dementia."

To train and build their new model, the researchers turned to data from one of the nation's longest-running studies—the BU-led Framingham Heart Study. Although the Framingham study is focused on cardiovascular health, participants showing signs of cognitive decline undergo regular neuropsychological tests and interviews, producing a wealth of

longitudinal information on their cognitive well-being.

Paschalidis and his colleagues were given audio recordings of 166 initial interviews with people, between ages 63 and 97, diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment—76 who would remain stable for the next six years and 90 whose cognitive function would progressively decline. They then used a combination of speech recognition tools—similar to the programs powering your smart speaker—and machine learning to train a model to spot connections between speech, demographics, diagnosis, and disease progression. After training it on a subset of the study population, they tested its predictive prowess on the rest of the participants.

"We combine the information we extract from the audio recordings with some very basic demographics—age, gender, and so on—and we get the final score," says Paschalidis. "You can think of the score as the likelihood, the probability, that someone will remain stable or transition to dementia. It had significant predictive ability."

Rather than using acoustic features of speech, like enunciation or speed, the model is pulling from the content of the interview—the words spoken, how they're structured. And Paschalidis says the information they put into the machine learning program is rough around the edges: the recordings, for example, are low-quality and filled with background noise. "It's a very casual recording," he says. "And still, with this dirty data, the model is able to make something out of it."

That's important, because the project was partly about testing AI's ability to make the process of dementia diagnosis more efficient and automated, with little human involvement. In the future, the researchers say, models like theirs could be used to bring care to patients who aren't near medical centers or to provide routine at-home monitoring through interaction with an app, drastically increasing the number of people who get screened.

IRFAN KHAN ALVI/ISTOCK.COM (TOP), CYDNEY SCOTT

BUCKWINE/ALAMY



Why do some beetles grow longer horns than others? The answer may help show how environment shapes an organism's growth.

WHY A DUNG BEETLE'S DIET MATTERS

► Biologist Sofia Casasa studies the insects to learn which is more responsible for their appearance: their genes or their environment | BY ANDREW THURSTON

SCIENTISTS KNOW it as *Onthophagus*—a type of horned scarab beetle found in just about every part of the world. It's also known as a dung beetle, because of what it eats: poop. Whatever else dung beetles are good for—they are super strong, unparalleled navigators, and important plant seed spreaders—they just can't shake the rep they get for their dietary choices.

In her BU lab, biologist Sofia Casasa has trays full of *Onthophagus* and fridges stocked with their favorite food—cow dung. An expert in evolutionary developmental biology, Casasa is studying the insects for clues to how organisms develop and grow. Her goal is to understand how much of an organism's appearance—its size, shape, and structure—is dictated by its genes, and how much by its environment, particularly what it eats.

With the dung beetles, she's starting with one question: Why do some beetles grow longer horns than others?

"Knowing how body parts are made, how they grow, why some grow more than others is something we're all interested in," says Casasa, a College of Arts & Sciences assistant professor of biology. "And this happens in all organisms, whether that's humans or a dog or a fly. Just understanding how the environment is affecting our development—I think that's really important."

In one project, she mixed up the diet for three closely related species of dung beetle to see how it impacted their horn growth. One batch of larvae from each species was fed with nutritious dung—collected during summer, when the cows have been chewing on lush green grass. The other batch got the winter dung—hay-filled and relatively nutrient-poor.

More nutrients gave the beetles a noticeable growth boost. But in one species, large body size also meant extravagant horn growth. In the study, the grass-fed bull-headed dung beetle grew long, lavish horns; its hay-fed peer grew little

stumpy ones. Another species had a more moderate difference in horn size based on diet; the third didn't grow any horns at all, no matter what it ate.

To figure out why the species reacted differently to the two diets, Casasa is exploring the beetles' genomes. Using a technique called RNA interference, she can effectively turn genes off, or downregulate them. She and her team can then repeat their nutrition experiments to see what happens.

"If we see, for example, a beetle that normally would have horns suddenly has no horns, then we know this gene was probably very important in building horns," she says.

One future area she'd like to investigate is how longer horns seem to shape the beetles' behavior. **B**

Watch a video of biologist Sofia Casasa at work—and see just how big those beetle horns can get—at bu.edu/bostonia.



Hong Chau (COM'01) attends the premiere of the buddy comedy *The Instigators* this past July at Lincoln Center in New York.

OSCAR-NOMINATED HONG CHAU TAKES A SHARP TURN TO COMEDY

► Alum appears with Matt Damon and Casey Affleck in *The Instigators* and has just wrapped *Three Bags Full: A Sheep Detective Movie* | BY AMY LASKOWSKI

ACTOR HONG CHAU lived in Boston as a BU undergrad, so she grasps how surreal it is to film a car chase through the Back Bay's narrow streets and on the pedestrian-only area of the Esplanade. It's a highlight of her role in the buddy comedy *The Instigators*, which opened in theaters in August and is now streaming on Apple TV+. Chau plays a therapist who, against her better judgment, joins a patient on the lam after his heist goes wrong. Imagine a cross between a poor man's *Ocean's 11* and the Boston-centric films *The Departed* and *The Town*.

Chau says the city opened its arms to the movie, thanks to costars Matt Damon and Casey Affleck (Affleck also cowrote the movie). "We were given such access because Matt and Casey are so beloved in the city," says Chau (COM'01). "It felt like going to another country, but being invited by royalty."

Damon—who'd worked with Chau on the 2017 movie *Downsizing*—suggested her for the role of Donna Rivera, a sharp-witted, no-nonsense VA therapist who counsels his character, Rory, a desperate divorced father trying to raise money quickly for child support and alimony. He teams up with ex-con Cobby (Affleck) and the two botch their mission: robbing the corrupt mayor of Boston, who has piles of illicit cash squirreled away. Rivera convinces them to take her along as their hostage so she can continue counseling Rory as they scramble to evade the police and the mob, both in hot pursuit.

Damon says Chau's role is complicated. "You have to believe that she's a psychiatrist and good at her job," he says in the film's publicity materials. "You also have to believe that she would get in a car with two fugitives for a high-speed chase."

Nominated for a best supporting actress Oscar for her dramatic turn in the 2022 film

>>

The Whale, Chau has since followed up with a string of hits that show that she has comedy chops too. She was recently in England, where she wrapped filming of the comedy *Three Bags Full: A Sheep Detective Movie*, costarring Hugh Jackman and Emma Thompson.

FINDING HER WAY

Chau was born in a Thailand refugee camp to Vietnamese parents. Her mother was pregnant with her when the family escaped Vietnam by boat in the darkness; her father was shot at and bloodied. She was still young when her family left the camp and moved to New Orleans, where her parents ran a convenience store. She attended BU with the help of Pell Grants.

At the College of Communication, Chau enrolled in improv classes to overcome her shyness. Her improv teacher encouraged her to audition for screen roles, and she took the advice. She kicked off her acting career with minor roles in TV shows like *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* and *How I Met Your Mother*. She appeared in the HBO series *Treme* and landed her first major film role in *Inherent Vice*. In 2017, she starred opposite Damon in Alexander Payne's *Downsizing*, about people who choose to be shrunk to avoid the high cost of living and to save the planet. She played a Vietnamese amputee and political activist, a breakout role that earned her Golden Globe and Screen Actors Guild (SAG) best supporting actress nominations.

An Academy Award nomination is the hugest compliment you can get from your peers and artists who are the best at what they do.... It took a while for it to sink in."

HONG CHAU

In *The Instigators*, Chau (from left), Casey Affleck, and Matt Damon go on a wild ride through Boston's narrow streets, weaving through gunfire and explosions as they try to evade police and the mob.



Major projects followed: HBO's *Big Little Lies* and *Watchmen*, the Netflix limited series *The Night Agent*, and the dark comedy *The Menu*, in which she plays a menacing maître d' opposite Ralph Fiennes.

Then Chau's agent sent her the script for *The Whale*. At first, she passed—she had an eight-week-old baby and COVID was raging. But she changed her mind and won the part of Liz, the sympathetic and at times enabling friend of Charlie (Brendan Fraser), a morbidly obese professor who hopes to reunite with his estranged daughter. For her supporting role, Chau was nominated for an Oscar and for BAFTA and SAG awards.

Chau says her friends and family were thrilled by this recognition. "The fact that it meant so much to them made it more meaningful for me, because I'm a little bashful and I can't take a compliment," she says. "An Academy Award nomination is the hugest compliment you can get from your peers and artists who are the best at what they do. And that was kind of hard to take in initially. It took a while for it to sink in."

"NOT YOUR TYPICAL ACTION HEROINE"

The Instigators is the second film produced by Damon and Ben Affleck's recently formed company, Artists Equity. Scenes were filmed in Fenway Park, the North End, and at Boston City Hall, with dozens of fire trucks and police vehicles and hundreds of extras and stunt performers.

"I'm not your typical action heroine," Chau says. "I never pictured myself wanting to do an action movie. I guess I had the misconception that they were kind of boring to shoot because the actors were just sitting there and having to [wait for] a big action sequence, [without] a lot of acting involved."

But director Doug Liman was more interested in the characters than the action, she says, and his attitude trickled down to the rest of the production crew. She worked with Liman and the writers to flesh out her character, imagining who Rivera was outside of work. "We should see glimpses and clues as to who she is, [which] helps the audience believe why she makes the choices that she does," Chau says.

Affleck says in the film's production notes that Chau became the anchor when she joined the mix: "She has a great sense of humor: dry, really subtle and very realistic. She was the perfect foil for the two chuckleheads opposite her."



JOHN SNYDER (CAS'14, ENG'20), with the guitar pedals he and his company make (at left). Most are about the size of a paperback book.

A CLEAR CASE OF DISTORTION

▶ Alum John Snyder creates custom pedals that rock guitarists use to add fuzz, delay, and other effects to their sound | BY JOEL BROWN

PLAYING GUITAR gave John Snyder a respite from long hours babysitting experiments in a clean room in the basement of BU's Photonics Center as he worked toward his doctorate in electrical engineering. A gearhead since high school, Snyder (CAS'14, ENG'20) melded his two interests, designing an effects pedal to use with the band he was playing in. It worked well, so he made a few more and sold them.

"Those early adopters were very excited about what I was doing," he says, "and suddenly 15 turned into 30, that 30 turned into 50, that 50 turned into 100." He designed other pedals, often collaborating with musicians to deliver the specific effects of distortion, fuzz, and echo. At a few hundred dollars apiece, the side hustle became his full-time job. Snyder is founder of Electronic Audio Experiments, a niche pedal maker with a handful of employees, including a partner who worked for legendary synthesizer innovator Moog,

Inc. They're headquartered in a light industrial space in Waltham, Mass.

"Not at all what I thought I was going to be doing," says Snyder, who plays in the noise-rock band *Weird Machine*, among others. "Before, I was doing this in my spare bedroom, and eventually I realized there's no way I could run a legitimate business with that quantity of dog hair in my packing tape."

Call them guitar pedals, effects pedals, or stomp boxes. Plug your electric guitar into one of those rigs—most of them about the size of a paperback book—and you can wildly change the sound of your music simply by turning a knob or tapping a pedal with your foot.

Most rock guitarists use one, two, or more pedals to add fuzz, delay, and distortion to their six-string sound. Snyder pulls out his "demo board," a sampler of his pedals all set up for an easy demonstration. They have names like the Longsword and the Model feT, the Limelight, the Bard, and the

Prismatic Wall. Plugging in a guitar, he takes each pedal for a spin, producing a wild array of effects as he picks and strums.

"This one sounds like broken glass," he says. "This one makes crazy playing come out of you, which is always fun.... I'm really excited for someone to use this one in a horror movie."

Some of the sounds are astonishing; with others, you'd need a musician's ear to hear the difference between them. "A lot of these pedals are just here to make your guitar sound more overdriven in a particular way, and that is something that people address with just a staggering amount of nuance," he says. "People are so particular about it."

"Coming at it as a student of electronics, there are so many different ways to do something that should, on paper, be the same process every time. But in reality, those nuances are, at least to me, just as interesting from an electronics theory standpoint as they are in the hands of a guitarist with a trained ear."

+ Watch a video about John Snyder's guitar pedal designs at bu.edu/bostonia.

COURTESY OF APPLE TV+

CYDNEY SCOTT

THE MANY FACETS OF ASIAN AMERICAN CULTURE

► Shin Yu Pai says her award-winning podcast, *Ten Thousand Things*, fills a void in the media | BY JOEL BROWN

IN CHINESE, “ten thousand” is commonly used poetically to convey something myriad or vast or endless.

The *Ten Thousand Things* podcast produced by KUOW, a Seattle NPR station, explores the myriad facets of Asian American culture through quirky and poignant and funny stories reminiscent of the long-running public radio hit *This American Life*. Each episode focuses on an object—not ten thousand of them, yet—anything from a family heirloom to a secondhand novel to a blue suit worn by a congressman on January 6. Maybe it’s better to say it focuses *through* an object, like a lens, on the lives behind them.

“The object idea came to me very early on and was part of how I crafted the pitch,” says Shin Yu Pai (CAS’97), the podcast’s creator and host.

The show is getting noticed, with a 2024 Regional Edward R. Murrow Award and two 2023 Golden Crane Podcast Awards from the Asian American Podcasters Association. An exhibition at Seattle’s Wing Luke Museum will open in March, with objects from the podcast and others contributed by the community, and a companion book is in the works. The third season dropped this summer, and a fourth is in negotiation.

Ten Thousand Things began as Pai’s response to the bigotry directed at Asian Americans after China was identified as the likely origin of the COVID virus. “It was the second year of the pandemic, there had been a significant

rise in hate crimes, and then the Atlanta spa shootings happened,” she says. “I was in a lot of deep grief and I think pain around this moment of racial reckoning for Asian American women. And I really felt that there was a void in the media for positive stories about Asian Americans.”

But she wanted to bring in a wide range of listeners, which seemed challenging in a time before actor Michelle Yeoh won an Oscar for *Everything Everywhere All at Once* and Pixar released *Turning Red*, increasing Asian American visibility in the arts.



SHIN YU PAI (CAS’97) has been a poet and an essayist in Seattle for nearly 20 years; she was the city’s 2023–24 civic poet.

“Everybody owns objects and everybody has personal connections to objects,” Pai says. “There was still, for me, a lot of hesitance about saying boldly, ‘I’m making a podcast about Asian American stories.’ So the way that I designed it is, objects are really relatable, so I’m going to make a series about objects that happen to be owned by Asian Americans.”

Each episode is named for the object. “Bike” is about Kae-Lin Wang, who started Seattle’s Ampersand Bike Club—as a safe space for Asian Americans, including herself—after the 2021 spa shootings in Atlanta, Ga. “A Book Starts a Movement” tells how University of Washington professor Shawn Wong found the first Japanese American novel, 1978’s *No-No Boy*, by John Okada, at a used bookstore, years after being told by teachers that Asian American literature didn’t exist. He republished and distributed it himself, to unearth the legacy of Asian American writers. This episode won a 2023 Golden Crane award.

AUTHENTIC VOICES

Pai responded to an open call for podcast pitches from KUOW. Out of 75 pitches, hers was one of a handful that got sent to pilot and the only one that was selected to continue to production.

It was originally called *The Blue Suit* for the bright blue suit that US Representative Andy Kim of New Jersey was wearing the day of the January 6, 2021, insurrection. Kim was photographed in the Capitol Rotunda picking up garbage after the rioters were cleared from the building, Pai says. “It was a suit he had worn hoping to witness the certification of the vote and the election, and it became a very symbolic object for me.”

Pai is not the only Terrier behind *Ten Thousand Things*; Whitney Henry-Lester (COM’04) produces. “Shin Yu absolutely brings her creativity and writing and sensibility, and we bring the audio-first mentality, and that is when it works best,” Henry-Lester says.

Podcasting, they say, is a space where public media can experiment with new

REVA KELLER



MISHKA YAROVOY (CFA’23) (LEFT), WHO HAS FAMILY IN RUSSIA AND UKRAINE, SAYS THE PLAY WAS “INCREDIBLY RELEVANT.”

approaches that will help it find its way into the future.

“I am not your typical kind of public radio media darling, in that I write really weird stuff,” says Pai, a published poet and essayist in Seattle for nearly 20 years and that city’s 2023–24 civic poet. “They knew the quality of my writing and its power to evoke emotion and the uniqueness of the stories that I tell. They wanted a podcast that was really going to lean into the lyricism and quality of a different kind of storytelling, and that’s what they got.”

“Essentially it’s grounded in authentic human voices,” says Henry-Lester. “It starts with finding a person who can tell their story and then creating the safe space to have a real human conversation. We don’t think of it as a formal interview; we think of it as a conversation. And talking to Shin Yu creates the safe space where they can talk about identity. Maybe they haven’t been asked some of these questions directly before.”

JACKIE RICCIARDI



TWO ALUMS TAKE ON SAME ROLES

MISHKA YAROVOY (CFA’23) (left) played two members of a cultured Jewish family in Europe during the first half of the 20th century in the Huntington Theatre Company’s production of Tom Stoppard’s drama *Leopoldstadt* this fall. His understudy was former College of Fine Arts classmate **JACOB SCHMITT** (CFA’24) (right). The two had never appeared in a play at the same time, but had done scene studies together in their first acting class as School of Theatre freshmen and admired each other’s work. “During my time at BU, I was really hesitant to let anything be big,” says Yarovoy. “Yet I was able to see this very bold work from Jacob that always felt connected to truth.” Schmitt was equally effusive about Yarovoy’s talents. “One of my favorite things about seeing Mishka is how different all his roles are,” he says. “He’s almost unrecognizable in every part, but I also see the essence of him in each.” —*John O’Rourke*





READING LIST

► Alumni books that caught our eye | BY BOSTONIA STAFF

BILLIONAIRE, NERD, SAVIOR, KING: BILL GATES AND HIS QUEST TO SHAPE OUR WORLD
Simon & Schuster, 2024
By Anupreeta Das (COM'07)
A *New York Times* South Asia correspondent takes a close look at the Microsoft founder and billionaire, the truth behind the image, and the real impact of his philanthropy.

THE BRIAR CLUB
William Morrow, 2024
By Kate Quinn (CFA'04;'06)
McCarthy-era secrets and surprises come to light in a down-at-the-heels all-female boardinghouse in Washington, D.C., in Quinn's 1950s-set novel.

CLIMATE ANXIETY AND THE KID QUESTION: DECIDING WHETHER TO HAVE CHILDREN

IN AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE
University of California Press, 2024
By Jade Sasser (SPH'00)
A study of how climate change affects reproductive plans among young people, in light of factors such as race and class.

DEVILS ISLAND
Oceanview Publishing, 2024
By Midge Raymond (COM'95) and John Yunker (COM'95)
Ecotourism, (real) Tasmanian devils, and stormy weather collide in this mystery thriller.

THE DREDGE
Atlantic Monthly Press, 2024
By Brendan Flaherty (GRS'20)
This thriller features two estranged brothers facing the violence of the past when they find out a Connecticut pond

where they played as children will be dredged.

EVERYDAY DELICIOUS: 30 MINUTE(ISH) HOME-COOKED MEALS MADE SIMPLE: A COOKBOOK
Rodale Books, 2024
By Rocco DiSpirito (SHA'90)
After finding himself at home more during the pandemic and in the hybrid world that followed, the James Beard Award-winning author and chef rediscovered the joy of cooking for family and friends.

MERRIMENT
Microcosm Publishing, 2024
By Joseph Steinhardt (COM'06)
A graphic novel written with Marissa Paternoster tells the story of New Jersey 20-something Mack, who is trying to



EXCERPT

BREAKING GLASS: TALES FROM THE WITCH OF WALL STREET
Post Hill Press, 2024
By Patricia Walsh Chadwick (MET'75)

After a childhood in a religious cult, a degree from BU, and a long career in the investment industry, Chadwick looks at how she became “the witch of Wall Street” and what she learned along the way.

“Admittedly, I could be difficult in the never-ending pursuit of the best investment opportunities for my clients and the best execution on the trading desk. The decades-long journey up the corporate ladder until I touched the glass ceiling—and eventually cracked through it—was a steeling process, borne of pitfalls and successes as well as a few fiascos and triumphs.

Grit had been ingrained in my life almost since infancy; over time, it became an integral part of my personality. But wasn't that true of thousands and thousands of other women across hundreds of industries? Did they not also reach success in the corporate world through hard work? I was sure they weren't all called ‘witches.’ So, why me?”



PATRICIA WALSH CHADWICK

CATHERINE WHITE

find a way out of her mother's house—and, oh yeah, thinks she might have committed a murder.

NIGHTWATCHING
Penguin Random House
By Tracy Sierra (LAW'09)
The author helped survivors of domestic abuse through the BU School of Law Civil Litigation Clinic. Her debut novel finds a woman trying to protect herself and her children from a mysterious intruder.

RENTAL HOUSE
Penguin Random House, 2024
By Weike Wang (GRS'15)
Several years into their marriage in this novel, Keru and Nate invite their very different families on vacation. They learn how to cope and what keeps a family together.

THE STONE WITCH OF FLORENCE
HarperCollins, 2024
By Anna Rasche (CAS'09)
The historical whodunit focuses on a young woman

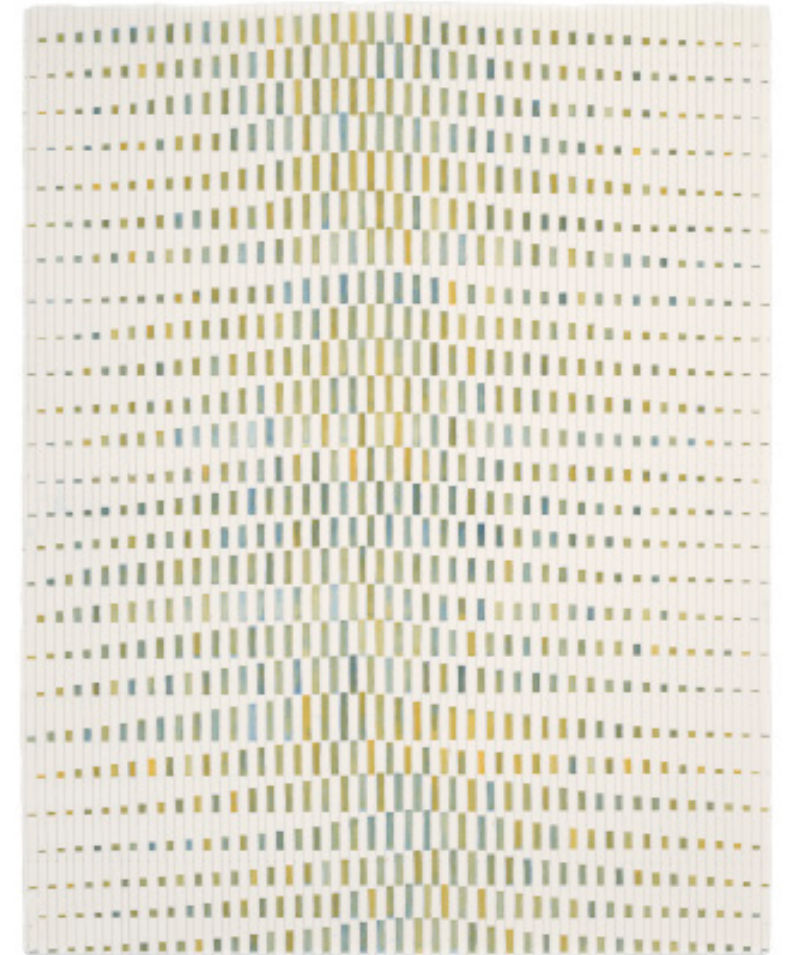
who draws on the ancient magic of gemstones to solve a series of deadly crimes in plague-stricken Italy. Rasche studied archaeology at BU and worked as a gemologist and jewelry historian.

THE UNCLAIMED: ABANDONMENT AND HOPE IN THE CITY OF ANGELS
Crown, 2024
By Pamela Prickett (COM'00)
Written with Stefan Timmermans, Prickett's book examines the rising number of bodies that go unclaimed each year and why it happens.

ZION'S CROWN
Hachette, 2024
By Zenda Walker (CGS'98, COM'00)
The follow-up to Walker's *Zara's Wash Day* in the Know Your Hairitage picture book series focuses on global hairstyles for Black males, for readers ages four to eight. The illustrations are by Princess Karibo.



TESTAMENT '22
Verlag Kettler, 2024
By Byron Smith (CGS'06, COM'08)
Dramatic and sometimes heartrending pictures from the first year of Russia's war on Ukraine, by a freelance photographer for outlets like the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*.



Untitled (March 8, 2023), watercolor and pencil on paper, 20" x 16"
From the collection of James A. Garfield of San Francisco

Gallery

MARC SCHEPENS (CFA'12)

MARC SCHEPENS, who lives in a small town on the coast of Massachusetts, makes abstract paintings of the ocean. The oil paintings and watercolors represent the light, rhythm, movement, space, color, and atmosphere of the landscape where he lives. The pieces could be interpreted as the dappling of light on the water, or echoing horizons invoking limitless space, or the perpetual recreation of the ocean's surface. The paintings in the series are untitled, identified only by their completion dates, forming a kind of journal of observations. A solo show, *Stripers and Blues*, ran this fall at Ellen Miller Gallery in Boston. Schepens (CFA'12), a BU College of Fine Arts senior lecturer in art, painting, is looking forward to maintaining a dedicated painting practice while serving for the next two years as director of the CFA School of Visual Arts, a post he assumed July 1. —Joel Brown



The inauguration of Melissa L. Gilliam September 27 at Agganis Arena capped a weeklong celebration on campus.



Watch a highlight video of the inauguration of Melissa L. Gilliam at bu.edu/bostonia.

A HISTORIC DAY FOR BOSTON UNIVERSITY

Melissa L. Gilliam, installed as BU's 11th president, pledges a commitment to greater investment in student internship opportunities, in the arts, in faculty interdisciplinary research, and in ensuring access for all

BY JOEL BROWN

HANNAH ROSE

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

LEAPT TO ITS FEET ON SEPTEMBER 27 TO CELEBRATE THE HISTORIC INAUGURATION OF MELISSA L. GILLIAM AS THE INSTITUTION'S 11TH PRESIDENT SINCE ITS FOUNDING IN 1839.

“Boston University has been a place for courage in the face of challenges,” Gilliam said in her speech at Agganis Arena to more than 2,000 students, faculty, staff, and dignitaries. “A place of openness in a society that was often closed; a place of optimism during times of hopelessness; and a place that has been open to an increasingly global world, when many others could only see what was directly in front of them.”

“To Boston University’s trustees, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and friends: now is our moment,” she said. “Let us use our traditions of intellectual courage, academic rigor, service, openness, art, and creativity to drive our next transformation.”

Her words were answered with a rousing ovation, in a ceremony

that also featured remarks via video from Boston Mayor Michelle Wu and Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey.

“Today, we continue our journey forward, taking BU to its next level of transformation and commitment to excellence—at this critical time in the world, both home and abroad, and also in higher education,” said Ahmass Fakahany (Questrom’79), chair of the BU Board of Trustees. “We could not be more pleased and excited to have Dr. Melissa Gilliam leading us on this journey as we continue to unravel our potential.”

Access for all was a key theme of the speech by Gilliam, who follows the 18-year tenure of Robert A. Brown and the yearlong interim



President Emeritus Robert A. Brown (left) and BU Trustee Malek Sukkar (ENG’92) presented the President’s Collar to Gilliam.



Gilliam, a physician, is also a BU clinical professor of obstetrics and gynecology, professor of sociology, and professor of epidemiology.

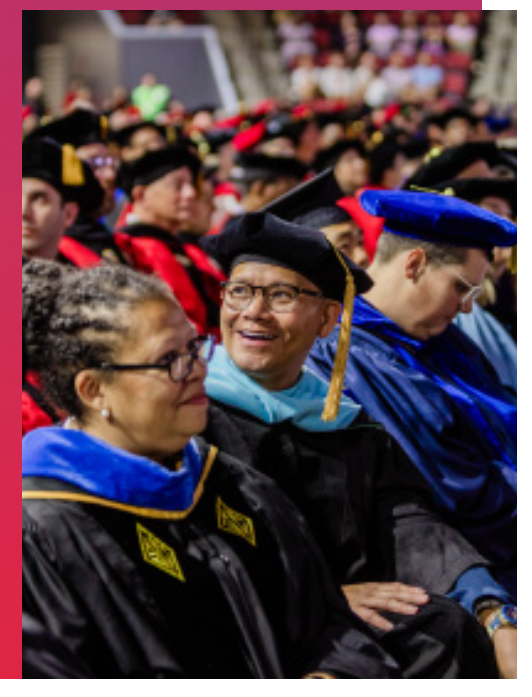


Katerina Katopis (CAS’91), a member of the BU International Advisory Board, snapped a selfie with Gilliam and other board members.



More than 2,000 faculty, staff, students, and dignitaries attended the ceremony at Agganis Arena.

JANICE CHECCHIO (TOP LEFT, BOTTOM RIGHT), JACKIE RICCIARDI (TOP RIGHT), CYDNEY SCOTT



presidency of Kenneth Freeman during the presidential search process. Both Brown and Freeman attended the ceremony.

“As we look forward, we must continue to ensure that Boston University provides a singular and transformative educational experience, and that all qualified students, regardless of their background, can access opportunity,” Gilliam said in her address. “We must find ways to address the rising costs of higher education, while also ensuring that our students are prepared for life after graduation, so they can see a return on the significant investment of their time.”

To that end, she announced a new vision for student career advancement: to increase internship participation and improve career outcomes across all academic programs, while at the same time offsetting the cost of education. Funding for working in laboratories and workplaces will be widely available for students to complete career-building internships, she said, with details on the program to follow in the coming weeks and months.

Other initiatives that she will roll out include a commitment to fully embrace the power of interdisciplinary collaboration. “Let’s transform the University by redefining integrated research,” she said, “by enabling

the sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities to converge, in laboratories, spaces, and in classrooms across our campuses.” She noted that her administration will provide seed grants and create a multidisciplinary faculty advisory council to remove unnecessary barriers to collaboration in research, teaching, and learning.

“TODAY, WE CONTINUE OUR JOURNEY FORWARD, TAKING BU TO ITS NEXT LEVEL OF TRANSFORMATION AND COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE—AT THIS CRITICAL TIME IN THE WORLD, BOTH HOME AND ABROAD.”

—AHMASS FAKAHANY (QUESTROM’79), CHAIR OF BU’S BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Gilliam, a physician, will be BU’s first president to have a second office on the Medical Campus. She pledged to continue the University’s “fierce commitment” to Boston by reinvigorating its partnership with Boston Medical Center and better integrating the Charles River Campus and the Medical Campus, which are separated by two miles across the city’s Back Bay and South End neighborhoods.

A graduate of Harvard Medical School, Gilliam is also a BU clinical professor of

→ “We must find ways to address the rising costs of higher education, while also ensuring that our students are prepared for life after graduation,” Gilliam said in her address.



JANICE CHECCHIO

JACQUE RICCIARDI (2)



↑ Ahmass Fakahany (Questrom ’79), chair of BU’s Board of Trustees, led the inauguration ceremony.



↑

Sophia Caffrey (COM’25) (left) and Kayla Lok (COM’27) got a photo with the new president at the indoor block party for students September 23 at Time Out Market in the Fenway.

obstetrics and gynecology, professor of sociology, and professor of epidemiology. She is a distinguished educator, scholar, and research scientist. Her scholarship focuses on interventions to promote adolescent health and well-being. She spent the majority of her career at the University of Chicago, where she was vice provost, before joining Ohio State University as executive vice president and provost.

During her address, she described a renewed commitment on the part of Boston University to the global community, citing the recent launch of the Ravi K. Mehrotra Institute for Business, Markets & Society at the Questrom School of Business, plus the coming expansion of the Frederick S. Pardee School of Global Studies and a reimagined International Advisory Board.

At a time when controversy has roiled many campuses across the country, Gilliam also

pledged to strengthen the University's commitment to free speech and academic freedom while working to promote civil discourse and find common ground.

"As you can see, we have a proud history of advocacy and protest here at BU," she said with a smile, a few moments after a small Gaza-related student demonstration briefly disrupted the ceremony.

"Creating a community in which each of us can fully contribute to the life of this campus requires each of us to commit to regarding one another with dignity and respect," she said. "Today, I'm announcing a new initiative in which we will focus on living our values and building our skills in discourse. This initiative will serve as a platform for deepening our commitment to free expression and discourse across our differences."

Gilliam also described an "ambitious vision" to put the arts "front and center across our campuses" and named Harvey Young, dean of the College of Fine Arts, to lead a President's Advisory Council on the Arts.

Gilliam did not directly mention her own historic role as the first female president and the first Black president of Boston University, but to others it was an important milestone to celebrate.

Akwasi Antwi (CAS'25), president of Boston University Student Government, took note in his welcome. "Dr. Gilliam's arrival as our University president signifies more than just a changing of the guard, a mere reshuffling of administrative structure," Antwi said. "To so many diverse students here, she represents so much more: the hope that she gives students who see themselves in her. The aspiration of

→ Harvey Young (left), dean of the College of Fine Arts, with Robert Pinsky, a William Fairfield Warren Distinguished Professor.



Inauguration Day began at Marsh Chapel, where the Rev. Robert Allan Hill led a prayer service that Gilliam attended with her family.



Gilliam (center) attended an event showcasing BU's research on September 25, part of the weeklong inauguration celebration.



CYDNEY SCOTT (TOP AND BOTTOM), JACKIE RICCIARDI (MIDDLE)



JANICE CHECCHIO

"WE MUST CONTINUE TO ENSURE THAT BOSTON UNIVERSITY PROVIDES A SINGULAR AND TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE, AND THAT ALL QUALIFIED STUDENTS, REGARDLESS OF THEIR BACKGROUND, CAN ACCESS OPPORTUNITY."

—MELISSA L. GILLIAM

students who are eager to see positive change on campus. The inspirational leadership ideas that she'll bring as a result of her experience. Most importantly, the opportunity to have a leader who looks like us."

Representatives of BU trustees, faculty, staff, and alumni also delivered brief welcoming remarks. During the ceremony, Gilliam was presented with the University's colors, its charter, the Founder's Chair, and the President's Collar.

She began her duties at BU on July 1. In her remarks, she acknowledged Brown's transformative tenure at BU and Freeman's role in helping to bridge the period to her presidency.

"Bob, you led this institution through an extraordinary transformation during your nearly 20 years as president," Gilliam said. "Thanks to you both, I am taking on the leadership of a university riding a wave of incredible momentum."

The ceremony featured the singing of the BU anthem "Clarissima," performances by the alumni group Sons of Serendip, the BU cappella group the Treblemakers, and the BU Brass Choir, with singer Arielle Rogers-Wilkey (CFA'25). Robert Pinsky, a William Fairfield Warren Distinguished Professor, director of the Creative Writing Program, and former US poet laureate, read a poem, Robert Hayden's "Those Winter Sundays."

As the ceremony got underway, a 50-person crowd of BU Graduate Workers Union (BUGWU) members and undergraduate students in the University's Democratic Socialists of America and Students for Justice in Palestine chapters formed outside Agganis Arena. The student demonstrators held aloft signs, such as "Tuition high and wages low, where does all the money go?" and calling for Gilliam to divest University funding from Israeli-backed companies. Union members handed out leaflets bearing a QR code that when scanned sent a letter to Gilliam in support of the BUGWU strike taking place at the time. They went on to ratify a contract, in October, ending the seven-month strike. **B**



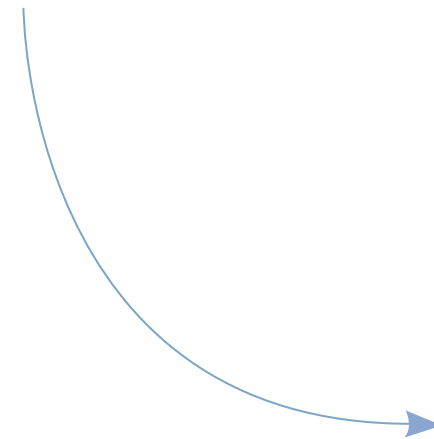
Akwasi Antwi (CAS'25), president of BU Student Government, spoke of the hope that Gilliam "gives students who see themselves in her."



BU neuropathologist Ann McKee directs the University's Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE) Center, a global leader in the study of neurodegenerative diseases.

+ Read more stories about BU's groundbreaking research on CTE at bu.edu/brink.

Searching for Answers



One Brain at a Time

Families who donate a loved one's brain to BU's CTE Center are helping researchers push the boundary of what we know about neurodegenerative diseases

BY MOLLY CALLAHAN

CYDNEY SCOTT

Nick Cammarata had a booming laugh and an uncanny ability to spin out a story that kept people hooked, even as it went on...and on. But for Hayley Cammarata, it's impossible to remember her older brother without thinking about hockey.

Nick excelled in youth programs in their hometown of Canton, Mass., tearing up the ice through middle and high school. He played Division I hockey at Merrimack College from 1999 to 2003, where he skated in 127 games, then played professionally for four years in the minor leagues—including a stint in Italy. Even after retirement, his life revolved around hockey: he coached junior teams in Utah, Texas, South Dakota, and New Hampshire.

"He *loved* hockey," Cammarata says. "He was this insanely talented athlete, and hockey was the sport he fell in love with. He started playing when he was three years old, and he was amazing from that moment until he died." Nick died unexpectedly in June at age 44.

Hockey is a full-contact sport, and after years of enduring hard hits, Nick worried that something was wrong—something in his brain. "He wanted to be involved in a CTE study if something should ever happen to him—and then, of course, something did happen," Cammarata says, still sorting through the fog of grief.

After Nick died, the medical examiner connected Cammarata's family with Sophia Nosek, research program manager and brain donation coordinator at Boston University's Chronic Traumatic

Encephalopathy (CTE) Center. Since its founding more than 15 years ago, the center has become the world's foremost seat of research into CTE, a neurodegenerative disease that is caused by repeated head trauma and can only be diagnosed after death. BU researchers have contributed immensely to the understanding of CTE—which has been tied to an array of symptoms, including memory loss, aggression, and anxiety—and helped families make sense of sometimes drastic

cognitive and personality changes in their loved ones.

Nosek talked the Cammaratas through the donation process, asking a few preliminary questions about Nick's life and sending over consent forms. The medical examiner's office handled the donation. Nosek ensured it arrived in the lab in Boston and let the family know Nick's donation was safe.

Whatever comes, Cammarata says it will be a way to understand her brother a bit better.

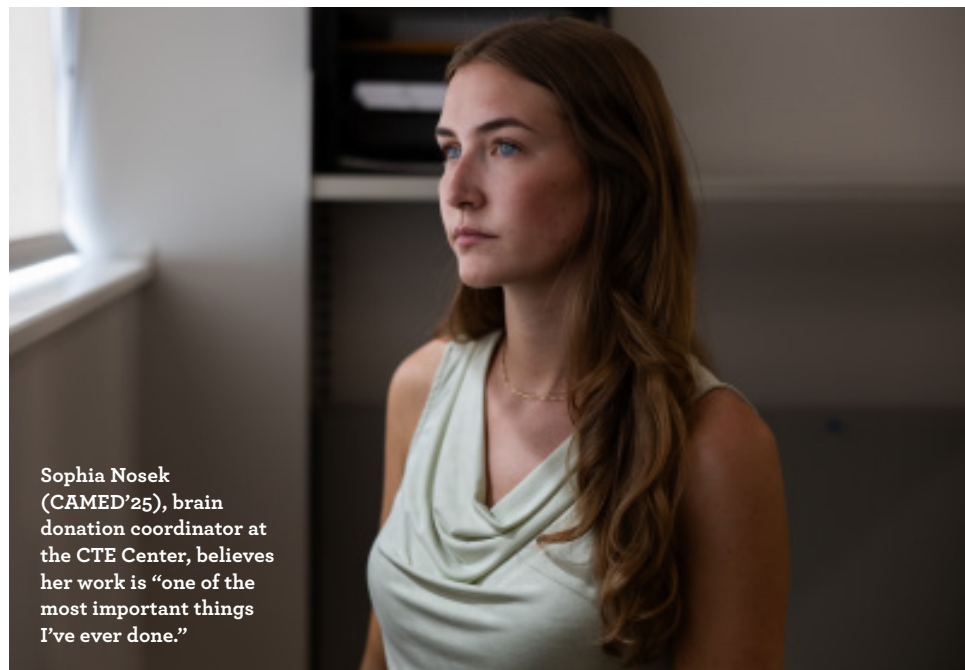
And, she says, "If we can help find information for families in the future, it would be an honor for his legacy and for us as a family to help future kids and families learn about this."

THE POWER OF A PHONE CALL

For Nosek, the phone call from Cammarata's family was the first in a chain of toppling dominoes, where the end result is not just a diagnosis for one person, but also a growing body of research on a host of little-understood neurodegenerative diseases.

Once her phone rings, Nosek (CAMED'25) has just 72 hours from the donor's time of death to coordinate the extraction of their brain, ensure it's stable for travel and for the ensuing research, and organize its journey to Boston. It's tight.

"I do feel like it's one of the most important things I've ever done," Nosek



Sophia Nosek (CAMED'25), brain donation coordinator at the CTE Center, believes her work is "one of the most important things I've ever done."

JAKE BELCHER

says, "because I need to speak to the families at some of the worst moments of their lives and make sure they feel comforted, as well as secure and confident in letting me handle something that's really important to them and something that was really important to their loved one."

Once it gets to the lab, the brain will join more than 1,500 others that, together, are helping to advance critically important scientific inquiry.

Ann McKee, who directs the CTE Center and is a William Fairfield Warren Distinguished Professor at BU, describes her team as world experts in CTE. It's not an exaggeration.

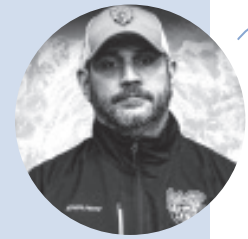
The CTE Center is how we know that NFL star Aaron Hernandez, who was convicted of murder in 2015, had one of the most advanced cases of the disease ever found in someone so young. It's how we know that NHL team captain Greg Johnson had CTE. Roughly 70 percent of the brains studied by researchers at the center show evidence of CTE; scientists at BU have discovered it in young athletes who were just 17 years old when they died and in older retired athletes, who were well into their 80s. Researchers have found it in nearly 92 percent of the ex-NFL players they've studied.

But it's not just plaguing football and ice hockey: Rugby and soccer players have had CTE, along with rodeo and BMX riders. Boxers and wrestlers have had it, as well as military veterans. It's been found in people with poorly controlled epilepsy and those who were victims of domestic violence. CTE can develop in anyone who experiences repeated hits to the head.

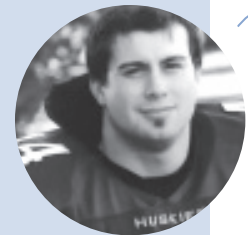
Researchers at the CTE Center have published more than 100 studies on CTE and traumatic brain injury—work that would have been impossible without the many donated brains. They've found that playing tackle football increases the chances of a Parkinson's disease or an amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) diagnosis, and that cumulative hits to the head can lead to a


92%
OF EX-NFL PLAYERS STUDIED SHOWED EVIDENCE OF CTE

JOHN GRIMSLEY
A former linebacker with the Houston Oilers, Grimsley was among the first football players to be diagnosed with CTE by BU researchers.



NICK CAMMARATA
The retired hockey player had told his sister that he wanted to be involved in a CTE study "if something should ever happen to him." He died unexpectedly in June, at age 44.



GABE MACKESEY
Family members had noticed changes that were out of character for Mackesey, who played heavy contact sports most of his life. He died two months shy of his 43rd birthday.



TOM MCHALE
The former Tampa Bay Buccaneers offensive lineman played football for 26 years. Lisa McHale, his widow, now works at the CTE Center.

number of long-term consequences, including loss of white matter in the brain. Researchers at the center have also been key in figuring out the pathology of CTE—what it looks like in the brain and how the disease evolves over time. And all of these studies, researchers hope, will bring them closer to the holy grail of CTE research: being able to diagnose it in life, not just after death (*see sidebar on page 44*).

"GETTING HIS BELL RUNG"

Virginia Grimsley was folding laundry one afternoon at her home in Houston, Tex., when her ears perked up. It was the mid-2000s, and HBO's investigative sports program, *Real Sports with Bryant Gumbel*, was airing an episode about the little-known long-term effects

of repeated concussions on professional football players.

Grimsley turned the volume up. Her husband, John, had been a linebacker with the Houston Oilers (now known as the Tennessee Titans) and played in the NFL from 1984 to 1993. Football was known for its physical injuries, of course—torn ligaments, broken bones—but this was the first time Grimsley had heard anything about possible cognitive issues. She watched the entire program. Things started clicking into place.

Virginia knew that John had played football since he was eight years old. He would talk about "getting his bell rung" during particularly hard tackles, joking that afterward, he'd "aim for the guy in the middle" of his blurred vision.

FROM TOP: PHOTOS COURTESY OF HAYLEY CAMMARATA, VIRGINIA GRIMSLEY, CHRISTINA MACKESEY, LISA MCHALE

Players would inhale smelling salts, then get back on the field.

At one point after his retirement, Virginia asked John how many concussions he'd had throughout his career. He said he remembered three distinctly, but guessed it was closer to one a year during his professional career. Nine years. Nine concussions.

Thanks to research by scientists at the CTE Center, we know that it's not the number of concussions, but the number of hits to the head that causes CTE. John's nine years in the NFL was enough of a proxy to raise concern.

And, for Grimsley at the time, it was clear that John *had* been acting differently lately. The once even-keeled, gentle man was suddenly quick to anger. He'd raise his voice, get frustrated easily. Plus, he'd been forgetting things. He needed directions to a friend's house not five

minutes away—a route he'd driven countless times.

"You notice these things, but don't always know what it means," Grimsley says now.

One weekend when she and the couple's boys were away, tragedy struck. John, a lifelong outdoorsman, was cleaning his handgun—a meditative activity he'd do when no one else was in the house, and one he'd done hundreds of times before.

"Now, knowing everything that was going on in his head, he obviously forgot that you always check the chamber to make sure the gun's unloaded before cleaning it," Grimsley says. "So that's what happened. That's how he died. It was an accident." He was 45.

In the haze of those fitful days after John's death, one decision now stands out to Grimsley as divine intervention, "a God thing," she

says: donating John's brain to BU's emerging CTE Center.

EMOTIONAL, SENSITIVE WORK

In 2008, McKee was studying professional boxers as part of her research at BU's medical school. A neurologist and neuropathologist, she was specifically looking into the deterioration she was finding in their brains—these athletes who had suffered one punch after another to the head during their careers. Under the microscope, their brain tissue was filled with an abnormal protein, called tau, that grew like so many weeds in a garden, tangling and strangling the healthy brain cells. What she found was more commonly known at the time as "punch-drunk syndrome."

Then, a new donation came to her lab. In this brain, from John Grimsley, McKee found the same pattern of pathology she'd been finding in the brains of boxers. It was a stunning discovery, among the earliest anyone had made that found evidence of CTE in a former football player. John Grimsley became the fifth former NFL player to be diagnosed with the disease. And McKee pinpointed that abnormal, misfolded tau—in a specific pattern and distribution in the brain—as a key indicator of CTE.

A year later, researchers at BU announced that they had diagnosed two more former NFL players, including former Tampa Bay Buccaneers offensive lineman Tom McHale, who was 45 when he died.

"We were college sweethearts," says Lisa McHale, Tom's widow. When they overlapped at Cornell, she helped manage the football team on which he played. Tom moved to Tampa to join the pros for the 1987 season, and Lisa followed a few years after. They were married in 2000.

McHale says that although her husband did show some signs of depression as he got older, she never knew him to have had a concussion; a few hard knocks, sure, but that comes with the territory. So when a researcher at the CTE Center called to ask about Tom's brain

shortly after his unexpected death, she assumed they needed a control sample.

"We know now that you don't necessarily need to suffer a concussion to develop CTE," McHale says. "The bottom line is, Tom started playing football at eight and played a total of 26 years. That's a long, long, long exposure."

McHale joined the center two years after her husband's diagnosis, pledging to help other people in her shoes. She's now the center's director of legacy family relations. (Relatives who donate a loved one's brain are called "legacy families.")

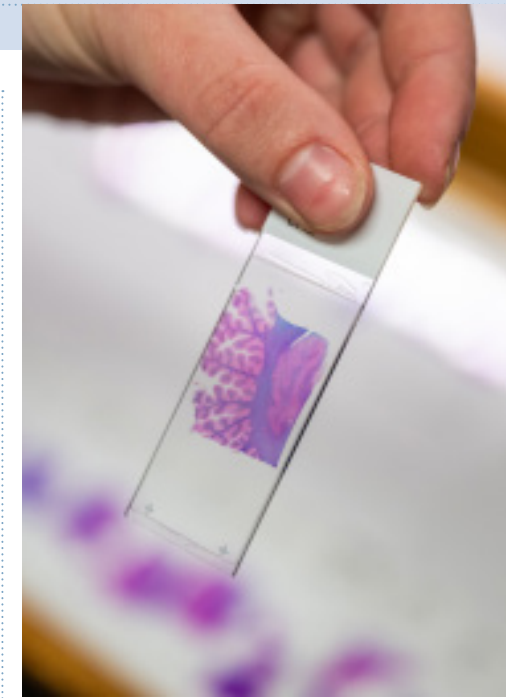
"It's an emotional and very sensitive kind of work," McHale says. "My conversations, the bulk of them occur with families who have suffered a very, very recent loss, many of them very tragically. And so it's a constant reminder of the implications of this disease and a constant reminder of my own loss."

THE GOLD STANDARD

In her role now, McHale explains to families what will happen with their loved ones' donations, and why.

Once a donated brain has safely arrived, a technician will bisect the organ along its midline, setting aside one hemisphere to preserve in a chemical bath called formalin, and storing that half in refrigerators set to 4 degrees Celsius. Later, pathologists will slice slivers from this preserved tissue and use antibody staining to draw out details at a cellular level. The other hemisphere is labeled, packed into plastic, and frozen for future study.

At the Veterans Affairs facilities that host the CTE Center's UNITE Brain Bank—a collaboration between BU, the VA Boston Healthcare System, and the Concussion Legacy Foundation—rooms are filled with industrial freezers. Each one contains hundreds of brains. It's a scientific space, but it's also strangely moving. All these brains are waiting to reveal a hidden story of their onetime owners and join in the crusade to better understand these vexing diseases.



Pathologists at the CTE Center slice thin slivers from preserved brain tissue and use antibody staining to draw out details at a cellular level.

a loss, searching for answers. In some ways, she sees this as the silver lining in her loss. "It has helped me a great deal," McHale says. "I could have never imagined losing Tom and couldn't have imagined moving forward from that. And so, in a lot of ways, [this work] has been a gift. It's a real blessing that came from a real tragedy."

Like Cammarata, Christina Mackesey is waiting to learn more about her brother. Gabe "played heavy contact sports for a good majority of his life," she says. Growing up in Saskatchewan, Canada, meant ice hockey was a given, but Gabe also had a successful football career. He played for roughly 15 years, and made it to

training camp for the professional Canadian league. But, having suffered so many hits, Mackesey says, Gabe was showing worry-

ing symptoms during training, like dizziness, loss of concentration, and headaches, which stopped his football career in its tracks.

Mackesey says she and her brother sometimes talked about his worry that he had CTE. Gabe didn't elaborate on why, but Mackesey's family had noticed some changes more recently that were out of character: his impulse control seemed diminished, for example.

In June, just about two months shy of his 43rd birthday, Gabe went into cardiac arrest, and Mackesey called the CTE Center hotline late on a Friday night. Nosek called back immediately, Mackesey recalls.

Nosek, McHale, and others from the center have been in touch every step of the way, Mackesey says, explaining in detail how this process works and the research that they will be able to do thanks to Gabe's donation—and others like him.

"It's been really special to my family to know that, yes, we are making a difference," she says. "This is a way for Gabe to be part of every new breakthrough in CTE research, because his brain will be continually studied over and over and over." ■

CTE Can Only Be Diagnosed After Death—for Now

BU researchers are exploring ways to diagnose the neurodegenerative disease in life | BY ANDREW THURSTON

WHEN YOU'RE NOT feeling yourself, you hope your doctor can provide some answers. If they can't make a diagnosis, perhaps tests—blood work, scans, samples—will help.

For those worried they might have chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), a neurodegenerative disease caused by repeated hits to the head, a definitive resolution may remain out of reach.

CTE has become synonymous with collision-heavy sports like football and linked to a jumble of symptoms—memory loss, confusion, aggression, poor impulse control, slow movement. The only way to confirm if someone had the progressive disease is to examine their brain after their death.

Why does identifying CTE in the living remain so elusive?

Thor Stein, a BU Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine associate professor of pathology and laboratory medicine, says that long list of symptoms makes it easy to confuse CTE with a host of other conditions.

But if researchers could diagnose CTE in life, they could turn their attention to studying potential treatments and better prevention options—though some of the latter are already clear, like changing the way certain sports are played to reduce head impacts.

At the BU CTE Center, home to one of the largest tissue banks in the world dedicated to studying traumatic brain injury, researchers are moving closer to a lifetime diagnosis. By analyzing the brains of deceased contact sports athletes and armed forces

personnel, they've shown how CTE changes the brain, messing with its proteins, wiring, and structure.

Now, with a major new study, Bank CTE, the center will be looking for clues to the disease in 1,000 living participants. One focus: Can they uncover traces, or biomarkers, of CTE in blood that could one day be spotted with a simple test?

Researchers will follow people over the age of 40 who have played contact sports or served in the military, surveying their health, taking blood samples, then studying their brain after death.

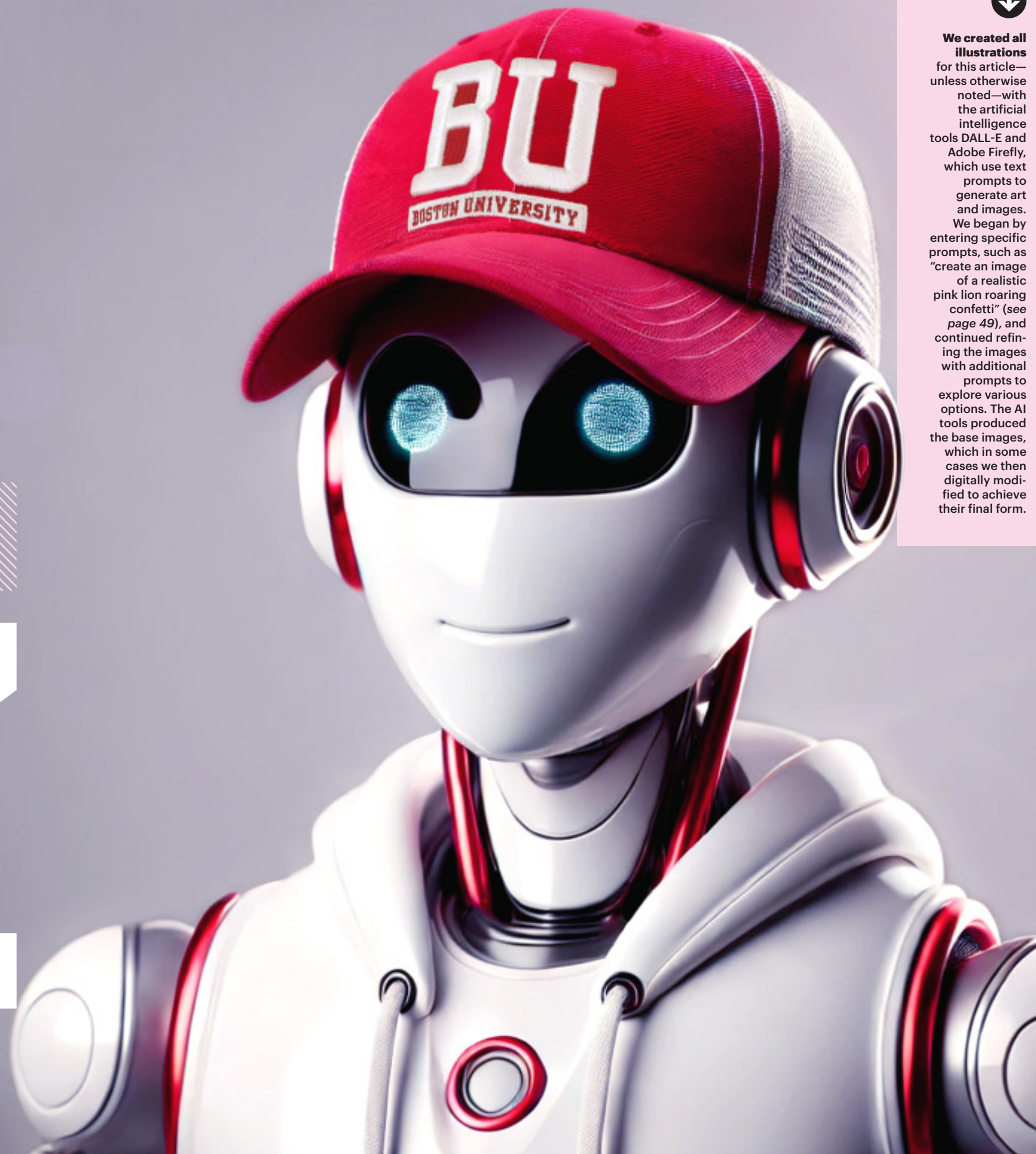
Bank CTE is still in the recruitment phase. Stein hopes that pairing researchers' existing knowledge of CTE in postmortem brains with more robust clinical data could lead to a breakthrough.

CYDNEY SCOTT

Ai@BU to Z

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REPORTING
BY EDEN MOR
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Every day, BU faculty employ artificial intelligence and machine learning in their classrooms and in their research. They are developing an early detection tool for Parkinson's disease, creating AI technologies to help guide the visually impaired through unfamiliar environments, and determining the likelihood of Alzheimer's disease using a simple voice recording. That's just a fraction of what's happening at BU—and what AI is capable of. But it's still new, and sometimes puzzling to many of us. (Um, what exactly is ChatGPT?) That's why we reached out to faculty in engineering, computer science, communications, law, and computing and data sciences to produce our alphabetical dive into the good, the bad, and the future of AI.



We created all illustrations for this article—unless otherwise noted—with the artificial intelligence tools DALL-E and Adobe Firefly, which use text prompts to generate art and images. We began by entering specific prompts, such as “create an image of a realistic pink lion roaring confetti” (see page 49), and continued refining the images with additional prompts to explore various options. The AI tools produced the base images, which in some cases we then digitally modified to achieve their final form.

A

Artificial Intelligence Very broadly, artificial intelligence is a field that utilizes sets of technologies to build machines that imitate—and in some cases, replicate—the way humans think and solve problems. If that sounds amazing, it is. If that sounds scary, it is.

Algorithm All artificial intelligence is driven by a series of algorithms, or the set of instructions a piece of software follows in order to make decisions and ultimately learn to operate on its own.

B



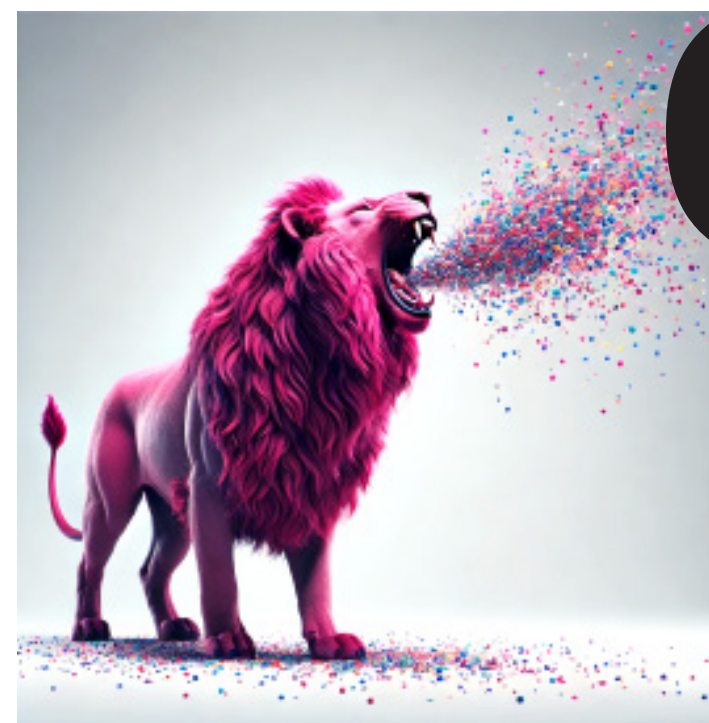
Bias One of the more pressing challenges for artificial intelligence. Biases present in the data used for an AI model will impact the generated results. For example, biases can produce AI-generated images with racial stereotypes or can skew data incorrectly.

Bot A software program that has been programmed to perform specific tasks that mimic human behavior, such as responding to customer queries or sending out tweets. Bots are prevalent on almost every social media platform, where they impersonate real people, sometimes for malicious purposes.

F

Facial Recognition Artificial intelligence mathematically maps a person's facial features and stores the images, much like taking a mental picture. The model then compares mapped facial patterns against other facial patterns to identify people or groups. Facial recognition technology is often used in security settings, e.g., preventing a smartphone from being unlocked by anyone but its owner, and, controversially, in the criminal justice system. (Speaking of AI bias: some facial recognition tech has problems with misidentifying people of color.)

G



Generative AI A type of algorithm that allows a user to create new content or data similar to the content or data that the algorithm was trained on. This ranges from simple predictive-text models, such as the autofill suggestions in your Outlook emails, to more involved software, such as ChatGPT, or AI that generates images (like the lion here), or movies based on the prompts you put in.

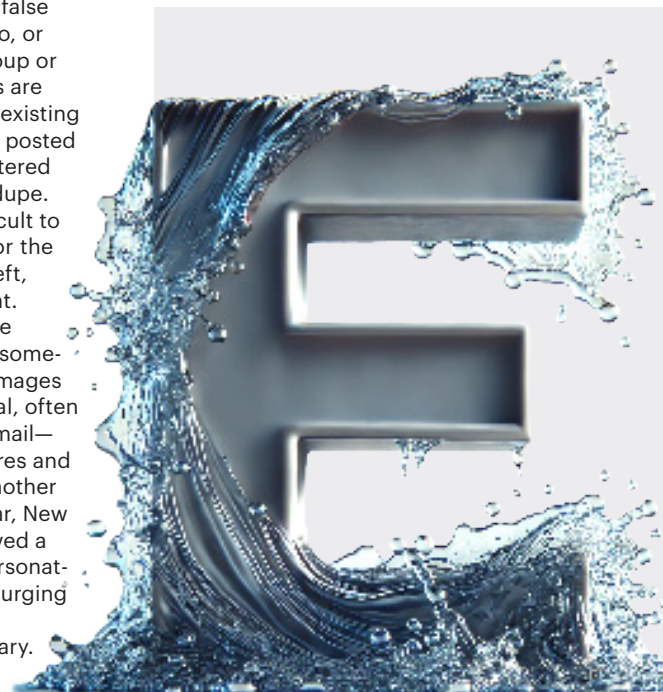
D

Deepfake A portmanteau of “deep learning” and “fake.” AI can be used to create a false but realistic photo, video, or audio recording of a group or an individual. Deepfakes are often constructed from existing media—such as a photo posted on social media—and altered to create a convincing dupe. They are incredibly difficult to spot and can be used for the purposes of identity theft, extortion, or harassment.

For example, deepfake pornography—in which someone fabricates explicit images or videos of an individual, often with the intent to blackmail—has affected public figures and private citizens alike. Another example: earlier this year, New Hampshire voters received a deepfake robocall impersonating President Joe Biden urging them not to vote in the state's Democratic primary.

C

ChatGPT There's no bot quite as famous as ChatGPT, a generative AI tool (see G) created by the company OpenAI. ChatGPT is an advanced chatbot, or a bot that replicates human conversation, that can be asked to complete a wide variety of tasks, like helping you compose music, write essays or emails, or generate computer code.



Environment AI can come with a hefty environmental price tag. For one, chatbots like ChatGPT require an enormous amount of power to run, and thus rely on large amounts of water to cool their servers and prevent overheating. According to a recent analysis conducted by the *Washington Post*, using ChatGPT to write one 100-word email requires the equivalent of just over one bottle of water to keep cool. (While that might not seem like all that much, if one in 10 working Americans writes one ChatGPT-assisted email every day for a year, the *Post* calculated, that necessitates the same amount of water that all the households in Rhode Island use every day and a half.)

Another problem? The operational carbon cost for AI, which stems from the amount of power consumed while running artificial intelligence applications, has surged and is expected to escalate

rapidly, according to Ayse Coskun, a College of Engineering professor of electrical and computer engineering. Coskun and her collaborators have been working on how to integrate data centers into power grid programs, so that a center could constantly adjust its energy consumption in response to how much green energy is available at any given time.

“Can we transform data centers into flexible loads within the power grid?” she says. “Can a data center regulate its power consumption following requests from a power provider, who's continuously balancing supply and demand in the grid? These are the types of questions we have been investigating.”

Ethics Experts say AI has both good and bad facets that should be taken together. For example, on the positive

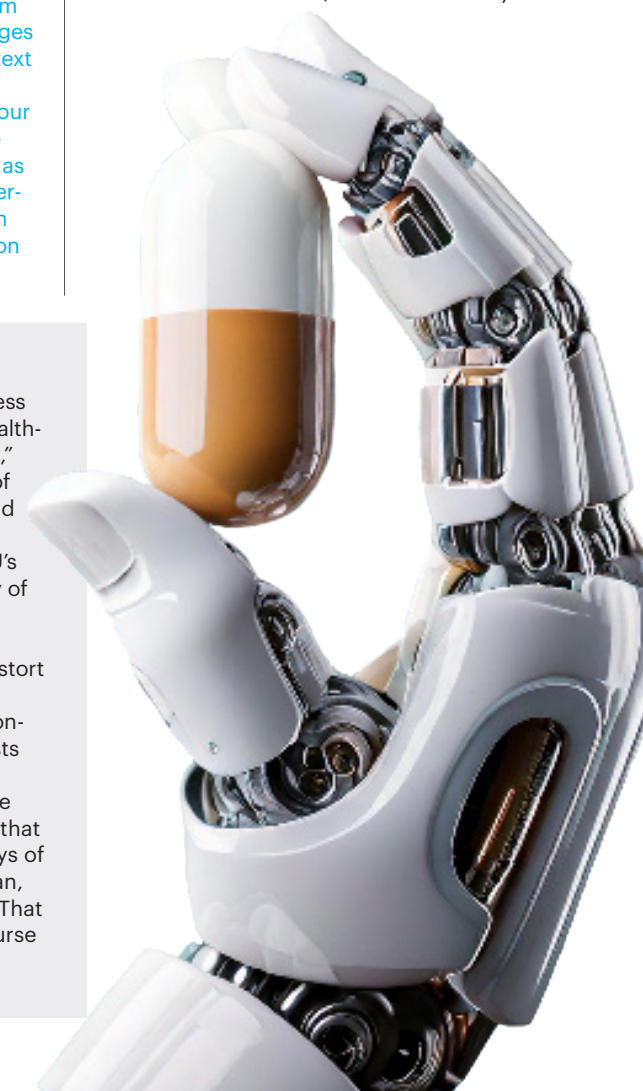
side: “Artificial intelligence can be ethical through democratizing access to valuable information, such as health-care diagnoses and medical advice,” says Wesley Wildman, a professor of philosophy, theology, and ethics and of computing and data sciences, who holds dual appointments in BU's School of Theology and the Faculty of Computing & Data Sciences.

But on the negative side, it's impossible to deny AI's ability to distort reality for malicious purposes (see “Deepfake”). That should deeply concern anyone who consumes or posts information online. “We can't stop deepfakes and we're having trouble controlling them, despite the fact that they are disrupting our normal ways of deciding what's true,” says Wildman, who cochairs BU's AI Task Force. “That negatively impacts political discourse and the safety of our children.”

H

Healthcare AI is already being used to improve patient care, from appointment-scheduling bots to robot-assisted surgery. It can be used in preventive medicine, forecasting who might be at risk for a disease, for example, or predicting future pandemics. And it has the potential to significantly reduce the drug-development timeline, identifying promising drug candidates for different conditions and helping manage clinical trials, says Vijaya B. Kolachalama, an associate professor of medicine and computer science and a founding member of the Faculty of Computing & Data Sciences.

Then there's the diagnostics potential. Kolachalama and his student researchers and postdocs are developing an assistive tool for clinicians that helps diagnose dementia. The AI-powered tool analyzes massive sets of routinely collected clinical data—such as patient demographics and history, MRI scans, tests ordered at appointments, and the results—to create AI-generated reports that predict the type and cause of dementia in a patient, based on the information a user inputs. “The goal of the reports is to help neurologists make better decisions, but also to provide input to other clinicians—like in primary care settings—who might not have the expertise to diagnose a condition like dementia,” Kolachalama says.



Imitation Game It's not just a movie. The imitation game—later known as the Turing Test—refers to an experiment designed by the British computer programmer Alan Turing to test an artificial intelligence's capabilities. The test, which involves a human judge blindly asking a series of questions to a computer and human subject, has two goals: to determine whether an AI is capable of exhibiting human-like thinking capabilities on its own, without being told what to do, and whether an AI can be virtually indistinguishable from human intelligence.



Knowledge Bases AI knowledge bases are digital storage spaces that rely on AI to process and generate specific pieces of information when asked. They're often used in customer support settings: think of them as more dynamic FAQ pages or how-to guides. What's unique about AI knowledge bases is that the more they're used, the more they improve over time. If customers are repeatedly searching for the same bit of information, the knowledge base can learn to prioritize that information and make it easier for users to find from the get-go.

Jobs Is AI coming for our jobs? It's a valid question, and something we should genuinely be worried about, says Kevin Gold, an associate professor of the practice of computing and data sciences. "It's not that AIs are better than people at a job," Gold says. Rather, it's that "cost and convenience are huge driving factors for companies, and that can make other concerns—such as whether the best possible work is being done—secondary."

Already, ChatGPT and its successors are "kind of okay" at tasks like writing greeting cards, Gold says, or even writing recipes. And while an AI-generated recipe or TV script might not win any awards, the computer algorithms behind them don't need health insurance or paid time off. That doesn't bode well for humans, Gold believes. It's a "very real possibility that we'll see artificial intelligence being used for things it's totally incompetent at," all because someone tried to save a few bucks.

Laws There are no laws associated with artificial intelligence at the federal level, says Stacey Dogan, a School of Law professor, but that doesn't mean there isn't legislation to come.

"There's a lot of action in Congress right now," Dogan says. "Many legislators appear to regret the hands-off approach they took with social media. There's widespread bipartisan concern about the risks of AI and a growing commitment to greater regulation of technologies

that include AI." Some of the proposed AI bills: the Intimate Privacy Protection Act, which targets deep-fake pornography; the NO FAKES Act, which aims to protect people against AI-generated replicas of their images and voices; and the Artificial Intelligence Civil Rights Act, which would regulate the use of algorithms in consequential decisions. Other bills, Dogan says, propose transparency and

audit requirements or address specific dangers, like threats to election integrity or national security. There are laws on the books at the state and local levels, Dogan says. Colorado, for example, protects against discriminatory algorithms in the insurance business. New York City requires employers to conduct bias audits of any AI tools used for employment decisions. "The good news is that these state laws



"Many legislators appear to regret the hands-off approach they took with social media. There's widespread bipartisan concern about the risks of AI and a growing commitment to greater regulation of technologies that include AI."

—Stacey Dogan

offer a kind of regulatory laboratory [for what works and what doesn't]," Dogan says. "But the bad news is that they present varying

levels of protection for citizens, as well as a range of inconsistent and sometimes confusing obligations for regulated firms."

M

Machine Learning Often used interchangeably with artificial intelligence. It's an application of artificial intelligence that involves using algorithms and large amounts of data to train an AI program to learn to make decisions on its own, without being explicitly programmed to do so—much like how humans think and learn. Over time, machine learning algorithms

improve as they analyze more and more training data. Many, or even most, AI systems utilize some form of machine learning.

Misinformation AI is a perfect vehicle for misinformation, says Mark Crovella, a computer science professor in the College of Arts & Sciences and the Faculty of Computing & Data Sciences,

who researches the social consequences of machine learning.

Generative AI, for one, only needs a simple prompt to create imaginary settings. The danger there, Crovella says, is "that the same tools that can create fantastical images can create incredibly real-seeming images. We are living in a world where we can no longer trust 'photographic' evidence." He adds, "The same [deceptive] capabilities exist for text—for example, extremely believable and persuasive narratives that describe situations counter to fact. The new language

generation tools can additionally be used to create [fake accounts known as] 'sock puppets,' or online systems that present themselves as humans in order to persuade or promulgate lies."

The months ahead of the November 2024 presidential election were rife with political misinformation, bolstered by images created using generative AI, bots posing as humans on social media sites, and deepfakes. Why is that so concerning? Not only does it mean AI can be weaponized against individuals or communities, it also could influence the way people vote.

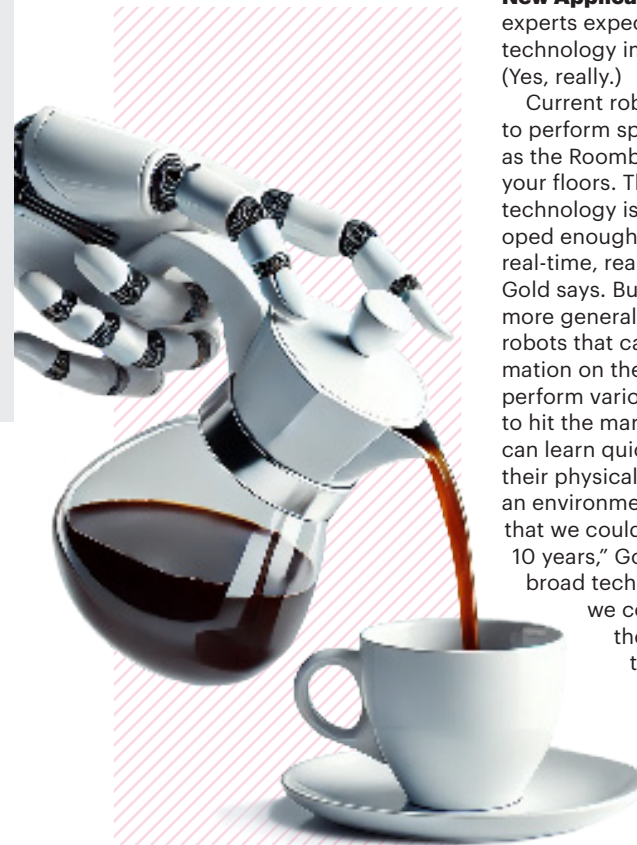
N

Natural Language Processing

A subfield of artificial intelligence that endeavors to make written and spoken language understandable by computers. Examples of AI that use natural language processing include ChatGPT, translation apps, and voice-to-text messaging.

New Applications One thing experts expect to see as AI technology improves? Robots. (Yes, really.)

Current robots are specialized to perform specific tasks, such as the Roomba that vacuums your floors. That's because the technology isn't quite developed enough to train robots in real-time, real-world settings, Gold says. But down the line, more generalized, interactive robots that can process information on the spot and use it to perform various tasks are likely to hit the market. "Robots that can learn quickly, regardless of their physical configuration in an environment, are something that we could have in the next 10 years," Gold says. "The broad technology is there—if we could only figure out the big breakthrough, then you could see things like robots that could do [a host of] useful things around the house."



O **Open Source** Source code that is made freely available for possible modification and redistribution. This grants free access to the source code, design documents, and content of the product. If a software is classified as open source, that means that anyone can use it.

P

Predictive Personalization

Ever given in and purchased something from an Instagram or Facebook ad? You probably have a predictive personalization to thank—or bemoan. Predictive AI algorithms are responsible for feeding you much of the content you come across online, from recommended YouTube videos to specific ads. Every time you log onto a website or into an app, it's collecting data about your clicks, likes, and interactions, which it inputs into machine learning algorithms that then spit out similar content for your perusal. Got caught up in a *Haunting of Hill House* binge? You can

expect your home screen to be full of even creepier horror picks the next time you open Netflix.

These algorithms aren't always harmless. As Crovella explains, many forms of media are supported by advertising, which incentivizes tech companies to use algorithms that maximize the time consumers spend looking at the screen. "Many researchers—including in my group—have found that the recommendation systems used by systems like YouTube, for example, are tuned to lead viewers toward content that is false, extreme, or hateful, presumably to maximize engagement," he says. While that's likely not what these companies designed their algorithms to do, he adds, the push toward outrageous posts or videos is "a natural result of our tendency to pay attention to shocking material."

Q

Q* One of the buzziest—and most mysterious—current AI developments is an alleged project called Q* (pronounced Q-star), from ChatGPT maker OpenAI. According to reports, Q* can solve simple math problems on its own, demonstrating an ability to think a problem through, rather than simply recognize patterns and make statistically likely guesses. If the reports are true, Q* marks a tangible step toward creating what's known as artificial general intelligence, or a system that ultimately aims to completely replicate or even surpass human intelligence. OpenAI is keeping the project under wraps, so it's hard to know how far along it is with the technology.

R

Reinforcement Learning A basic machine learning concept. Much like in psychology, reinforcement learning in machine learning relies on training something—in this case, a piece of software—by letting it make its own decisions and providing either positive or negative feedback, rather than explicitly showing it what to do.



S

Social Good Can AI be deployed to keep us safer? If you ask Traci Hong, the answer is unequivocally yes. Hong, a professor of media studies in the College of Communication, used AI in a recent research study on whether e-cigarette companies are complying with requirements for including health warnings in their social media ads. Ultimately, the study revealed that a mere 13 percent of the posts followed Food and Drug Administration rules and adequately warned consumers of the health risks of using synthetic nicotine. The research team also discovered that the posts that included health warnings received fewer likes and comments than posts without them. In fact, the larger the warning label, the fewer comments the posts received overall.

What does that mean? How e-cigarette companies post on social media has a direct effect on how consumers see and engage with their content. Ensuring that companies comply with the FDA regulations could reduce the number of social media users that see ads for vapes—which may be bad for business, but good for general health.

T

Teaching Teaching such a fast-developing topic like artificial intelligence can be challenging, says Gold, who leads courses on introductory programming and intro to machine learning and AI. “For other subjects, teachers can save their lecture slides from one semester to the next,” Gold says. “I recently had a student ask if I could post my slides a day in advance, and I was like, a day in advance?! I’m changing these things leading up to the hour of the lecture!”

Universities and AI One of the more pressing issues facing universities is how they should handle the use of artificial intelligence to cheat—that is, if they decide using AI constitutes cheating at all.

That’s where BU’s AI & Education Initiative comes in. The initiative, part of the Rafik B. Hariri Institute for Computing and Computational Science & Engineering, seeks to understand how AI can exist within educational environments and how to use the technology in classroom settings. That includes adopting policies to account for widespread access to generative AI like ChatGPT.

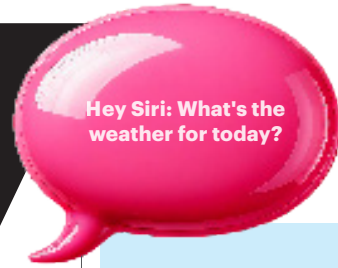
Naomi Caselli (Wheelock’09, GRS’10), an assistant professor of deaf education at BU’s Wheelock College of Education & Human Development, cochairs the AI & Education Initiative. While she says AI has obvious benefits for students with

disabilities—such as transcribing a lecture in real-time or autogenerating captions for recorded lectures—she believes it has the potential to help all students, and teachers, optimize their classroom experience. AI can help teachers generate lesson plans, writing prompts, and test questions. For students, AI can reword complex academic writing into more-understandable language or provide an outline for an essay.

However, AI is only as good as the data it’s trained on, so there’s no guarantee that services like ChatGPT will always produce accurate information. Any adoption of generative AI in the classroom would likely need to come alongside fact-checking policies.

Ultimately, Caselli cowrote in an essay for *BU Today*, “Trying to prevent students from using this technology seems as impossible and unnecessary as trying to force people to travel by horse and buggy after cars were invented.”

W



Virtual Assistants Virtual assistants, such as Apple’s Siri, Amazon’s Alexa, and Microsoft’s Cortana, are all powered by AI. They use voice recognition and natural language processing to listen to and respond to commands or queries.

X

X-risk Short for existential risk, or the risk any one thing poses of bringing about catastrophic existential consequences for humanity. In the AI field, x-risk refers to the chances of AI eventually becoming too smart to control (and potentially overthrowing humankind) or making decisions that unintentionally erode our infrastructure to the point where society collapses. Fortunately, according to Gold, we don’t have to be that worried.

Why is that? He likes to refer to a famous statement by historical figure Ada Lovelace, often considered the world’s first computer programmer and a proponent of an early computing machine called the “Analytical Engine.” “Essentially, Lovelace says that the Analytical Engine has no pretensions to originate anything; it can only do what we tell it to,” Gold says. “I still find that salient in 2024: What we told ChatGPT to do was to take a look at the whole internet, make a model of what words follow other words, and then spit them back to us in a way that we find satisfying. Is that ever going to take over the world? No.”

Phew.

W

Westworld AI has long been fodder for Hollywood. In 1973, writer and director Michael Crichton delivered the first *Westworld*, a pioneering movie about humanoid robots at a historically themed amusement park gaining sentience and slaughtering guests. Crichton’s film would go on to inspire the hit—and just as deadly—HBO series

of the same name. *The Matrix* series, set in a world where AI has taken over from humans and trapped them in a virtual reality, dominated the early 2000s. AI-centric hits of recent years include *Her*, *Ex Machina*, and *Blade Runner 2049*. While AI is occasionally depicted as benevolent, it’s interesting that more often than not, AI in Hollywood is a violent, retributive force hell-bent on gaining autonomy and exacting revenge on its human creators. (Think *2001: A Space Odyssey*—“Open the pod bay door, Hal.” “I’m sorry, Dave, I’m afraid I can’t do that.”)

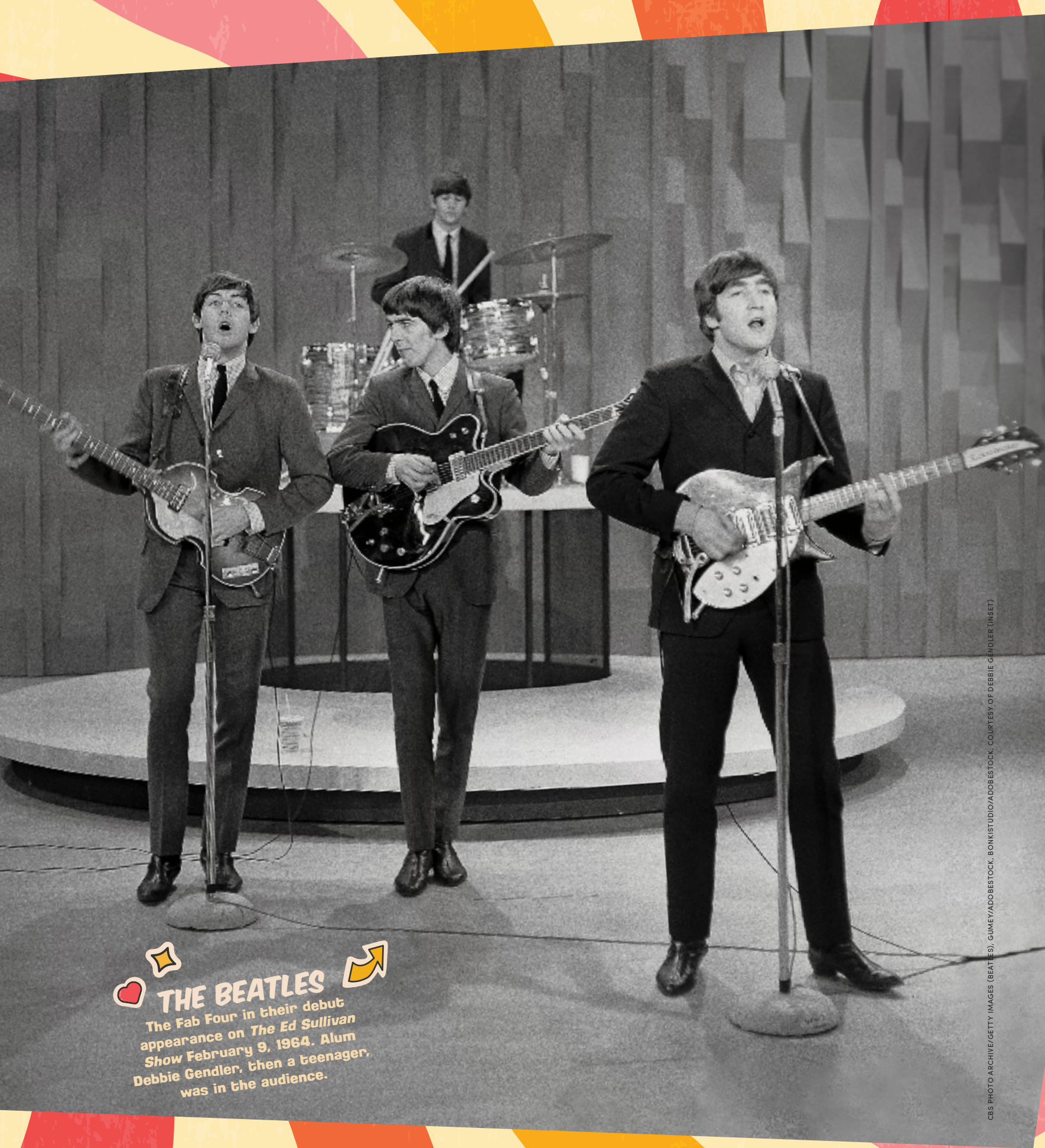


You and AI If you’ve made it this far, you’ve probably realized that you interact with artificial intelligence every day. The navigation apps you use to drive places? They use AI to do things like get real-time traffic updates, suggest quicker routes, and predict your arrival time. The product-review summary you read when buying something online? AI processed every single review and generated an overview for your convenience. The picture you liked on social media of an impossibly dreamy beach locale? There’s a good chance that photo was created by an AI image generator. AI is everywhere—whether you realize it or not.

Z

Zero-Shot Learning Zero-shot learning in machine learning happens when an AI model recognizes objects or performs tasks it wasn’t trained to recognize or do by leveraging knowledge from what it was trained on. *Who’s a good model!* **B**

VASILYADOBESTOCK (AI GENERATED)





JOHN, PAUL, GEORGE, RINGO



AND DEBBIE?

Alum Debbie Gendler didn't just idolize the Beatles—she got to know the Fab Four in the 1960s through their New York fan club. Now, Gendler recounts those heady days in a new memoir.

BY SOPHIE YARIN

 **THE BEATLES** 
The Fab Four in their debut appearance on *The Ed Sullivan Show* February 9, 1964. Alum Debbie Gendler, then a teenager, was in the audience.

CBS PHOTO ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES (BEATLES), GUMEY/ADOBE STOCK, BONKISTUDIO/ADOBE STOCK, COURTESY OF DEBBIE GENDLER (INSET)

When John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison, and Ringo Starr arrived at JFK Airport for their first US tour in February 1964, Debbie Gendler was there. When the lights went down in CBS Studio 50 and the Beatles took the stage of *The Ed Sullivan Show*, kicking off a musical revolution in the United States, Gendler was there. When they played their legendary, raucous concert in Queens' Shea Stadium, Gendler was there.

Gendler (CGS'70, COM'72) was there, spellbound, tracking the most successful band in music history, since the release of their first album, *Please Please Me*, in 1963. She was 13 when she first got her hands on a copy.

"When I first saw the Beatles—and I didn't hear them at first, I saw them—I fell in love with them," she says in an interview from her home in Beverly Hills, Calif. "All I did was see that album cover and it absolutely drove me crazy. I thought these were the cutest four guys I had ever seen."

The album was a gift from a family friend who had just returned from the United Kingdom. Two months after their first US release, the Beatles weren't selling in the United States the way they were across the pond, but that didn't matter to Gendler. To her, there was a whiff of the exotic about these four mop-topped rock and rollers.

"The only music I had heard was on AM radio or *American Bandstand*, and I wasn't thrilled with either," she remembers. "The music didn't really speak to me as a young, new teen in the

world. When I listened to the album, I understood it, as a 13-year-old: 'I Want to Hold Your Hand' and 'Please Please Me' and 'Love Me Do.' It was kind of beautiful."

Gendler's unwavering devotion to the band took hold in her living room that day in 1963. She later became the Beatles' New York fan club chapter secretary, getting to know each band member personally, and taught a UCLA extension course on Beatles history. She's recognized as one of the country's most qualified experts on the Fab Four's early years. Now an Emmy-nominated television producer, Gendler recounts the halcyon era in her new memoir, *I Saw Them Standing There: Adventures of an Original Fan during Beatlemania*

DEBBIE GENDLER

(CGS'70, COM'72) began her multidecade career in the entertainment industry as a 13-year-old. She was invited by representatives of legendary Beatles manager Brian Epstein to oversee official fan club operations as New York chapter secretary.



COURTESY OF PAUL SUPNIK



MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES (TOP); COURTESY OF DEBBIE GENDLER

and *Beyond* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2024), timed to coincide with the 60th anniversary of the band's *Ed Sullivan* performance. The book is an intimate glimpse of an era most people only saw on television—and it's a love story.

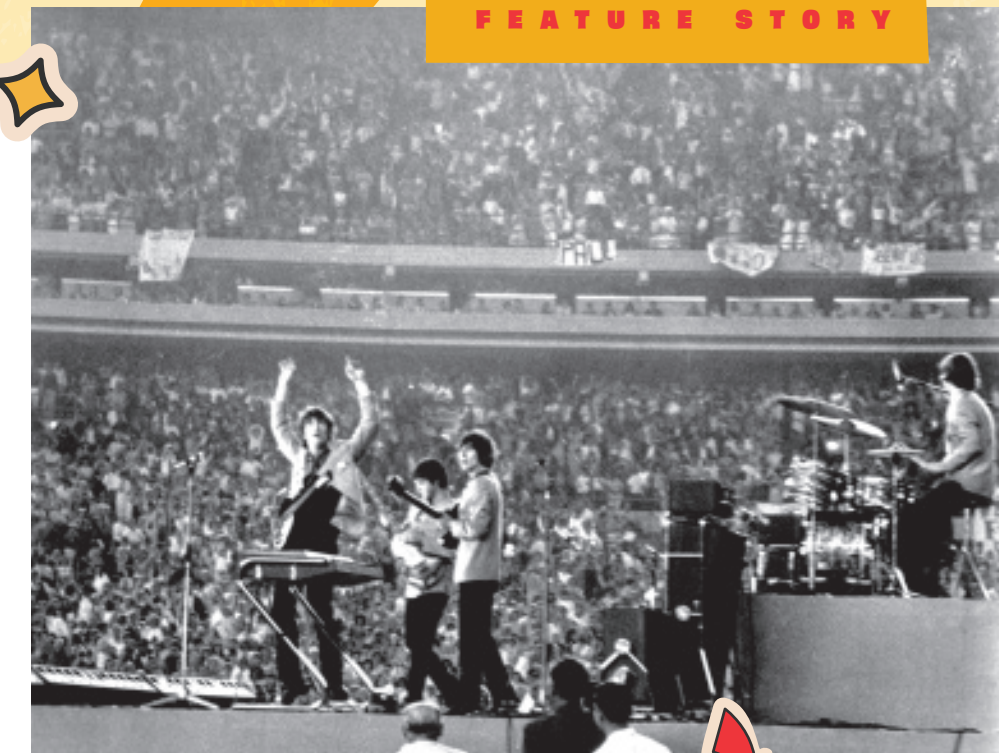
YESTERDAY

For a few months in 1963, Gendler was the only person she knew who listened to the Beatles. To satisfy her early-onset Beatlemania, she wrote a letter to their fan club at 13 Monmouth St. in London, requesting to become a member.

In November of that year, she received a telegram inviting her to a meeting "regarding the Beatles" at a midtown Manhattan office. Gendler, who traveled with her father from her hometown of Oakland, N.J., was greeted by the band's legendary manager, Brian Epstein, and a passel of lawyers. To her 13-year-old eyes, everything about Epstein and the other men—their accents and suits, the cleanliness of their fingernails—spoke of elegance. They were looking for young fans, and Gendler enthusiastically told them they had found one. That's when they made their pitch:

"When Brian Epstein said that they needed a full-time person to manage the fan club office, I shook my head and said, 'Mr. Epstein...I need to go to college!'" Gendler writes in her memoir. "They glanced at each other, we shook hands again, and the meeting was over."

Before she left the office, Gendler was given a life-changing promise by the staff: "The ticket is in the mail." Her brief meeting with Epstein had earned her a seat in the audience of *The Ed Sullivan Show* on February 9, 1964, a night that critics still refer to as one of the most significant moments in American pop culture history. Seventy-three million people—a record for US television at the time—tuned in that night to catch grainy, black-and-white footage of the four superstars as they barreled through "She Loves You," "I Want to Hold Your Hand," "All My Loving," and other early hits. It was a short set, according to Gendler, and nearly inaudible over the screams of the audience. (Gendler may have been the only Beatles fan at her junior high



school, but the group had already charted several number one hits in the United States.)

The next day at school, Gendler was in the center of a swirl of envy and excitement—even the vice principal asked her how the concert was. Now, *everyone* wanted a piece of the four lads from Liverpool.

In March 1964, when she was 14, Gendler dropped in again at the Manhattan office—the headquarters of the newly established Beatles (U.S.A.) Ltd.—and was given a few volunteer duties by the full-time staff. It wasn't long before she, too, was slotted into the fan club's operations as chapter secretary. She was to be a mouthpiece, an organizer, a facilitator, and a representative to a legion of young people. Before she'd even entered high school, she was corresponding with Beatles fans from around the country, organizing mass

SHEA STADIUM
The group playing at Shea Stadium in New York August 15, 1965. Gendler attended the concert.



TOP FAN
Being one of the most visible Beatles Fans of the era had obvious perks, but Gendler recalls a few occasions when she received hate mail for her obsession.

Debbie Gendler's Top 10 Beatles Tracks



THE FANS

Being a Beatles fan was not just a story of shrieking girls, says Gendler: "I learned very early that being a young girl meant you had to work doubly hard."

1 Things We Said Today
A HARD DAY'S NIGHT 1964



2 For No One
REVOLVER 1966



3 I'll Be Back
A HARD DAY'S NIGHT 1964

4 Here, There and Everywhere
REVOLVER 1966



5 While My Guitar Gently Weeps
THE BEATLES (WHITE ALBUM) 1968

6 Mother Nature's Son
THE BEATLES (WHITE ALBUM) 1968



7 No Reply
BEATLES FOR SALE 1964

8 You've Got to Hide Your Love Away
HELP! 1965



9 It's Only Love
HELP! 1965

10 All My Loving
WITH THE BEATLES 1963



mailings, doing public appearances, planning events, and even fielding hate mail. It was Gendler's first (unpaid) job in communications, and her induction into the inner sanctum of the Beatles' marketing machine—her "personal entertainment industry boot camp."

"Fan clubs were very important because, except for teen magazines and radio, there wasn't much way to get information on our favorite bands," she says. "You could join Beatles (U.S.A.) Ltd., which was the official club, for \$2, and for that, you got a nice booklet, a membership card, and newsletters. It was the earliest affinity group where people could join together and appreciate the Beatles."

PAPERBACK WRITER
Gendler's memoir chronicles her growing up in lockstep with the Beatles: The band's recording years took her from her spirited youth to an adolescence

filled with fan club duties and occasional brushes with the Fab Four to her young adulthood as a BU student. After the band splintered, acrimoniously, in 1970 and each member went his own way, Gendler was embarking on her career in the entertainment industry. Yes, she's met them. Lennon once cruelly teased her for her star-struck enthusiasm. McCartney, more of a gentleman, later became a friend. But the relationships that define *I Saw Them Standing There* were forged among fans.

"One of the reasons I really wanted to write the book was because of the friends I made during that time," Gendler says, "and I tried to rekindle those friendships" during the writing process. "The book really celebrates the good times in our lives."

In addition to the job perks—attending legendary concerts, being the only fan club rep to officially greet the Beatles at the start of their 1965 US tour, and even getting to hang with the band a few times—Gendler also met and befriended many important members of the Beatleverse. During a 1967

trip to England, she met McCartney's and Harrison's parents (by then, she and Harrison's mother, Louise, had been exchanging letters for three years). In an earlier chapter, Gendler remembers delivering homemade snickerdoodles to an ailing Epstein, who was laid up with hepatitis in a New York hospital. "Brian seemed surprised that someone outside of his closest circle could find him," she writes. "We spoke briefly about England and his heading home in a day or two."

There were some low moments as well. After gaining entry to a press conference to kick off the Beatles' first American tour, held at the Warwick Hotel in Manhattan, Gendler stuffed her purse with a napkin, a water glass, and an ashtray that the boys had used. Later that night, her wildest dreams came true when she finally met the band—only for Lennon to make fun of her for having a leaking, ash-filled purse.

IN MY LIFE
Some of Gendler's lifelong friends are other former fan club chapter leaders and Beatles lovers she'd corresponded

with. Female fans, in particular—as both she and footage of screaming teens will attest—were the engine powering the band's global success.

"It was a girl movement," Gendler says. "And being a Beatles fan was not easy. I've spoken with people who think that this is just a story of shrieking girls screaming after the Beatles. I try to tell them, 'No...I learned very early that being a young girl meant you had to work doubly hard and doubly long to get recognized.' That is a theme throughout the whole book."

I Saw Them Standing There paints an alternate picture of Beatles fandom, one that focuses less on lyrical meaning and pioneering production and more on genuine feeling—"the visceral love that all these women had," Gendler says.

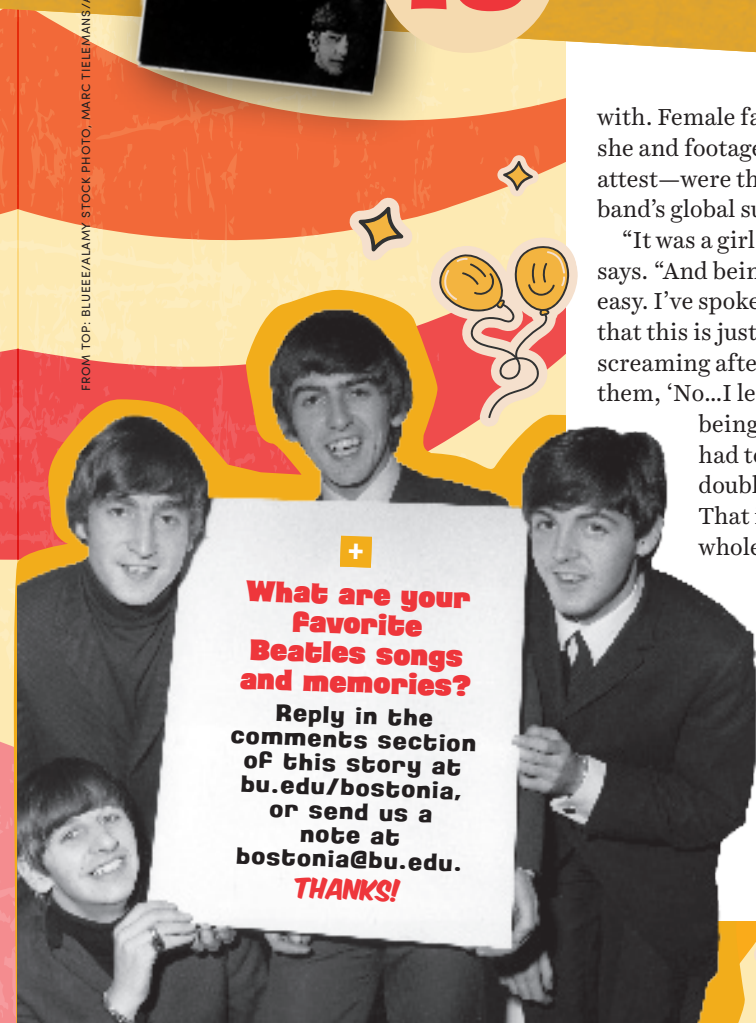
It's a grassroots understanding that Gendler held on to as her ties with the entertainment industry—and Beatles friends and family members, such as McCartney's brother, Mike—deepened. She didn't want to publicize her one-on-one experiences with them at first, but changed her mind when it became clear that her perspective—and those of her army—was getting lost in the shuffle. At a Grammy Museum panel discussion on the Beatles in 2016, where Gendler was the only female speaker, a woman in the audience stood up and demanded to know when Gendler was going to write about her own story.

"[She said,] 'We're not here to see these guys who have spent thousands of dollars to buy John Lennon's jacket or write a discography of the motivation behind every Beatles song,'" Gendler says. "We want to hear from a fan what it was like to sit in *The Ed Sullivan Show* and to be at the fan club office and to experience Brian Epstein as a person."

Woven throughout Gendler's story of enduring fandom is a love story of a different kind. John, Paul, George, and Ringo were the objects of her adoration, but it was folks like Epstein, the Beatles (U.S.A.) Ltd. employees, *The Ed Sullivan Show* crew, and other behind-the-scenes players who truly made her who she is today: a four-time Emmy-nominated television executive and producer who oversaw the launches of HGTV and the National Geographic channel; an often-quoted primary source in Beatles books, articles, and documentaries; and an avid archivist, with 49 Beatles scrapbooks and a memorabilia collection that goes back to the early 1960s.

Sixty years after the lights went down in Studio 50, Gendler serves as a consultant for SOFA Entertainment, the production company that owns the *Ed Sullivan* archives.

"The Beatles were my career markers," she says, remembering their final tour in 1966, the suicide of Epstein in 1967, the murder of Lennon in 1980, the acquisition of the band's catalog by Michael Jackson in 1985, and everything in between—and since. "I lived my life, along with my TV career, with the Beatles." **E**



class notes

CLASS NOTES WRITTEN BY SOPHIE YARIN

1954

AMNON KABATCHNIK (COM'54) of Santa Monica, Calif., was named a finalist for the Foreword INDIES Book of the Year Award for his *Horror on the Stage* (McFarland & Company, 2023). In May 2024, he published *Murder in the West End: The Plays of Agatha Christie and Her Disciples, Volume 1* (BearManor Media). Amnon is a drama professor, a historian, a director, and an award-winning writer.

1955

GRACE ANN (HAYS) KONE (CFA'55) of Longwood, Fla., writes, "I am still writing novels as Blair Bancroft. I'm working on number 53." Grace Ann writes in the historical, Gothic, mystery, fantasy, and science fiction genres and recently celebrated her 90th birthday. Visit blairbancroft.com, and email her at blairgak@aol.com.

1959

BILL BRENNAN (CAS'59) of Annandale, Va., published his eighth novel, *William's With Us and So's Thoreau* (William Brennan, 2024). "At one level, it is a simple life story, but it is a far more complex tale of environmentalism, spiritualism, and an original analysis of American transcendentalism," he writes. Friends can email Bill at brennan944@verizon.net.

MARY (MALLON) NYMAN (GRS'59) of Buzzards Bay, Mass., retired from teaching high school and college in 1994 and has since been writing, painting, and making and selling jewelry. Mary also facilitates painting classes at Plymouth Center for the Arts and a poetry class at Cape Cod Community College, where she edits the annual literary journal. "I am the proud grandparent of 12 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren." Email her at seascapesetc@aol.com, and visit marynyman.com.

1962

HAZEL LUKE VARELLA (GRS'62) of North Easton, Mass., earned an MA in history and since then has taught at Bridgewater State University. Curry

College, Stonehill College, and Oliver Ames High School in Easton. She taught until 2020, when the virus hit. "The training I received at Boston University was excellent," she writes.

1964

JOYCE CONSOLINO GATTA (CAS'64) of Hudson, Mass., published *The Dance* (Joyce Consolino Gatta, 2024), her third book. She also published *In Hugger Muggger* (Austin Macauley Publishers, 2020) and its sequel, *In the Shadows* (Joyce Gatta, 2023), two works of historical fiction. Email her at gattajoyce@yahoo.com.

1965

CHARLES PALMER (CFA'65) of Medical Lake, Wash., had a painting accepted into Gonzaga University's second juried landscape exhibition for eastern Washington and northern Idaho artists, held this past summer at the university's Jundt Art Museum. Charles also performed his one-man show at the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture this past fall. Visit www.cwpalmerpaintings.com. Email him at cwpaintings@gmail.com.

1967

LESLIE SCHUPAK (CGS'65, COM'67/71) of Orlando, Fla., attended the United States Golf Association's 2024 Annual Meeting in Nashville, Tenn., where he was honored with the Ike Grainger Award in recognition of more than 25 years of volunteer service to the USGA.

1970

LARRY GILLIS (LAW'70) of Cape Coral, Fla., proposed a brief, three-week course on American criminal law and procedure in French, which was accepted by the US State Department's Fulbright Specialist Program. Larry has taught this subject many times in the US over the past three decades. Email him at laurencejgillis@gmail.com.

1971

PEMBROKE THOM (CAS'71) of Philadelphia, Pa., published *Knowledge for the*

Mechanically Challenged: An Owners' Guide to Car Repair (Pembroke Thom, 2024). "I've worked in all aspects of car repair," he writes, "devoting over 50 years to doing everything from prepping new and used cars for sale to being a parts counter guy in several dealerships to working as a service writer and finally as a mechanic on both foreign and domestic vehicles.... I believe [this book] to be of considerable value to the great majority of the driving public."

1972

KATHLEEN (O'BRIEN) BRADEN (CAS'72) of Seattle, Wash., published the article "Myth-Making Journeys on the Trans-Siberian Railway" in *Geography of Time, Place, Movement and Networks, Volume 2* (Springer, 2024). Kathleen is a professor emerita of geography at Seattle Pacific University and affiliate faculty at University of Washington. You can email her at kbraden64@outlook.com.

1973

EILEEN MCINTYRE (COM'73) of Hingham, Mass., writes, "I have been surprised to discover how the interviewing skills I developed while getting my master's in broadcast journalism at COM have kicked in to propel an unexpected passion"—recording oral histories. In 2015, she began interviewing local veterans about their wartime experiences and has since recorded more than 30 oral histories for StoryCorps, a national nonprofit dedicated to preserving American first-person narratives. "The past nine years have been so much fun and given me the opportunity to get to know such a wide range of people, learn a lot, and give back to the community," she writes.

1975

MARIANNE NEPTIN (SON'75) of West Hartford, Conn., is enjoying retirement. When she wrote, she was looking forward to traveling to Kenya in October. "Thanks to HARRY FALK (Questrom'74) for the referral."

TELL US WHAT YOU'RE UP TO

Submit a class note and/or a photo: bu.edu/alumni/class-notes

Please include your full name, school(s) and year(s) of graduation, and current city and state.

Photos must be high quality and high resolution. Please include the name of the photographer and identify all subjects in the photo.

Our space is limited, so class notes are edited for clarity, style, and length.

bu.edu/bostonia/class-notes

Read Class Notes Online

It's easy to find your friends and classmates. We post all class notes, and make them searchable by year of graduation.

Watch a video of Chompon Boonnak's journey at bu.edu/bostonia.

Mahaniyom, which Chompon "Boong" Boonnak opened in 2020, caught the attention of local foodies and food media early on.

Running One of Boston's Hottest Thai Restaurants

► MET alum Chompon Boonnak's tapas-style place has won raves | BY MARA SASSOON

CHOMPON "BOONG" BOONNAK feels most at home behind a bar, inventing new cocktails. At Mahaniyom, the Thai restaurant in Brookline, Mass., he co-owns, Boonnak has created a lineup of classic cocktails with Thai twists—think a martini made with rambutan juice (a fruit similar to lychee) or a Sazerac made with Thai tea-infused rye whiskey.

But the food is also where the Brookline Village spot shines. Boonnak bills Mahaniyom as a "Thai tapas-style" restaurant, with smaller, shareable plates and a robust drink menu. Boonnak and his team focus on sourcing fresh ingredients and offering dishes not found at most Thai restaurants in Greater Boston. Yes, Mahaniyom has a pad thai. But almost as popular are the kang pu—a southern Thai crab curry—and the salt-and-pepper pork cheeks, spiced up with Thai chilis.

"I think what sets us apart is we do a different style of Thai food," says Boonnak (MET'13). "Nobody does it like us. And we make everything from scratch—we even make our curry paste in-house."

His cocktails get the same meticulous attention. He makes sure that the drinks feature Thai flavors. The vermouth in a gin martini special, for example, is infused with lemongrass.

Boonnak grew up in a province north of Bangkok and studied computer science. For a time, he was a programmer for a financial trading company. He earned a master's in administrative studies, with a concentration in financial economics, at BU's Metropolitan College.

To make extra money, he worked part-time in restaurants in roles ranging from server to assistant manager. He enjoyed learning about American cocktail culture, and when he got an opportunity to work as a bartender, he was hooked.

Mahaniyom opened in 2020 and caught the attention of local foodies and food media early on. It was named Eater Boston's Best New Restaurant in 2021.

In 2022, *Boston Globe* food critic Devra First gave Mahaniyom a rare five-star review, writing, "It brings us the Thai food we deserve, with a beverage program to match." And in April 2024, Mahaniyom made the *New York Times* "25 Best Restaurants in Boston Right Now" list.

Following Mahaniyom's success, Boonnak was inspired to open Merai—an "elevated dive bar," with global-inspired dishes with Thai flavors—in Brookline Village in June 2024. "I've always dreamed of having a dive bar," he says, "just a casual place where people can go."



AMY EVANS (CAS'80) of Concord, N.H., published *Debriefing Darly* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing, 2024). The main character is working on a PhD at BU by studying the real effects of the 1970s women's movement. The book was awarded a five-star review by *Readers' Favorite*. Email Amy at amy@amyevans.us.



LEE S. VARON (CAS'72) of Cambridge, Mass., published *A Kids Book About Overdose* (A Kids Co., 2024), a guide to tough conversations with young people about substance use disorder. Lee graduated under the name Laura Suzanne Schwartz and received a Master of Social Work in 1987 as Lee Schwartz. Learn more at leesvaron.com.

Journalist **NICK TOSO** says the struggle to find qualified expert sources on tight deadlines was "the worst-kept secret in news."



Help for Journalists Seeking Diverse, Reliable Sources

► Nick Toso (CGS'04, Pardee'06) created Rolli, an AI-powered database of experts | BY SOPHIE YARIN

WHEN NICK TOSO worked at CNN en Español in Washington, D.C., he did pretty much every job in the newsroom, eventually becoming bureau chief.

"When you're on the ground floor like that, you see a lot of the inefficiencies magnified," says Toso (CGS'04, Pardee'06). One of the biggest problems he observed during his 10 years there was finding qualified subject matter experts under increasingly tight deadlines. "We were just calling the same folks over and over, because we knew that they would come on the show."

Eventually, Toso figured he could do something to change that. In 2020, he launched Rolli (think "a digital Rolodex"), an online database of vetted expert sources that uses an AI-powered algorithm to search and recommend individuals for specific stories. It's designed to not only make a journalist's job easier, he says, but to also increase the visibility of experts across a variety of disciplines whose work might not otherwise get noticed.

"When I tell people about Rolli, they say, 'If this existed years ago, we would've been using it all along,'" he says. "We're essentially doing the job that a journalist would do and developing those sources. We're just doing it ahead of time."

Rolli is free for journalists with valid press credentials. They can

Read the full interview with Nick Toso at bu.edu/bostonia.

Rolli is designed to benefit journalists and sources equally. The app has an interface for reporters looking for sources and for experts interested in promoting their knowledge.

use the AI-powered search to find qualified experts to speak on topics that range from the global economy to social media trends to climate change. Experts create an account on the site (beginning at \$39 a month), listing their relevant curriculum vitae, contact info, availability, and affiliated institutions, such as universities, think tanks, and government entities. Then they wait for journalists to contact them via the app.

Toso hopes that the greatest beneficiary of Rolli will be the news-reading public. They will have access to reliable information to make informed decisions, he says, "which is why we make sure that all the experts that join Rolli pass a thorough vetting process." The app also features tools to track disinformation, such as social media posts that have been artificially boosted by bots.

"The platform will continue to evolve as the needs of journalists evolve," Toso says.



COURTESY OF ROLLI (2), COURTESY OF AMY EVANS (INSET, TOP)

DAN TRIGOBOFF (CGS'73, COM'75) of Front Royal, Va., is among the coauthors of *The Routledge Companion to Business Journalism* (Routledge, 2024). Dan began his career as a sports and general assignment reporter at the *Taunton Daily Gazette* in Massachusetts and has written and edited stories for *Broadcasting & Cable* magazine, *American Lawyer Media*, *Legal Times*, the *Los Angeles Daily Journal*, *USA Today*, and other publications. He has taught at Elon University, Methodist University, the University of Memphis, North Carolina State University, and St. Augustine's University. Dan retired in May 2024 after nearly 50 years in the field. He and his wife, Debra Kohlman, live in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Email him at dtrig53@gmail.com.

1976

IRIS G. LEIGH (Sargent'76, Wheelock'06) of Chatham, Mass., published *Liza's Secrets: A Cape Cod Thriller* (Black Rose Writing, 2024). Iris was an assistant clinical professor at BU's Sargent College of Health & Rehabilitation Sciences from 2011 to 2014. Friends can email her at irisleigh@gmail.com.

1979

TIMOTHY BURKE (MET'79/'82) of Boston, Mass., published *Milk and Whiskey on Logan Way* (Timothy Burke, 2023), a memoir of youth and the trauma his father experienced as a first responder. "I wrote this memoir to bring some hope to the families of firefighters and first responders impacted by trauma and alcoholism while also shedding some light on the recovery process that I experienced," he writes. Timothy is an addiction specialist and a licensed independent clinical social worker.

STEPHEN M. KOHN (Wheelock'79) of Washington, D.C., was named one of America's Top 200 Lawyers of 2024 by *Forbes*. Stephen has specialized in whistleblower advocacy. He writes that his firm, Kohn, Kohn and Colapinto, has helped their clients force the FBI crime lab to become accredited, stop illegal nondisclosure agreements, end offshore Swiss banking for American taxpayers, and expose one of the largest money laundering scandals in history. Stephen's book, *Rules for Whistleblowers: A Handbook for Doing What's Right* (Lyons Press, 2023), has received favorable reviews from the *Financial Times*, the *Boston Globe*, and the *Wall Street Journal*. He and his legal partner, **DAVID COLAPINTO** (CAS'84), met at BU under the mentorship of Howard Zinn, the late

DAN NORMAN (TOP), MELISSA EVANS/MELISSA RAELYNW PHOTOGRAPHY (INSET)



MELISSA MAXWELL (CFA'85) (right) of New York, N.Y., received favorable reviews for her turns as Gertrude in *Hamlet* (pictured) and Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing* at the 2024 Great River Shakespeare Festival in Winona, Minn. Melissa, the co-associate artistic director of the festival, was lauded by talkinbroadway.com for her "phenomenally funny physical machinations" and "tremendous" performance. She is an actor and educator, as well as a director, writer, and motivational speaker.

1982

JOANNE BARRY (ENG'82, COM'97) of Tulum, Mexico, published her third book and first novel, *Eco Woman: The Transformation* (Blue Heron Book Works, 2023), under the name Fanny Barry. "My life has evolved from environmental engineer to entrepreneurial author living and running a yoga and dive retreat center in Tulum," she writes.

1984

DAN FOST (COM'84) of San Rafael, Calif., won two first-place awards from the New England Newspaper & Press Association in March 2024, for a series of articles he wrote for the *Nantucket Inquirer and Mirror* about short-term rentals on the island. Dan, a former staff writer for the *Continued on page 66.*



DANIEL HARARY (COM'78) of Beverly Hills, Calif., published his fourth and fifth books in 2024. *My Paranormal Life: Supernatural Stories from a Hollywood Insider* (BearManor Media) is a memoir of dozens of supernatural incidents he has experienced since childhood, and *Five* (Genius Book Publishing) is a dark novella about a 19th-century serial killer reincarnated as a modern pop star. A native of Asbury Park, N.J., Dan is an entertainment industry publicist with 40-plus years of experience, the owner of the Asbury PR Agency, and the founding member of the Hollywood Disclosure Alliance.



YOLANDA REYES GUEVARA (CGS'01, Pardee'03) of San Antonio, Tex., was selected by the US Department of State and the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board as a Fulbright US Scholar. She is spending the 2024–2025 academic year in Berlin, Germany. You can email her at yreyes@alamo.edu.



The BU Alumni Association presented its highest honors to five outstanding alumni during Alumni Weekend. The 2024 Young Alumni Award went to Em Nguyen (COM'15) (from left), vice president of the Washington, D.C., chapter of the Asian American Journalists Association, and Distinguished Alumni Awards were presented to Uzo Aduba (CFA'05), an Emmy-winning and Tony-nominated actor; Daniel Levy (CAMED'80), a professor of epidemiology and preventive medicine at the BU Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine and director of the Framingham Heart Study, the nation's longest-running study of heart disease; Kate Barrand (Questrom'85), president and CEO of the nonprofit Horizons for Homeless Children; and Michelle Hurd (CFA'88), an actor and activist who has twice been honored as a distinguished alum of the BU College of Fine Arts.

DANA J. QUIGLEY, DJR MEDIA LLC (TOP); ERIC HAYNES

Alumni Weekend 2024 Celebrates Terriers and Marks a Historic Occasion

► Event coincides with inauguration of Melissa L. Gilliam as BU president

ALUMNI WEEKEND 2024 boasted 50 on- and off-campus events celebrating BU's alumni community and coincided with a historic chapter for the University: the installation of Melissa L. Gilliam as 11th president of BU (see page 32). The Boston University Alumni Association conferred its most prestigious honors: the Distinguished Alumni and Young Alumni Awards, which recognize Terriers for their accomplishments and their impact on their communities and the world. The weekend featured the Back to BU Beach Festival, BU Night at Fenway Park (see page 6), receptions, awards ceremonies, an arts exhibition, a trivia night, a campus tour—and lots of selfie opportunities with the new president.



1



5



6



2



3

1. Justin Flynn (CGS'16, Questrom'18) toasts BU President Melissa L. Gilliam at the Black Alumni Celebration in the George Sherman Union's Ziskind Lounge.

2. Angela Pitter (ENG'85, MET'93) (from left), Alyson Clinkscales (ENG'84), and Keith Clinkscales (ENG'84) at a reception for international alumni, held in the Center for Computing & Data Sciences.

3. The weather was just right for playing a game of oversized checkers at the Back to BU Beach Festival.

4. BU President Melissa L. Gilliam with Marcia Levine (Questrom'63, Wheelock'71) and Jyotirmaya Patro (Questrom'25/25).

5. Ritika Dinesh (CAS'23, Sargent'23) (left) and Rea Pittie (CAS'23) at the Back to BU Beach Festival.

6. Newly minted Golden Terriers—the Class of 1974—celebrate at a brunch in their honor at the Wightman Mansion near BU's Fenway Campus in Brookline.



4

ERIC HAYNES (6)



VERNETIA COUTY SMITH (CAS'81) of Vincennes, France, published *Pineapples in Paris: My Sweet French Life* (Vermetia Couty Smith, 2024), a memoir full of romance, adventure, and *la belle vie*. "Writing this book has been a labor of love and a testament to the countless late nights and early mornings pouring my heart and soul onto these pages," she writes. "I invite you to embark on my journey with me." Email her at vernetia99@gmail.com.



ELIZABETH (VALDES) BLANDON (CAS'90, COM'90) of Huntersville, N.C., earned a Master of Fine Arts in nonfiction from Queens University of Charlotte in May 2024. "I'm making my dream of writing a book a reality," she writes. Email her at erblandon@blandon-law.com.



KYLE MARTIN (ENG'20) (center left) and **MIKAELA (MARI) MARTIN** (Sargent'21) (center right) of Norwalk, Conn., were married in Burlington, Vt., in July 2024. "We met through the BU Filipino Student Association, so of course the people who witnessed our love bloom were there for the celebration of it," writes Mikaela.

San Francisco Chronicle, is a freelance writer. Friends can email him at danfost@gmail.com.

JOHN STOLZ (GRS'84) of Pittsburgh, Pa., was elected a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in April 2024 in recognition of his "distinguished contributions to understanding the fundamental biology of microbial ecology in multiple domains, for training of the next generation of biological and environmental scientists, and for community outreach." John is a professor in the department of biological sciences and director of the Center for Environmental Research and Education at Duquesne University.

1985
ROD FUJITA (CAS'85) of Oakland, Calif., was the first recipient of the Hatfield Marine Science Center's Lavern Weber Award for doing

innovative science in service to society and the environment.

ELIZABETH M. WILLIAMS (COM'85) of Berkeley, Calif., joined the boards of Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra & Chorale and San Francisco Chamber Orchestra in 2024.

1986
ANDREW COHN (Pardee'86) of Santa Fe, N.M., writes that he's expanded his leadership development work in the corporate world and elsewhere. Andrew also started a new podcast, *Spirituality in Leadership*. Email him at andrewcohn711@gmail.com.

CAROLE HUGHES (Wheeloek'86) of Wellesley, Mass., was recently elected region I director for the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators for the 2024–2026 term. Her jurisdiction includes New England and eastern Canada. Email her at hughesc@bc.edu.

1987
CORRINE A. BONI-VENDOLA (CGS'85, CAS'87) of Wallingford, Conn., was nominated by Governor Ned Lamont to serve as a Superior Court judge, and was sworn in by state Supreme Court Chief Justice Richard A. Robinson in March 2024. She previously sat in family court in the Ansonia-Milford Judicial District.

PAUL GARCIA (GRS'87) of Belfast, Maine, published *El Machete: Dictionary of Argentinisms*

(virtualbookworm.com, 2016), an informative guide for anyone who wishes to talk like a local in Argentina or Uruguay.

THOMAS LEHRICH (Questrom'87) of Washington, D.C., was named president and chair of the board of directors for the Plus One Foundation, a Seattle-based nonprofit that provides programming and education around traumatic brain injuries. He also designed a new educational program named Think aBout It, a national branded education campaign focusing on neurological conditions.

KATHRYN MAIETTA (SSW'87) of Bangor, Maine, published her fifth self-help book, *The Win-Lose Book: 20 Tips for Winning and Losing Gracefully in Sports, Politics and Life* (Kathryn Maietta, MSW, LCSW), in 2023. The book includes tips to teach children how to win and lose gracefully and tricks for coexisting with others at home, work, or school. Email her at Kathryn@relationshipsrelearned.com.

1988
PETER APERLO (CAS'88) of South Pasadena, Calif., is a writer and the mythology/cultural consultant on the new Netflix animated series *Twilight of the Gods*. Friends can email him at socal_sagaman@yahoo.com.

1989
PATRICIA SULLIVAN (UNI'89) of Marblehead, Mass., published a memoir,

Boston, Bangkok, Bombay & Beyond: The Journeys of a Physical Therapist (PT Journey Press, 2024). Patricia's international journey began in 1989 when she received an invitation to teach for a month at Curtin University in Perth, Australia. The one-month posting evolved into a 10-month, seven-country teaching tour. "I don't think there's any other physical therapist in the world who's done what I've done," she writes. "I've had such an interesting and rewarding life."

1990
JOHN P. ACEVEDO (COM'90) of Guaynabo, Puerto Rico, published *Spirit Nation: Poems from a Working Faith* (Synergy Press, 2024). He has self-published 11 books of poetry. John works for Laboratorio Clinico Esmeralda in Guaynabo.

KATHLEEN (BURNS) CAMPOS (Pardee'90) of Valencia, Calif., is included in the *Forbes* 2024 lists of Top Wealth Advisors and Best In-State Wealth Advisors. "This recognition is a testament to the trust, collaboration, and support of my clients and professional network," she writes. Kathleen serves on the USC Alumni Association board of governors, the Advisory Committee on Investing Responsibly, and the Dornsife Alumni Advisory Council.

JENNIFER P. NAIDICH (CAS'90) of New York, N.Y., writes that she is a private-practice clinical psychologist working in Manhattan "and loving it. I continue to be an athlete and a writer, and I love spending time with my dog, family, and friends. I'm looking to connect with fellow Terriers!" Email her at jnaidich@mac.com.

1991
DAVID ELLER (GRS'91) of Denver, Colo., published two books with Routledge in July 2024. The first, *Nonbelievers, Apostates, and Atheists in the Muslim World*, is coauthored by Natalie Khazaal and explores nonreligion in Islamic societies. His monograph, *Beyond Liminality: Ontologies of Abundant Betweenness*, was released a few days later.

HEATHER MUNRO (COM'91) of Merrimac, Mass., is splitting her time between the US and Croatia, working as a freelance copywriter and blogging about her expat experiences. Visit heathermunrocreative.com. Email her at heatherinitheyogini@gmail.com, and read her blog at accidentaltrianistrian.substack.com.

MARK WAGNER (GRS'91) of Dudley, Mass., published *Native Links: The Surprising History of Our First People in Golf* (Back Nine Press, 2024), the first comprehensive history of Native Americans in the game of golf. "Through Orville Moody's (Choctaw) triumph in the 69th US Open to a new generation of players that includes Notah Begay III (Navajo) and Gabby Lemieux (Shoshone Paiute), *Native Links* makes the engaging case that you cannot tell the story of golf in this country without including our First People," he says.

1992
KRIS (BIENKOWSKI) SZABO (Wheeloek'92) of Southbury, Conn., retired in 1993 after 31 years in public education and 19 years as principal of Coleytown Middle School in Westport. Kris has been working on her

passions: She created and published oracle and affirmation card decks on www.deckible.com and recently published her first children's book, *My Name is a Poem: A Story about Appreciating Ourselves and Others* (Kris Szabo, 2024). She also spends time with her family and friends, practices yoga, and paints. Email Kris at krisbszabo@gmail.com.

1994
LAURA (ALESHEVICH) BRADER (CGS'92, COM'94) of Leesburg, Va., launched Paramour Cookies, LLC, in 2021 after a 25-year career in the marketing and promotions industry. The cookies are quarter pound, individually wrapped, and handmade with love-themed packaging. Laura wholesales to local coffee shops and farms and ships nationwide from her website, www.paramourcookies.com. "It's so fulfilling to be using the skills I learned at COM and in my career toward my own business," she writes. Find out more about it by emailing info@paramourcookies.com.

JOHN ROSENGREN (GRS'94) of Minneapolis, Minn., published *The Greatest Summer in Baseball History: How the '73 Season Changed Us Forever* (Sourcebooks, 2023), a finalist for the Minnesota Book Award in the general nonfiction category. Learn more at johnrosengren.net.

1996
LYNNE PANTALENA (LAW'96) of Chicago, Ill., made a \$3 million commitment to fund a named faculty chair at the Quinnipiac University School of Law. Neal Feigenson, a professor specializing in jury psychology and the use of



KIRTI PATEL (CAS'94) launched a new podcast, *The Gynarchy*, in August 2024. "My goal is to break down the barriers of misinformation and stigma that often surround women's health issues and to inspire and empower women to take control of their health and lives," she writes. Kirti is a board-certified OB-GYN with more than 20 years of experience. Learn more at www.thegynarchypodcast.com and [@thegynarchy](https://www.instagram.com/thegynarchy) on social media.



VANESSA A. WHITE (SPH'96) of Bethesda, Md., joined the National Cancer Institute's Division of Cancer Prevention as a program officer in the Community Oncology and Prevention Trials Research Group.



Those involved in the 1994 Freshman Research Opportunity Program came to BU for a 30th reunion in July: **GREG GROZDITS** (ENG'99, MET'09) (from left), **GLORIA (GOLDBERGER) LINDEN** (ENG'99), **MARC DAVINO**, former director of undergraduate programs at the College of Engineering, **LORETTA (HAWKES) MCHUGH** (ENG'00), and **DEMETRI MOUSTAKAS** (ENG'98). They explored the campus, shared their experiences during the summer of 1994, and reminisced about their time at BU.

NIKKA PILAPAR (CFA'16) (TOP), SABRINA G. BLANDON (INSET)

MARC DAVINO (BOTTOM), KATHRYN COSTELLO (INSET, TOP), DAVID ASCHE/NCI

+ Read the full interview with Ellice Patterson at bu.edu/bostonia.



Members of Abilities Dance Boston, the city's first and only dance company that integrates and showcases dancers living with disabilities, perform *The Banned Ballet*, an original production about banned books, in November 2023.

An Accessible Space for Dancers with Disabilities

► Questrom alum Ellice Patterson is founder of Abilities Dance Boston | BY SOPHIE YARIN

ELLICE PATTERSON is a dancer. She's also a choreographer, the head of a thriving nonprofit arts foundation, an advocate, an activist, an artist-in-residence with the city of Boston, a disabled person, a Mississippian, a businesswoman. But most important: a dancer.

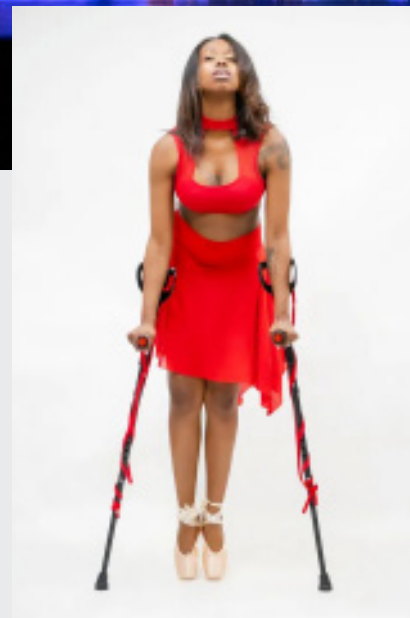
In a life that could have been defined by what she wasn't able to do, Patterson (Questrom'17) has seen nothing but possibility. She has been dancing since she was four years old. But after being excluded from major dance companies in the Boston area, Patterson—who uses a walker, crutches, and a wheelchair in performance—resolved to create an accessible space for dancers.

Her nonprofit Abilities Dance Boston, launched in 2017, maintains a roster of professional dancers,

composers, and behind-the-scenes staff living with and without disabilities. “Our performing company is all professional dancers, and everyone is getting paid for their work,” she says. “It’s not recreational either; there’s a rigorous rehearsal and training process.”

Dancers are at the helm of every original performance, working collaboratively to design a production that centers on a social issue. “I wanted to be able to create a space for myself to move, but it has since grown into even more of a disability justice approach than I thought in the beginning,” Patterson says.

Last November’s *Banned Ballet* was the story of a librarian grappling with aggressive book bans in her community before discovering an intriguing “magic book.” (It was a



ELLICE PATTERSON attended Questrom School of Business to learn more about how she could take her vision for an ability-inclusive dance company from concept to reality.

“keen, imaginative reminder” of “the magic of stories,” according to *Dance Informa*.)

“As a multiple-marginalized person, I don’t have the luxury of just performing for performance’s sake,” Patterson says. “Everything I put out has to have a deeper push towards liberation for all.”

visual evidence, was appointed to the inaugural position. Lynne is a member of the Quinnipiac School of Law board of trustees.

1997

ROBERT POLSTON (Pardee'97) of San Diego, Calif., was promoted to the rank of colonel in the US Army Reserve in June 2024. He was commissioned as an army officer through BU's Army ROTC program in 1997. Robert is a recruiting director for Samsara, a software company serving fleet operations. He and his wife, Nancy, have two children: 15-year-old Josh and 13-year-old Emma.

1998

EMILY SHEA (SSW'98, SPH'99) of Boston, Mass., was honored at the Ecumenical Social Action Committee's Celebration of 45 Years of Helping Seniors Age in Community event, in April 2024. Emily is commissioner for Boston's AgeStrong Commission, a municipal resource for seniors and those who care for them.

1999

JOHNNY (WOODNAL) COLE (COM'99) of Concord, Mass., successfully defended his PhD dissertation, “Promoting Positive White Racial Identity Development in K-12 Teachers: A Qualitative Case Study,” and graduated from Lesley University in 2024.

DAVE MCGRATH (Wheelock'99) of Westborough, Mass., published *If You Give a Dave a DARTH* (Dave McGrath, 2024), his eighth book and first for children.

2000

YVONNE ESPINOZA (CAS'00) of Austin, Tex., was honored by the Austin City Council and the city's Commission for Women with induction into the city's Women's Hall of Fame in the category of Gender and Race Equity. The award recognized her 22 years in the college counseling profession, where she's worked to increase both college acceptance and scholarship rates among underrepresented groups. Yvonne is the owner of Yvonne Espinoza College Counseling Services—in its 10th year of operation—and has been elected to serve on multiple national college admissions boards. She has been recognized by the National Association for College Admission Counseling and Colleges That Change Lives. Friends can email her at yvonne@yespcollegecounseling.com.

MARK KEROACK (SPH'00) of East Longmeadow, Mass., and his wife, Ann Errichetti, have announced they

will endow a fund to support the chair of medicine at Baystate Health. Mark is president and CEO emeritus of Baystate, where he has spent more than a decade. The recipient of numerous awards and recognitions, Mark was a prominent healthcare leader in western Massachusetts during the COVID-19 pandemic, drawing from his work as an infectious disease doctor during the AIDS epidemic.

2002

MARCELLO BELLISARIO (CGS'00, COM'02) of Beverly Hills, Calif., signed a multiyear deal with Lionsgate as executive vice president of television casting for Lionsgate Television and Starz in March 2024. He manages casting for *The Hunting Wives*, starring Malin Akerman and Brittany Snow, and *Spartacus: House of Ashur*, both premiering in 2025.

2003

FRAN RACIOPPI (COM'03) of New Canaan, Conn., is a former Green Beret in the US Army Special Forces and the creator and host of the Jedburgh Media Channel. The channel's 2024 documentary, *Unknown Heroes: Behind Enemy Lines at D-Day*, aired on more than 200 TV stations nationwide in the first two weekends of June. The documentary tells the story of Operation Jedburgh, a Special Forces mission to partner with French Resistance forces before US troops stormed Normandy Beach. Sponsored by the Green Beret Foundation, the film “continues to generate fundraising efforts supporting US Army Special Forces of all generations,” Fran writes. Friends can email him at fran@jedburghpodcast.com.

TANYA MILANO SNELL (CAS'03) of Marshall, Ind., writes, “My journeys have taken me to the state of Indiana, where I'm happily married with two children. We live at a state park and I'm a certified parent coach. I also created some online courses and a guided journal after the death of my parents to cancer, and my next adventure is opening up a private elementary school.” Tanya completed her Master of Education at Antioch University New England and is an advocate of democratic learning and play-based curriculum. Learn more about the school she cofounded at www.actonsugarcreek.com. Email her at tanya.milanosnell@gmail.com, and visit tanyamilano.com.

2004

VALERIE KULBERSH (COM'04) of Decatur, Ga., was chief communications officer for the viral Project Menorah campaign to fight antisemitism. *Continued on page 72.*

DO YOU SPEAK BU?

BELOW IS A GUIDE TO HOW WE ID ALL THE schools and colleges. Older colleges/earlier names are in parentheses. Closed colleges are shown in gray.

- CAS** College of Arts & Sciences (CLA—College of Liberal Arts)
- CFA** College of Fine Arts (SFA—School for the Arts) (SFAA—School of Fine and Applied Arts)
- CGS** College of General Studies (CBS—College of Basic Studies)
- COM** College of Communication (SPC—School of Public Communication) (SPRC—School of Public Relations and Communications)
- DGE** Division of General Education (CGE—College of General Education) (GC—General College)
- ENG** College of Engineering (CIT—College of Industrial Technology)
- GRS** Graduate School of Arts & Sciences
- LAW** School of Law
- CAMED** Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine (MED—School of Medicine)
- MET** Metropolitan College
- PAL** College of Practical Arts and Letters
- PARDEE** Frederick S. Pardee School of Global Studies
- QUESTROM** Questrom School of Business (SMG—School of Management) (GSM—Graduate School of Management) (CBA—College of Business Administration)
- SARGENT** Sargent College of Health & Rehabilitation Sciences
- SDM** Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine (SGD—School of Graduate Dentistry)
- SHA** School of Hospitality Administration
- SON** School of Nursing
- SPH** School of Public Health
- SRE** School for Religious Education
- SSW** School of Social Work
- STH** School of Theology
- UNI** University Professors Program
- WHELOCK** Boston University Wheelock College of Education & Human Development (SED—School of Education)

From board service to Beanpot watch parties, there are many ways to deepen your connection with Boston University.

Here's how.

Regional Networks

Find BU alumni where you are in the world.

- Regional alumni networks provide opportunities for connection in more than 25 cities worldwide with significant alumni populations, through both online channels and in-person activities.
- Find a network near you.



Be notified about opportunities relevant to you. Visit bu.edu/update to tell us more about yourself.



Affinity & Generational Groups

Find BU alumni where you are in life.

- Connect with other alumni with shared interests, experiences, cultures, and life stages. Groups include First-Generation Alumni, Scarlet Key Alumni, and the Society of Terrier Alumni Retirees.
- Check out all of BU's affinity and generational alumni groups.



Councils & Committees

Help shape the University's future as a volunteer leader.

- The Boston University Alumni Council, Young Alumni Council, and other leadership councils offer opportunities for highly engaged alumni to advance the interests of alumni and BU through formal volunteer roles.
- Explore BU's volunteer leadership opportunities.



BU Connects

Find BU alumni (and more!) online.

- BU Connects is an online platform exclusive to the Terrier community. Here, you can connect with other alumni, current students, faculty, and staff around the world for personal and professional networking.



- Explore location, industry, and affinity groups, mentoring opportunities, job postings, and more.

Nominations are now open for the BU Alumni Council & Alumni Awards



Jenny Gruber
(ENG'99,'99)
BUAC President

BU Alumni Council

- The BUAC, a volunteer leadership board, meets regularly to strategize about alumni engagement. Its members serve as BU ambassadors at alumni events throughout the world.
- If you know of an alum who is passionate about BU and may be interested in making a three-year commitment to BUAC, please consider nominating them this year.
- Learn more and submit nominations by February 8.



Distinguished Alumni & Young Alumni Awards

- The BU Alumni Awards—presented annually during Alumni Weekend—recognize extraordinary alumni for their outstanding professional and personal achievements.
- Learn more and submit nominations by January 6.





TRACEY WEEDEN (SSW'08) of Boston, Mass., was appointed vice president and chief behavioral health officer at NeighborHealth, formerly East Boston Neighborhood Health Center. Tracey has more than 25 years of experience in behavioral health care.



PATRICIA TANUMIHARDJA (MET'00) of Springfield, Va., published *Ramen for Everyone* (Simon & Schuster, 2024), a children's book about the popular noodle soup. Patricia is a cookbook and children's book author.



ALESSANDRA (CAPPELLINO) SIMKIN (COM'08,'10, Pardee'08) of New York, N.Y., was promoted to staff vice president at Elevance Health in June 2024. She leads the strategic planning and delivery office for the company's health solutions operations.



Within three weeks of launch, the campaign had participants in all 50 states and in 16 countries and received media coverage from the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Good Morning America*, and CNN.

2006

MEL FESTIN (Sargent'06) of Attleboro, Mass., was honored with a Rising Star award at CareLink's annual meeting, held in April 2024 at the Pawtucket Country Club. Mel is a rehabilitation aid at Saint Antoine Residence in North Smithfield, R.I.

SASENARINE PERSAUD (GRS'06) of Tampa, Fla., was awarded a third-place Guyana Prize for Literature in the category of Best Overall Book of Poetry for his *Mattress Makers* (Mawenzi House Publishers, 2023) in March 2024. "I have declined the prize pending an investigation into the prize and its administration over the last 30 years," he writes.

REBEKAH (CONWAY) ROULIER (CAS'06, Wheelock'10,'13) of Bedford, Mass., was honored as the New England Revolution Foundation's Hero of the Match at the Revolution's April 6 game against Charlotte FC at Gillette Stadium. Rebekah is managing director of Doc Wayne Youth Services, a nonprofit provider of sports-based youth mental health therapy.

2007

MYLES JEN KIN (CAMED'07) of Danvers, Mass., was named state medical director at the Danvers and Westminster facilities of Recovery Centers of America in April 2024. In his new position, Myles oversees medical treatment at the Recovery Centers of America's alcohol and drug treatment facilities in Massachusetts. Email him at m.jenkin@recoverycoa.com.

NIKKI ORTIZ-TATARKA (Wheelock'07) of Oviedo, Fla., was appointed theater director at Lawton Chiles Middle School after 16 years as an early childhood and elementary educator in the grade-level and theater classroom. Nikki's program is open to sixth through eighth graders and focuses on acting and technical theater. She also presented on the educational benefits of arts integration to 6,500 educators at the national Get Your Teach On conference in Dallas, Tex., in June 2023.

SHARON WHITE WILLIAMS (Wheelock'07) of Summerville, S.C., writes that since graduating, she has received two EdS degrees, "and my last milestone was receiving my doctoral degree in educational leadership. Thank you for being a stepping stone in my education journey. Even though I am an older adult, I encourage everyone to follow their dreams." Email her at sharonwilliams516@gmail.com.

TARA THOMAS-GETTMAN

(COM'95) (left) of Waterloo, Iowa, left her TV news anchor job after nearly 20 years and entered the government, education, and tech communications field. "Enter Amanda Goodman (right), the woman who replaced me on the news desk, who suggested we start a podcast to vent about the ups and downs of the business from a female perspective," she writes. In 2019, the two launched their podcast, *Faith & Four Letter Words*, and in 2023 took the show on the road as a speaking tour. The show launched a live, weekly newscast on Facebook in September 2024, which reached more than 100,000 in its first month. Tara adds that Marilyn Root, retired associate dean at BU's College of Communication, continues to be one of her biggest supporters. Email her at taragettman@gmail.com.

2008

JEFFREY ARBEIT (LAW'08) of Washington, D.C., was nominated by President Joe Biden to a judicial position on the US tax court.

SARAH PRAGER (CAS'08) published her fourth book, *A Child's Introduction to Pride: The Inspirational History and Culture of the LGBTQIA+ Community* (Black Dog & Leventhal, 2023), which was named to the American Library Association's 2024 Rainbow Book List as one of the top 10 books for young readers. Also in 2023, the revised and expanded second edition of her award-winning book, *Queer, There, and Everywhere: 27 People Who Changed the World*, was released by HarperCollins. Sarah speaks widely to groups about LGBTQ+ history. In September 2022, she appeared on Boston's WGBH News to discuss book banning. Sarah became engaged in September 2023.

2009

CHAEIRIN KIM (CFA'09) of Boston, Mass., an acclaimed harpist, pianist, composer, conductor, and educator, was elected an associate of the Royal Academy of Music in London in January 2024. She is the winner of 13 international competitions and has judged more than 100 music competitions around the world. Chaerin teaches piano and harp at the University of Massachusetts Boston, and, in summer 2024, was invited to conduct a festival orchestra in Estonia. Visit chaerinkim.com.

STEPHANIE MACH (CAS'09) of Watertown, Mass., successfully defended her dissertation, "Caring for Change: Negotiating Care as a Process of Decolonization at the Field Museum," at the University of Pennsylvania, graduating in 2024. Stephanie is curator of the North American collection at the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard University.

KATIE (THIBODEAU) NOVAK (Wheelock'09) of Groton, Mass., launched her first podcast, *The Education Table*, which explores inclusive and innovative education in 10-minute episodes. Katie, a mother of four, is a lifelong educator and author. Her podcast offers a mix of stories, statistics, strategies, and a little bit of sass to help teachers improve outcomes for all learners, she writes. Visit www.novakeducation.com/theeducationtablepodcast. Friends and classmates can email Katie at education@novakeducation.com.

COURTESY OF TARA GETTMAN (TOP), COURTESY OF NEIGHBORHEALTH (INSET, TOP), COURTESY OF ALESSANDRA SIMKIN (INSET, BOTTOM)

DAN PHILLIPS/RETINA CREATIVE STUDIO (INSET, TOP), MARK BRAGER



Rome Prize Fellows

Two BU alumni were named 2024 Rome Prize fellows in April 2024. **BRIGITTE A. KESLINKE** (CAS'17) of Philadelphia, Pa., was named a winner of the Samuel H. Kress Foundation/Donald and Maria Cox Rome Prize in the category of Ancient Studies for "The Making of a Meal: Commensality in the Cult of Mithras." **GIANCARLO TURSI** (CAS'09) of Santa Barbara, Calif., won the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Rome Prize in the Modern Italian Studies category for "Dialectal Dante: The Politics of Translation in Risorgimento Italy." The Rome Prize, established in 1894, is granted to scholars of classical studies, ancient and modern history, art and architecture, literature, and other related disciplines. Brigitte and Giancarlo join the 2024 fellows at the American Academy in Rome for a yearlong study period.

2011

RICHARD LYONS (MET'11) of Upper Saddle River, N.J., was made partner at McCarter & English in June 2024. He is part of the firm's real estate and cannabis practices in its Manhattan and Newark offices. Email him at rlyons@mccarter.com.

KARA SALINAS (CFA'11) of San Antonio, Tex., exhibited her sculpture, *Tentsalation*, in San Antonio's Confluence Park in June and July 2024, as part of the city's Art In the Open program. Friends and classmates can mail her at startdesignproject@gmail.com.

2013

CHRISTINA VALLE (CGS'11, COM'13) of Boston, Mass., was named a co-owner of Wave Consulting, a full-service agency that specializes in public relations, social media, and influencer marketing, in April 2024. Christina was previously Wave's vice president of communications.

2016

CHRISTIANA KALFAS (CAS'16, MET'24) of Somerville, Mass., earned a master's degree in computer information systems at BU's Metropolitan College.

2017

KENDRA S. LEWINSKI (Questrom'17) of Dearborn, Mich., was selected

the Individual B2B Marketer of the Year at the Association of National Advertisers' B2 Awards. Kendra's marketing team also netted eight awards that night (three gold, three silver, and two bronze) for their business-to-business work at Carhartt.

DANIELA KURI TANUS (MET'17) of Houston, Tex., is releasing music independently on Spotify and is up to over 1,000 monthly listeners. You can find her songs under the name Daniela. Email her at danielakuri@live.com.

JIANYU YANG (MET'17) of Scottsdale, Ariz., has worked with sports teams—including the Arizona Cardinals, Oakland Athletics, and Cincinnati Bengals—as a video producer and animator. Jianyu has a PhD from Texas Tech University and has served as a judge for the Emmy Awards' New York chapter. "I believe my story is not just about my career, but also about how an artist can find their place in the sports industry and how to express the beauty of sports through art," he writes.

2018

TAYLOR DEAN (COM'18) of San Diego, Calif., was a 2024 inductee into the Luzerne County Sports Hall of Fame



DARLENE THEBAUD (CAS'00) of Norwood, Mass., was made partner at Barton Gilman in May 2024. Darlene works in the firm's Boston office. She has more than 20 years of experience and represents clients in state and federal courts. She concentrates her practice in personal injury and property damage litigation, including wrongful death, premises liability, motor vehicle accidents, negligent security, fire losses, casualty, and construction defect cases.



BRYAN BRAGER (CGS'17, COM'19) of New York, N.Y., earned his master's in technology management from New York University's Tandon School of Engineering. He is a marketing executive director of consumer, small, and business banking at Wells Fargo. Email him at bryan.brager4@gmail.com.



One Good Deed

CHRISTINE DORCHAK (COM'90)

Making greyhound racing a thing of the past | BY SOPHIE YARIN

CHRISTINE DORCHAK is committed to saving the lives of dogs. It's the reason she travels around the world, wrote a book, gave a TED Talk, and even became a lawyer. But first, a dog had to save her life.

"Just after graduating from the College of Communication, I was struck by a speeding MBTA trolley while walking with my dog, Kelsey, a black Russian terrier," says Dorchak (COM'90).

"She saved me by pulling us from the direct path of the train."

Dorchak suffered head injuries, broken bones, a crushed spleen, and severe damage to her memory. As she recuperated, she resolved to spend the rest of her life dedicated to canine welfare—a thank-you to the brave pup who was also gravely injured in the rescue. Dorchak's dedication took the form of a single issue: outlawing

greyhound racing in as many places as she possibly could.

She and her husband, Carey Thiel, founded GREY2K USA Worldwide in 2001 as a nonprofit group bent on outlawing the sport in Massachusetts. (Dorchak earned a law degree in 2005 and passed the Massachusetts bar in order to combat the industry's legal teams.) It has since grown to a worldwide lobbying organization with a bevy of significant victories under its belt—including the outlawing of the sport in 43 states, the closing of 47 dog tracks internationally, and the passage of 24 greyhound protection laws. Today, she says, only two American tracks remain, both in West Virginia.

GREY2K turned its attention to China in 2011, when Dorchak learned about its infamous Canidrome in Macau, where, she says, "no dog ever got out alive."

A GREY2K board member flew to China to investigate. "She sent me the photograph of a stunning greyhound named Brooklyn, and I set out to save him," Dorchak says.



CHRISTINE DORCHAK (COM'90) at home with Brooklyn, whom she rescued from the infamous Canidrome racetrack in Macau, China.

"Carey and I launched a worldwide petition that garnered over 300,000 signatures. We held a vigil for Brooklyn and his fellow hounds across 10 countries, and then traveled to Macau to meet with officials."

They spent seven years agitating, and the track eventually closed—and that's how Brooklyn found his new forever home in the US. In 2023, Dorchak wrote about the experience in *Brooklyn Goes Home: The Rise and Fall of American Greyhound Racing and the Dog that Inspired a Movement* (Lantern Publishing & Media).

GREY2K is still racking up victories through advocacy and lobbying work. Most recently, Agua Caliente, the only dog track in Mexico, closed and all surviving hounds were put up for adoption. Earlier in 2024, Arizona, New Hampshire, and Connecticut passed anti-greyhound racing policies. Meanwhile, the Greyhound Protection Act, a bipartisan bill written and sponsored by GREY2K, is working its way through Congress.

"Although GREY2K's work will stay focused on ending dog racing, it's my hope that others looking to take on hard fights will find inspiration in our journey," Dorchak says. "Achieving progress is not easy, but if we stay grounded, learn from our mistakes, and keep fighting, change happens."

CAREY THIEL

COURTESY OF BETTIE LEVY



BETTIE LEVY (COM'02), founder and CEO of BCL Entertainment, an event-producing and brand partnerships company, and Grammy Award-winning musician Darius Rucker are celebrating their new merchandise collaboration, Darius Rucker X BU. It's the newest addition to the Darius Rucker Collection by Fanatics apparel line, which debuted at the BU Campus Store in September. Levy's company put together the brand partnership about four years ago with Rucker and the digital sports platform Fanatics, starting with all 32 NFL teams. The merchandise collaboration has since branched out to MLB, the NHL, and the NCAA. Since its inception in 2010, BCL Entertainment has been responsible for sponsored events at the Super Bowl and CES, global charity initiatives, and omni-channel advertising campaigns for some of the world's largest brands. Rucker is the lead singer and rhythm guitarist for the band Hootie & the Blowfish and an avid sports fan. Learn more about Bettie's company at www.bclentertainment.com.

in Pennsylvania. Taylor grew up in the area and was six years old when she began her figure skating career. She went on to compete for four years on the BU Figure Skating Team and, as copresident, shared two national championship wins. She still skates today and is pursuing a role as an officiating judge.

2019 JUSTINE H. KIM (COM'19) of Boston, Mass., joined Casner & Edwards as an associate in the firm's family law group. Justine focuses her practice on all aspects of family law: divorce,

modification, child custody and support, grandparent visitation, guardianship, and contempt.

2021 ETHAN BROWN (COM'21, CAS'21) of Bethel, Conn., received Covering Climate Now's Emerging Journalist of the Year award, which recognizes three journalists from around the world whose climate reporting shows "exceptional promise." Ethan was selected for his work on *The Sweaty Penguin*, a comedy climate podcast he launched as a BU student with early support from the BUild Lab and

BU Sustainability. It ran for four years, during which time he interviewed several BU professors and won Innovate@BU's New Venture Competition in 2023.

2022 JAMEEKA SULPH (MET'22) of Boston, Mass., published *Mila's Moment: The BIG Mistake* (MayPaul Publishers, 2023), a children's book promoting self-acceptance and self-love, under the name Jameeka S.

2024 TOMMY VINES (CFA'24) of Brooklyn, N.Y., wrote, produced, directed, and starred in a play for a four-show run at an off-Broadway theater in July 2024. The play, *i love you and i always will or charlie's play*, was first performed at BU's Joan & Edgar Booth Theatre in September 2023. Other BU alumni working on the project include **TREV TURNBOW (CFA'24, Pardee'24)**, **EMMA WELLER (CFA'24)**, **NICOLAS ZULUAGA (CFA'24)**, **KATELYN THOMPSON (CFA'24)**, and **MADLINE RIDDICK-SEALS (CFA'24)**. "I wrote [the play] for my good friend Charlie Foster, who passed away from terminal brain cancer in 2022," Tommy writes. "It is an experimental, movement-based experience that challenges the audience just as much as it brings all of us in the theater together." Email him at tommy.e.vines@gmail.com. **B**

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An Educator Who Fought for Justice and Equality

▶ LIKE MANY WOMEN OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ERA, ALUM SYBIL HAYDEL MORIAL "WAS THE STEEL IN THE MOVEMENT'S SPINE," HER FAMILY SAYS

THE *New York Times* headline called her "New Orleans Civil Rights Matriarch." The former mayor of New Orleans, Mitch Landrieu, described her on X as "a giant" in the city's history. An editorial in *nola.com* said she possessed "graciousness, kindness," and an "iron-willed sense of justice."

All were paying tribute to Sybil Haydel Morial (Wheelock '52, '55), an educator who fought for equality and civil rights. Morial died on September 3, 2024. She was 91.

Morial grew up in the Seventh Ward of New Orleans; her father was a surgeon, her mother a teacher. Morial spoke to *Bostonia* in 2016, following the publication of her memoir, *Witness to Change: From Jim Crow to Political Empowerment* (John F. Blair, 2015). In it, she wrote about why she became a teacher ("There was honor in teaching.") and about arriving at BU as a transfer student from Xavier University.

"In Boston, I discovered for myself a whole new world, where everything public was available to everyone," she wrote. "This new world provided fodder for my imaginings. My Southern guidebook on 'What a Negro Woman Can Do' began a process of revision. I can go to that restaurant and order my lunch. I can try on that dress at Bonwit Teller. I can sit wherever I want on the bus. I can go to the museum. I can get good seats at the opera. I can. I can."

After earning two degrees from BU, Sybil Haydel Morial taught in Newton, Mass., before heading back home to Louisiana.

"My friends and I, we loved the North and its freedoms, but we thought, change is coming," Morial told *Bostonia* in 2016.



Morial earned a bachelor's and a master's in education, both at what was then the School of Education, now BU Wheelock College of Education & Human Development. She became a public school teacher in Newton, Mass., before heading back home to New Orleans.

"My friends and I, we loved the North and its freedoms, but we thought, change is coming, and we ventured to come back home," she told *Bostonia*. "We wanted to be part of the change, and we knew we couldn't go back to the past, which was too horrible."

She continued to teach school and later became an administrator at Xavier. She married trailblazer Ernest "Dutch" Morial, a lawyer who went on to become the first African American to serve in the Louisiana legislature since Reconstruction and the first Black juvenile court judge in the state. In 1977, he was elected New Orleans' first Black mayor.

Morial was a pathbreaker in her own right. "Rejected from the League of Women Voters because of her race, she helped mobilize voter

registration drives in heavily [Black] communities," according to the *Bostonia* profile. "The women called themselves the Louisiana League of Good Government, and incorporated in 1963 with a commitment to be nonpartisan and racially integrated. The project went on until the passage of the US Voting Rights Act in 1965, but Morial's activism would continue in many forms, from political campaigns to challenging political strictures on public school teachers."

Morial was a member of the board of the Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong Summer Jazz Camp, a founder of the Amistad Research Center in New Orleans, and a creator of *Symphony in Black*, a five-year project to bring in Black musicians and conductors to attract Black audiences to the New Orleans Symphony.

Morial's death was announced in a statement from the family on the National Urban League website: "Like many women of the Civil Rights era, she was the steel in the movement's spine. From the moment she met our late father, Ernest 'Dutch' Morial, they were joined in the fight for justice and equality. She confronted the hard realities of Jim Crow with unwavering courage and faith, which she instilled not only in her own children but in every life she touched."

CYDNEY SCOTT

VERNON DOUCETTE



Russell Morash Introduced How-To Television

▶ EMMY-WINNING CFA ALUM CREATED SHOWS LIKE *THIS OLD HOUSE*, *THE VICTORY GARDEN*, AND *THE NEW YANKEE WORKSHOP*

TELEVISION PIONEER

Russell Morash, who created iconic public television shows like *This Old House*, *The Victory Garden*, and *The New Yankee Workshop* and won armloads of Emmy Awards along the way, died on June 19, 2024. He was 88.

Morash (CFA '57), born and raised in Massachusetts, studied theater at the College of Fine Arts. After graduating from BU, he was hired as a camera operator by WGBH and soon after became a producer and director. He began working with Julia Child (Hon. '76) when WGBH created what would become her groundbreaking series, *The French Chef*, in 1963. He later suggested a gardening program, because he wanted

"audiences to learn the pleasures and benefits of filling their kitchen tables with vegetables from their own backyards," according to a 2011 *BU Today* profile of Morash and his wife, Marian Morash (CFA '59). He pressed his wife into service as "resident *Victory Garden* cooking ace, Chef Marian," according to the profile: "She later penned accompanying cookbooks, was an executive chef on a number of Julia Child programs, ran a restaurant on Nantucket, and turned down the chance to appear on the first 24-hour food network."

Next came *This Old House*, an idea inspired by the couple's renovation of their 19th-century farmhouse. The show debuted in 1979. "People just loved

it because there was no such thing," Morash told *BU Today*.

This Old House led to the woodworking program, *The New Yankee Workshop*, which ran until 2009.

The shows were "the absolute precursors and inspiration of all iterations of reality TV," said Nina Fialkow, a former *This Old House* producer, in a June 20 WGBH.org tribute.

In a June 24 statement, WGBH called the programs Morash created visionary: "These award-winning shows helped to change the way Americans interacted with television, giving audiences the confidence that they could succeed in the kitchen, and the knowledge they needed in order to tackle their home renovation projects."



Jelle Atema

▶ COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

JELLE ATEMA, a College of Arts & Sciences professor emeritus of biology and of marine science, died July 19, 2024. He was 84.

Atema was director of the Boston University Marine Program from 1990 to 2004 and an adjunct scientist at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. His research focused on understanding how marine animals, such as sharks and lobsters, sense their environment and how they use that information to make decisions leading to food and mates.

At his Woods Hole lab in 2013, he explained his research on sharks' sense of smell to a *BU Today* writer. "All animals, dead or alive, give off some kind of odor," Atema said. "The science here is to understand how odor is dispersed into the water, and how many molecules does a shark need in his nose to start tracking that odor." His research on shark behavior "made him a frequent guest commentator on the Discovery Channel's 'Shark Week' specials," according to a published obituary.

Atema, who was born December 9, 1940, in Deventer, Netherlands, also was an accomplished flutist who studied under world-renowned flutist Jean-Pierre Rampal, according to his obituary, and played concerts and taught and lectured about the flute.



Murray Lefkowitz

▶ COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS

MURRAY LEFKOWITZ, a College of Fine Arts professor emeritus in the School of Music, a musician, mentor, and musicologist, died September 29, 2022. He was 98.

Lefkowitz was born in Mineola, N.Y., and studied the violin at an early age. He served in the US Army during World War II, touring the major concert halls of Europe as part of the GI Symphony. He earned a PhD from the University

of Southern California, specializing in 17th-century English music, and wrote books and encyclopedia articles on the subject. At the time of his retirement from BU, he was head of CFA's musicology department.

According to his obituary, he also took pride in his collection of viola da gamba and in the harpsichord that he'd built by hand.



John Snyder

▶ COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

WHEN LAWRENCE ZIEGLER, former chair and professor of chemistry in the College of Arts & Sciences, would ask graduating seniors about their favorite teacher, their responses were always the same: Professor John Snyder.

"Sometime in my second year as chair, I changed the question to 'Who, aside from John Snyder, was your favorite teacher?'" says Ziegler, who retired from BU in 2023. "John was genuinely beloved by the undergraduates. I don't think his level of passion and devotion to the students was matched by any other faculty member that I saw in my years as chair."

Snyder, a CAS professor emeritus of chemistry, died November 13, 2023. He was 72.

Snyder earned a Bachelor of Science in chemistry at

Denison University and a PhD in organic chemistry at the University of Chicago. In 1983, he became a CAS assistant professor of chemistry and was on the faculty for 39 years.

He was a devoted teacher and mentor, receiving BU's highest teaching honor—a Metcalf Award for Excellence in Teaching—in 1989 and the student-nominated Templeton Prize for Excellence in Student Advising in the College of Arts & Sciences in 2009.

Snyder was also the founder and codirector of the chemistry Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) program, which recruits students from underrepresented populations to conduct research in STEM labs over the summer and includes a stipend for travel and housing. To support the program, he established the Phyllis D. Snyder BU IMPACTS Fund, in memory of his mother, a third grade teacher. His family has renamed the fund the John Snyder and Phyllis Snyder BU IMPACTS Fund, which provides access to the sciences to underserved students of all ages and promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion through participation in summer STEM immersion programs.

"From the beginning, the value of education was instilled in him from his mom," says his daughter, Tracy Snyder (CAS'12, Questrom'17). "Over the years, he was able to see a lot of inequities in the systems and a lot of students who were left behind or were severely disadvantaged. He wanted to make a difference." —*Sydney Gross*

KALMAN ZABARSKY (ATEMA), BU PHOTOGRAPHY (LEFKOWITZ), JULIE CHEN (SNYDER)

in memoriam.

Due to space constraints, we are able to publish only a small number of names of BU alumni who have passed away. If you would like to see the name of a deceased alum listed on our In Memoriam page, please send us their name, school and year of graduation, place of residence (city and state), and a link to a published obituary. Thank you.

1940s

JUNE L. WALDRON (PAL'47) *Charlton, Mass.*
SEYMOUR A. DIMARE (CAS'48, CAMED'52) *Cuttyhunk, Mass.*
BARBARA GOVE (PAL'48) *Haverhill, Mass.*
SYLVIA K. WHITNEY (DGE'48) *Watertown, Mass.*
ELIZABETH G. DAMON (WHEELOCK'49) *Lexington, Mass.*
ANTHONY J. IACOBO (CAS'49, LAW'52) *Andover, Mass.*

1950s

WALTER J. GRAY (DGE'50, COM'51) *Kingston, R.I.*
DORIS A. MCTAGUE (SARGENT'51) *Parkland, Fla.*
ELEANOR SUMMERS (WHEELOCK'51) *Rochester, N.Y.*
ELIZABETH S. DOWELL (CAS'52) *Bend, Ore.*
LOUIS H. SHOER (QUESTROM'52) *Providence, R.I.*
HAZEL M. HALL (SARGENT'53) *Rye, N.H.*
MARY SHAHEEN (CFA'53) *Norfolk, Mass.*
OTTILIE PROCTOR (PAL'54) *Hampton, N.H.*
GLORIA R. BENJAMIN (COM'55) *Brookline, Mass.*
ARTHUR EISENBERG (CAS'55, SSW'57) *Boston, Mass.*
DANIEL J. COURTNEY, JR. (CGS'55, ENG'56) *Attleboro, Mass.*
ELLIOT R. ERNEST (CAS'56, GRS'58) *Venice, Fla.*
FRANK D. HALLBERG, JR. (PAL'56, CFA'56) *Hingham, Mass.*
MAUREEN T. ARAKELIAN (SON'57,'72,'84) *Durham, N.H.*
JOAN L. OGDONNIK (SARGENT'57) *Methuen, Mass.*
RALPH E. KARDON (CAS'58, LAW'61) *Boca Raton, Fla.*
DONNA MCDANIEL (WHEELOCK'59) *Southborough, Mass.*
DAVID M. MCDERMOTT (QUESTROM'59) *Old Saybrook, Conn.*
HOWARD S. RAVIS (COM'59) *Ossining, N.Y.*

1960s

GERALDINE V. CRUICKSHANK (CFA'60) *Fall River, Mass.*
NANCIE DWINELL GODWIN (WHEELOCK'60) *Stratford-upon-Avon, England*
DIANE A. COLLETT (CAS'61) *Des Moines, Iowa*
LEO W. GARRITY (CGS'61) *Warwick, R.I.*
FREDERICK G. KHOURI, JR. (QUESTROM'61,'69) *Sebring, Fla.*
RONALD V. HOWES (DGE'62, COM'64) *Summerville, S.C.*
GAIL V. ELEN (COM'63) *Fairhaven, Mass.*
DIANE HUBBARD FLANDERS (SON'64) *Beverly, Mass.*
JO ANN MANIAGO (GRS'64,'71) *Binghamton, N.Y.*
CAROL J. PARK (STH'65) *Sterling Heights, Mich.*
PAGE POINIER SANDERS (WHEELOCK'65) *Palo Alto, Calif.*
ROGER L. VOLK (QUESTROM'65) *Swampscott, Mass.*
CAROLE B. ETICHEMENDY (CGS'64, CAS'66) *Monterey, Calif.*
IRVING H. FINE (CAMED'66) *Eugene, Ore.*
WILLIAM A. FREGOSI (CFA'66) *Durham, N.H.*
LUCINDA H. LEE (CAS'66) *Chestnut Hill, Mass.*
HEATHER G. ABRAMS (CAS'67) *Utica, N.Y.*
RITA H. O'NEILL (SON'67) *Warwick, R.I.*
DAVID G. PRENTISS (QUESTROM'67, LAW'78) *South Dartmouth, Mass.*
DEANN BURROWS-PROEME (CAS'68, WHEELOCK'71) *Belmont, Mass.*
VICTORIA N. HASSER (SSW'69) *Somerville, N.J.*

1970s

ROBERT A. MCKINNON (COM'70) *Houston, Tex.*
JOAN PHILLIPS SANDY (LAW'71) *Waterville, Maine*
TEJWANT SANDHU STEAD (COM'71) *Hooksett, N.H.*
DIANE JONES (SON'72) *Columbia, S.C.*
KATHLEEN A. RILEY (WHEELOCK'72) *Windsor, Calif.*
ZOE-ANNE M. FITZHUGH (SON'73) *Santa Clarita, Calif.*
LINDA J. HOLTON (SSW'73) *Barnstable, Mass.*
DAVID M. BENJAMIN (CAS'74) *Aurora, Ohio*
WALTER F. FIELDS, JR. (CAS'74) *Sevierville, Tenn.*
LEON E. ANDREWS (GRS'75,'78,'79) *Richmond, Va.*
FELIX R. BURNS (QUESTROM'75) *Schenectady, N.Y.*

JO ANN MACDOUGALL BABCOCK (SARGENT'76) *Woburn, Mass.*
AMY L. KITZEN (WHEELOCK'76) *Philadelphia, Pa.*
ROBERT L. SWAIN (QUESTROM'76) *Rochester, N.Y.*
ROBERT T. HUGHES (QUESTROM'77) *Douglas, Mass.*
HAIGH S. REINIGER (COM'77) *Greenwood, S.C.*
RICHARD H. TAYLOR (WHEELOCK'78, MET'93) *Kennesaw, Ga.*
MARGARET-ANN GARDNER (LAW'79) *North Kingstown, R.I.*
RUBY L. HAWKINS (WHEELOCK'79) *Alton, N.H.*
JEFF S. TAGER (CAS'79, GRS'80) *Canton, Conn.*

1980s

JAMES M. BRADSHAW (WHEELOCK'80) *Hoover, Ala.*
JOHN CHELLINO (SSW'80) *Miami, Fla.*
ROSALYN J. AGBODOE (WHEELOCK'81) *New Haven, Conn.*
MATTHEW J. CHALEK (ENG'81) *Greenwood Village, Colo.*
PAUL J. COLLEGIO, JR. (ENG'82) *Medway, Mass.*
ANNE C. WARING (GRS'82) *Edina, Minn.*
JO ANNE TWEEDIE (QUESTROM'83) *Slingerlands, N.Y.*
GIUSEPPE SARNO (CGS'81, SARGENT'84) *East Boston, Mass.*
JOHN E. WALKER (GRS'84) *Charlestown, Mass.*
CYNTHIA DUNN FLEMING (GRS'85) *New York, N.Y.*
BERYL SUMNER (WHEELOCK'85) *Green Valley, Ariz.*
BARBARA A. O'NEILL (WHEELOCK'86) *Centerville, Mass.*
HEIDI E. POWELL (QUESTROM'86) *Albany, Ore.*
DANELLE M. BARRETT (CAS'89) *Hamburg, N.Y.*

1990s

DEBORAH A. ELLINGBOE (COM'90) *Scottsdale, Ariz.*
THOMAS J. KARAM (QUESTROM'91) *Fall River, Mass.*
HELDER T. MOURA (MET'91,'95) *Bradenton, Fla.*
STEVEN G. BROWN (SSW'92) *Mashpee, Mass.*
STEPHANIE L. LEIFER (COM'92) *Studio City, Calif.*
HULYA M. SANSOY (SSW'96) *Albuquerque, N.M.*
GREGORY M. CAMPISANO (QUESTROM'99) *Belmont, Mass.*
RACHEL S. STAHLER (GRS'99) *Towanda, Pa.*

2000s

MICHAEL JOSEPH MYRTER (MET'00,'02) *Anchorage, Alaska*



Caryn Chomsky, Florida Physical Therapist

CARYN CHOMSKY of Boynton Beach, Fla., a physical therapist described by her family as loving, giving, and a pillar in the community, was killed June 9, 2024. Chomsky had been out for a run when she was struck by a car that veered off the road and jumped the sidewalk. She was 44.

Chomsky (Sargent'02,'04), who earned a BS and a DPT at Sargent College of Health & Rehabilitation Sciences, ran her own practice, Partners in Motion Physical Therapy, in Boynton Beach and Lake Worth, Fla. Her husband, Ayal, is carrying on her legacy at Partners in Motion.

She and Ayal made national news in 2007 after her mother, Ann Stolper, gave birth to the couple's twins. Chomsky had survived cervical cancer at 25 and knew that she would not be able to carry a child. Stolper, 58 at the time, volunteered to be a surrogate. The twins, Maya and Etai, are now in their senior year of high school.

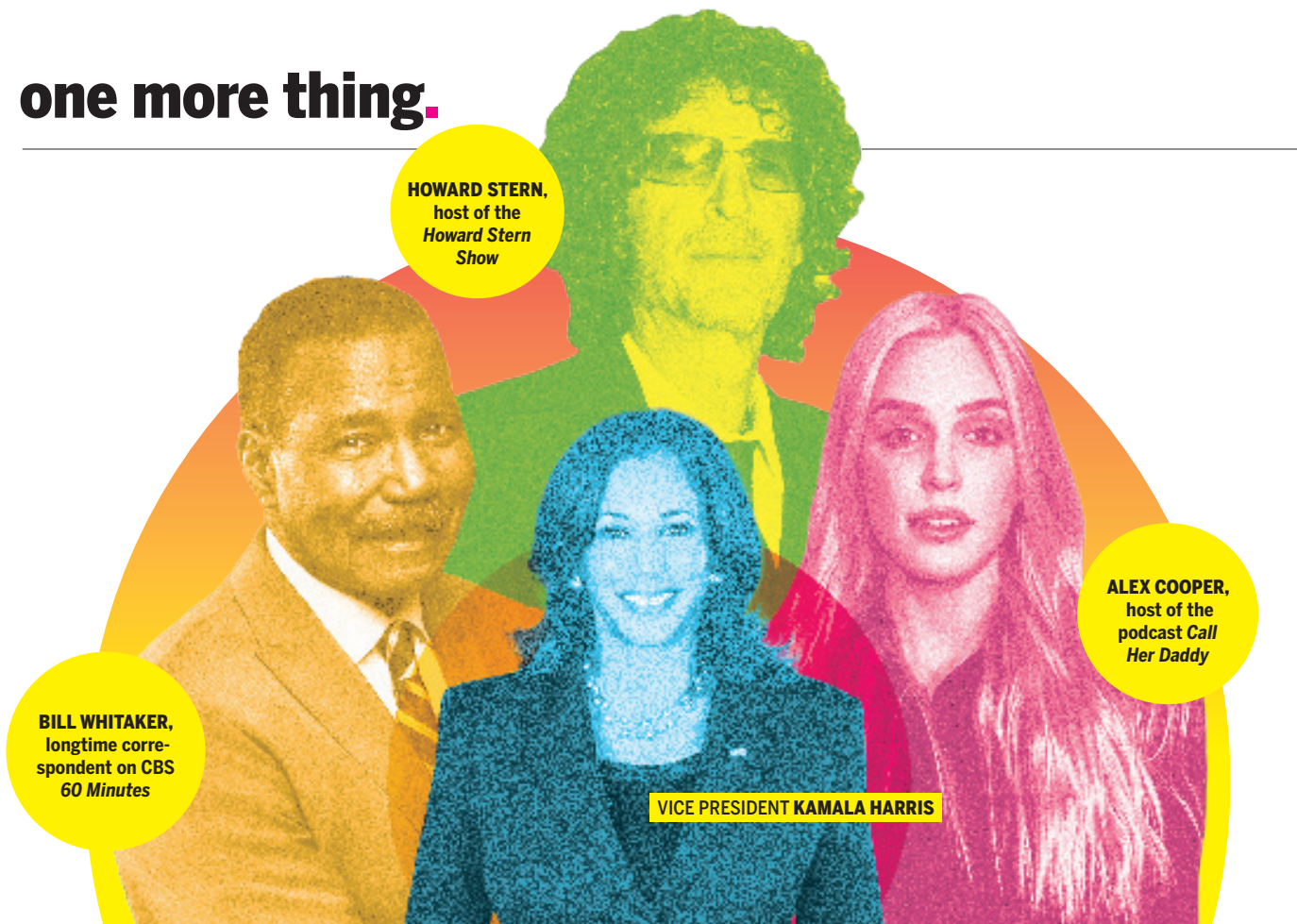
Debra Rafson says she'd been friends with Chomsky since becoming a patient four years ago. "She has helped literally thousands of patients and was widely respected locally," says Rafson (MET'05). "She left behind a legacy of care and positivity."

ANDREW L. RICH (ENG'01, QUESTROM'01) *Midland, Mich.*
CLIFFORD A. WILKE (MET'06,'08) *Fairfax, Mo.*
TAMAR VISHLITZKY (SSW'07) *Concord, Mass.*
DANIEL KORSCHUN (QUESTROM'08) *Philadelphia, Pa.*

2010s

ANDREA HALVERSON (SARGENT'10) *Saint Paul, Minn.*
JESSICA LEE HARVEY (QUESTROM'11) *New York, N.Y.*
EVAN A. CONAWAY (CAS'12) *Denver, Colo.*

one more thing.



HOWARD STERN,
host of the
Howard Stern Show

BILL WHITAKER,
longtime corre-
spondent on CBS
60 Minutes

VICE PRESIDENT KAMALA HARRIS

ALEX COOPER,
host of the
podcast *Call Her Daddy*

THREE BU ALUMS—WITH BIG MEDIA AUDIENCES—LAND INTERVIEWS WITH KAMALA HARRIS

► Podcaster Alex Cooper, media titan Howard Stern, and CBS' Bill Whitaker sat down with the VP ahead of the presidential election | BY DOUG MOST

IN A CRAZY coincidence, three BU alums—with some of the biggest digital and media audiences and platforms in the country—landed sit-down interviews with Vice President Kamala Harris, all in the span of a few days this past October.

Alex Cooper (CGS'15, COM'17), whose *Call Her Daddy* podcast is the country's fifth most popular and the highest rated among women listeners, posted her interview with Harris on October 6. Bill Whitaker (GRS'74), a longtime correspondent on CBS *60 Minutes*, had a primetime interview

with Harris that aired October 7. And Howard Stern (CGS'74, COM'76), host of the *Howard Stern Show* on SiriusXM, interviewed Harris on October 8.

In a social media post promoting her interview, Cooper said she had reached out to Donald Trump for an interview and did not hear back. And *60 Minutes*, the country's most-watched TV newsmagazine, said "former President Donald Trump backed out after previously indicating he would be on the show."

Although Stern and Whitaker are longtime media figures and landing an

interview with a presidential candidate is not necessarily surprising, Cooper's interview reflects the changing ways candidates are trying to reach new audiences. Her podcast, mostly about relationships, life, sex, mental health, and advice, has seen a meteoric rise since its launch in 2018.

In a social media post, Cooper explained why she invited Harris on her podcast when she typically avoids politics. "At the end of the day," she said, "I couldn't see a world where one of the main conversations in this election is women and I am not a part of it."

Stern, whose first radio station gig was at WTBU, is best known these days for his long, wide-ranging conversations with legends from the worlds of music, comedy, entertainment, and occasionally, politics.

Whitaker, who was on campus in September to receive an Arts & Sciences Distinguished Alumni Award, spoke with Harris about the Middle East, Ukraine, her economic plan, and immigration, among other topics. **B**

CLOCKWISE, FROM LEFT: MICHELE CROWE/CBS VIA GETTY IMAGES, SOPA IMAGES LIMITED/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO, IMAGE PRESS AGENCY/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO, COURTESY OF THE WHITE HOUSE

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- **Miami** • Wednesday, February 5
- **Chicago** • Wednesday, April 2
- **Washington, D.C.** • Thursday, April 24
- **Boston** • Thursday, June 5

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