

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA SPRING 2019

# U M I

TODAY

*The Magazine*



Introducing your new Chancellor  
**ANNE MAHON**

# Postcard

## THE BIG 4-0

"Even if I thought I would love it, I love it five times more than that!" That's in a 1992 letter to Joyce Fromson, who founded Mini U 40 years ago, from a child who took a tennis camp that summer.

Generations of young Manitobans have now enjoyed "mini-university," a program that's emulated across North America.

Fromson, who took the helm of men's and women's sports at the U of M in 1979, began with outreach for 70 children to do physical activities. Enrollment now tops 16,000, with most coming over nine weeks each summer. Soon, the university will become a playground with kids exploring campus (like the Active Living Centre's climbing wall) and evolving themes, from musical theatre to how to make an app.



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Read about Destiny Seymour, a designer and shop owner inspired by her Indigenous ancestors, on page 47.

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Do you know your own privilege? Read how U of M alumni, faculty and students are finding ways to expose it.

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We sit down with author and incoming Chancellor Anne Mahon to talk about her new role, amplifying voices, and the people in her books who've inspired her along the way.

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COVER PHOTO BY THOMAS FRICKE; POSTCARD PHOTO BY IAN MCCALLS; BACK COVER QUOTABLE BY CHUI CHOY [BA(GEOG)/09]; DESTINY SEYMOUR PHOTO BY ALAN GREYEVES



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UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

Dr. Janice Ristock, FRSC, Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

## From the Provost

A RECENT EDITION of *University World News* (March 17, 2019 issue no. 543) had several stories on the current state of women in higher education, with articles exploring why so very few women are in leadership roles. Sarah Jane Aiston writes: “The underrepresentation of women academics in the most senior ranks and leadership positions in higher education is an enduring social justice issue. We would like to think that universities are at the forefront of demonstrating a commitment to diversity and inclusivity, but they remain ‘bastions of male power and prestige’....”

As a woman in a senior leadership role it is discouraging to see these trends continue. I am fully aware of the importance of women seeing ourselves reflected in these roles as it conveys a message about the values, climate and culture of an organization. I have had the privilege of serving in a number of capacities at the University of Manitoba over the last 28 years—first as coordinator of the Women’s and Gender Studies Program, then as associate dean of the Faculty of Arts, associate vice-president (research and international), vice-provost (academic affairs), and now as provost and vice-president (academic). I have been struck by comments made to me by other women who said seeing me in a leadership role made them think that this was something they, too, could consider doing.

I have felt encouraged and supported along the way *and* I have also encountered barriers and challenges. Often I have been the only woman around a leadership table and I have experienced the ways in which male-dominated tables can ignore and silence women’s voices; when entering new settings I have experienced the assumption that I must be providing administrative support rather than acting as Chair; and when I think back to 20 years ago I particularly remember inappropriate comments made to me about my choice of clothing and footwear (things like, “Why don’t you wear high heels?” and “Why don’t I ever see you in a dress?”). These comments were likely as much about my age and sexuality as they were about my gender.

When examining the issue of women in leadership we need to consider an intersectional framework since not all women’s experiences are the same. We need to look at the ways in which race, sexual orientation, disability, language, age and other forms of social diversity are interwoven and intersect with gender to shape experiences of disadvantage



and privilege. We also need to acknowledge that gender is not binary and that trans men and women will have different experiences from those of us who are cisgender.

I am pleased to be part of the president’s executive team at our university where there is evidence of a commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion. Of the four vice-presidents, two of us are women, two of us are 2SLGBTQ+, and one of us is a person of colour. At the dean’s table we have more work to do: currently only five out of 22 deans are women. When looking at associate deans and department heads there is more diversity but still barely a third (44/130) are women. Clearly, the pattern of underrepresentation of women in leadership roles persists.

Within the higher education sector there is a commitment to increasing diversity and a growing awareness of how unconscious bias operates to prevent us from being more inclusive when selecting leaders. Being inclusive is not simply about adding more women or addressing underrepresentation in our current community. It is also about meaningful engagement and a willingness to change existing practices and structures that are embedded with gender bias and other forms of systemic discrimination.

We know that diversity makes us better. We know that having a diverse representation of women in leadership roles would enrich our university. We can and must do better.

PHOTO BY THOMAS FRICKE

**GO BISONS GO**

Head coach **Brian Dobie [BPE/74, CertEd/75]** was impressed: a quick, hard-hitting defensive back with the guts to tackle someone twice as big. Even at 5-foot-7 and 160 pounds, this player was fearless and would take down a 200-pound receiver, no problem.

**Reina Iizuka**, 19, has been playing football since she was nine years old. Her eyes light up when asked what her favourite part of the game is.

"I love to hit," she says with a smirk.

"I just love it. It's so satisfying. If I could be a linebacker, honestly...."

She can't because of her size, but she's no stranger to barriers. Two weeks after Dobie scouted her at the training camp, Iizuka tore her ACL. While scholarships and offers rolled in for her peers, Iizuka was out for months after surgery. "It was a grey area. I tore my knee during the most important time for a football player," she recalls.

It's been three years since Dobie first spotted Iizuka, believed to be the first female on a football roster at a Canadian university. As a red-shirt player who doesn't dress for games, she has trained relentlessly with the Bisons for the last two years. She's hoping for her game debut in the 2019 season.

Iizuka recalls how she felt after her first practice with the team, noting she had the "best sleep of her life."

"I can't describe to you how great of a feeling it was to just be able to say, 'Alright, I'm a university athlete. I'm here. Finally. I made it.'"



**That Voice**

Between chemistry and physics class, Faouzia Ouihya sneaks away for a musical interlude. It's not unusual to find the first-year engineering student—known simply as Faouzia in the vocal credits of DJ-producer David Guetta's Billboard hit, *Battle*—playing the piano at St. John's College during breaks.

Born in Morocco's largest city, Casablanca, and raised in small-town Carman, Man., the singer-songwriter grew up listening to traditional Arabic tunes in her parents' mini-van. It was important to them that she and her two sisters learn an instrument. And after pursuing the piano, Ouihya became hungry for more and took up the violin and guitar. But it's her mature vocals that she first showcased on YouTube—and that secured her huge wins at international competitions—which sets this powerhouse apart in the music industry, grabbing the attention of Guetta last year.

Just before the bell rang in a high school calculus class, Ouihya got a call from one of her managers. Guetta had heard her demo and wanted her to audition for a song on his upcoming album.

"Everyone in my class was commenting on how I was in such a good mood," she says with a laugh. "I wasn't allowed to tell anyone, but I was so, so excited."

Being chosen as the featured vocalist for one of Guetta's tracks—alongside other album selects Nicki Minaj and Justin Bieber—became a huge stepping stone. Last summer, Ouihya spent two months in Los Angeles, recording music with some of the industry's top producers. On her 18th birthday, she signed a major record deal with Atlantic Records, which manages Top 40 artists like Bruno Mars and Sia.



While Ouihya's heart is set on music, she doesn't feel like she has to choose between this passion and a career in engineering. She'll combine the two by majoring in computer engineering and one day creating software for music production. For now, science concepts from class sometimes find their

way into her lyrics: *Now I'm exothermic, watch my heart explode.*

"I want to be a well-rounded individual, and I feel like the more I learn, the more I can give back to people. Whether that's through music or an engineering career."

REINA IIZUKA PHOTO BY STEFAN LEVY; FAOUZIA OUIHYA PHOTO SUPPLIED



Passengers aboard this VIA Rail train hear from scientists while en route to Churchill. It's part of a recently launched outreach program to promote Arctic climate change research.

## CHURCHILL AND THE POLAR BEAR

Ask alumna Heidi den Haan about the relationship between the largest land predator and the northern Manitoba region it calls home, and she'll tell you: *It's complicated.*

Locals balance a bond with a sense of beware and respect when it comes to the iconic 1,000-pound bears that define Churchill and drive its economy, says den Haan, who handles logistics for the many tourists to the sub-Arctic town. She's also a biologist who lived in Churchill for more than six years.

Legend says residents keep cars and houses unlocked so anyone can escape should they meet a bear in the street. When kids trick or treat for Halloween, there are extensive patrols—even helicopters—to keep watch. **Den Haan [BSc(Hons)/81]** once got a call from a neighbour who spied a bear lurking outside her house.

"There's a constant looking over your shoulder," she says, "especially in the fall."

That's when the bears congregate on the shore of Hudson Bay. Den Haan is happy to spot *Ursus maritimus* in its own habitat—it leaves her awestruck, she says.

Den Haan works for Frontiers North Adventures, a family-run business known for its big-wheeled Tundra Buggies. The bear-watching experience is what helps draw some 530,000 people to Churchill every year. "Seeing a polar bear in the wild is a huge bucket-list item for a lot of people," she says.

The town's population swells as globe-trotters come to witness, photograph or study an animal who's become the poster child for climate change.

Tourism dipped when the rail line washed out in 2017, but it's back. The University of

Manitoba has even outfitted a VIA Rail dining car with technologies to allow scientists to inform and entertain passengers en route to Churchill, sharing what they know about its fauna and changing climate. Like a rolling research station, it's part of the Expedition Churchill outreach program launched earlier this year.

The bears were also declared a must-see in 2019 by travel guide *The Lonely Planet*. While the beasts are a highlight of itineraries, along with belugas and northern lights, Churchill itself is a standout. As *Lonely Planet* notes, "There's something less tangible that makes people stay longer and keeps them coming back: a hearty seductive spirit that makes the rest of the world seem—thankfully—even further away than it really is."

## Puffed-up Protein

The beloved cheese puff could be getting a makeover.

A recent funding boost from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada will help fuel U of M food engineer Filiz Koksel's work to develop healthier aerated products.

When foods are made into a puffy form, it's tough to maintain their nutritional content without sacrificing taste and texture, explains **Koksel [PhD/15]**, an assistant professor in the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences.

"As a general rule of thumb, when the protein and fibre content is increased in an aerated food, overall textural and physical quality degrades," she says. "I'm investigating how food structure can be tailored to generate foods that are not only high in protein and fibre but palatable and appealing."

Koksel also leads a research team exploring plant-based meat substitutes and how to best mimic the juicy and fibrous texture of animal meat. To improve the sensory and nutritional quality of these alternatives, researchers need to better understand how processing conditions—like temperature—affect protein sources and the food's microstructure, she says.

"It is exciting for our team to be at the forefront of an emerging field of food processing research."



PHOTO BY DANIEL GWOZDZ  
SUZANNE GAGNON PHOTO BY MIKE LATSCHISLAW; STETHOSCOPE ILLUSTRATION BY LEOCRAFTS/ISTOCK; CHEESE PUFFS PHOTO BY TODDSM66/ISTOCK



## Leading the Leaders

Professor Suzanne Gagnon is building the next generation of movers and shakers. She is the inaugural Great-West Life Chair in Leadership Education of the U of M's new Institute for Leadership Development.

Based in the Asper School of Business, the institute will start training its first students in June. This President's Student Leadership Program will bring together students from across all interests, backgrounds and several post-secondary institutes.

"This program is designed to guide the participants to thrive in their careers, no matter what field or discipline," says Gagnon, who came to the U of M from the University of McGill. "They will learn from top leaders in

Manitoba about some of their biggest leadership issues and opportunities, and how these leaders confronted those challenges."

Students will explore contemporary issues with locally and internationally known leaders in social services, the arts, the justice system, healthcare, IT and the construction and trades industries.

"This program is designed for students already active as leaders in their community who are looking to improve their skills and more fully achieve their potential," says Gagnon, who's own work specializes in organizational behaviour. "It will help you move from good, to better, to best."

## TRADITIONAL HEALING

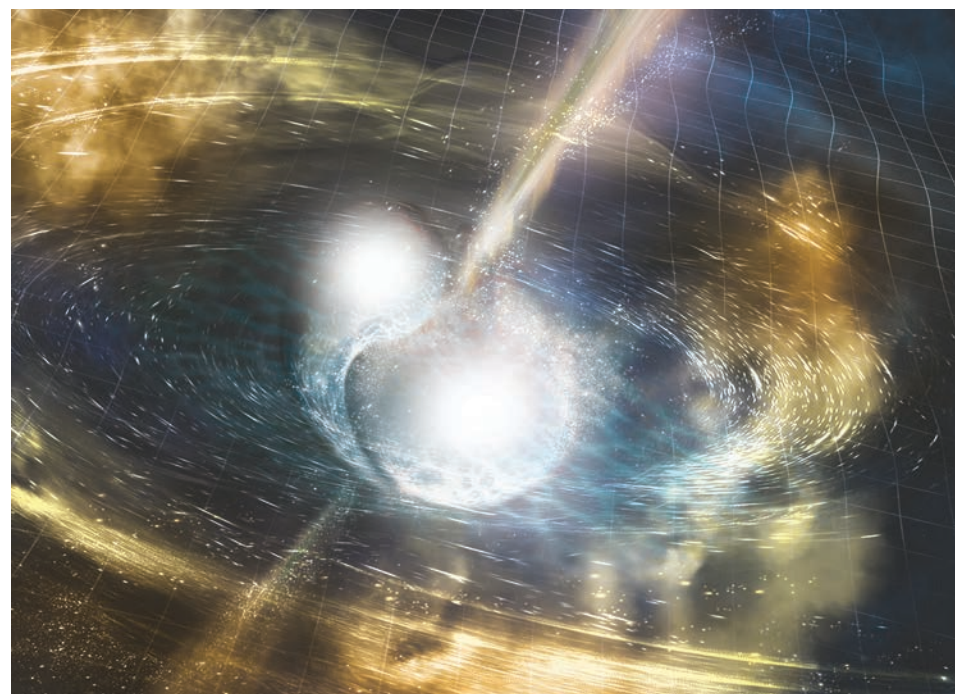
**Dr. Marlyn Cook [MD/87]**, a family physician within Ongomiizwin—Indigenous Institute of Health and Healing at the University of Manitoba, is the recipient of a national 2019 Indspire Award.

Cook, one of the first female Indigenous physicians to graduate from the Max Rady College of Medicine, is recognized for her work reshaping medicine in First Nations communities. Her practice weaves together Western and traditional medicine to ensure a healthy body, mind and spirit.

"When I first started talking about this in the early '90s, you could hear a pin drop in the room," says Cook, who is from Mispawistik Cree Nation. "I learned a lot [at school] about procedures, drugs and disease, but not about what would help my community heal."

She now shares her approach to care with first-year U of M medical students.





## The Ripple Effect

What happens when two neutron stars collide? A team of researchers led by U of M astrophysicist Samar Safi-Harb has discovered a new way to look at this merger using X-ray.

The neutron star is one that has exhausted all its fuel and blown off excess gas, leaving behind a tiny core. A century ago, Einstein predicted the collision would create ripples in space-time.

Since this type of merger was first detected in 2017, astronomers have been debating what it produced. Safi-Harb's team suggests it creates a dense chunk of matter called a "kilonova remnant." The findings were recently published in the *Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada*.

"This opens a whole new window for interpreting the aftermath of this neutron star merger," Safi-Harb says. "Our analysis revealed evidence of hot, glowing X-ray light."

Their modelling also revealed that a kilonova remnant evolves faster than its supernova counterpart, which is produced when a massive star explodes, outshining an entire galaxy.

## BEE-ING THE CHANGE

It's an idea that's getting a lot of buzz.

Team Bee Box took home the \$5,000 grand prize and the People's Choice Award at Game Changer: Manitoba's Idea Competition last fall.

The winning U of M student team tackled the environmental problem: How can we offset the mass collapse of bee colonies in a natural and sustainable way?

Their solution: a monthly subscription box, where consumers can sponsor a bee hive and in return receive various bee products from around Manitoba. A portion of the profits goes to supporting a local bee apiary, to increase the number of bee hives in the province.

What's up next for education student **Alexandria Townsend [BAEnvSt/18]** and business students Jacquelyn Townsend and Hannah McCutcheon?

The entrepreneurs are looking for opportunities to showcase their bee boxes at local farmers' markets this summer. "We do really love our idea and will continue to do research and development on this project," says McCutcheon. "We believe in the mission immensely."



KILONOVA IMAGE COURTESY OF NSF/LIGO/SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY/A. SIMONNET

DR. GUNTER PHOTO BY ADAM DOLMAN [BA/12].



## FEISTY GYNECOLOGIST

"Wielding the lasso of truth" is what **Dr. Jen Gunter [MD/90]** proclaims as her online mission. The outspoken physician, blogger and *New York Times* women's health columnist has made a name for herself as "Twitter's resident gynecologist."

Gunter says credible doctors are needed on social media to debunk health myths and shoot down pseudoscience.

"If that's where patients are, that's where I need to meet them," she told students, teachers, faculty and deans from the Max Rady College of Medicine this past February, when she spoke at the Teacher Recognition and Manitoba Medical Students' Association Awards Dinner.

The Winnipeg-born, California-based Gunter has a forthcoming book called *The Vagina Bible*.

Her fame rose partly through her fierce Twitter condemnation of "lifestyle guru" Gwyneth Paltrow as an online snake-oil huckster of potentially dangerous "wellness" products.

More recently, Gunter called out U.S. President Donald Trump for perpetuating abortion myths, generating a storm in the Twitterverse.



## MEET THE AUTHOR

**Lisa Kassenaar [BComm(Hons)/88]** is senior editor at Voice of America, the largest international broadcaster in the U.S. At Bloomberg News, she founded a global women's project to boost equal female sources and voices in all business coverage, transforming the ethos of the organization.



## Source of Inspiration

I skipped my University of Manitoba graduation ceremony in the Spring of 1988. Instead, the day after the last exam of my B. Comm(Hons), my mom drove me to the railway station on Main Street with a huge, blue backpack from 'The Happy Outdoorsman' and I boarded a train to Vancouver.

I returned to campus in January this year to interview **Anne Mahon [BScHEc/87]**, who'll take over as chancellor in June. It's significant to me, and I think to Manitoba, that the person who'll confer U of M degrees on thousands of new engineers, scientists, philosophers, lawyers, artists and entrepreneurs is a woman. She's just the second female chancellor since 1887.

I lived in Vancouver, Fernie, Toronto and Chicago before finding my way to a journalism career in New York City. After 15 years covering business and finance at Bloomberg News,

I took on a project to push our global news organization to consider women as crucial sources and voices in stories from 150 bureaus in 70 countries. I currently lead a women's initiative at Voice of America, a parallel—yet entirely different—challenge: Bloomberg writes for the traders and investors who move the world's money around; VOA broadcasts to 230 million people a week in the developing world, in 45 languages from Amharic to Uzbek.

Women are half the people, but they are simply not present in a huge majority of the stories we read and hear, regardless of the media source. I believe that we are all a little too comfortable with the slow progress of integrating women's voices into the public dialogue. We celebrate the women we do see, but forget, for instance, that almost three quarters of Canada's parliamentarians are still men. Our move to gender balance must be deliberate. For me, that starts with driving journalists to judge

their own work incomplete without a woman's perspective. For woman leaders in their fields, it demands they participate with the press.

In the U of M Commerce program of the 1980s, I never had a female professor. Images of men and lists of men's names filled the hallways. I did go to an event at the Manitoba Club, the historic meeting place for Winnipeg's business elite that, at the time, only men could join. It was a Ladies' Night fashion show.

I used to wonder why I was so quick to get on that VIA Rail train to BC instead of enjoying the pomp of receiving my undergraduate degree along with my classmates. The reality is that, as a 21-year-old woman, I felt entirely disconnected from the accomplishment. Now, I'm on board with the more succinct conclusion of my friend Marie Wilson, who created 'Take Our Daughters to Work Day' as head of the Ms. Foundation in 1992: "You can't be what you can't see."

BEE ILLUSTRATION BY FRIZTIN/ISTOCK; LISA KASSENAAR PHOTO SUPPLIED; MICROPHONE PHOTO BY BRAZZO/ISTOCK

**HOMETOWN HEADLINES**

Something had to happen. Editor-in-chief Dona Harvey could feel it. The *Winnipeg Tribune*, the city's underdog newspaper, was sinking slowly but surely. With \$15-million worth of debt and increasing costs—something had to happen.

On Wednesday, Aug. 27, 1980, the *Tribune* abruptly folded. Ninety years of publishing came to a screeching halt. The paper had spent decades competing with the *Winnipeg Free Press*, and earlier that summer, the Trib finally matched them reader for reader. But it wasn't enough; advertising dollars refused to follow and the paper couldn't afford to continue, says Harvey, who was on campus in September to announce the full digitization of every issue in the Trib's history.

From the beginning, the Trib emphasized local stories (like that of Lena Birch [right], who was forced from her home to make way for a sewage plant.) The *Free Press* had access to the AP newswire; the Trib didn't.

"The stories of Winnipeg told by the Trib both reflected

and helped shape the life of the city it challenged and cherished," said Harvey.

The day the paper died still resonates with many: former staff, readers, newspaper carriers and advertisers.

"It's an event that remains suspended in time for many of us," Harvey said.

She recalls how staff gathered in the newsroom that final morning, and at 9:05 a.m. publisher Gordon Fisher stood on a desk to address the crowd: "I regret to tell you that today will be your last day of publication."

Some cried out while others stood frozen. But they had work to do—one final paper to print. Harvey remembers saying, "Everyone pitch in and make it the best damned paper we've ever produced."

The city mourned, draping storefront windows in black: a gesture of solidarity. Harvey saw people swarming a Trib delivery truck, fighting for a copy of the final issue. On the front page was a giant 30 (a nod to the iconic newspaper sign-off).

It took the U of M Archives & Special Collections five years to give the newspaper new life online.

"The underdog still barks," Harvey said. "And it's a beautiful sound."



This 1967 photo by Frank Chalmers shows Lena Birch being evicted from her home by the City of Winnipeg. Named by the *Canadian Press* as one of the top 100 images of the 20th Century, the photo was also used by U.S. politician Bobby Kennedy during speeches to advocate for the dispossessed.

PHOTO COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA ARCHIVES & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, WINNIPEG TRIBUNE FONDS, PC 18 (A1981-012), BOX 31, FOLDER 1916, ITEM 1

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IF I SHOULD NEED TO MOVE, I CAN BE PRETTY

SURE OF RENTING OR PURCHASING HOUSING IN AN AREA WHICH I CAN AFFORD AND IN WHICH I WOULD WANT TO LIVE.

I CAN BE PRETTY SURE THAT MY NEIGHBOURS IN SUCH A LOCATION WILL BE NEUTRAL OR PLEASANT TO ME.

I CAN TURN ON THE TELEVISION OR OPEN TO THE FRONT PAGE OF THE

PAPER AND SEE PEOPLE OF MY RACE WIDELY REPRESENTED. WHEN I AM TOLD ABOUT OUR NATIONAL HERITAGE OR ABOUT "CIVILIZATION," I AM

SHOWN THAT PEOPLE OF MY COLOUR MADE IT WHAT IT IS. I CAN BE SURE THAT MY CHILDREN WILL BE GIVEN CURRICULAR MATERIALS THAT TESTIFY

TO THE EXISTENCE OF THEIR RACE.

WHETHER I USE CHEQUES, CREDIT CARDS, OR CASH, I CAN COUNT ON MY SKIN COLOUR NOT TO WORK AGAINST THE APPEARANCE OF FINANCIAL

RELIABILITY. I CAN ARRANGE TO PROTECT MY CHILDREN MOST OF THE TIME FROM PEOPLE WHO MIGHT NOT LIKE THEM.

# Deconstructing Privilege

BY SEAN MOORE

I CAN DO WELL IN A CHALLENGING SITUATION WITHOUT BEING CALLED A CREDIT TO MY RACE.

I CAN REMAIN OBLIVIOUS OF THE LANGUAGE AND CUSTOMS OF

PERSONS OF COLOUR WHO CONSTITUTE THE WORLD'S MAJORITY WITHOUT FEELING IN MY CULTURE ANY PENALTY FOR SUCH OBLIVION.

I CAN CRITICIZE OUR GOVERNMENT AND TALK ABOUT HOW MUCH I FEAR ITS POLICIES AND

BEHAVIOUR WITHOUT BEING SEEN AS A CULTURAL OUTSIDER. I CAN BE PRETTY SURE THAT IF I ASK TO TALK TO "THE PERSON IN CHARGE,"

I WILL BE FACING MY RACE. I CAN GO HOME FROM MOST MEETINGS OF ORGANIZATIONS I BELONG TO FEELING SOMEWHAT TIED IN,

RATHER THAN ISOLATED, OUT-OF-PLACE, OUT-NUMBERED, UNHEARD, HELD AT A DISTANCE, OR FEARED.

I CAN CHOOSE PUBLIC ACCOMMODATION WITHOUT FEARING THAT PEOPLE OF MY RACE CANNOT GET IN OR WILL BE MISTREATED IN THE

PLACES I HAVE CHOSEN. I CAN BE SURE THAT IF I NEED LEGAL OR MEDICAL HELP, MY RACE WILL NOT WORK AGAINST ME.

IF MY DAY, WEEK, OR YEAR IS GOING BADLY, I NEED NOT ASK OF EACH NEGATIVE EPISODE OR SITUATION

WHETHER IT HAS RACIAL OVERTONES.

When did you last see your privilege? If you're white, you may never have even glimpsed it. But our alumni, faculty and students are finding ways to expose it. Prepare to get uncomfortable.

ON THIS OCTOBER day at a Winnipeg Rotary Club meeting, a white woman in her 70s plays the role of a black woman. She pulls a card from the board game's deck. It reads, "You took the bus to go to your 'English as an Additional Language' class. When people walked past you, they clasped their purses tighter, or glared in your direction. By the time you got to class, you already wanted to go home. Move back two spaces."

The player remarks that in ethnically diverse Winnipeg, this doesn't happen. The two younger black women at the table disagree: "Every single day," they tell her.

Michelle Lam, a PhD student in the Faculty of Education who studies newcomer integration, recounts this story with an academic's excitement. The conversation is exactly what she was hoping for. It's why she designed *Refugee Journeys*, a game styled on *Snakes and Ladders* where players work their way along a grid, jumping forward, sliding back, or missing turns. It's part of her thesis to help people empathize with others by revealing privileges and systemic racism.

But can a game really put privilege in check? In feedback questionnaires, players tell Lam they learned how others' experiences differ from their own, but she wants to know if these revelations change their behaviour in the long term. Her research will question if awakening white players to their own biases will alter their everyday interactions with people in the grocery store or walking down the street.

"The discussion part is where the real meat of the game is," says Lam. "You can't be aware of your privilege until you genuinely can listen to other people and realize that it's different. It's uncomfortable but necessary."

Indigenous scholar and advocate **Verna J. Kirkness [BA/74, BEd/76, MEd/80, LLD/08]** agrees. She has dedicated her life to empowering Indigenous people through education and, to her, privilege endures partly because the privileged have yet to really learn about others' ongoing struggle for equal footing. But she senses a change is underway.

"Non-Indigenous people should be asking what they can do. And many more are starting to ask this. To them I say: Go and educate your circles."

Lam, who is white, was inspired to study racial privilege after marrying Daniel, a Vietnamese man whose family fled to Canada as refugees in 1979. She has since noticed that her children are treated differently when she accompanies them to the playground or a medical appointment, compared to when her husband does. She confesses that privilege is nice, but not right.

"I really do want to make some change. I feel it deep in my soul. So when I think of how to make change, rather than think on the individual level—how can I help my kids succeed?—I think, how can I build a better world for my kids?"

Her game helps people see what needs changing by having players assume a character—a 33-year-old married Iraqi woman with PTSD

and three children, for instance, or a 50-year-old gay man from Ethiopia with lung cancer and a BA in computer technology. Players race to the finish collecting "Integration Experience Cards" that promote or thwart progress. (Example: You answered the phone in English, move ahead two spaces.)

## CULTURE SHOCK. MISS A TURN.

In 1988, Peggy McIntosh, a famed feminist scholar now at the Wellesley Centres for Women at Wellesley College in Massachusetts, wrote a paper likening white privilege to "an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools, and blank checks."

A white person has no fewer than 26 points of privilege, according to McIntosh. Men have countless more. They are unaware of most of them, and none of them are earned.

Like Lam's game, McIntosh's paper challenges readers to reflect on privileges they may not have considered before. Such as: whites can criticize the government without being labelled an outsider; if white people ask to speak to the person in charge, they'll likely meet someone of their own race; whites are never asked to speak for all the people of their race; whites can arrange to protect their children from people who may not like them; whites can swear or wear second-hand clothes without people thinking their race lacks morals, is illiterate or poor.

\*Points of privilege statements from the book *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack* by Peggy McIntosh

So who gave white people this knapsack? In part, aristocrats in the Middle Ages. They had a series of private laws that only applied to them, such as not having to pay certain taxes. Indeed, “privilege” comes from the Latin *privus lex*, meaning “private law.”

Today, white privilege allows dangerous ideas to find fertile ground (a U.S. congressman recently wondered in the *New York Times* how white nationalism and white supremacy are offensive). In such a divisive global climate, and as Canada lumbers towards reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, questions around race and inequality increasingly arise—questions perhaps best tackled by casting the lens inward. And while McIntosh’s conscious-raising list has been around for 30 years, her ideas are now creeping into popular culture.

*First Contact*, a three-part TV miniseries, challenged six white Canadians to confront their prejudices of Indigenous people and examine their own privileges. It aired on TVO and APTN and is now being used as a teaching tool in some Canadian classrooms. **Desiree Single [BA/96]**, a television producer at Animiki See Digital Production Inc. in Winnipeg, helped develop the show by adapting it from its original Australian format.

In episode one, the participants—three women, three men—gather in front of an apartment in downtown Winnipeg to meet Michael Redhead Champagne, a local activist from Shattawa Cree Nation. He asks them about their views of Indigenous people.

Dallas, a 26-year-old lobster fisherman from Keswick, N.B., responds with another question: “Why are they given all this money—free housing or education or programs or things like that—and they are not doing anything with it?”

Through two more episodes, capturing a 28-day journey with stops in Nunavut, Alberta and British Columbia, viewers experience a shift in attitude—by some. Two older men in the group (a truck driver and a civil servant) admit the trip didn’t change their opinions. But Dallas says he was transformed.

“I came in here thinking [Indigenous people] were given everything, from their housing to their schooling, you know, to all these perks,”

he says in the final episode. “But the little perks they do have are insubstantial to the cons that they’ve been dealing with.”

Dallas makes a promise to challenge those who think as he once did. “I can be a lot more than I was 28 days ago,” he says in a final scene.

Critics say the show makes Indigenous people relive historic traumas for white people’s sake. Champagne somewhat agreed, posting on social media that he feels “the frustration of needing to perform in front of outsiders just to prove the point that Indigenous people are people too.” But he liked how the show positions Indigenous people as the heroes.

## “Privilege also means the privilege of writing the history you choose to tell.”

CARY MILLER

Single, a white woman who has worked in television for nearly 20 years, suspected the older participants would protect their own world views. Dallas’s reaction also didn’t surprise her. “When you spend time with people and actually hear their truth...how can that not touch you?”

The producers sought participants who were unafraid to express genuine emotions and opinions, Single says.

“You have to crack open prejudices,” she says. “You have to crack open those misconceptions and have an open, honest dialogue about them. That was the purpose of this.”

**YOU WERE BORN WHITE.  
MOVE AHEAD THREE SPACES.  
MUSLIM? MOVE BACK  
TWO SPACES.**

So why are whites so unconscious of their everyday privilege?

Cary Miller, the head of the University of Manitoba’s department of Native studies and a

scholar of treaties and sovereignty, says white privilege is tied to how we tell our stories.

Reconciliation, defined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, “is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between [Indigenous] and non-[Indigenous] peoples in this country. In order for that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, an acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour.”

To Miller, an Anishinaabe woman, this will require us to re-visit and re-learn history—to know about treaties and their mutual obligations, as well as federal policies like Residential Schools that forced Indigenous people to give up their cultures and assimilate.

“Privilege also means the privilege of writing the history you choose to tell, and allowing the unpleasant memories to be forgotten,” she says.

To explain, Miller cites the book *White Fragility* by sociologist Robin DiAngelo. When we talk about struggles and triumphs of other groups, DiAngelo writes, we must always ask: in relation to whom? Because by doing this, we begin to see the systems that benefit white people.

An example from popular culture involves Jackie Robinson, the first black professional baseball player. The common story implies he was the first black athlete of exceptional ability, but really, he was the first black athlete whom whites allowed to play in the big leagues, DiAngelo says. Framing it this way reveals a glimpse of the structural racism that non-whites contend with on a daily basis.

If you’re white and this makes you feel a bit awkward or defensive, you’re not alone.

Even university students, sponges for new ideas, react with “various forms of hostility and resistance,” when confronting their own privilege, according to a 2005 paper by University of Illinois professor Jennifer Logue. That’s because it’s jarring to hear. *What do you mean I benefited from a system? I worked hard my whole life to get here. You told me as much in my orientation to this school!*

And even when privileged people admit that systems disadvantage others, they struggle to recognize that the same systems benefit them,

ALL PHOTOS BY DAVID LIPNOWSKI [BA(HONS)/08]



says Shamus Khan, chair of Columbia University's department of sociology, in his 2011 book *Privilege*. These denials protect privilege from being acknowledged, lessened, or ended.

White people argue against their privilege so often that scholars have invented terms to capture the phenomenon. Alice McIntyre, an education professor at Hellenic College in Massachusetts, called it "White Talk." White Talk is like a psychological immune response, allowing us to evade issues of race by reframing conversations. It puts white people as the centre of attention, not systemic issues.

Examples of White Talk include: "Nobody cares about race;" "I'm the least racist person you have ever met;" "All lives matter." And a common one—"My family arrived in this country with nothing"—is used by more than just whites.

Iloradanon Efimoff, a PhD student in the U of M's psychology department, has begun studying ways to make people less racist, and she hears White Talk often.

Efimoff's father is Haida and her mother is white. Unlike her younger sister, she looks Caucasian, which allows her to be what her family calls, "an undercover Indian." She overhears people's unfiltered conversations, which she doubts they would have if they knew she was Indigenous. She hears White Talk in taxis and restaurants, she says. A turning point for her came in her undergrad political science class at Douglas College in B.C. A fellow student said his parents arrived from India with nothing and built a prosperous life, while Indigenous people receive government handouts and do little else.

"I didn't have the voice I have now so I just sat there shaking with anger," Efimoff says. "But there was a black man in the class, from the States, who said, 'Your parents didn't have *nothing* when they came to Canada—they had their culture. Indigenous and black people don't have their culture. They don't know who they are. Your family wasn't explicitly abused because of their race for generations.' And a switch flipped. Now I knew how to word my thoughts to make my case, because I heard [White Talk] so many times."

Efimoff came to the U of M last year after being awarded the prestigious Vanier Canada

Graduate Scholarship from the federal government, recognizing her exceptional academic and leadership record. Her research, which is in the preliminary stages, aims to diminish racist attitudes by tweaking how people think.

Over the next few years, she will survey hundreds of undergraduate students at the U of M to explore how they use basic psychological frameworks to make sense of the world, in the hopes of finding ways to deconstruct them.

**Efimoff's father is Haida and her mother is white... which allows her to be what her family calls, "an undercover Indian."**

Two such frameworks that interest her: "in-group bias," where people prefer their own group to outsiders, and "justification theory," where people legitimize and defend the status quo of social systems, sometimes unconsciously, even if it doesn't benefit them.

As a social psychologist, Efimoff says it's unexplored territory to see if undergraduate students can be led to change their frameworks and become less racist.

"This isn't going to solve racism in Canada but it is potentially going to do some good," she says.

**ARE YOU MALE?  
MOVE AHEAD 2 SPACES.**

Who is responsible for enlightening white people? Is it white people's job to educate whites? Whites shouldn't shirk this duty out of fear of being politically incorrect. And bur-

dening others with it is a privileged thing to do, Joe Curnow says.

"It's awkward, but it's our responsibility," she says. Curnow is a white professor in the U of M's Faculty of Education who grew up in Colorado and now studies race, activism and privilege.

"Communities of colour argue that white people need to get their house in order—and that structural racism isn't a problem created by black or Indigenous communities. It is a problem within the white community and white people need to accept responsibility for doing education and repair work, accountable to, and in relationship with, black, Indigenous, and people of colour communities," she says. "We have to hold ourselves and our families responsible for the harm we are often doing through our everyday acts of white supremacy that we don't have to see, because we have that invisible knapsack."

So, can white people teach others about Indigenous issues?

Yes. A former head of the U of M's department of Native studies was a German white woman named Renate Eigenbrod, who studied decolonization in relation to Indigenous literature. When she died in 2014, professor **Emma LaRocque [MA/80, PhD/99]**, a Métis woman and the longest serving department member, praised Eigenbrod as an "enthusiastic supporter of Aboriginal peoples and culture." Today, two of the department's eight faculty members are non-Indigenous, and many of its sessional instructors are non-Indigenous.

"I have no issue of any professor of any colour teaching in Native studies—as long as they aren't being racist," LaRocque says. "I see all cultures as dynamic and Indigenous cultures were dynamic long before Europeans set foot here. We have to have honest conversations and you can't have that if you're teaching according to our colours. That is not enlightened."

The department head agrees with LaRocque, and both scholars also caution against a recent push to quickly "Indigenize" courses, a trend that oversimplifies cultural histories and mistakenly lumps differing ones together. It also ignores the fact that "sophisticated Indigenous knowledge, histories, theories and methodologies can't be



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Emma LaRocque

picked up quickly off the side of one's desk," Miller says.

**Karen Favell [BA/92]** is guiding the next generation of teachers on this. An Ojibway instructor in the Faculty of Education, who also studies reconciliation through art, she shows students how to share Indigenous cultures in their own classrooms.

To avoid appropriation, Favell says Elders—the knowledge keepers—must be the ones to lead, and students must abandon colonial mindsets.

For instance, in developing a lesson plan on smudging, Favell's students sometimes say they'd teach about its significance and history and then invite an Elder to perform a smudging ceremony. But by doing this, they provided a colonial version of the activity instead of an Indigenous one.

"It's the Elder's information to share, not theirs to take," Favell says. "In their mind they're thinking they're educating students. I'm not saying there's malice. I'm saying there's a difference in your worldview and the Elder's worldview, and why does yours always supersede ours?"

### YOU BOUGHT YOUR FIRST HOME IN CANADA. MOVE AHEAD 3 SPACES.

LaRocque, a professor in the department of Native studies, researches Indigenous-white relations. She grew up in a Cree/Michif-speaking community in Alberta and is now a scholar, author and poet.

To her, the problem is colonial privilege. In her book, *When the Other is Me*, she reports on the first-recorded instance in Canada: in 1612 Jesuit missionary Pierre Biard wrote that Indigenous people "roam through, rather than occupy" their land. This misrepresentation multiplied and let grow a dehumanizing mindset, which fed a "civ/sav ideology" as LaRocque termed it. It means settlers viewed themselves as civilized and others as savages, letting settlers justify unequal relationships.

"Colonial privilege is more than about economics or resources, it is an attitude," she says.

"This is why even the poorest white person can have 'white privilege' in the sense of racist attitudes. 'White privilege' is systemic because its foundation is colonial and centrally racist—and colonial racism is much more profound than one or two white people discovering they have privileges."

## "I didn't think I'd live long enough to see young Native students take their place in a huge university."

EMMA LAROCQUE

It requires shifts in power structures to expel it. Progress has been slow, but when she began teaching at the U of M 40 years ago, very few Indigenous students sat in her classrooms. Today, they form the majority in her department.

"I didn't think I'd live long enough to see young Native students take their place in a huge university, and I think basically they are ready to change the system. Or they're trying to change the system," she says.

"We need to think a lot more about this white privilege business. Go after the foundation and then, hopefully, the resources in a society will become more equitably shared. The U of M, like most universities, has mostly white administrators. If a non-white person came in and took an administrative position, does that mean that a white person's privilege was lost? And does it mean any Native person would now be privileged? Why do we see it in terms of either/or?"

Verna Kirkness views Indigenous advancement with optimism and frustration.

She is the namesake of a science and engineering program that began at the University of Manitoba in 2009 and now runs across the

country, providing Indigenous schoolchildren with a campus experience.

As a professor in the University of British Columbia's Faculty of Education in the early '80s, fed up with schools neglecting Indigenous history and culture, she and her colleagues pressed for a compulsory course on Indigenous people. It took the university 20 years to change, and many universities today still have yet to, she says.

"I have seen a lot of change and I have been part of a lot of change," she says, "but it does seem that [Indigenous people] have to do all the work. We're the ones, in the total context, working so hard in the area of reconciliation. It's not 50-50."

### YOU FIND A CULTURAL COMMUNITY. JUMP AHEAD.

White people need to get more involved. To clarify, neither "slacktivism" nor "performative allyship" is desired. These are doing easy things, like retweeting a hashtag or going to a Pow Wow, but then abandoning the cause by, say, not writing your member of Parliament.

And white people assuming the role of hero is also not desired. Conversation and education are, as well as pointing the spotlight, without stepping into the spotlight.

"Much more can be done to make changes," says LaRocque. "Society can do so much more. But as individuals, we can all work within our spheres of influence. Educate your fellow whites, your children, your co-workers—then perhaps we can begin to have genuine reconciliation and we won't need a revolution."

For Kirkness, a self-described optimist, such conversations matter. They help shift philosophies and policies, she says.

"You have to look at it as a possibility that something good will come from something, otherwise we wouldn't do anything," she says.

"Maybe this article will start a dialogue among alumni and their children. We have to stop and think, is this the end of the conversation, or is this the beginning of it?" **UM**





PHOTO BY THOMAS FRICKE

# ‘Behind Every Face is a Story’

Incoming Chancellor **Anne Mahon [BScHEc/87]** wants to know yours.

BY LISA KASSENAAR

ANNE MAHON, WHO’LL become the U of M’s 14th chancellor in June, sat down to talk in ARTlab on a pale winter afternoon. The volunteer job means seats on nine committees of the board of governors, a new set of black and gold robes, and handing out more than 5,500 U of M degrees and diplomas a year.

Mahon grew up less than five kilometres from the school’s main campus, and was the first in her family to go to university. She graduated with a bachelor of human ecology in 1987.

Now, she’s an author whose books recount both the heartbreaking and hopeful oral histories of some of Winnipeg’s most marginalized—African refugees, former gang members and women who grew up in foster care.

Through dozens of interviews for her books in small apartments, in churches, and in the offices of social justice groups, Mahon says, she’s continually drawn back to the enormous value of a good education, and the opportunities it creates.



**ISABEL AULD  
[LLD/86]**

Tens of thousands of U of M grads may remember being handed their degrees by Isabel Auld, the university's first female chancellor, who was in the job from 1977 to 1986.

Auld came to the university as a genetics researcher in the 1940s to do advanced work in biotechnology, a word that hadn't yet been coined. She started out as a teen in Regina during the Depression, when she won a grain-judging contest and a cash award that was enough to cover her tuition to the University of Saskatchewan. She balanced her studies there with part-time work in the research lab, helping to develop rust-resistant wheat. She later pursued postgraduate studies at McGill University, then found her way to the federal department of agriculture's Rust Research Laboratory at the U of M.

After getting married and having three kids, Auld volunteered for decades in Winnipeg, a champion of health care, medical research, social justice and higher education. She joined the board of the University of Manitoba, and was only the second woman in Canadian history to be named chancellor of a post-secondary institution. Over nine years, Auld expanded the role as both an ambassador of the U of M, and as a leader who wanted to better understand the needs of the community the university serves. She died in 2016 at age 98.

**Anne, what was your experience like at the University of Manitoba?**

The first thing I realized was I didn't know how to write an essay. I came to university and I was not prepared, much to my own shock.

So, while everyone was eating pizza and drinking beer in University Centre, I would go up the elevator to some kind of program. It was in a little classroom. I remember feeling kind of humbled that I was there, but also that it was very necessary. I really did get what I needed.

I started out in the Faculty of Commerce and, in my second year, I realized I was missing the creative in my life. I had always felt good about the art I made. I sewed almost all my own clothes. And, in Human Ecology, there was the opportunity to do marketing of apparel and textiles as a major with a minor in business. The minute I was there, I felt like it was much more the right place for me.

It was partly a time of personal exploration and growth, but it was also a time of a lot of fun. I went to a lot of socials in MPR.

**Did you have much to do with the U of M after you graduated?**

No. I did quite a few different things. I went to work in the garment industry at Wescott Fashions and then at Olympic Pant and Sportswear and at Cotter Canada. I went to Ricki's as a buyer. Then I had my daughter and I sold Casio watches two days a week. I had my second child, and my third.

I had the claim to fame of having landed the single largest order of Casio watches when I left the company. They called me from the head office and said, "What is this?" And I said, "I sold your product for you." It was thousands and thousands of watches.

Sales is possibly something that can be in your blood and my dad was an in-the-blood salesman. I think I genetically inherited sales from my dad.

**Then you moved to Ontario for three years.**

It was challenging. I had had three kids in four years and I was living in a different city with them. That's what made me start to think, 'Okay, if I found this hard, what about an immigrant or refugee? They've got to find it infinitely harder than me.'

**How did working on your books change how you view your own privilege?**

I grew up in a modest, middle-class home where hard work was always instilled. I worked part-time through high school, as a babysitter, a camp counsellor and in a program at Eaton's department store called Junior Executives. I paid for my own university tuition. But I also took many things for granted, like borrowing my parents' car or having an easy time finding employment. I realize that being white, I have built-in privilege. I continue to learn from the participants in my books.

**What kinds of stories have people shared with you?**

I've heard most about overcoming trauma. Poverty. Isolation. Support.

**In your own life, have you ever felt your resilience challenged?**

When I was in Grade 5 I was bullied by a classmate. It brought lasting effects in school for a few years. And, residually, in my view of myself for a long time. I've thought about my interest in resilience quite a bit. I trace it back to that time. I have nowhere near the level of inner strength that the participants in my books have. But that bullying is the seed from which my fascination grew. Being bullied was a very difficult time in my life. But some good did come from it.

**When did you get wind that you might be chancellor?**

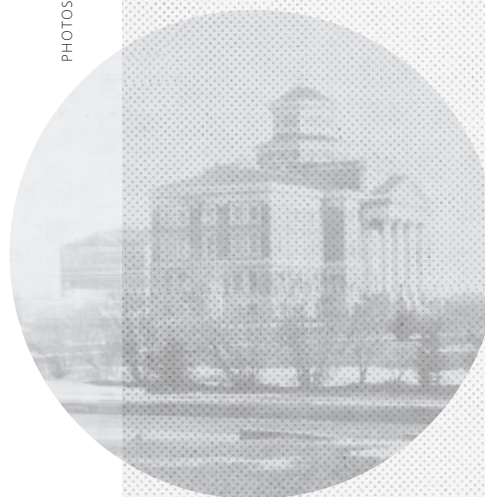
I got a call. I was just so surprised. I talked to my family first, of course. And, last, I talked to two people who work day in and day out for the disempowered in the community. Both of them I respect tremendously. And both said, "Oh my God, you have to do this." The university is really a cornerstone of the city. And from my time spent with people in my books, particularly newcomers, I can see it through their eyes—they have an eye on opportunity and they have gratitude for higher education. And such respect for it.

I'm drawn to people who are on the fringe. I will be chancellor for all but my heart tends to be with people who are more in the nooks and crannies of the university. Sometimes people on the fringe don't feel welcomed or encouraged. Sometimes people in the very centre

Anne Mahon is the second woman since 1887 to be chancellor of the University of Manitoba. It got us thinking how the numbers have shifted over time—and where do we need to go next?

**TIMELINE**

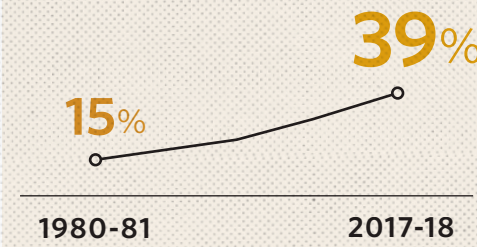
PHOTOS OF ISABEL AULD PAINTING AND ADMINISTRATION BUILDING COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA ARCHIVES & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS



**FEMALE ENROLMENT THROUGH 40 YEARS**



**FEMALE TEACHING STAFF**



**FEMALE GRADUATES THEN & NOW**

**ARTS**

1900 17% | NOW 62%

**AGRICULTURE\***

1916 0% | NOW 57%

**ENGINEERING**

1935 0% | NOW 20%

**SCIENCE**

1938 17% | NOW 45%

**BUSINESS**

1950 3% | NOW 49%

**ARCHITECTURE**

1960 4% | NOW 58%

\* When the department of human nutritional sciences moved from the Faculty of Human Ecology to the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences in 2014, it further boosted female representation.

\*\* Statistics provided by the Office of Institutional Analysis are the most recent available (2017).



don't either. We all want to feel welcomed and we all want to feel encouraged.

I volunteer in the jail with women. I am going there tonight. I have sat down with former gang members. I have the tremendous and unusual privilege in my life of having been with a very broad spectrum of people. So the connecting part of the job should come fairly naturally, and the welcoming and encouraging are on my radar.

I wouldn't have been asked to be chancellor if I hadn't written the books. And I wrote the books because people who didn't know me, who live in the margins, trusted me.

Having been invited to this role, I come on the shoulders of the disempowered who have been so good to me. There is a lot of poverty in Winnipeg. We have one of the highest child poverty rates and somehow the message of university and opening doors needs to go to them too.

**When new graduates come across the stage at the University of Manitoba convocation ceremonies, they will increasingly be from all over the world. What will you be thinking about?**

First and foremost, behind every face is a story. Sometimes we assume we know the story, which is a mistake, and sometime we just have no clue. Most of us want the same things. It doesn't matter what we look like or where we have come from. We want love. We want to feel belonging. We want opportunity, whether that's for a decent job or so we can give our kids what we think our kids need. We want to have peace inside ourselves and peace in our communities.

I've learned two things writing these books. One of them is not to judge anybody. Nobody. We live in a fast world where we want answers and our egos want to think we know this or that, but we really don't. And the other thing is, and it sounds kind of clichéd, but, wow, have I learned gratitude.

And even my friends who are former refugees who are doing really well—they've learned English, and their kids are young, and they have a hybrid culture between Canada and their birth culture—still, they work so hard. They don't take anything for granted. And that challenges me.

I'm looking forward to standing on the dais and looking out at everybody. I'm such an observer of people and I want to see what that looks like. All the different ages and colours, and all the stories that are behind all those faces. I am looking forward to that moment very much.

**You talked to Harvey Secter [BComm/67, LLB/92], who's been chancellor since 2009, before you decided to step into the role. What did he tell you?**

I talked to Harvey for an hour at a coffee shop and I found him very warm and gracious, and very encouraging. I appreciated that. He talked about being a bridge from the university to the community and back to the university.

And he gave me two pieces of advice: The first was, "Just be yourself, don't try to be anyone else." The second was, "There are no rules for how to do this job."

He also said he bought new shoes before the first set of convocations. And he told me: "Don't wear brand-new shoes."

**How significant is it that you are a woman in this job?**

In 142 years, there has been one female chancellor. So I think the university made the right choice to select a woman, but I tend not to look at things through a gender lens. While I value balanced representation and feel it is critical, my priority is working with people of heart; people who are courageous, care for all, are open and generous.

My original plan for early June, when I will be installed, was to be in Vancouver at the world's largest women's conference, Women Deliver. I have a ton of friends who will be going. It's not escaped me that the reason I won't be there this year is because I will be conferring degrees.

Maybe I will say, "I am not there. I am here. And I am delivering because I am a woman." **UM**

**AMPLIFYING VOICES**

Mahon's book, *The Lucky Ones: African Refugees' Stories of Extraordinary Courage*, is a collection of first-person accounts from newcomers.

Among them: **Sally Wai [BSW/09]**, a refugee from Sierra Leone who went on to earn a social work degree from the University of Manitoba and now works at the Community Education Development Association in Winnipeg.

"The first time I met Sally," says Mahon, "I came with a guest as a last-minute tag-along to a community lunch she was hosting. But she welcomed us in as she would a good friend. She said it is the African way to welcome extra people. Her big-heartedness proved itself again the day I asked her if she had any suggestions for individuals who could be interviewed for [my] book. She offered herself. A woman who is constantly giving, she was the first person to offer her story."

Here are some excerpts:

**I arrived with very little and there were many of us:** my daughter and me as well as my elderly mom and three of her other grandchildren. When we first arrived, I quickly found a church to attend. It was difficult for me, but I stood up in church and said, "I have come to Canada and I have nothing." Initially it was hard for me to ask because it is not a custom in my culture to ask for assistance. I was honest because I needed the help.

**I came to Canada because I had been living surrounded by war** and had seen the suffering up close. My mother, then in her late sixties, had to hide in the rural bush of Sierra Leone for two months to protect her three young grandchildren. **Our country was not safe.** We had family members die, and so we decided to get out. That was 2002.

Today, I am part of a community, one I am proud to say many of us have built together—the Central Park neighbourhood. Sure, there are drug dealers and crime here, but there are many strengths too. **People here open their doors and their hearts to each other.** That is the way to survive as a newcomer.

Where I come from, women don't have rights: they can't speak out or make political decisions. They don't even have the ultimate right to their own bodies, so if they are abused or raped there is no way for them to seek help

or justice. **It is only now that women in Africa are fighting for their rights** and to be able to have representation in decision making. That is very new in our society. **Women need help to know what their rights are.** If a woman is abused, here in Canada you dial 911, but that service does not exist in Africa. There is no point in going to the police there, for who are the police? Men. There lies the bias, and this bias is part of the system already.

Every day my office doors are open. We've started a sewing co-operative, a conversational English group, and we are gardening on land given to us by the University of Manitoba. On Fridays, **we take turns cooking our native foods** for each other because we are a diverse group: Somali, Ethiopian, Korean, Sierra Leonean, Sudanese, Liberian, Filipino, Aboriginal, Nigerian, South American and Chilean.

**I have had to work two and three jobs** just to go to school. Newcomers whose education is not accepted in Canada have a hard time. They take on menial jobs to pay for their re-education because with no valid education they can easily go down the drain. **It is difficult to advance.**

When I was young, I lived with my aunts. They beat me and told me I was good for nothing. I felt so low I tuned my mind to accept the beatings; it was part of my daily life. But the only thing I never accepted was that I was good for nothing and couldn't do anything with my life. I said to myself, **I will take these beatings, but I will do something with my life,** and I will impart this message to other women. I will stand for the truth, for what I believe in, and not accept what these other people are telling me.

**I plan to take this message back to Sierra Leone.** My hope is that, in 10 years, I will have a resource centre there. It will be for every woman and girl-child of Sierra Leone. I have a special place in my heart for these less fortunate girls. They are young and not in school. **Often they have no parents,** having been orphaned by war or AIDS. They are in need and have no way to cope. I want to teach them they can rise above the abuse and the suffering; **they can find their voice** and become strong. I want to empower women and the girl-child to give them hope in society. I want to help women know how to live their lives **independent of men.**



PHOTO BY THOMAS FRICKE



# Misprint

The smallest typo in the billions of letters that make up our genetic code can carry huge, heart-wrenching consequences. While the genetic diseases they trigger strike with rare odds globally, they can target communities with a less diverse gene pool. U of M researchers reveal the triumphs, and the setbacks, from decades of advocacy and scientific study in Manitoba's unique populations of Hutterites, Mennonites, Ashkenazi Jews, and Indigenous people.

BY KATIE CHALMERS-BROOKS

A LIGHT SHINES from a house across the way and Dora Maendel takes it as a sign. In the middle of the night, she's not alone.

**Maendel [BEd/85, BA/88, PBDipEd/10]** has always lived on Manitoba Hutterite colonies, first in New Rosedale, and now in Fairholme, a 90-minute drive west of Winnipeg. At 67, she still resides in her family home with her two sisters. When she can't sleep, she finds comfort in the glow outside her window.

"You know this community is surrounding you. Even if you're not related to all of them, it's reassuring," says Maendel, who is one of 12 siblings.

Her family tree, and that of her neighbours, is of interest to University of Manitoba genetics researchers who study rare, inherited diseases in unique communities like this.

Maendel offers a peek into life at Fairholme. She calls it "a blessing" that when a sensor breaks on her stove at 10:30 p.m., the colony's electrician—her nephew, Jamie—fixes it within the hour. Everyone has a role. Maendel's is high school teacher. She earned her education degree in part through distance learning from the University of Manitoba and now teaches English and German. It's important, she says, that her students know community members needn't feel self-conscious about their Carinthian German dialect in the world beyond their communal upbringing. Knowing a second language is a strength, she tells them.

It's tradition that the men operate the grain farm and the hog barn, or load the turkeys (this affluent colony is one of the province's largest turkey producers). But gender roles are changing, says Maendel. Her nieces drove the tractors a few years ago when there was a shortage of young men. Fairholme is also home to female hockey players, she notes.

The women tend gardens, sew and bring their creativity to knitting and crocheting. Each week, they rotate a lead role to plan and make all meals for the colony. If they require labour-intensive, homemade egg rolls or perogies, a request goes out over the PA system for help.

About 50 adults and 30 kids live here, notes Maendel, plus one (a baby born last fall) and minus one (a young woman, possibly in search of something different, who left the colony two weeks ago, but is always welcome back).

Their common way of dressing—dirndl-style dresses and head kerchiefs, and buttoned-down shirts and suspenders—speaks to a shared equality, she explains.

They eat together three times a day, and worship together several times a week.

"It's peaceful but it's not trouble-free," Maendel says. "Being together this way requires kindness and forgiveness. And then accepting when *you* are not on your most perfect behaviour. That can be very difficult. Even though there is all of this support and security—that is the reality. But the other reality is that we're not angels. People in our communities are very much human beings."

The Hutterites of Fairholme are also navigating another very human hurdle—they are a population that faces an increased risk for some diseases because of inherited genetic mutations. U of M scientists and doctors are working alongside Manitoba's Hutterite communities to find answers, and hopefully, treatments.

Geneticists believe the Hutterite population in North America is derived from a mere 89 "founders," dating back to 16th-century Europe. Originally from Germany and Austria, the Hutterites have beliefs deeply rooted in non-violence, which ultimately led them to Canada as conscientious objectors to the Second World War. Their communal way of life came much earlier, in 1528, when a small group fled to a deserted island near what today is the Czech Republic. For survival, they shared the few belongings they carried on their backs—it's now their most important religious tenet.

Because they marry within their faith—and have done so for nearly 500 years—their gene diversity is limited. Certain genetic mutations, like misprints in an alphabet, have passed from generation to generation. In the roughly 100 colonies in Manitoba, some disorders appear more frequently than in the general population, including cystic fibrosis and limb girdle muscular dystrophy. Many of these conditions can be fatal or result in physical or cognitive disabilities.

The carrier risk for any given genetic disorder overrepresented in the Hutterites can be as high as one in seven. The odds of having a child with one of these disorders is greatest if both parents have a misprint in the DNA sequence in the same gene.

"There is this dialogue always. It's an ongoing discussion," says Maendel, of the talk on her colony.

It's common for young people to ponder having large families, she says.

PHOTO COMPILATIONS BY KATHRYN CARNEGIE [BFA(HONS)/08]



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Her aunt and uncle lost three boys in infancy to hemophilia, an inherited disorder that prevents blood from clotting. And she has known several people, including a cousin's son, who have lost a child to Bowen-Conradi syndrome, a severe disorder that to date has only been identified in Hutterite babies. Bowen-Conradi has no cure, causes developmental delay, and is characterized by several abnormalities affecting facial features, the fingers and feet.

Young couples recognize the risks.

"There are some who want to have carrier testing done and some who say, 'I don't want to know.' But I think the advice from mothers and other women is: It's better to know—

then you will decide. And they say, 'Well, if it means I have to separate from my boyfriend, I don't want to do that.' I know young women who have done exactly that because they felt they were too closely related," says Maendel.

There's an understanding you shouldn't marry closer than a second cousin, yet "there are always cases where it happens anyway," she adds.

For decades, **Barbara Triggs-Raine [BSc(Hons)/83, PhD/87]**, a University of Manitoba researcher in biochemistry and medical genetics, and Dr. Cheryl Rockman-Greenberg, a pediatrics and child health professor, have worked with Manitoba's unique populations.

And what they've learned from these communities helps us better understand rare disease on a larger scale.

Triggs-Raine and collaborators identified the mutation responsible for Bowen-Conradi and, together with Rockman-Greenberg, and **Beth Spriggs [BSc(Hons)/88]**, a geneticist with Shared Health Manitoba, developed a diagnostic chip—basically a slide with DNA—to test for 30 gene-causing mutations in Hutterites.

If both parents are carriers, the risk of having a child with Bowen-Conradi is one in four. The odds of one family having three babies with the disease is less likely: about one in 64.

"But that has happened," says Rockman-Greenberg, noting that families draw strength from their faith. "They have a faith I marvel at—how comforting it is for them. They are good people, good parents, and they have been wonderful partners in research."

“Even though there’s no cure, they know what causes it. And when you know what causes something, you also know what *doesn’t* cause it.”

**C H E R Y L  
R O C K M A N - G R E E N B E R G**

Over the years, she has held town-hall meetings on colonies to share research discoveries, answer questions and put minds at ease.

"Knowledge is very empowering for them. Even though there's no cure, they know what causes it. And when you know what causes something, you also know what *doesn't* cause it."

**IN THE BUBBLE**

Manitoba has more babies born with severe combined immune deficiency syndrome, or SCID, than anywhere else in Canada. The number of cases of this rare genetic condition is three times the national average. The overrepresentation is in two groups: Mennonites and select Indigenous communities.

These babies are born without an immune system—no protection from a killer as common as the common cold. The most well-known sufferer might be David Vetter, who became known as The Bubble Boy. He made headlines when doctors in Texas cocooned him within a clear, plastic chamber within seconds of his birth in 1971, given his SCID diagnosis. Vetter rarely left his enclosure, and only while wearing a NASA-engineered suit. Before treatment became available, most kids with the disease, including Vetter's older brother, lived less than a year; Vetter survived 12.

"They obviously thought they were doing the right thing, and they could prove that you could keep these kids alive, but the quality of life was awful," says pediatric hematologist and U of M Professor Emeritus **Dr. Marlis Schroeder [MD/66]**. "Can you imagine growing up without touch from another human being?"

Schroeder knows well the reality of what you can and can't do to protect children diagnosed with SCID. Having dedicated a lifetime to their care, she still remembers the first child she observed more than 50 years ago, when she was a U of M medical student. This fragile boy struggled with recurrent infections, which ultimately led to his death.

At that time, the team would isolate the babies in their own room, limit visitors and cover street clothes with scrubs, she says. "There was no definitive treatment so all you could do was provide supportive care with antibiotics. They all failed to thrive, they don't gain weight and they ended up dying with malnutrition and usually an infection, frequently viral. We knew clinically it was SCID, but we didn't know the molecular or genetic defect. None of that technology was available."

Schroeder decided to specialize in bone marrow transplants in the 1970s after doctors in Minneapolis successfully treated SCID using stem cells from bone marrow to rebuild the body's defenses.





Amy Tinsley, age 9

The need to identify the mutation responsible in Manitoba families felt all the more urgent, she says. If babies could be screened before they got sick, they could be saved before they became too ill to survive the long and bumpy road of a transplant. Schroeder established the Pediatric Manitoba Blood and Marrow Transplant Program at the Health Sciences Centre in 1993. It now treats one or two kids with SCID each year.

“The babies don’t get sick for at least three months because they still have their mother’s immunity. If you identify them earlier, you can usually transplant them before they get sick,” she says.

For a child to be born with SCID, both parents must be carriers, and the genetic disorder is much more often seen in communities where people are having children within a small group. The Mennonites and select Indigenous communities are each considered by the researchers as “isolates.”

The Indigenous communities are isolated by their remote, northern location. The Mennonite communities are isolated by their cultural and religious beliefs. “You see SCID in the Mexican Mennonites too, which has to do with how they moved around,” Schroeder says.

A breakthrough came in the late 1980s when she worked with a group from Toronto’s Hospital for Sick Children who successfully identified the genetic mutation responsible in Manitoba Mennonites. They analyzed blood samples of selected families.

Then, in 2013, another leap forward: Schroeder, U of M colleague **Teresa Zelinski [BSc/78, MSc/81, PhD/84]** and a team of German scientists revealed the IKBKB gene was linked to a form of SCID in the Indigenous community. Their work was published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*. “It was sort of, *finally*,” Schroeder says.

The team also discovered the need for a more complex screening methodology. Specific variances in the Mennonite and Indigenous communities were missed using standard methods since the tests look for the absence of T cells—these groups have these cells but they don’t activate, Zelinski explains.

Parents carrying the same SCID mutation face a one in four chance their child will have it and this risk holds steady for each pregnancy. Schroeder has seen as many as four SCID siblings in one family. “Sometimes they don’t believe it could happen a second time,” she says.

Despite the urgency to identify SCID babies as early as possible, it is not among the disorders examined in Manitoba’s newborn screening program.

“The screening is urgently required,” adds Schroeder. “Right now, you often don’t get the babies until they’re quite ill so, obviously, the success of a transplant is significantly less.”

## A BREAKTHROUGH

U of M researchers working on rare diseases are part of a crowd of medical researchers often battling for attention, says Rockman-Greenberg, a physician and scientist in the Children’s Hospital Research Institute of Manitoba.

“Just because it’s a rare disease doesn’t mean it isn’t as important to understand as a common disease,” she says. “I’ll speak for rare diseases anytime.”

Also known as orphan diseases, these disorders can be neglected by the pharmaceutical industry because the market for a new drug is so limited. Prices are often sky high.

Still, Montreal-based Enobia Pharma developed an enzyme replacement therapy to treat a bone disease called hypophosphatasia, or HPP. It strikes one in roughly 100,000 worldwide but the odds of having the disease narrow to one in every 2,500 among Mennonites in Canada, and Rockman-Greenberg is one of the global experts.

The bones of babies with its most severe form appear translucent on X-rays. Without treatment, their lives are measured in hours, weeks at most, with chest cavities so narrow it stifles their breathing, and bones so delicate they can’t even be hugged.

Rockman-Greenberg and her colleagues began researching HPP in the 1980s. Through family studies and gene sequencing, she and her team uncovered the genetic cause of HPP in Manitoba’s Mennonite community: a misprint in the gene coding for the enzyme *alkaline phosphatase*, normally responsible for mineralizing the bones. Years later, in 2008, she became the principal investigator for Canada for the first clinical trials of Enobia Pharma’s drug *asfotase alfa*, now marketed by Alexion Pharmaceuticals as Strensiq.

Children came to Winnipeg from Lebanon, France and other corners of the globe seeking a treatment they couldn’t access in their home country. The first to arrive, on a Learjet, was Amy Tinsley, a baby from a dairy farm outside Belfast, Northern Ireland, whose bones had broken in her mother’s womb.

“That was certainly a very emotional day,” says Rockman-Greenberg. “She would not have survived had she not had been able to have access to this new drug.”

“She was the first child to enroll in the clinical trial. It changed the natural history of the disease completely, from a mortality rate in our population of the most severe forms of HPP from 100 per cent to a mortality rate of four per cent.”

Amy didn’t bounce back right away. It’s not unusual for HPP babies to get sicker before they get better. On a particularly dim day, as the parents debated a palliative approach, Rockman-Greenberg instead encouraged perseverance. “I just had this feeling that things were going to turn around.”

PHOTO OF AMY TINSLEY SUPPLIED



**STAR PHYSICIAN**

In 2018, Cheryl Rockman-Greenberg was inducted into the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame and also received the Order of Manitoba for contributions to her field.

And I remember the day it did. Whenever I speak with the parents, they remind me of that day when I said, ‘Stay the course. Give it a little bit longer.’”

Rockman-Greenberg recently visited Amy in Dublin, bringing her a pink University of Manitoba hoodie—and lots of hugs. “I just got a picture from the family. She’s 10 years old now, a loving little girl. It’s not often that you actually get a treatment that really works. It was brilliant.”

**TEXTBOOK CASE**

Leanne Tinsley still can’t believe her good fortune, that a breakthrough treatment for HPP came through just in time to save her daughter a decade ago. Today, Amy is a tween who decorated her bedroom in all-pink, and picked out a duvet cover with “wee cats and dogs on it,” Leanne says. Amy wants an iPhone for her 11<sup>th</sup> birthday.

“She’s the centre of the family,” says Leanne, while looking at Amy riding her bike across the family’s fourth-generation farmyard, chasing her older sister and younger brother.

There are no other child survivors of this genetic disease who’ve come before. Amy is the textbook case.

She’ll likely have to take *asfotase alfa* for the rest of her life. Injections would have cost \$5,000 per week but now there is government coverage in the United Kingdom. Initially, Leanne was told it was too new a drug and too rare a condition but after years of advocacy, officials finally—within the last year—agreed to cover it for children with severe forms. In Canada, similar government approval came through last year.

Amy is healthy but has undergone two neurosurgeries to correct skull bones that were closing, and she has metal pins in her spine to manage scoliosis. Leanne admits the future is blurry. “Nobody can give us any indication of what to expect,” she says. “There’s no history there. The unknown is the most difficult part.”

**HUNTING FOR ANSWERS**

The mapping of blood-group genes in families began decades ago at the U of M. Thousands of samples now provide a major resource for tracking genes in Manitoba’s unique populations.

Over 32 years, scientist and professor Teresa Zelinski has expanded the database to include multiple generations and analyze DNA in increasingly complex ways. The techniques have evolved but the goal remains the same: She looks for gene patterns of family members carrying diseases that don’t repeat in genes of non-carrier family members.

Stacks of handwritten family trees stretch out like accordions in her office in the Pathology building, documenting up to five generations. For the rarest mutations, Zelinski might

be the only hope for a family who wants to know: Why us? And will it happen again?

She says the refrain “Why the heck can’t I figure this out?” plays in her head during her daily commute to the Bannatyne campus.

“There are some things that are so very rare, so very unusual, whose underlying genetic cause is equally as unusual. We have families where we have no answer for them and they might be the only family in Canada whose kids are suffering from that specific disease,” she says.

One puzzle has haunted her for 10 years. Two children in the same family died of a neurological disorder so mysterious it doesn’t yet have a name. Zelinski, now 61, feared retirement would come sooner than an answer. “It’s something that kind of eats at you,” she says.

But then, within weeks of this interview, a victory. She can’t share the findings yet (they’re pending publication) but it means two grown sisters, now at an age to ponder motherhood, finally can look ahead. Knowing the mutation means they can find out if they are carriers.

“We’ve found a lot, we know a lot, but the next generation will do equally as much if not more,” she says.

But how much do we all want to know, *really*?

Since the completion of the Human Genome Project in 2003, scientists can tell us which mutations cause thousands of diseases. When you undergo gene sequencing, your DNA is compared with the norm, identifying what’s different and whether that might bring trouble. You can now sequence your “coding genome”—a less thorough glance, but still, one that looks at your risk for key diseases—for a couple thousand dollars, she says.

Zelinski predicts the future of genetic scanning will go something like this: “You can go *vroop* and they’ll know all the changes and what it could mean. It’s going to be a little freaky, a little scary. Do you want to know, at 16 or 17, that by 40 you are going to die within, say five or six years?”

**A BIT FRANKENSTEIN**

The genome-editing technology CRISPR, now being used by scientists across the globe, is the newest addition to the U of M research toolkit for the study of rare genetic diseases.

First described by researchers in Japan in 1987, CRISPR (pronounced *crisper*) uses a protein like a pair of scissors to cut problematic DNA. The protein takes its location cue from a molecular guide, which also tells cells what template to use while repairing themselves. The result: a corrected gene.

Scientists have tried tweaking the genetics of insects—like mosquitoes—to stop them from carrying communicable

diseases, and of people to thwart symptoms from immobilizing disorders, like Huntington Disease. If done on embryos, could parents correct mutations before their child is born?

U of M researcher Barb Triggs-Raine imagines the possibilities.

“I don’t think it’s science fiction anymore. The ability to have an impact on genetic diseases is really real now,” she says. “It’s amazing how things have changed.”

Before she was a scientist, Triggs-Raine was an imaginative kid growing up on a farm near Treherne, Man., her nose always in a sci-fi book. One of her favourites, *I Will Fear No Evil*, described the swapping of a man’s head onto a woman’s body, and vice versa—and it fascinated her.

Today, her two millennial sons call CRISPR “a bit Frankenstein,” she says.

What she doesn’t condone: IVF gene manipulation for designer babies, customizing gender or upping athleticism. “I don’t think we should be using CRISPR to make changes in the genome that are not needed to cure a disease that has a significant impact on the well-being of that person.”

CRISPR is being used by Triggs-Raine to help humans fight disease. But instead of correcting genes, she does genetic edits to mouse models to mimic various human disorders.

The frequency of the disease she’s now targeting—Tay-Sachs—is highest among Ashkenazi Jews. They too are considered by geneticists to be a unique population. Their ancestry can be traced to 350 individuals, according to a 2014 Columbia University study by Shai Carmi. One in a mere 25 are carriers of Tay-Sachs, says Triggs-Raine.

Parents are fooled into thinking their baby is healthy until about six months, when missed milestones set in. These children never take a first step or learn to speak, and gradually fade to a vegetative state. They usually die before their fifth birthday.

It was a major advance when, in the late ’80s, as a sleuthing postdoctoral student at Toronto’s Hospital for Sick Children and then Montreal Children’s Hospital, Triggs-Raine was among the team to discover several mutations underlying this disease: some specific to Ashkenazi Jews, and some found in the general population. Given the disease’s progressive and cruel nature—and how that might impact a carrier couple’s decision on whether or not to have children—it was significant that she discovered the first pseudo-deficiency mutation that gave parents inaccurate test results. A year later, in 1993, she led her own team at the University of Manitoba to identify a second pseudo-deficiency mutation, again improving the accuracy of screening for this disease.

Screening has reduced cases of Tay-Sachs tenfold, she notes. But still, no cure. CRISPR is not yet sophisticated enough to make the correction.

Now, Triggs-Raine is working with U of M professor **Brian Mark [MSc/98]**, her former student, to replace the natural enzyme missing in people with Tay-Sachs with an engineered form, and then get it to where it needs to be: the brain. She tracks the mice in the university’s animal imaging facility, with its miniature CT, MRI and ultrasound machines.

A cure for Tay-Sachs could be within reach in the next five to 10 years, she says.

**THE QUEST CONTINUES**

With patience for progress, these Manitoba communities steeped in tradition await the next cutting-edge findings.

Alongside the Hutterite population, a new generation of U of M scientists are now working to develop projects aimed at identifying new genes and developing therapies for these communities, says Triggs-Raine. In the meantime, their everyday also means grappling with the risks and outcomes of genetic disease.

When a visitor, an American woman from outside the Hutterite community, came to Fairholme colony, she remarked to Dora Maendel how struck she was by the way everyone looked after one another.

“She said, ‘I don’t think you understand the wealth you have here,’” Maendel recalls.

If there’s any stigma attached to those diagnosed with genetic disorders or those who are carriers, Maendel says she hasn’t witnessed it. Rather, it’s people helping others, as they did recently for her cousin’s daughter, who has two children living with Joubert syndrome. It’s among the brain disorders U of M researchers want to better understand. Community members built the family a wheelchair-accessible home and ensured the children had extra resources in school.

“Just to know, they’re never going to walk or run like other children will, it’s very, very difficult.” Maendel says. “Of course, you have the whole community to help out. It’s teaching how we should love one another. Essentially, that’s what this whole way of life is about. It’s what we believe.” **UM**

“We’ve found a lot, we know a lot, but the next generation will do equally as much if not more.”

**TERESA ZELINSKI**

PHOTO OF CHERYL ROCKMAN-GREENBERG BY MIKE LATSCHISLAW



Gail Asper performs in the Black Hole Theatre Company's production of *A Fine Coloured Easter Egg* in 1981.

# Gail Asper

[BA/81, LLB/84, LLD/08]

What she did for Winnipeg with the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, she now wants to do for Tel Aviv. President David Barnard caught up with the philanthropist, lawyer and Black Hole Theatre alumna to talk about her next pursuit (a \$400-million Jewish Museum on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea), what she learned from her mom growing up—and her dream role on Broadway.

ARCHIVAL PHOTO COURTESY OF BLACK HOLE THEATRE COMPANY

**PRESIDENT BARNARD: Let's talk about your new project in Tel Aviv. How will it be different from other museums?**

**GAIL ASPER:** The intent of the World's Jewish Museum is to chronicle Jewish world history from the perspective of impact on civilization. Seventy per cent of Jewish museums are Holocaust-related. So many of the cultural institutions we see about Jewish people are very depressing—because some of the history is depressing. But, in fact, the history is fascinating.

Think about it, the Bible—and the Bible's impact on civilization—is huge. Everything from the Ten Commandments to the concept of a Day of Rest. There's enterprise and there's science. There hasn't really been anything done about Einstein. Arts and culture, literature. Comic books are a creation of Jewish writers like Stan Lee. Even fashion. Think about the blue jeans, Levi Strauss, the most ubiquitous piece of clothing in the world. And, you know, there's a little Jewish story behind that. So we want to do something that celebrates Jewish history. We want people to leave this Jewish Museum laughing instead of crying.

**Who do you envision as the museum visitors?**

The idea is to introduce Jewish history and Jewish ideas and values to Jews, to Israelis and also to the non-Jewish world. And the other final part of this museum is a whole section on leadership and philanthropy and social justice because so many social justice movements have actually had Jewish involvement. Women's rights: Gloria Steinem and Ruth Bader Ginsburg. In the black civil rights movements, there were a lot of Jews involved. South African anti-apartheid—many people in the Jewish community were involved with Nelson Mandela. So, we would love to have people leaving the museum thinking about how they can impact

the world. Here are some examples of people who've done that—*what will you do?* And that should be relevant to people whether they're Jewish or not Jewish, because 60 per cent of visitors to Israel—of the 3 million tourists a year—are not Jewish.

**You have Frank Gehry as the architect.**

He's one of the world's top architects. We would love to have an iconic stunning structure just like we have in the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. Frank Gehry has designed kind of a village or cluster of buildings all in quite white stone, because Tel Aviv is known as the White City. It faces the Mediterranean on an extraordinary site. It's a great city but it's missing a major cultural institution and major architectural statement. This could become both the cultural and architectural iconic statement for Tel Aviv.

**Tell me a little bit about your first visit to Israel.**

Well, I have to thank my parents for taking us to Israel. I know a lot of Jewish people have never been. They're nervous about going because of safety issues. My parents believed very strongly in telling us about Jewish history and introducing us to Israel. So we went in 1974. It was a year after the Yom Kippur War. So there were still remnants of tank battles and so on. It seemed very dusty and dirty. You know, it was hard to phone home and quite rudimentary, but fascinating. What had a huge impact on me was visiting Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem.

I really have gotten to learn that museums are terrific educational platforms. Unlike a university, which is kind of for the elite—museums are very egalitarian. You don't have to have a certain level of education to enjoy a museum.



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#### Her dream role on Broadway

Maria in *West Side Story* (40 years ago)  
Donna in *Mamma Mia* (today)

#### Her best argument

Making the statistical case about the role that beauty and business play in a city, while convincing former Prime Minister Stephen Harper that an iconic museum in Winnipeg was a good idea

#### Her regrets

Not learning how to play hockey  
Not having a third child

#### What her dad used to say about her love of the stage

"Gail, I know you want to pursue a performing arts career but the most mediocre lawyer makes a way better living than the best actor."

#### What makes her laugh

Monty Python's *Life of Brian*

#### What makes her cry

*Call the Midwife*

"I literally can't go through one episode without bawling my eyes out."

#### Her favourite book

*The Three Musketeers* by Alexandre Dumas

#### Who she would love to have coffee with

U.S. Supreme Court justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg

#### How she starts her morning

Listening to CBC Radio

#### Her favourite U of M memories

Taking a philosophy course with Prof. Arthur Schafer and an English course with Prof. Vic Cowie, who taught *The Good-Morrow* by John Donne. "That became my poem of true love to my husband, Mike. I loved all six glorious years at the U of M. And I am still joined to the hip with my friends from law school."

#### What she's learned

"Cherish every day because you really don't know—what if it's your last day on this Earth? Make it a good one."

#### How do you respond to the CMHR today?

I love it. I am so proud of it, to be honest. I am grateful to my mother and to my brothers, David and Leonard, who still said, when my father dropped dead the day that we were launching the architectural competition: "Let's give it a try." None of us was equipped to do this project. None of us had that entrepreneurial experience, that government relations experience. I did have a lot of fundraising experience but it still strikes me as an incredible miracle, particularly as I'm working on the World's Jewish Museum project. I thought the World's Jewish Museum would be a slam dunk. It's much more challenging and now I realize how much of a slam dunk the [CMHR] was and, seriously, what a miracle it was.

#### I think most of us know that without your dogged determination to get that thing done, it just wouldn't be there.

Using a quarterback analogy, if you're running with the ball and you've got to throw the ball to someone, and there's nobody there to catch the ball, I don't care whether you're Tom Brady or not, you're not going to score the touchdowns. So, you know, you can be running and trying but you have to have people to throw the ball to.

#### As you know, Shakespeare says, in *As You Like It*, that all the world is a stage, all men and women merely players. How is acting like life? Are we all actors?

Yes. Because we are in a position where we need to act. Sometimes you're thrown in a leadership position, like when my dad died. I had been perfectly happy to be working behind him. He could be the actor; I would be the, you know, spear carrier. And then, suddenly, you have to take on a role where you're walking into a premier's office and maybe you're feeling insecure or unsure. But you know you can't reveal that. You've got to go with confidence. I think this acting training does help you when you're not comfortable in the role that you're being given. But you've got to fake it 'til you make it.

I love my dad for encouraging me to take on leadership early. I was asked to join the board at the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre when I was 29 and I remember thinking: Oh, that's for 55-year-old bank managers, that's not me.

And he said, "Are you crazy? Just go. You'll stumble. You'll learn. And then when you're 55 you're going to feel like an old hat." I absolutely believe in forcing yourself to do things that get you out of your comfort zone.

#### You often share what you learned from your father, Israel. What about the influence your mother, Babs, had on your life?

My mother expected us to behave with humility, be respectful to everybody, remember where you came from. She was very thrifty. So she got mad if you didn't turn off the lights. She didn't live an ostentatious lifestyle. She didn't believe in that and so she, you know, tried to keep us in check if we were behaving in an unseemly manner. She always had the saying: Whatever you've got to do, do it well. Be thorough. That was my mom.

#### Did you pass that on to your children?

Yes. That's one of my big mantras. My mom also tried to get me not to swear but failed abysmally on that. I enjoy swearing. I got her to swear by the end!

#### What moves you?

When I see people out in the streets in the cold without a home. And they look like they've got a story, and you just don't know how they ended up here. And *there but for the grace of God go you*. That really tugs at my heart. Hannah Taylor (who launched the Ladybug Foundation to support the homeless) is someone I've been able to work with over the years. Watching her in action, how she's actually turned that compassion into action, is inspiring. That moves me.

#### You are well-known in Winnipeg. Do you ever wish you weren't?

I really wish that I could just be anonymous when it comes to my driving. This is such a small city, you cannot be a bad driver! But other than that, I don't mind. I'm trying to be on my best behaviour.




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PRESENTS



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In the News

# Front Page Alumnae

## ONE TO WATCH:

Annette Riziki [BA(Hons)/18] is the University of Manitoba's 99th Rhodes Scholar. She landed on the front page of the *Globe and Mail* after receiving the prestigious scholarship for students who are Oxford University-bound.

Riziki plans on pursuing a master's degree in refugee and forced migration studies, inspired by her early experiences in the Democratic Republic of Congo. She'll focus her research on resilience.

The U of M has produced more Rhodes Scholars than any university in western Canada.

The honour—and the opportunity that comes with it—felt like a long shot when she applied.

"It's something I never expected," she says. "It's such a huge turning point in my life."



## ONE WHO'S ARRIVED:

She took over Bay Street and now the cover of *Report on Business* magazine.

U of M alumna and donor Kiki Delaney [BA/69, LLD/11] grew up in Winnipeg learning about the stock market from her currency-trader dad, who immigrated from Holland after the Second World War.

Delaney's first move in finance? Sales assistant at Merrill Lynch. By 1992, she founded what is now Delaney Capital Management—one of Canada's leading investment counselling firms, managing more than \$1.8 billion.

She once shared with us her outlook on life: "You only get one pass, so try not to screw it up."



#MOMLIFE

One multitasking mother is breastfeeding her toddler while getting a tattoo. Another is mid-hike, a pack on her back and a hungry baby on her front. They're among the many moms posting photos on Instagram in an effort to normalize breastfeeding in public—on the bus, on the beach, at the hair salon.

Researcher **Meghan Azad [PhD/10]**, a University of Manitoba pediatrics and child health assistant professor, says the image-sharing social platform is a powerful vehicle to reduce the stigma that has long had Canadian women hiding away in bathroom stalls to feed their babies.

"A lot of it has to do with sexualization of breasts. There are other societies where breastfeeding is totally normal and no one gives it a second look. Breastfeeding rates are higher in these countries because people just don't feel weird about it," says Azad, a Canada Research Chair in Developmental Origins of Chronic Disease.

In Mongolia, for example, there's an engrained belief that the longer you're breastfed, the better you'll be at the country's national sport of wrestling, she notes. Acceptance is so deep-rooted that it's not uncommon for kids to be breastfed until age five. "Adults will even drink what's left over," says Azad.

While she's not necessarily recommending the latter, her research touts the complex health benefits of breastmilk. She characterizes each feed as "a dose."

Azad is among 40 researchers nationwide involved in the Canadian Healthy Infant Longitudinal Development Study, or CHILD. They've been tracking the environments and health outcomes of 1,000 kids, now eight years old, since before they were born. Among the valuable samples collected: the first dirty diapers and the mother's breastmilk.

Azad and her team look at how breastmilk components affect the baby's gut flora and protect against allergy and asthma. She believes the interactions between microbes in a mother's milk and the baby's gut microbiome (the bacteria that live in the digestive tract)—and their link to the immune system—could reveal



why a growing number of kids in North America need puffers and EpiPens.

In 2018, only 26 per cent of infants in this continent were exclusively breastfed for the first six months, below the global rate of 41, according to UNICEF data. Among Canadian moms who do breastfeed, nearly a third said they've been openly criticized for feeding in public, a 2017 Lansinoh Global Breastfeeding Study revealed.

Azad also looks at how breastfeeding as a topic can be better integrated into curriculum in Manitoba schools.

"They might learn about it in high school if they take family studies, which is an optional class taken primarily by girls," she says. "We're not reaching everyone and it really needs to be everyone. Everyone should learn that it's not a big deal to breastfeed in public—it's just how we feed babies."



Farm to Fork

**Katharina Stieffenhofer's [BFA/96]** documentary *From Seed to Seed* is being screened at 27 film festivals around the world (and counting). The doc features Manitoba farmers and the research team of U of M plant scientist **Dr. Martin Entz [BSA/78, MSc/81]**, who runs Canada's oldest organic-versus-conventional crop comparison study.

*From Seed to Seed* tells the story of Terry Mierau and Monique Sholte, who gave up their careers as opera singers in Europe to follow their passion for eco-farming on the prairies. Stieffenhofer follows the family

"As societies we have become increasingly disconnected to where our food comes from," Stieffenhofer says.

Among the film's accolades so far: Best of the Fest at the Colorado Environmental Film Festival and Best Documentary Film at the Seneca Film Festival. After filling her spring with screenings in Estonia and Vancouver, Stieffenhofer plans on getting back to playing around in the soil.

"I am hoping my tomato and pepper seedlings will survive under my husband's care while I am away, and can't wait to get into my garden for spring planting and seeding."

INDIGENOUS BARBIE

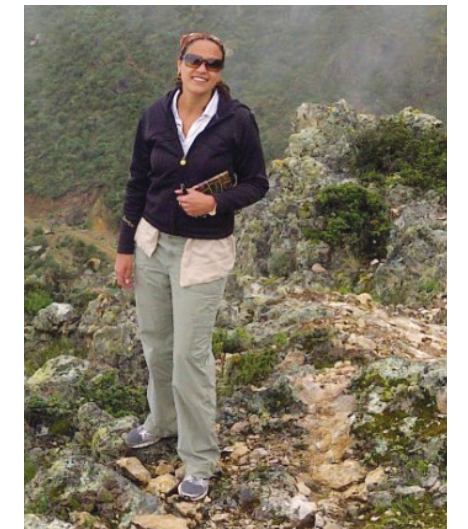
She's a Cree filmmaker and now a Barbie role model. Toy giant Mattel reached out to alumna **Sonya Ballantyne [BA(Hons)/08]** (who was featured in our Fall 2018 issue) about becoming one of 60 Canadian role models to commemorate the doll's 60th anniversary this year. Right away, she saw this as an opportunity to create a Cree Barbie.

"Advocating for the Barbie is me just wanting to prove that a Native Barbie from Mattel would be encompassing the message of: 'You can be anything,'" Ballantyne told the *Winnipeg Free Press*.

In an effort to persuade Mattel to create the Cree Barbie, she created a [change.org](http://change.org) petition with the goal of 15,000 signatures.

Late last year, Ballantyne also released her first children's book, *Kerri Bery Lynn*, based on her sister.

The story follows a young girl from Mispawistik Cree Nation whose great-grandmother gives her seven dogs. The family then adopts a mean dog who Kerri realizes just needs some love. Ballantyne has been reading her book in elementary school classrooms.



PRODUCING GOLD

Ontario-based geologist and business owner **Shastri Ramnath [BSc(Hons)/99]** was named a YMCA Woman of Distinction in Sudbury for her leadership in the mining industry.

She co-founded Orix Geoscience, which offers 3-D geological consulting to exploration and mining companies in search of metals like gold, copper and lithium. She is past president and CEO of Bridgeport Ventures Inc., where she raised more than \$17 million in the capital markets before merging with Premier Royalty.

For Shastri, being a leader in her field is also about advocating for gender balance. Orix's workforce boasts a 50-50 gender split and follows a philosophy that puts employee success first, even helping them pay off student debt.

"Life's short, being an entrepreneur is incredibly demanding, and it's a lot easier to invest your heart, soul, and financial future when you're doing so in the company of people you respect and enjoy," said Ramnath, in an interview with Women of Influence Inc.

IN MEMORIAM

A reminder that we have moved our *In Memoriam* listings online where they are easily searchable on any desktop or mobile device. The listings are updated monthly. Please visit [umtoday.ca/memoriam](http://umtoday.ca/memoriam)

INFANT, PAINTING BY CLETOFONTE PRETI (1843-1880), PHOTO BY DEAGOSTINI/GETTY IMAGES  
FARM TO FORK IMAGE SUPPLIED; SHASTRI RAMNATH PHOTO SUPPLIED; BARBIE GLOBAL ROLE MODELS PHOTO COURTESY OF MATTEL





## Designer Fromagerie

**Renee Struthers [BEnvD/12, MID/16]** transformed a cluttered Corydon Avenue vacuum repair shop into an award-winning boutique. Now called Cheesemongers Fromagerie, this minimalist-style cheese deli was inspired by the tiny specialty grocers in Europe, Montréal and New York, says Struthers, of interior design company Studio Hiraeth.

Despite the small footprint, she met the many needs of owners Meg Gifford and Courtney Dhaliwal—for display, storage, seating, a commercial kitchen and office space—while keeping a sense of openness.

The space recently won Storefront Manitoba's People's Choice Award, in its Commerce Design Winnipeg competition. Struthers says she wanted to capture her client's commitment to community and to engaging the city in the appreciation of fine cheese.

"Such shops have a strong character that takes years to develop, and so one of the intentions of the minimalist feel for the space is to provide a backdrop for the Cheesemongers' unique identity, allowing the opportunity for it to develop as time passes," said Struthers. "At the same time, we wanted to allow the space to have an immediate sense of comfort."



## PRAIRIE PORTRAIT

The figurative sculpture *Prairie Sailor*, brought to life by Winnipeg-born ceramic artist **Pattie Chalmers [BA/86, BFA(Hons)/93]**, was featured on the cover of the February/March edition of *American Craft* magazine. Chalmers says she intended her 29-inch clay creation to be "an expression of hopes for the future." But in the end, he conveys a sense of pathos about the present, she says. Her next exhibit is in Montana in June. Chalmers teaches art at Southern Illinois University.



## GONE IN A FLASH

**Michelle Boyce [BSc/85]**, a U of M physics and astronomy professor, was on the McGill University research team that discovered unusually fast radio bursts emanating from faraway objects in the universe. The finding, captured using a football-field-sized telescope, made headlines earlier this year. It's only the second time astronomers have detected a repeated cosmic burst. The source of the signals remains a mystery.

## BLOOM

Educator and author **Gemma Dalayoan [BEd/83, MEd/90]** launched her book, *gemma (The Bud)*: *A Collection of Poems*, in February. The collection, says fellow author **Alison Marshall [PBDipEd/13]**, "paints a picture of the affective moments along this lifelong journey from bud to flower, from Filipino migrant to Filipino Canadian, and from local historian to poet."

Dalayoan co-founded the Manitoba Association of Filipino Teachers and has played a key role in the preservation and promotion of Filipino cultural heritage. She's the 2019 University of Manitoba Distinguished Alumni Award recipient for community service.



CHEESEMONGERS FROMAGERIE PHOTO BY JANINE KROPLA; PRAIRIE SAILOR PHOTO SUPPLIED; CHIME RADIO TELESCOPE BY JAMES WILLIAM SMITH/SHUTTERSTOCK; GEMMA PHOTO SUPPLIED



Area of Study  
Biological Sciences

Research Focus  
The Canada lynx

Faculty Advisor  
James Roth

## CHRISTA BURSTAHLER [PHD/18]

PhD graduate

She spent her childhood in motion, born into a family with "a short attention span" who sought adventure and lived in nearly every province. Now, Christa Burstahler studies the roaming Canada lynx as part of conservation efforts to protect these mysterious, solitary cats with the oversized paws—who are native to North America but seldom seen.

**If a lynx were human, what kind of person would it be?** Picky. They're the connoisseurs of the boreal forest. They have a refined taste for food and habitat, and prefer their own company so they don't have to deal with others' grief.

**Because lynx are so elusive, you studied pelts for sale at auction?** A major advantage of using fur auction houses is that I was able to research lynx populations literally across the continent over a six-year period. We posed research questions that previously were

unanswerable because it would be logistically impossible. I would take a sample of skin and hair tissue from these pelts for all kinds of lab analyses to learn what they ate, their stress physiology or genetics.

**What did you find?** Some are way more generalized in their feeding than we thought. I mean, you grab any ecology textbook and look up "specialist consumer" and it will give lynx as the example because they're so specific to snowshoe hare. And yet southern populations are behaving quite differently and eating alternative prey species like red squirrel. Lynx numbers there are dwindling and climate change is just going to amplify that, so it's encouraging they're more flexible.

**How come they're dwindling?** We're not really sure. There are some obvious culprits: human development means less habitat and

their preferred food. They have to move further afield. There's more competition for food; suddenly they overlap with other predator species like bobcats.

**What's with the high-pitched noises lynx make when they fight?** It's pretty spectacular. It almost sounds like a baby crying. They very apprehensively start screaming at each other—it's a vocal threat before they throw punches, like they don't actually want to hurt themselves or each other if they don't have to.

**Could a human take a lynx?** I guess it depends how well you practiced your scream.

**When did you first see one in the wild?** I was 11 or 12 on a ski hill in Alberta. There was a mom and three kittens playing under the chair lift. That was one of the best days of my life.

PHOTO BY COOPER & O'HARA PHOTOGRAPHY



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ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**Tracie Afifi [BSc/99, MSc/03, PhD/09]** is the 2018 winner of The Royal-Mach-Gaensslen Prize for Mental Health Research. Her work highlights the long-term consequences of child maltreatment on mental health. Afifi is an associate professor in the U of M's Rady Faculty of Health Sciences and a research scientist at the Children's Hospital Research Institute of Manitoba.

**Heather Cutcliffe [DipOT/78]** received the Order of Prince Edward Island in October. As an occupational therapist, Cutcliffe has dedicated a lifetime to improving services for patients who have had strokes and live with disabilities.

**Margaret E. Dwyer [BN/90]**, a nurse and author, released *What the Living Do*, a fictional novel based in Winnipeg that tells the story of the murder of a young Cree woman, Georgia Lee. Georgia's birth family battles with her adoptive Costa Rican parents for the rights to her burial.

**Ruthanne Dyck [Bed/86, MEd/12]** and **Teresa Rogers [MEd/02]** have been recognized as two of Canada's most outstanding principals by the Learning Partnership. Rogers and Dyck, who both work in the Pembina Trails School Division, were chosen by a national selection committee and will have the opportunity to travel to Toronto's Rotman School of Management for leadership training.

**Kathryn Johnson's [BA/95]** book *Celebrating the Silver Lining in Difficult Days* hit number one in multiple categories after its September release. Johnson was born with cerebral palsy and uses her unique perspective on life to help readers embrace happiness.

**Sharon Oberlander [BA/71]** has been recognized for the 10th consecutive year as a Top 1,200 Financial Advisor by *Barron's* magazine. She has been a wealth management advisor for more than 40 years and works at Bank of America's Merrill Lynch unit in Chicago. Oberlander was also a Forbes Best-in-State Wealth Advisor for 2018 and 2019.

**Shawna Pachal [BSc/85, ExtEd/94, MBA/95]** is the first recipient of the Women in Renewable Energy (WiRE) Hydropower Woman of Distinction Award. The acting chief of finance and strategy officer at Manitoba Hydro, Pachal has more than 30 years of technical, managerial and executive experience in utility operations.

**Milena Pirnat [MSc/09]** travelled to Mongolia in 2018 as chair of the Canadian Hemophilia Society to help support the Mongolian National Association of Hemophilia. Inspired by her son's journey, Pirnat helps to raise awareness about the challenges faced by people with bleeding disorders in Canada and abroad.

**Mallory Richard [MA/11]**, an ultramarathon runner, was the first woman to cross the finish line of the Superior 100 Mile Trail Race in Minnesota last fall. She beat her own course record by over an hour, with a time of 22 hours, 36 minutes and 39 seconds.

**Dayna Spiring [BA/98, LLB/01]** was named chair of the board of the Winnipeg Blue Bombers in January. She's the first woman to hold the post in the club's history. In 2016, she became the Winnipeg Football Club's first female representative to sit on the CFL's board of governors.

**Liz Wilson [BComm(Hons)/93]** took the helm as president and chief executive officer of FortWhyte Alive late last year. This comes after 13 years at Ducks Unlimited Canada, working in fundraising and development. She is also a past president of Volunteer Manitoba.

CANADA'S TOP 100 MOST POWERFUL WOMEN

The Women's Executive Network announced their 2018 awards, celebrating the accomplishments of Canadian women.

**Dr. Marcia Anderson [MD/02]**, executive director of Indigenous academic affairs in the Ongomizwin-Indigenous Institute of Health and Healing, was honoured for her advocacy of Indigenous medical education and health-care delivery in northern Manitoba.

**Tina Jones [Bed/89]**, philanthropist and owner of Banville and Jones Wine Company, helped bring life-saving technology to the Health Sciences Centre and is the chair of the Health Sciences Centre Foundation. Her visionary spirit and business-savvy is what made her a University of Manitoba 2018 Distinguished Alumni Award recipient for community service.

THE MANITOBA PHILANTHROPY AWARDS

In November, the Manitoba Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals announced this year's recipients, with University of Manitoba alumni named in several categories.

**Joan Blight [BA/75]** took home the Professional Fundraiser award. Blight directed seven annual United Way campaigns in three cities and helped the Assiniboine Park Conservancy raise \$31 million for their capital campaign. In 1989, she founded Strategic Philanthropy, a consulting firm for charitable organizations in education, health, arts, human services and international development.

**Mary Hanson [BA(Hons)/76]** and her husband **Gregg Hanson [BCom(Hons)/76, CA/79, LLD/18]** were named Outstanding Volunteer Fundraisers. Mary has impacted the lives of many Manitobans by generously giving her time to the Junior League of Winnipeg, Manitoba ALIVE and Rossbrook House.

**Tanjit Nagra [BA/18]** received the award for Outstanding Youth in Philanthropy for her endeavours as University 1 Student Council VP, and most recently as president of the University of Manitoba Students' Union. She oversaw UMSU's contribution of \$16.2 million toward the university's Front and Centre campaign.

**Tannis Richardson [BScHEc/48, LLD/12]** was recognized as an Outstanding Philanthropist. There are few communities, organizations or causes in Manitoba that have not benefited from Richardson's generosity. She's served on the boards of Rainbow Stage, the Manitoba Opera Association, and the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, to name a few.



Items found in the creative space of **Destiny Seymour [BA(Adv)/00, MID/13]**, owner of design firm Woven Collaborative and of Indigo Arrows, a home décor shop that reimagines patterns found in the pottery and tools of her ancestors.

Field Notes



**No. 1** A keychain made by a friend, a fine arts student, who helps with her pop-up shops. "She understands what it means to be a maker."  
**No. 2** A tea towel inspired by a pattern etched in local pottery shards dated AD 1000-1350. "Women would make the pots together. It's interesting to think about who they were. You have to imagine the story."

**No. 3** Her well-used copper water bottle—a birthday gift from husband Alan Greyeyes, who works in the Indigenous music scene, supporting "the business side of things."  
**No. 4** A squeegee to push paint through the silk screen onto fabric, and their resting blocks. "The nice thing about 'making' is it forces you to slow down or else you mess up."

**No. 5** A pillow cover and the screen used to create a design originally etched into a hide scraper tool, made from elk antler 400 years ago and uncovered in Birtle, Man. "Our whole house is full of these pillows and textiles. I love that it's normal for my daughters to grow up around patterns their ancestors made thousands of years ago."

**No. 7** A ring with the word LOVE engraved, bought in Paris. "I like the simplicity." She hopes to return this fall and show her designs in a festival there called Maison & Objet.  
**No. 8** A thank-you card she gives customers, crafted with help from protégées: Ella, 8, and Ava, 7. "I like sketching with my daughters. They do animals, owls, lots of rainbows."

FIELD NOTES PHOTO BY JASON HALSTEAD (BPE/92); DESTINY SEYMOUR PHOTO BY ALAN GREYEVES

# End Scene

## CREATIVITY EMBEDDED

Every mark, drawing, scratch and score—six decades worth—speaks to the creative toil of all who sat at the student drafting tables in the Architecture 2 Building.

The 24-foot-long studio tabletops were replaced last summer when the workspace underwent a \$1.3 million renewal, but not before architecture professor Lisa Landrum photographed their storied surfaces.

“These worktables, laboured over by design students year after year, are silent witnesses to a continuous life of learning and discovery,” she says.

Landrum likens them to dynamic palimpsests: a type of medieval manuscript with layered writings on animal hide, in which prior markings were never erased but rather embedded deeper over time.

“They reveal more than immediately meets the eye,” she says, “enabling discoveries beneath the surface.”

PHOTOS BY LISA LANDRUM

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