

ELIZABETH TSURKOV: KIDNAPPED AND FREED / LIFE IN SMALL TOWNS

# PRINCETON ALUMNI WEEKLY

JANUARY 2026

## EMPOWER COUPLE

Inside the high-voltage  
world of Kwanza Jones '93  
and José E. Feliciano '94



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*An editorially independent magazine by alumni for alumni since 1900*



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Kwanza Jones '93 and José E. Feliciano '94 at their home in Pacific Palisades.

*Photograph courtesy of Kwanza Jones '93 and José E. Feliciano '94.*

MINESH BACRANIA

# Venture Forward's Enduring Impact

In the closing weeks of October, we celebrated both the completion of the Venture Forward campaign and the opening of the new Princeton University Art Museum. The coincidence was poetic: The Museum's opening was a lovely illustration of how Venture Forward will benefit the University for generations to come.

The new Museum has already earned rave reviews for its architecture and its collection. Its opening week drew nearly 35,000 visitors. To put the number in perspective, that's a crowd larger than our annual Reunions converging upon a single building. Those who visited will almost certainly return—if you've seen the Museum, you know it offers a magical experience. And if you haven't seen it, you are in for a treat.

I expect that the Museum—and the Venture Forward campaign that made it possible—will enhance the experience of every undergraduate and graduate who comes to this campus. I confess that when I was a student, I passed by Princeton's unprepossessing museum many times without, so far as I can recall, ever entering it.

I doubt that any future student will complete their Princeton journey without being tempted inside at least once. When they do enter, many will be inspired to take courses in fields and subjects that they might otherwise have overlooked.

The Museum's impact will also extend beyond our campus, strengthening Princeton's ties to our local community and the larger world. Many who participated in the festive opening came from the surrounding region and beyond. I am confident our new "town square for the arts and humanities," as Museum director James Steward describes it, will continue to attract and delight people who might otherwise never visit our campus.

The new Museum is but one example of the many ways that Venture Forward has extended Princeton's cherished traditions into the future, making us an even better and stronger University than before.

The question I hear most often about Venture Forward is, "How much did you raise?" It is tempting to reply with a dollar figure; the campaign was, I can say, the most successful in the University's history. But we made Venture Forward a new kind of campaign, defined by mission rather than dollar targets, so I believe that the right question to answer is, "What did Venture Forward accomplish?"

People are the heart of Princeton, and so my favorite examples of the campaign's impact pertain to its impact on the people we can bring to Princeton and the support we can provide to them:

- New undergraduate colleges and dormitories that made it possible to add 500 undergraduates to our student body;
- 350 new undergraduate scholarship funds that enabled Princeton to enhance what was already the best financial aid program in the world;
- 60 new graduate fellowship funds that helped the University make historic increases to graduate stipends; and
- 69 new professorships that will bring the world's best teachers and scholars to Princeton.

Of course, Venture Forward also transformed our campus, adding beautiful facilities and programs that include not only the Museum but also the Class of 1986 Fitness and Wellness Center, the Frist Health Center, the Omenn-Darling Bioengineering Institute, Briger Hall (the new home of the High Meadows Environmental Institute, the Department of



Our new Museum and other milestones will enhance students' campus experience. Photo by Sameer A. Khan/Fotobuddy

Geosciences, and the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology), the Engineering Commons, and athletic facilities on Princeton's new Meadows Campus south of Lake Carnegie, to name a few.

As I walk the campus and see the changes that Venture Forward has made possible, I am reminded again that Princeton is fortunate to have so many supportive alumni and friends. The campaign's success resulted from the dedication and commitment of an extraordinary number of people. More than 75,000 donors made gifts to the campaign, many through Annual Giving.

Another novel feature of this campaign was Venture Forward's emphasis on alumni engagement. Here, too, the breadth of alumni participation—through the Alumni Schools Committee, class activities, regional associations, affinity groups, Stand Up for Princeton, Annual Giving, and other initiatives—was breathtaking. More than 47% of undergraduate alumni, joined by a rapidly growing number of graduate alumni, volunteered precious time and talent to our alma mater.

I am grateful to everyone who participated in Venture Forward. Special thanks go to the Campaign Executive Committee and its amazing co-chairs, Blair Effron '84, Katherine Bradley '86, and James Yeh '87. I also want to salute Vice President for Advancement Kevin Heaney, Deputy Vice President for Alumni Engagement Jen Caputo and her predecessor Alex Day '02, and their marvelous team for running a history-making campaign that excelled even by Princeton's high standards.

Venture Forward aimed, as we often said during the campaign, "to take us from the present to the possible." On a campus that aims for genuine excellence in teaching and research, that work will always continue. In the months ahead, we will Venture Beyond. It was a pleasure, though, to pause for a moment in late October to celebrate exuberantly and express gratitude joyously to the many people whose dedication and generosity have improved Princeton so wonderfully.



# INBOX

YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE LATEST ISSUES

## REMEMBERING RICHARD SPRINGS III '64

Thank you so much, Lanny Springs '67, for unearthing unknown gems about your brother ... and our “brother,” Dick



DICK SPRINGS '64

Springs '64 (Memorial PAWcast, published online Oct. 31). We were lucky to be teammates of his and loved him to death! You deeply captured that visceral, soul-centered bond that athletes (especially in contact sports) are prone to develop. But it went even deeper with Dick because of his constant, full-throated love of life, the sport, the environment, and us. Thanks for this gift.

**JOHNNY O'BRIEN '65**  
Easton, Md.

## AI IN THE CLASSROOM

Professor Daniel Notterman hit the nail on the head with his fear that AI “tools” turn professors into cops and students into suspects by making it so easy (and tempting) to cheat on assignments (On the Campus, November issue). His concession to adapt evaluating measures like essays and quizzes to contexts where it won't be possible to cheat is probably prudent, unfortunately. I think any Princeton student who uses these products to circumvent actual learning, the scholarly work to become a critical citizen of the world, is cheating first and foremost himself.

Professor Robert Gehl from York University in Toronto put it best in a recent 404 Media story: “GenAI can simulate all of the steps: It can summarize readings, pull out key concepts, draft text, and even generate ideas for discussion.

But that would be like going to the gym and asking a robot to lift weights for you.”

**PETER SEVERSON '09**  
Westminster, Colo.

## OVERLOOKED ASTROPHYSICIST

The Princeton Portrait about Henry Norris Russell 1897 \*1900 (November issue) erases the contribution of Cecilia Payne (later Payne-Gaposchkin), who in her 1925 Ph.D. thesis at Harvard had already demonstrated that the sun is primarily made of hydrogen. Russell was initially highly skeptical of her result and, as a reviewer of her thesis, forced her to claim that it was likely incorrect. It took him four years to accept it in the work described in the article, which was then generally accepted. Though he credited Payne, her pioneering work was only widely acknowledged decades later (and apparently still not completely, judging



PAYNE-GAPOSCHKIN

by the article). Payne-Gaposchkin later went on to be the first woman tenured in astronomy at Harvard, as well as its first female department chair.

I further note that the apparent discovery of planets (or at least brown dwarfs) outside the solar system in 1943 was definitively refuted (though not until the late 1970s), with the first brown dwarfs and planets not being confirmed until a half century later, in the mid-1990s. Russell's philosophical comments illustrate the danger that every popularizer faces, of deciding when the evidence for an exciting result is strong enough to publicize it.

**MORDECAI-MARK MAC LOW '83**  
New York, N.Y.

*Editor's note: The author is curator and professor in the American Museum of Natural History's Department of Astrophysics.*

*Additional letters about Cecilia Payne-Gaposchkin, written by Don McCarthy '70, David Derbes '74, and W. Bruce Hawkins \*54, are available online at [bit.ly/cpayne](http://bit.ly/cpayne).*

## RULES FOR RECORDING

While there are many concerns the University needs to address in its recording policy (“New Policy Bans Most Recording on Princeton's Campus,” published online Nov. 14), one that stands out immediately is this line: “When authorized as a University-approved accommodation for a documented disability.”

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## INBOX

One must prove one has a disability to use a recording device? When I started at Princeton, I had ADHD. Because ADHD is so often overlooked in women, I did not receive formal documentation until I was 24, almost two years after I had already graduated. Getting diagnosed cost me at least \$5,000 and a significant amount of time. Documentation for ADHD is not a fair ask if it's not easy to be diagnosed. Frankly, it would have been extremely helpful if I had been able to record certain meetings, and I now use tools like this regularly. I always ask for consent, but I imagine this becomes an additional burden if the meeting is a precept or a class.

The policy does not mention classes or precepts. It only references situations "when privacy would be reasonably expected." What counts as reasonable?

At a practical level, this policy harms students who, like me, have yet to figure out why they are less organized and have poorer working memories than some of their peers, despite being able to achieve at a high level inconsistently.

While I understand where the administration may be coming from with this rule, it feels half-baked and theoretical rather than grounded in practice and experience. I hope that there is more clarity to come.

**MEAGHAN BYRNE '10**

*Washington, D.C.*

## ROWING'S WALK-ON TRADITION

As a walk-on to the lightweight crew in the fall of '84, I enjoyed reading the article on Princeton crew's continuing walk-on tradition (Student Dispatch, November issue). As freshmen, we fielded two boats, the 1F and 2F. If memory serves, 11 out of 18 of us were walk-ons. In '88, our senior year, the varsity consisted of three boats, and 17 out of 27 were walk-ons. As the freshman lightweight coach in '89, my two boats had 13.

Walk-ons, most of whom played soccer, lacrosse, or ran cross country and track in high school, were critical to the depth and success of the program. I've been curious to know whether walk-ons comprise as significant a proportion of the squads

since the freshman and novice programs were absorbed by the varsities some years ago. My hunch is they do not. Those programs allowed good athletes the time and space to learn technique and bond as a class. That seemed consistent with a liberal arts education.

**JIM MOSES '88**

*Greenfield, Mass.*

Rowing's walk-ons are part of a great tradition, with new encumbrances as life has grown more complex.

I was a walk-on in the fall of 1953. I had been a trumpet player in high school on the West Coast; my only rowing experience had come in Sea Explorer whaleboat races on the Columbia River. But the lure of rowing in a real shell grabbed me at Princeton and would not let go.

In the end I was captain of the lightweight men's eight that captured the EARCs and the Thames Challenge Cup in both 1956 and 1957. Great crews, and nearly all of us had walked on.

**JIM NEWCOMER '57**

*Lake Oswego, Ore.*

Although I got my master's and Ph.D. degrees from Princeton, it was as an undergraduate at MIT that I was a crew walk-on, never having been in a shell before, having to compete against a crop of much taller, very experienced rowers. But I made the heavyweight varsity, beating Harvard twice. And now, I'm still rowing in my 80s, doing eight kilometers every other morning in a single on a nearby lake.

**WILLIAM H. NELSON '73**

*Grafton, Mass.*

## MARCHING BAND MEMORIES

I was one of the bass drummers in the marching band in 1974 and '75 and the photo that is in the November issue of PAW is from '75 (From the Archives). Although I don't remember the names, I am the bass drummer on the far left side of the photo. If my memory serves me correctly, the fellow next to me is John Beers '76. Not only do I recognize John, but also the other bass drummer in the bank was a sophomore when I was a senior and he had red hair (as in the



photo). I recognize the faces of the others in this picture but simply don't remember the names. I hope there is a way to verify the date of the photo!

**NORMAN CALVO '76**  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

*Editor's note: The image ran on PAW's Nov. 2, 1981, cover under the headline "The Band Cleans Up Its Act," and an inside credit said the photo was provided by the University's Communications Office. No date was given.*

#### YOUR PERSPECTIVE

Let us know what you think

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## ONLINE EXCLUSIVES

CONTENT AVAILABLE ONLY AT [PAW.PRINCETON.EDU](http://PAW.PRINCETON.EDU)

#### TIGER OF THE WEEK Carey Jones '08

About a year ago, **Carey Jones '08** learned that a clinical trial into a possible way to prevent severe vomiting during pregnancy couldn't get funding — a casualty of the research world's labyrinthine systems. She herself had suffered intense morning sickness during her two pregnancies, and she knew how dangerous it is, and how understudied. The article she wrote launching a crowdfunding campaign was titled, "Let's Fund the Damn Research Ourselves." Read more at [paw.princeton.edu/tiger-of-the-week](http://paw.princeton.edu/tiger-of-the-week).



JONES '08

#### PAW GOES TO THE MOVIES 'Springsteen'



DUNEIER, LEFT, AND BERNSTEIN '83

Bruce Springsteen's struggle to make the 1982 album *Nebraska*, a stark departure from the raucous sounds that had made him a star, forms the center of the new biopic *Springsteen: Deliver Me From Nowhere*. PAW senior writer **Mark F. Bernstein '83** went to see the film with sociology chair **Mitchell Duneier**, who teaches the popular course, Sociology from E-Street: Bruce Springsteen's America. What did he think of the film? "It was wonderful." Read the Q&A at [paw.princeton.edu/tags/paw-goes-movies](http://paw.princeton.edu/tags/paw-goes-movies).

#### PAW BOOK CLUB Suleika Jaouad '10

We're thrilled to announce our next read is *Between Two Kingdoms*,



We'll interview Suleika for a podcast in early February. Sign up at [paw.princeton.edu/paw-book-club](http://paw.princeton.edu/paw-book-club).

**Suleika Jaouad '10's** widely lauded memoir of fighting leukemia for four years, beginning at age 22, and then taking a road trip to heal and begin again.



#### PAW MEMORIALS Share Your Memories

Did you know that you can now leave comments on PAW Memorials online? Alumni have been leaving thoughtful notes that contribute to the Memorials of their classmates and friends. Read them and share your own at [paw.princeton.edu/memorials](http://paw.princeton.edu/memorials).



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Photo: Richard Barnes.





# ON THE CAMPUS

NEWS, SPORTS, AND STUDENT LIFE

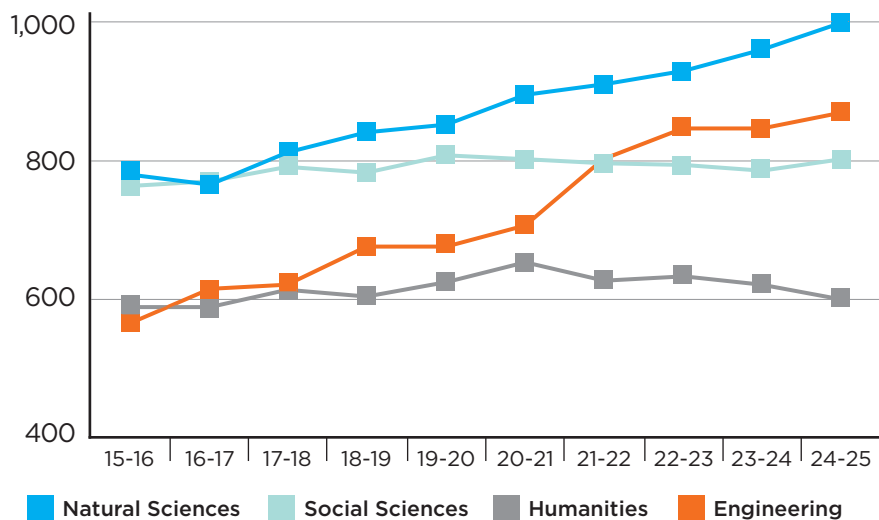
## NORTHERN EXPOSURE

*In November, Princetonians pointed their cameras to the night sky for a rare glimpse of the Northern Lights and captured stunning campus views, including this image of Alexander Hall by Aayush Mitra '29.*

AAVUSH MITRA '29

## Princeton Graduate Enrollment by Division

Number of degree-seeking candidates



SOURCE: PRINCETON UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL

### ADMISSIONS

# Graduate School to Extend Fewer Offers to Applicants

BY JULIE BONETTE

**M**OST GRADUATE PROGRAMS at Princeton will admit fewer applicants this year due to “uncertainty around Princeton’s budget and research funding,” according to Tracy Meyer, director for communications and external engagement at the Graduate School.

“The modest reduction of target enrollment allows Princeton to continue to prioritize and support graduate education and graduate students,” Meyer told PAW via email. “Princeton is fortunate that our graduate programs ... continue to thrive in a challenging time for higher education.”

Princeton joins several peers, including Harvard and the University of Chicago, that have said they intend to admit fewer graduate candidates as institutions negotiate cuts to research funding by the Trump administration.

The only programs at Princeton that are not affected are biophysics, bioengineering, quantum science and engineering, and materials science and engineering — which have all launched in the past three years.

Meyer would not share target enrollment numbers for the coming year; the admissions cycle will wrap up in June. According to the Graduate School website, 3,280 graduate students were enrolled in the 2024-25 academic year, and 23% were new students.

This fall, the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center reported a 0.6% decrease in graduate enrollment nationwide versus the fall of 2024.

Based on estimated admission yield rates, Princeton gives each program a maximum number of offers to extend to prospective students that is usually fairly steady from year to year, according to Meyer, and is determined by a centralized University process. Programs sometimes choose to extend fewer offers than allocated.

Over the past decade, engineering and natural sciences programs at Princeton have steadily increased their share of graduate students on campus.

Overall, Princeton’s graduate applicant pool has grown significantly, from 10,956

in 2015-16 to 19,931 in 2024-25.

Kurt Ristroph \*21, an assistant professor of agricultural and biological engineering at Purdue, said federal funding uncertainty has led faculty at some institutions to “be more hesitant in accepting students” and that he’s aware of some academic units that are “more heavily scrutinizing a faculty member’s funding before allowing a student to be admitted.”

Avery Barnett, a fifth-year graduate student in the School of Public and International Affairs and a GradFUTURES professional development associate, foresees potential advantages and disadvantages to fewer graduate students on campus.

“Smaller could mean more intimate and closer,” she said, inspiring more collaboration.

In addition, as reductions occur across the country, Barnett hopes the job market for those seeking tenure-track positions after graduation may become less competitive.

However, she also worries fewer students could negatively impact “the overall body of research,” and perhaps lead to “a global shift in who is outputting research and the institutions that people look to for new work and information.”

Chris Catalano, a fifth-year graduate student in molecular biology and an officer in the Graduate Student Government, echoed that. “We’re at the forefront of science, and if we want our country and our civilization to be continuing to progress and improve into the future ... then we have to continue to have forward thinking and [study] and [learn] about our world as best we can, because that’s going to lead to the innovations that end up changing the world and saving millions of lives.”

Yuzhou Bai \*24, who received his Ph.D. in East Asian studies and is now a special collections librarian and archivist at Harvard, believes support staff positions and potentially faculty may be cut if reductions persist. He is also concerned that fewer graduate students at Princeton “would further deteriorate students’ mental health, because as a community, I always felt like the grad students on campus were kind of isolated.” ■

## ACADEMICS

# Computer Science Majors Decline, Consistent with Nationwide Trends

BY LIA OPPERMAN '25 WITH REPORTING BY SOFIA CIPRIANO '27

**A**S ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE reshapes the tech industry and perceptions of job security within it, fewer students at Princeton are declaring the computer science major. But Szymon Rusinkiewicz, chair of the department, hopes students consider the full picture, rather than responding solely to the current anxieties of AI.

"I can't say that we aren't a little bit annoyed when the perception of 'AI is coming for your jobs' doesn't quite match reality," he said.

At Princeton, there was a large surge in computer science majors between 2011 and 2017, when it rose to become the top major on campus. It remained at the top in number of degrees conferred by the University from the Class of 2017 until the most recent graduation from the Class of 2025. From 2005 to 2023, the number of computer science majors in the United States quadrupled as well. Now, that momentum appears to have shifted.

For the Class of 2028, 74 students declared a major in the computer science B.S.E. program, down from 117 for the Class of 2027 and 150 for the Class of 2026. Computer science A.B. students will declare in the spring.

Among Class of 2026 and 2027 students in the School of Engineering and Applied Science, computer science was by far the most popular major, but this year, it dropped to fourth place, behind electrical and computer engineering, operations research and financial engineering, and mechanical and aerospace engineering.

"Part of this is we are adapting to a new world," said Rusinkiewicz. "We have definitely noticed that things have leveled off, that we weren't growing at that explosive pace anymore."

According to Rusinkiewicz, much of the initial growth in computer science majors was driven by a belief that a degree in the field was a near-guaranteed ticket to a tech job following graduation. Today, that assumption is less certain. To an extent, he said, the reality is that jobs at tech companies are harder to get as AI is increasingly taking over their roles, but that's not the whole truth.

"It is certainly the case that there have been these very well-publicized stories of people who tried to get tech jobs and did not have a lot of experience with the way modern programming works. That is, you know, in collaboration with AI tools," he said. "It's less a case of, 'AI is coming for

your jobs,' but much more a case of AI is making people more efficient at their jobs."

Tech companies, he said, are looking to hire people who know how to work with AI.

**Students are taking notice.** Rahul Kalavagunta '26, an electrical and computer engineering major, believes that while AI may be encroaching on traditional coding jobs, "for more hardware stuff and robotic stuff, it's not as effective as of now, but that could change."

Electrical and computer engineering's significant rise in majors may reflect that perception. But Tom Griffiths, director of the Princeton Laboratory for Artificial Intelligence, explained that as there is a decrease in these cognitive jobs, there's going to be an increase in metacognitive jobs, such as knowing enough about software engineering to instruct automated software engineers and systems.

"I can understand why students are trying to model out what the job market is going to look like in a few years when they finish their degrees," he said. "But I also think there's going to be all sorts of things that surprise us in terms of the kinds of jobs that become possible with particular skill sets."

Fewer majors in the department may have some upsides. "I think that everybody is kind of happy about that," Rusinkiewicz said. Faculty are still advising a large class of seniors on their theses and independent work, and the department recently welcomed a large cohort of graduate students. Many students who major in other engineering disciplines pursue a computer science minor, and students outside of the engineering school continue to take computer science classes.

The department's master's program, however, has slightly contracted, partly because master's students serve as teaching assistants, and the reduced demand for TAs has corresponded with fewer hires. University-wide budget constraints have also meant hiring fewer undergraduate graders and scaling back departmental "swag." ■





CRESSEY BELDEN '91

## AUDITING AT PRINCETON

# The Joy of Returning to the Classroom

BY LIA OPPERMAN '25

**W**HEN CRESSEY BELDEN '91 took Introduction to Macroeconomics in the first semester of her freshman year, she recalled noticing “white-haired people” seated at the back of McCosh 50. She didn’t know who they were, only that she wanted to be them someday.

“I was like, that’s the club that I want to be a member of,” she said.

The folks in the back row were likely auditing the course, a practice that has long been an informal part of Princeton and, since 1999, has been managed by the Community Auditing Program (CAP), now run by Gina Mastro, which gives local residents and community members the chance to expand their knowledge by attending Princeton courses. Mastro said that many participants tell her they’ve been looking forward to auditing for years, and some retirees say they moved to the area specifically to enroll. “We are fortunate to have our campus located within a community of lifelong learners,” she said.

Belden majored in sociology at Princeton, but as an auditor she’s wandered widely. She has taken multiple politics and legal courses, along with various religion courses on the religions of China, Jesus, and Buddha, while she

was actively writing about faith, which helped her intellectual journey.

Returning to the classroom, Belden said, has been unexpectedly restoring. “I just am myself ... on campus,” she said. “Having this chance to be in the classroom again, I don’t think I understood just how special it would be.”

About 600 people audit each semester, including businesspeople, retirees, au pairs, and University alumni and staff. This fall, auditors chose from 100 classes, along with “auditor only” courses on topics including Claude Monet, the American Revolution, and Mozart’s comic operas. Auditors must live in New Jersey or be within a 50-mile radius of campus and be

legal adults with a high school diploma or equivalent. Each course costs \$250 unless otherwise noted.

Tony Singleton spent his career in international finance, from global risk management to restructuring banks in Africa, and later worked in microfinance. He worked for years at Chase, and then joined a consulting firm. When he retired, he moved from Westchester to Lawrenceville in search of a more diverse community.

Singleton’s vision for retirement was to engage with “pure learning.” His education has been in political theory, policy, and math, but auditing opened up a new world to him. He was excited to absorb information with a much different perspective than he had at 22 years old, when he first was in college.

Singleton described CAP as “a gift by the University to the community.” He has taken a financial engineering class and several classics courses, which he has experience in, but also has ventured outside of his comfort zone with an astrophysics course and multiple neuroscience courses.

In one of his favorites, they designed what he described as “the platform for a new Uber.” In another, he explored political ethics and the effects of greed on democracy. Auditors are not allowed to complete assignments or exams, join labs or precepts, or participate in class, although a few professors have made exceptions.

“I was absolutely blown away with what was happening in my life — the value, the enrichment that took place,” Singleton said.



TONY SINGLETON

Stephen Tarnoff, a retired OB-GYN who remembered paying just \$9 a term to attend Brooklyn College, has been auditing for the past six years. He learned about the program from a Princeton alum in Freehold, New Jersey. Each semester, he queues up five or six courses, and like undergraduates during registration, refreshes his screen at 11 a.m. with the hope that he can at least get into one of them.

**CAP has a limited capacity for auditors**, with three days of course registration. Residents of Princeton and others affiliated with the University can register for one course on Day 1, non-Princeton affiliates, including Tarnoff, can register for one course on Day 2, and all auditors can register for up to one other course (or two total courses) on Day 3. Auditors can make up no more than 10% of a class, unless a professor has made an exception.

Tarnoff especially enjoys classes where teachers encourage auditor participation. In a politics course, students and auditors role-played shareholders as they attempted to pass an immigration bill over three meetings. Tarnoff drew the role of Fox News, which required him to walk around the classroom and gather the most interesting news he could. At one point, he overheard a student, who was playing a Republican congressman, say he planned to stage a filibuster to block the bill. Tarnoff reported the comment. While the student was unhappy, the professor was delighted.

Tarnoff recalled “having that interaction with the student, who looked like he wanted to kill me, and then the teacher saved me, because he said to him, ‘There’s a lesson here.’ The lesson is, if you’re a politician, don’t open your mouth until you know who you’re talking to.”

He has taken courses on American television, Beethoven, and the history of medicine back to antiquity, along with many others. He described the community of auditors as vibrant and supportive, with friendships formed through shared classes and life experiences. Mastro, the CAP manager, said, “People meet others who they would not have otherwise met, and many friendships, and even a marriage, have been the result.” **P**



#### CLASS CLOSE-UP

## Learning by Doing, Students Rebuild Rocky Heating System

BY LIA OPPERMAN '25

**S**TUDENTS AT PRINCETON are all too familiar with campus construction, from the newly opened art museum and engineering and environmental sciences complex to the ongoing conversion of the campus-wide steam heating to an electric heat pump and geo-exchange system. Professor Forrest Meggers wanted his class to be a part of the action.

For the final project in his fall semester course, Designing Sustainable Systems: Beating the Heat of Climate Change with New Building Paradigms, students were working to sustainably and optimally heat Rockefeller College, a group of collegiate Gothic dorms up-campus that were built in 1877. Staff from the campus facilities office were expected to be on hand for their final presentations.

Forty-three students were split into groups to retrofit a cross-section of a wall in Rocky into an ideal radiant heating system, working as plumbers, carpenters, or electricians to regulate the temperature inside the box, which serves as a model for the building. Meggers said he enjoys watching the students test what may or may not work. “That’s my favorite part of the class: recognizing how to learn from failing, because, really, it’s a cliché, because you’re never really failing. But nothing works on the first try,” he said.

Meggers explained that “every building is supposed to be a smart building, but they’re actually pretty stupid buildings. It’s not hard

to make them quite a bit smarter.” Buildings around campus come with their own challenges, he said: Some are outdated and weren’t designed with modern sustainability in mind or run on inefficient heating and cooling systems. “They are all stupid for their own special reasons,” he said.

While students worked on the heating hardware, they also learned about sustainability and environmental science fundamentals. Although the class included traditional lectures, Meggers described it as “even more of an experiential learning class.”

“You kind of get to do your own thing, in a sense of like, you can design your own things and have a lot of freedom to do different things,” Imani Kegode ’28 said. She added that she was excited to see her team’s ideas come together.

As part of the course, students visited Meggers’ house, which he has retrofitted with a heat-pump water heater, custom shower controllers, and cooling elements under his floors. “I didn’t realize how useful my house would end up being on the academic side,” he said. Students examined the heat pump in action and then applied the concepts to their projects. They explored the house, where they saw a curvy roof with solar panels on the back, reclaimed wood floors covering radiant piping, copper tubes that run cold water in the summer, and a network of wires and pipes in the basement.

“It’s one of the more interesting labs you can take,” Parker Lenoce ’27 said. **P**



## ADMINISTRATION

## New Policy Bans Most Recording on Princeton's Campus

BY JULIE BONETTE

**A** NEW UNIVERSITY POLICY that bans recording on campus with few exceptions was set to go into effect Jan. 1. It was passed by a wide margin at the November meeting of the Council of the Princeton University Community (CPUC), with no opposing votes, but concerns by student journalists and others were raised in the aftermath.

The policy “prohibits the installation or use of any device for listening, observing, photographing, recording, amplifying, transmitting, or broadcasting sounds or events occurring in any place where the individual or group involved has a reasonable expectation of being free from unwanted surveillance, eavesdropping, recording, or observation without the knowledge and consent of all participants ... .” Public meetings also may be covered “when it has been explicitly stated that recording is not permitted.” Other meeting conveners may explicitly give permission to record.

Prior to the vote, several of those present raised clarifying questions, which Rochelle Calhoun, vice president for campus life, said would be addressed by forthcoming FAQs.

University spokesperson Jennifer Morrill told PAW in mid-November that guidance would be made available “well

ahead” of the Jan. 1 implementation; the FAQs were not available when this issue went to print in early December.

Isaac Barsoum ’28 wrote an opinion piece arguing against the policy for *The Daily Princetonian*. In an email, he told PAW that “the policy was *not* communicated effectively during the meeting.”

“I find it very concerning that CPUC was willing to pass such a sweeping policy when the substantive details ... have not yet been clarified,” Barsoum told PAW.

One goal of the policy is to “establish a mutually respectful environment in which free inquiry and free expression can flourish,” Calhoun said at the meeting. President Christopher Eisgruber ’83 added that concerns that video recordings can be spliced are reasonable.

At an event on Nov. 19 at the new Princeton University Art Museum, Eisgruber said worries about “surreptitious recording” led the CPUC to approve the policy, which “makes that surreptitious recording impermissible.”

The policy extends to virtual conversations and those that occur off campus during University sponsored activities.

Exceptions include devices authorized by the University for safety and security,

documented accommodations for those with disabilities, and devices used for a University investigation, hearing, interview, or review.

Aishwarya Swamidurai ’26, a CPUC councilor, was not present at the meeting but told PAW afterward that “this policy can, and should aim to, bolster our community’s sense of security.”

However, Swamidurai said, the broad scope “introduces ambiguity and the potential for uneven enforcement ... and places undue burdens on specific populations, like student journalists, for whom recording is a core part of factual accuracy.”

Morrill told PAW that “it’s important to note that Princeton has a longstanding practice of accommodating the news gathering needs of journalists when covering certain meetings and events on campus that are generally open to the University community. Rules applying to media vary according to location and circumstance... .

“The University’s new recording policy will be implemented with an eye to maintaining existing media access and to supporting media accuracy, which may be helped by audio recordings that supplement note taking,” Morrill continued.

At the April 2024 CPUC meeting, the council debated a proposal to ban video recordings of CPUC meetings, which was ultimately tabled. When presenting the most recent policy proposal, Calhoun said related discussions started in 2019.

Former CPUC councilor Daniel Shaw ’25 was not involved in this semester’s discussions but was vocal in the 2024 conversation. “Recording policies merit careful consideration in how they balance interests in transparency and the need to avoid creating conditions that might chill academic freedom and other protected speech,” Shaw said.

Under New Jersey law, consent of one party of a conversation is required to record, though in October, a bill was introduced to the state senate that would require the consent of all parties. The fate of the bill is unclear. Only a dozen states require all parties of a conversation to consent to recording. ■

TRANSLATOR-IN-RESIDENCE DONG LI

# Getting the Word Out on the 'Living' Craft of Translation

BY JULIE BONETTE

**T**HROUGH PRINCETON'S Program in Translation and Intercultural Communication, students can take courses about (and minor in) translation, attend topical lectures, and receive funding for translation projects. Every semester, the program, which is housed within the Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies, also hosts a translator-in-residence. PAW sat down with the fall 2025 resident, Dong Li, to ask about his work.

Li was born and raised in China, came to the United States for his bachelor's degree in comparative literature and his master of fine arts degree in creative writing, and then settled in Germany, where he has lived for more than a decade. He primarily translates

Chinese poetry into English, but also translates from English, French, and German. He's currently working on several projects, including translating his own forthcoming poetry collection — *The Bench*, a follow-up to his debut, *The Orange Tree* — from English into German. He hopes to encourage more students to explore translation.



## What brought you into translation?

I just love languages.

## Have you always?

Yeah. I feel like it has opened not just a world, but worlds to me. I learned English through translating contemporary poets from mainland China who have been underdogs. I think it's important — voices which have not been heard. Still, I try to only translate people who are not famous or very well-known in the target language, or whoever's doing innovative stuff.

## Does your process vary if you're translating into English versus another language?

It depends on the project. For me, I really want to know the sound of that particular author. Sometimes I will visit places that are important for a particular book. I really try to get at the emotional landscape, which is often reflected in the physical landscape.

## It sounds like you really put yourself into these translations.

I see it as a new life of this work. I have to be super committed because sometimes

I'm also like an agent. I promote the authors in foreign countries, trying to organize events and readings.

## Has AI affected the field?

I don't think AI can translate the unpredictability of poetry, the linguistic surprises. In poetry, you try to do things that have not been formulated yet. Yesterday, Michael Moore, a very established translator from Italian, demonstrated in class, you can give AI orders — "translate this more colloquially," but students were saying, "AI cannot translate emotion." AI has been fed text from lots of consciousnesses. If you want to hear an author's voice, it's got to come from one consciousness.

## Do you feel like the field gets the respect it deserves?

A lot of translators are also activists in the field, fighting for rights, especially more commercial publishing, saying the translator's name should be on the cover, which I agree. Translated literature requires creativity as well. There is this false comparison — if it's a good translation, people say it reads like the original, but I feel that's not right, because translation is its own genre. You are making the translators invisible.

## What brought you to Princeton?

I find the setting fantastic. I get encouraged by the professors and students, who are always very hardworking, very kind, and generous with their time.

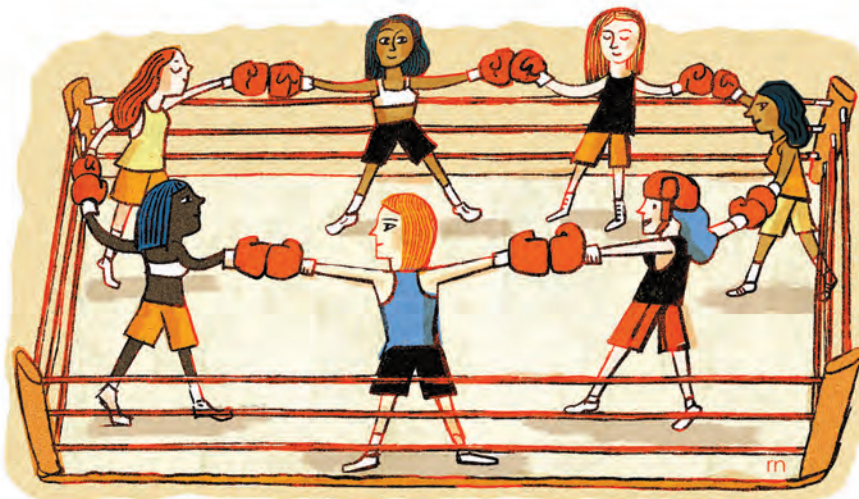
I admire translators who have been here. I just mentioned Michael Moore, who was the first translator-in-residence here. I think I'm the 18th.

I run four workshops for the class Translation, Migration, and Culture. I try to put together interesting texts to translate. Sometimes I have a sample translation from established translators, but sometimes students come up with better ideas. I just told them, embody your translation, put your soul into it. You are not just translating one word and another word, you're translating a living thing. Make it alive. ■

*This interview has been edited for length and clarity.*



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STUDENT DISPATCH

# Sparring Undergrads Revive Princeton's Boxing Tradition

BY CHLOE CRESSWELL '26



**“PULL, SLIP, ROLL,”** Grace Shin '28 shouts, throwing a punch into the air. It's 7 p.m. in Dillon Gym's Studio C, and the Princeton Boxing Club is in the midst of its semiweekly training. Shin, the club's president and a sophomore who plans to major in the School of Public and International Affairs, guides the group through this week's sequence. The atmosphere is lighthearted yet focused, the calculated footsteps shuffling as the boxers spar in pairs, keeping time while Snoopy Dogg sings the hook of “Still D.R.E.”

Shin is one of 300 members in the Princeton Boxing Club's group chat, which was only created last spring. Each training session attracts about 10 students. The club is open to all levels, from novices to more experienced boxers, such as Shin, who grew up in Tucson, Arizona, and was inspired to take up the sport five years ago

after watching the film *Kim Possible*. She enjoys its collective aspect. “Back home, my gym is a community,” she said. “Boxers rely on both their coaches and their team for support.”

On this evening, the overwhelming majority of students are women. For Shin, this has made the club a comfortable and uniquely empowering environment. It is a far cry from her home gym, where she was accustomed to boxing mostly men in a male-dominated sport.

Seoyon Kim '29 had a different experience. She spent 3 1/2 years training in a female-focused gym before joining the club at Princeton. Her decision was inspired by Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*. In the novel, one of Hemingway's characters is a Princeton graduate named Robert Cohn, who joined the middleweight boxing team as a means of gaining confidence.

For other members, such as Elizabeth Hu '29, training serves as a dedicated window for exercise and an excellent way to meet other students. Previously interested in martial arts but unable to find the time to learn, Hu has now formed several friendships in the club. “It's cool like that,” she said.

The Princeton Boxing Club began in the fall of 2024 with a message on

an informal boxing group chat. Prince Takano '24 asked whether anyone would be interested in creating a club, adding that he would donate the equipment. When Shin and her co-founder, Nicholas Vickery '26, liked the message, a plan was set in motion. By that October, the two found themselves in a frustrating back-and-forth with Campus Recreation, which ultimately denied their proposal due to the level of risk involved. (Until the early 1960s, boxing was a popular component of Princeton's phys ed program, taught by sculpture professor and former pro boxer Joe Brown.)

In February, Shin and Vickery were given a second chance and presented their idea to the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Students, which accepted their proposal, with the caveat that they could not participate in competitions. Shin has continued to build community by hosting regular fight night watch parties, where members and boxing enthusiasts alike gather to watch another combat sport, UFC.

Once the club was established, Shin and Vickery faced another hurdle: finding a permanent training venue. Shadowboxing sessions were initially held on Poe Field, before transitioning to Dillon Gym in the first week of the fall semester. Shin remembers the outdoor workouts fondly, blasting music and training to build strength and conditioning.

Shin is currently working to establish a partnership with TITLE Boxing Club in East Windsor, which would enable greater access to equipment and exposure to the boxing culture in which she was raised. She also intends to recruit a treasurer and a media chair to assist in designing merchandise and creating a social media account. Drawing on her experience as director of events for Princeton's student-run Coffee Club cafés, Shin aspires to ensure the boxing club's longevity. Whether shadowboxing on Poe or mastering self-defense in Studio C, the club is already an important third space on campus, outside of Princeton's rigorous academic framework, connecting students through their mutual appreciation for boxing. **P**



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GLOBAL OUTLOOK

## International Graduate Students Connect Over Shared Challenges

BY JULIE BONETTE

**F**OR THE FIRST TIME THIS FALL, international graduate students and postdocs under pressure due to changing policies from the Trump administration gathered weekly to discuss challenges, form a community, and support one another.

The International Scholars and Scientists Cohort was organized by GradFUTURES, the Graduate School's professional development hub, and was led by Sonali Majumdar, an immigrant from India who joined Princeton in 2022 as assistant dean for professional development. Majumdar published a book this October, *Thriving as an International Scientist: Professional Development for Global STEM Citizens*.

Current news headlines affecting the academic and international communities — such as immigration challenges and fewer grants — were brought up but were not a focus, according to Majumdar. But some participants told PAW that federal turmoil in the U.S. was a factor behind their decision to attend.

"The reason that I was interested," said Yun Choi, a fourth-year civil and environmental engineering

graduate student from South Korea, "is because of the current situation [in the U.S.]. ... As a person who has a student visa, I also need to figure out my plan B and C."

Majumdar discussed real-life examples from her book of international scholars who have found success globally — beyond their home countries and the U.S. — which Lynn Hirose, a fourth-year atmospheric and oceanic sciences graduate student from Japan, said served to "broaden my options and provide an overview of what is actually possible."

"During this difficult time ... just staying in the U.S. might not be the only option," said Hirose.

"If you feel like your purpose, your scholarship, your interests, are not being met in this country, there might be other spaces in the world to explore," Majumdar said during one session.



### Dean of the Graduate School

Rodney Priestley said international students have valued Majumdar's guidance since she got to Princeton, and "her new book is an exciting next step, allowing her to share that expertise with a wider audience. What's even better is that the

GradFUTURES learning cohort ... brings those insights into the classroom with practical, actionable recommendations for Princeton graduate students. We are lucky and thrilled to have her on our team."

The gatherings were inspired by one of Majumdar's book reviewers, who suggested her book would pair well with workshops. So, Majumdar developed a curriculum. The group, which had more than 20 participants, met on Tuesday evenings in the Louis A. Simpson International Building.

"The central thesis is applying the curiosity and creativity that they bring into their scholarship and their research into other parts of their life ... and problem solving through disruptions and challenges that they face so that eventually they can still find the career path that they are interested in," said Majumdar.

Topics included building communities of mentors, the ins and outs of visas, storytelling, and mental health. The sessions incorporated practical tips and strategies for finding a fulfilling career and overall happiness both inside and outside of the U.S. Though the book and the gatherings were primarily geared toward STEM, the humanities were also included.

Cécile Raas, a first-year graduate student in French and Italian from France, said some participants discussed how the cohort became "like therapy to some extent ... and I think it really opens up this safe space for us, especially right now in a moment at which it gets a little bit more difficult to be an international student."

Students expressed a desire for meetings to continue beyond the semester, though nothing has been planned. "One of the biggest benefits of this cohort has been the community and getting to hear from other peers on how there are shared challenges," said Majumdar of feedback she's received.

About 44% of Princeton's graduate students are international, according to the Graduate School. Almost a quarter of graduate students enrolled in the U.S. in 2023-24 were international, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. ■

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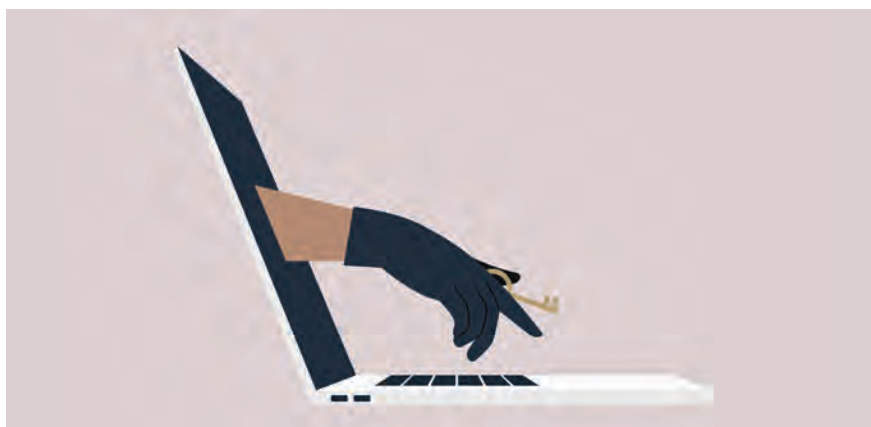
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### ADMINISTRATION

## Princeton Database Breached in Targeted Phishing Incident

**A** **PRINCETON UNIVERSITY** Advancement database containing information about alumni, donors, some faculty, students, parents, and other members of the University community was compromised by external actors on Nov. 10, Princeton officials said in a Nov. 15 message to those affected. The breach lasted less than 24 hours.

According to a statement from Daren Hubbard, vice president for information technology and chief information officer, and Kevin Heaney, vice president for advancement, the database contains personal information such as names, email addresses, telephone numbers, and home and business addresses. It also includes information about fundraising activities and donations.

The University, in a series of FAQs about the breach, said it believes the database does not contain Social Security numbers, passwords, or sensitive financial information, including credit card or bank account numbers. The database also does not contain detailed student records covered by federal privacy laws or data about staff employees unless they are donors.

According to the University, the breach stemmed from a phone phishing scam targeting a University employee who had routine access to the Advancement database.

Princeton notified law enforcement and is working closely with them and outside cybersecurity experts. At the time of publication, no suspects had been identified, and the University had no information to share about a criminal investigation.

"We urge you to be alert for unusual messages that purport to come from the University," Hubbard and Heaney wrote. "No one from Princeton University should ever call, text, or email you asking for sensitive information such as Social Security numbers, passwords, or bank information."

In response to the incident, three class action lawsuits have been filed, by Henggao Cai, David Ramirez '22, and Gary Penna '70, which claim that the University failed to properly secure and safeguard protected, personally identifiable information of thousands of individuals in its network. Princeton believes the claims to be without merit and plans to contest them, University spokesperson Jennifer Morrill said.

The attack was one of several targeting Ivy League institutions, including breaches of Harvard's alumni affairs database and Penn's donor records in November, a hacking incident at Dartmouth in August that was confirmed publicly in late November, and a dayslong IT outage at Columbia in late June. **P** By L.O.



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## IN SHORT



KAMARA '26

Hadi Kamara '26, a politics major and U.S. Air Force veteran from Alexandria, Virginia, has been named a **2026 Rhodes scholar** and will pursue a master's in international relations from the University of Oxford next fall. Kamara, a first-generation college student, received his associate's degree in business administration and management from Northern Virginia Community College after serving as a crew chief in the Air Force. He entered Princeton as a transfer student in 2022.

"Hadi and his fellow student veterans play an invaluable role on our campus by exemplifying Princeton's informal motto, 'in the nation's service and the service of humanity,'" said Jacob Shapiro, a professor at the School of Public and International Affairs who advised Kamara's junior paper, in a University announcement.

Two-thirds of undergraduate course grades at Princeton were in the A-range (A-plus, A, or A-minus), according to the **2024-25 grading report** distributed to the faculty in December. Historical data showed a particularly sharp jump in A and A-plus grades in the years of the COVID-19 pandemic and a gradual increase since then, peaking at 45.5% last year. A-minus grades have remained roughly the same for the last three decades.

In 2004, Princeton's faculty adopted recommendations that each department limit A's to 35% of the grades given in undergraduate courses, a policy that

frustrated many students but managed to curb grade inflation for nearly a decade. Since the policy was dropped in 2014-15, A grades have risen and B grades have declined.

The report, compiled by the Faculty Committee on Examinations and Standing, did not prescribe specific changes but called on professors to be more discerning when awarding A-plus grades and to "continue developing transparent and consistent grading standards" within academic departments.

William Lockwood Jr. '59, the longtime director of special programming who brought Itzhak Perlman, the Alvin Ailey dance company, Lang Lang, and scores of others to **McCarter Theatre Center**, made a gift to endow his former position at the local arts institution, according to an October announcement. Lockwood has been associated with McCarter for more than 60 years and booked his first events there as an undergrad. Paula Abreu, McCarter's director of presented programming, will be the first to hold the endowed chair.



SMITH

Creative writing professor Patricia Smith received the **2025 National Book Award** for poetry in November for her collection *The Intentions of Thunder: New and Selected Poems*.



Smith, who joined the Princeton faculty in 2023, taught an introductory poetry course in the fall and is working on her first novel, according to her department bio. Two other Princetonians were nominated for

the National Book Award in nonfiction: creative writing professor Yiyun Li, for *Things in Nature Merely Grow*; and Julia Ioffe '05, for *Motherland: A Feminist History of Modern Russia, from Revolution to Autocracy*. **P**

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## FALL SPORTS

# NCAA Runner-Up Field Hockey Headlines a Season of Champions

BY BRETT TOMLINSON

**F**OUR WEEKS INTO ITS 2025 season, Princeton field hockey lost a Friday night home game to rival Harvard, dropping the Tigers' record to 4-3.

The following day, as Princeton headed south to play perennial power Maryland, head coach Carla Tagliente remembered thinking, "We could be .500 or under pretty quick. It can tilt the other way so fast ... and I'm like, geez, we have really no time to feel sorry for ourselves."

The road trip turned out to be just what the Tigers needed, Tagliente said: Her team bonded on the bus and in the hotel, played with exceptional speed and stamina on Sunday against the Terrapins, and turned in a dominant second half to start a 14-game winning streak that would carry Princeton all the way to the

NCAA title game for the first time since 2019.

Princeton lost the championship to Northwestern by the narrowest of margins when the Wildcats ricocheted in a shot over goalkeeper Olivia Caponiti '27's left shoulder early in the second overtime period. The 2-1 loss on Nov. 23 marked the first time in more

**"I think as they have time to reflect on the season as a whole, they're going to have so much pride in everything that they've done."**

— CARLA TAGLIENTE  
Field hockey head coach

## RUBBER MATCH

*After losing to Harvard in September, Princeton beat the Crimson twice in the postseason in the Ivy League Tournament and an NCAA semifinal, pictured, where a goal by Caitlin Thompson '29, front right, put the Tigers ahead 2-0.*

than a month that the Tigers' defense allowed more than one goal in a game (also to Northwestern, in a 3-2 Princeton win on Oct. 13).

"When you put yourself out there to go for it, it stings a little bit more," Tagliente told PAW. "I just told them to be proud of their performance and what they've done through the season. It's been truly remarkable. You can't distill it down to one game. The competitor in you is going to fixate on that. But I think as they have time to reflect on the season as a whole, they're going to have so much pride in everything that they've done."

The championship game was the last Princeton appearance for Beth Yeager '26, a four-time Ivy League Offensive Player of the Year whose college career was sandwiched around a one-year break to play for the United States in the 2024 Olympics. Yeager scored 15 goals in her senior season with an astounding nine game-winners, including one late in the fourth period of a quarterfinal game against Syracuse that sent Princeton to the Final Four.

The Tigers will return a promising lineup — Yeager was the only senior who started in the championship game — and a historically distinguished defense that allowed less than one goal per game and gave up only half as many shots as the offense took. Defensive midfielder Ella Cashman '27 and defender Clem Houlden '28 both joined Yeager on the All-Ivy first team.

Princeton also avenged that early loss to Harvard — twice — by beating the Crimson in Cambridge to win the Ivy League Tournament and again in the NCAA semifinals in Durham, North Carolina.

**Princeton's fall success stretched** across the athletic department, with every team except football and the

fledgling women's rugby program winning a league title in either the regular season or postseason.

Women's soccer rebounded from a slow start in Ivy play to win the regular season championship and host the Ivy Tournament, where it fell to Dartmouth, 1-0. Men's soccer posted 15 wins — a new program record — and swept the Ivy regular season and tournament en route to a No. 3 seed in the NCAA Tournament. Playing at home against Duke in the round of 32, Princeton struck first on a header by defender Jack Hunt '26. But the Blue Devils scored twice in the final 20 minutes to upset the Tigers, 2-1.

Princeton's cross country teams were repeat winners at the Ivy Heptagonals, with the men winning their fifth straight championship and the women their second in a row. Bronx-bred Myles Hogan '26 won the men's individual title, outpacing the field by 48 seconds at Van Cortlandt Park in his home borough, and



Anna McNatt '27 won the women's race, followed by teammate Meg Madison '28 in second. The men's team also won the NCAA Mid-Atlantic Regional and placed 27th in the NCAA Championships.

Women's volleyball won its last five regular season matches to edge Cornell and Yale for the Ivy championship and then earned the league's NCAA Tournament bid with a tight 3-2 win over

Yale in the league tournament final at Dillon Gym. Princeton dropped a 3-0 match to No. 4 seed USC in the NCAA Tournament Dec. 4.

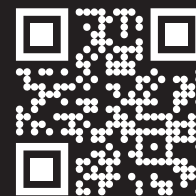
With a 13-10 win over Harvard, the Princeton men's water polo team secured an unprecedented fifth consecutive Northeast Water Polo Conference championship. The Tigers lost to UCLA in the NCAA quarterfinals Dec. 5. **P**



Barbie Adler, Founder

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# RESEARCH

ADVANCING THE FRONTIERS OF KNOWLEDGE

## BLUE CHIP

*Princeton has developed a new superconducting quantum chip, as shown, with qubits that last up to 15 times longer than many large-scale processors. "The real challenge, the thing that stops us from having useful quantum computers today, is that you build a qubit and the information just doesn't last very long," says Andrew Houck '00, dean of Princeton's School of Engineering and Applied Sciences. "Now we can begin to make progress much more quickly. It's very possible that by the end of the decade we will see a scientifically relevant quantum computer." The work is largely funded by the Department of Energy through a national quantum research center, where Houck is chief scientist.*



## SLEEP AND CHILDREN

# The Negative Impacts of Screens on Teens

BY LIA OPPERMAN '25

**L**AUREN HALE '03 DIDN'T PLAN to build her career around sleep, but a single lecture rerouted her path. Near the end of her Ph.D. program in the School of Public and International Affairs, she attended a talk by neuroscientist Robert Stickgold, who described the importance of sleep in learning and memory consolidation. He showed the audience photos of low-income children sleeping on couches and on the floor, and said that we really don't know much about how sleep affects education, nor the demography of sleep.

This struck Hale, who was training as a demographer, an expert studying human populations by analyzing data and demographic characteristics. "I basically chased him down at the airport in Madison, Wisconsin, where his talk was, and told him that I was going to study the demography of sleep," she says.

After completing her Ph.D., Hale pursued a postdoc in sleep research and



HALE '03

joined Stony Brook University as an assistant professor in 2005. She has been a core faculty member in public health and family, population, and preventive medicine ever since. She has chaired the board of directors for the National Sleep Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to improving health and well-being by advancing sleep health. She also is the founding editor-in-chief of the journal *Sleep Health*. Stickgold's lecture "changed my whole trajectory," she says.

Hale has long worked with the Future of Families and Child Wellbeing Study, a longitudinal birth cohort study of American families run by Princeton, Columbia, and Notre Dame. She began studying adolescent sleep in 15-year-olds using actigraphs, devices similar to Fitbits worn on the wrist to measure movement and estimate sleep-wake patterns, but

## PHONE FIXATION

*According to research, 15% of adolescents are on their phones nine hours a day, and 5% are on them 12 hours a day. Additionally, 25% of tweens sleep with their phone in hand or in their bed, Hale says.*

realized she couldn't fully study sleep without understanding how teens are using their phones. That brought her into the field of screens and sleep.

In 2015, she published a paper that studied the limited literature on screens and sleep at the time. The paper has been cited more than 1,000 times. In the decade since, hundreds of studies have shown a consistent association between screen time, especially interactive nighttime screen use, and later bedtimes, shorter sleep duration, and worse sleep quality. Meanwhile, screens have also evolved, and the digital environment has become more difficult for younger people to disengage from.

Around the same time, Hale joined the scientific advisory panel of Children and Screens: Institute of Digital Media and Child Development. The nonprofit was founded by Dr. Pamela Hurst-Della Pietra, who was motivated as both a parent and a physician. "I saw that there was this growing gap between the pace of children's digital media use and its development and our understanding of its impacts," she says. The organization was designed to bring researchers together and provide information on the short- and long-term impacts of digital media on children, and what to do about it. The group convenes to build a collaborative and diverse research ecosystem, translates evidence for parents and educators, and works to ensure that legislation related to youth safety, privacy, and education, reflects the best available science.

**Hale and Dr. Dimitri Christakis**, a pediatrician, co-edited a widely downloaded handbook on children and screens that brings together psychologists, psychiatrists, communication specialists, neuroscientists, and public health experts to convey the latest research

from their areas of expertise. Their goal was to give parents and caregivers an accessible, research-grounded guide.

According to Christakis, 15% of adolescents are on their phones nine hours a day, and 5% are on them 12 hours a day. Hale noted that 25% of tweens sleep with their phone in hand or in bed. “No 11-year-old should have a device in their bed with them,” she says. “They should be sleeping.”

Hale’s research has shown that not all screen time carries the same weight. Interactive media, especially video games, can be particularly disruptive to sleep. “Everybody’s at risk of losing sleep because these devices capture your attention,” Hale says. “It’s not the devices. It’s what’s on the devices [and] how you’re engaging with them.”

While hypotheses about light exposure, including research that blue light suppresses melatonin, has long dominated the conversation, there are

**“Everybody’s at  
risk of losing sleep  
because these devices  
capture your attention.  
It’s not the devices.  
It’s what’s on the devices  
[and] how you’re  
engaging with them.”**


— LAUREN HALE \*03

many other factors at play. Psychological and emotional arousal, how children are engaging with people on the other end of the phone, feelings of FOMO, and being woken up by your phone, either directly or indirectly, play a larger role.

Her studies also show meaningful disparities: Children of color are more likely to spend more time on their phone at night, and they are three times more likely to get a phone by age 10.

To Hale, the question is no longer about whether screens affect sleep, but what families, schools, and policymakers should do about it. She mentions school-wide phone bans, later school start times, and the elimination of daylight saving time as possible solutions.

Still, she believes powerful interventions happen right at home. “If you set rules about when and where screens can be used, you can just mitigate the potential risks associated with screen use,” she says. Her handbook encourages parents to promote no screens in the bedroom, create positive physical activities for children, and educate them on digital privacy risks. Outside of the science, as a researcher and parent herself, she returns to a simple principle.

“Try to live as much of your life as possible not through a screen,” Hale says. “That means make time and space for real interactions.” 

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## COMPUTER SCIENCE AND PSYCHOLOGY

# Using AI to Tackle ‘One of the Biggest Scientific Mysteries’

BY CARLETT SPIKE

**B**RENDEN LAKE FIRST encountered the use of technology to understand human intelligence during a scientific research opportunity in high school. It opened his world to new possibilities.

“I learned about neural networks, this computational approach for trying to understand the mind and the brain, and I was just completely captivated,” Lake says. “It just seemed like there was this field of cognitive science where you could ask big questions.”

Lake went on to earn degrees in cognitive science and symbolic systems from MIT and Stanford University, respectively, before working at NYU and Meta AI. In the fall, he joined



LAKE

Princeton’s faculty as an associate professor of computer science and psychology and taught the class Computational Models of Cognition.

His lab focuses on the intersection of machine and human intelligence in the hopes of advancing society’s understanding of both. “One of the biggest scientific mysteries is how our own minds work,” Lake says. Through this understanding, his goal is to create AI systems that process data in a way that resembles human thinking.

In 2024, Lake created the first ever AI model that could learn words from the experience of one child. To understand how children learn in the earliest stages of life, Lake’s team used video captured by a camera attached to the helmet the child wore to train the AI model. The team used about 60 hours of footage over a two-year period — roughly 1% of the child’s waking hours, Lake says.

“We showed, for the first time, that a neural network trained on just a subset of what a child could have experienced could link words to their visual counterparts,” says Lake, who began this research at NYU. For example,

## LUNABOT

*Brenden Lake’s daughter, Luna, participated in a study that recorded her experiences for one hour each week. The data was collected by a camera attached to a helmet worn by Luna. Lake hopes to use this data to train an AI model.*

when typing the word “ball” into the system, it often correctly picked the image of a ball.

These findings could help explain the ongoing mystery among those who study childhood development around how children learn to associate words with objects and ultimately understand what words mean. “Today’s AI systems can start to piece that together,” Lake says.

**In 2023, his daughter, Luna, who was 6 months old at the time, was part of a similar study to record her experiences for one hour each week. He hopes to use this footage to train another AI model using the sensory models a toddler is exposed to. He’s tentatively calling it a LunaBot.**

There have been many concerns raised about AI’s capabilities and consequences over the past several years — from hallucinations where false information is generated to instances where troubling advice is offered, such as the case of a teen who died by suicide in April after interactions with a chatbot. When asked about the potential negative implications of training models to respond more like humans, Lake says he’s hopeful this type of research could eliminate these problems.

“My personal bet is that making progress on this joint enterprise of not just focusing on better machine intelligence sort of at the neglect of understanding our own intelligence could help to address some of those risks,” he says. “I think some of those risks come from those systems not really understanding how to help somebody, or what somebody is looking for.”

In a broader sense, he says he believes building more human-centered AI can have positive impacts in the future in areas such as education. For example, if AI models could predict how children learn, that could lead to new teaching strategies.

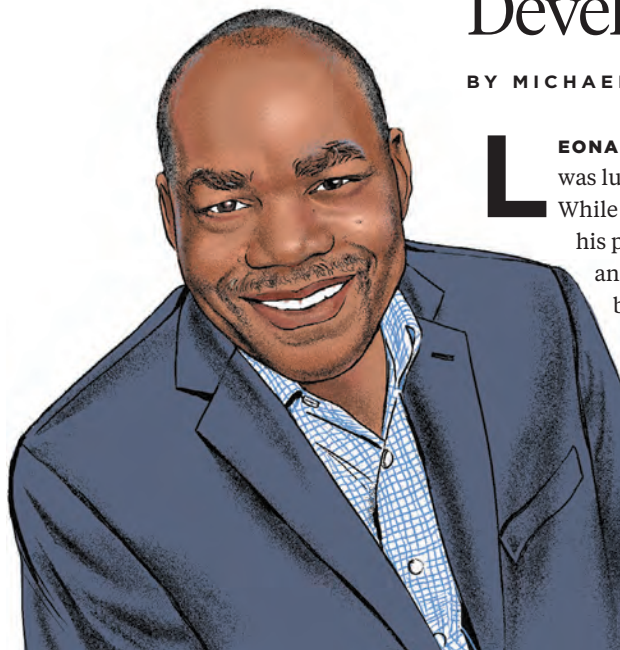
“There’s this huge push to try to get systems to do math and step-by-step reasoning more accurately,” Lake says, “but if we can model the types of struggles and successes, say of a middle school student learning algebra, we could potentially simulate different innovations for teaching.” **P**



BEHIND THE RESEARCH: LEONARD WANTCHEKON

# Developing Africa and the World

BY MICHAEL BLANDING



**L** EONARD WANTCHEKON GREW UP IN A FAMILY OF FARMERS in rural Benin but was lucky enough to get an education at the first missionary school in West Africa. While there, he recalls observing the differences in fortunes between himself and his peers. As a young adult in college, he helped organize prodemocracy protests and was imprisoned. He made a daring escape before going into exile in Canada and the U.S. in the late 1980s. All those experiences influenced his scholarship in international economics, as he became a professor at Yale and NYU before joining Princeton's faculty in 2011. "In my work, I'm always interested in how to develop alternatives to the status quo," he says. His research includes looking at the roots of individual success and national prosperity in Africa and around the world.

## Quick Facts

### TITLE

*Professor of Politics and International Affairs*

### TIME AT PRINCETON

*14 years*

### RECENT CLASS

*State Capture and Misgovernance*

## WANTCHEKON'S RESEARCH A SAMPLING

### BUILDING AFRICAN ECONOMIES

After supporting African students in the U.S. for many years, Wantchekon conceived of a uniquely African institution that would educate the best and brightest of the continent. With support from Princeton in 2014, he established the African School of Economics, a pan-African university in Benin that has since expanded to multiple campuses and sent dozens of students to postdoc roles or teaching positions at top-ranked institutions in the U.S. and Europe. He's now opening a new campus in Zanzibar, a cosmopolitan island strategically located between Africa, India, and the Gulf States, which he envisions not just as an educational institution but also as an innovation hub around artificial intelligence and other technologies. "Our goal will be to set up business ecosystems within the university to use research to create economic

opportunities," he says, "not just by doing research, but also by creating innovation-driven startups."

### UNAPPRECIATED ASPIRATION

Much of Wantchekon's research has been focused on understanding the drivers of social mobility, compiling unique datasets of individuals in Benin, Nigeria, New Orleans, and other areas to examine the relative impact of education, income, and other factors. "We collect data documenting not only the individual but also their fathers, grandfathers, siblings, and neighbors," he says. Among his most compelling findings is that education can pull people out of poverty — but just as important are social connections with educated and successful people, which can spur a person's own desire to succeed. "One of the most unappreciated drivers of mobility is aspiration," Wantchekon says, touting




governments fail and what can be done to improve them. "It's like genetic editing," he says, "where you take out or add something to the problem, and then experiment with it to see what changes." In identifying issues that cause institutional failure, he takes a deep historical perspective; one of his most acclaimed papers, for example, showed that trust in government

the importance of mixing low-income and uneducated individuals with rich and educated counterparts to raise society. "This could be one of the strengths of African culture, which is based on social cohesion, trust, and connection."

### GENE-EDITING POLITICS

On a broader level, Wantchekon has applied his analytical lens to politics to better understand why

and society is lower today among certain ethnic groups in areas of Africa historically impacted by the slave trade. In experimenting to improve government, he's staged interventions such as adding more deliberation into municipal governments in Africa, inspired by New England town meetings from the 18th century, and found this increases cooperation and transparency, and reduces corruption. **P**

A close-up, low-angle portrait of a woman with dark hair and tortoiseshell glasses. She is looking slightly upwards and to the right. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights on her face and glasses, and deep shadows in the background and under her chin.

## Kidnapped and Freed

Elizabeth Tsurkov  
continues her Ph.D. research  
**after** more than 900 days  
**in** captivity

**BY JULIE BONETTE**



## LOOKING AHEAD

*After being kidnapped in Iraq in March 2023, Elizabeth Tsurkov was released in September and is recovering in Ramat Gan, Israel.*

## A NOTEBOOK.

After more than 900 days in captivity, that's what Princeton Ph.D. student Elizabeth Tsurkov was thinking about on Sept. 9, the day she regained her freedom from Kataib Hezbollah, a Shiite militia group.

"I was not filled with joy," Tsurkov tells PAW over Zoom from Israel, where she was recovering as of mid-November. "I expected this is going to be the happiest day of my life. No, I was mainly concerned about my notebook."

Tsurkov spent years filling that notebook with thoughts on her research, "developing these projects ... rewriting them to make it cleaner, to make it better." When she was released, she didn't have the chance to bring it with her.

Just reliving the memory makes Tsurkov upset again.

"I think I'm a typical Ph.D. candidate of Princeton in the sense that I'm very passionate about the research that I'm conducting," Tsurkov says.

Tsurkov, who is a dual Russian-Israeli citizen, was kidnapped in March 2023 while in Iraq conducting field research for her Ph.D. in politics. A 2021 draft of her thesis prospectus shows Tsurkov was researching groups in Iraq, Iraqi Kurdistan, and Lebanon — such as the Lebanese Forces, a political party and former militia group — that are popular among locals despite not providing material benefits.

Israel and Iraq do not share diplomatic relations, and it is against Israeli law for citizens to enter enemy states, even on a foreign passport. Tsurkov, who had been to Iraq before, used her Russian passport to enter the country and says she was careful not to share her Israeli identity when meeting with and interviewing locals.

A week before her planned departure from Iraq, and eight days after undergoing emergency back surgery, Tsurkov was leaving a café in an upscale neighborhood of Baghdad when she was blindfolded, sexually assaulted, and kidnapped by at least one man, possibly several, who dragged her into a waiting black SUV. United States and Israeli officials have since confirmed the kidnappers were from Kataib Hezbollah, which has ties to Iraq and Iran and is considered a terrorist organization by the U.S. government.

She was taken to a large house where she was isolated and starved. During this time, Tsurkov's research was often at the front of her mind.

"Unfortunately, I didn't have notebooks at the time or a computer to be able to type on. But I did have [a] very enforced digital detox. And that was very useful ... just thinking about my Ph.D.," Tsurkov says, comparing her forced situation without access to writing materials, making her research even more challenging, to other Ph.D. candidates who intentionally disconnect from the world to focus and write.

"During the first month of captivity, I really developed the outline of my Ph.D. really in great detail" in her head, she says.

Around this time, conditions got much worse. The kidnappers discovered Tsurkov's Israeli identity after going through her phone and began physically torturing her. They thought she was an intelligence agent and demanded she confess to crimes she didn't commit. Since her release, Tsurkov has given interviews to *The New York Times*, IranWire, and the Associated Press in which she detailed the beatings, whippings, and electrocutions she endured. On more than one occasion, she was beaten so severely that she

lost hearing. They pestered her about her sex life, touched her inappropriately, and threatened to rape her. All the while, she says, she fabricated information to play along and try to appease her torturers.

At night, while trying to fall asleep, Tsurkov struggled to relax. To stop replaying torture sessions in her mind, "I would constantly tell myself, just think about your Ph.D. Just think about your research. So that's what I tried to do. I would recite whole chapters that I would write in my head."

Whenever she could, Tsurkov attempted to keep pens she was given to write confessions. That sometimes worked. And as the drinking water in Iraq can be deadly, she was given potable water delivered in cardboard boxes, which she used to write "the outline of my Ph.D. And they would confiscate the pieces of cardboard, and I would write it on new pieces of cardboard, and I kept memorizing it. I would walk around in the room or lie down on the pile of blankets on which I was sleeping, and I would give myself lectures about my Ph.D. And I would present it ... at first in English, then in Hebrew, then in Arabic, then in Russian, to just keep myself busy because I had nothing else to do."

Four and a half months into the ordeal, Tsurkov was moved again, this time to the location — likely a Kataib Hezbollah base near the Iranian border — where she would stay until her release. Thankfully, her situation vastly improved. Though she was still isolated in a windowless room, the torture stopped, and she was supplied with writing materials. For the next two years, she not only pondered her dissertation, but also thought about additional research she would be interested in pursuing. She came up with ideas for a book and other articles she wanted to write.

While being held at the first location during the first few months of her captivity, she asked multiple times for a Quran, "because I thought this is not going to be something that they refuse. Because of course I would prefer to read political science journals, but they're not available." She was told she'd be given a copy, but she never received it. The next time she asked, Tsurkov recalls one of her captors said, "I told you we're never going to give it to you." ... And I looked at him like ... you are lying. But I didn't say anything because at that point they were already torturing me."

The incident underscored her lack of agency and made her feel weak. This helped her relate to people she had been studying who are oppressed and don't speak up due to fear, which "lowers your perception or respect for the people around you," because others are also too afraid to speak up or act out. That sparked a new potential avenue of research for Tsurkov. She told *The Times* that she wanted to share the story of her kidnapping to give voice to Iraqis who have been tortured by Kataib Hezbollah.

In addition, before her kidnapping, Tsurkov had avoided contact with certain groups due to the potential danger, but in captivity, she reasoned, "I'm already in their hands, I might as well ask them for oral consent ... to provide me with their oral history." She interviewed one of her captors and a nurse who visited her. "So that was definitely useful," she says.

At night, while trying to fall asleep, Tsurkov struggled to relax. To stop replaying torture sessions in her mind, "I would constantly tell myself, just think about your Ph.D. Just think about your research. So that's what I tried to do. I would recite whole chapters that I would write in my head."

Tsurkov grew up in poverty, lived in a trailer park in the occupied West Bank for most of her childhood, and worked hard to get into Princeton. She was and still is focused on completing her Ph.D.

"This experience of captivity didn't ... cause me to feel that my Ph.D. is unimportant. On the contrary," she says.

**ON SEPT. 9, PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP SURPRISED** the world when he announced on social media that Tsurkov was "now safely in the American Embassy in Iraq." Tsurkov herself had been surprised the previous day when she was driven, blindfolded, away from her cell. Then she was turned over to an Iraqi official in a garage in Baghdad.

In her first public statement via a post on X, Tsurkov thanked Trump and other administration officials for campaigning on her behalf.

Deborah Amos, a Ferris Professor of Journalism in Residence and a former roommate of Tsurkov, couldn't believe it when she heard the news. As a journalist who reports on the Middle East, Amos has "met people who've been kidnapped and get out, and there's not very many of them. And so, it's astonishing to me."

Amos says she and Tsurkov reconnected within days of her release and spent an hour crying together on Zoom. To Amos' relief, Tsurkov sounded "like Elizabeth. That was the most important thing. She really seemed like Elizabeth. She was feisty, she was energetic. I mean, I knew what she'd been through, and so I was kind of being careful, but then she was just herself, and that was so remarkable to hear her voice at that strength."

At the hospital in Israel, Tsurkov had a joyous reunion with her family, including her sister Emma, who traveled to Princeton and Washington, D.C., to advocate on Elizabeth's behalf during her captivity.

Since regaining her freedom, Tsurkov has continued working on her dissertation, collecting oral histories remotely. She says she's willing to do what it takes to get her notebook back, but she's not expecting to ever see it again.

As of mid-November, Tsurkov was staying at a friend's house in a suburb of Tel Aviv, Israel. She intends to return to the United States at some point, but "it really depends on how fast my physical therapy progresses and when I'm able to sit, because that is the main limiting factor." At the moment, she's "basically not living independently."

Tsurkov has nerve damage that might be permanent. She

says the torturers herniated two discs in her back, among other injuries. "I'm just really in pain all the time."

Amos says Tsurkov is "in the very best place of all to address those concerns because this is a group of medical professionals that has been dealing with the hostages of Gaza, so they have an enormous amount of data of how the body responds to that kind of trauma. ...

"When she's ready, they will, and she will, decide that she's ready," Amos says. "And then she will come home. Well, she will come to her other home, which is Princeton."

Amaney Jamal, dean of the School of Public and International Affairs and chair of Tsurkov's dissertation

committee, told PAW via email, "First and foremost, I'm so happy that Elizabeth is home and recovering. I'm also thrilled that she will complete her Ph.D., and I look forward to continuing our work together on her dissertation."

Tsurkov declined to answer questions about the University. Seven months after she was abducted, and three months after the kidnapping was made public, Princeton spokesperson Michael



#### **'NOT LIVING INDEPENDENTLY'**

*Tsurkov, who underwent emergency back surgery eight days before being kidnapped, does rehab work in a therapy pool.*

Hotchkiss confirmed that Tsurkov was in Iraq for her approved dissertation. However, since at least April 2022, Iraq has been on the University's list of locations where travel is "not feasible, even with significant precautions taken," according to the Permitted Travel Policy.

In 2023, Princeton doctoral student Xiyue Wang \*15, who was imprisoned in Iran for more than three years, and his wife, Hua Qu \*21, settled a civil lawsuit against Princeton in which they alleged negligence by the University, claiming that advisers encouraged Wang to travel to Iran and failed to support him while he was incarcerated there.

As for her peers, Tsurkov said she "want[s] to express my gratitude to the students at Princeton who came out to support me and my family. They wrote letters, made phone calls, participated in rallies, and all of this kept my name in the news and helped to get me home."

For now, Tsurkov is doing her best to return to normalcy. She spent her last two birthdays alone in a dark cell, but when she turned 39 on Nov. 11, she traveled to northern Israel to celebrate with family.

"It's a very nice area, great nature," she says.

A welcome change after years of not seeing the sun. ■

JULIE BONETTE is PAW's writer/assistant editor.





COURTESY OF KWANZA JONES '93 AND JOSÉ E. FELICIANO '94

# THE KING AND QUEEN OF ENERGY

Kwanza Jones '93 and  
José E. Feliciano '94  
dream — and give — big

BY MARK F. BERNSTEIN '83

**“Exuberant” hardly describes the mood at the dedications of Kwanza Jones Hall and José E. Feliciano Hall on May 5, 2023. Though the weather that day was cloudy, from the podium there was only sunshine.**

The two dorms, built thanks to a \$20 million gift by their namesakes, Kwanza Jones '93 and José E. Feliciano '94, are part of the sprawling New College West-Yeh College complex on the southern edge of campus. Between them, the dorms house about 250 students and all the latest amenities. They are the first Princeton dorms named for a Black or Latino alum.

“Today we celebrate the power of possibility,” President Christopher Eisgruber '83 told a dedication crowd of more than 100, which included family, friends, and fellow alums, many decked in Reunions jackets. “We celebrate the generosity and love of two very special members of the Princeton community. And we celebrate and honor what it means to belong.”

But the real master of ceremonies was Jones herself. Although the marriage is very much a partnership “in business and in life” as Jones puts it, she tends to be the power couple’s public voice, with Feliciano content to keep a lower profile. (“You got one minute!” she joked when calling him up to say a few words.) Symbolically, a bridge connects the two buildings, fitting for the first dorms to be named after alumni spouses. Jones, though, saw an even broader metaphor.

“Princeton connected people,” she said, choking back tears. “It connects cultures, it connects thoughts, it connects ideas. It connects.” Concluding with a quote from her own 2023 song, “We Buildin’,” Jones rapped, “We makin’ change and there ain’t nobody stoppin’ us!”

Few Princetonians, it seems safe to say, know much about

the people for whom their buildings are named, or the fortunes behind them. Kwanza Jones and José E. Feliciano certainly are different from the 19th and 20th century industrialists whose gifts built the Princeton campus. The reasons go beyond their race and ethnicity.

Jones is a recording artist, an influencer, and an activist whose media company focuses on self-development. Feliciano is co-founder of Clearlake Capital Group, L.P., a private equity fund, and part owner of the Chelsea soccer club in the English Premier League. *Forbes* reports his net worth as \$3.9 billion. They are Democratic Party donors (although both are registered as unaffiliated) and live in a palatial estate in Pacific Palisades, in the hills above Los Angeles. The two serve on numerous corporate, educational, and charitable boards, including Stanford University, the Apollo Theater, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, and the Susan G. Komen foundation.

They are also major philanthropists who have committed more than \$200 million so far, supporting community groups and historically Black colleges and universities, among other causes. Though their charitable foundation is officially known as the Kwanza Jones and José E. Feliciano Initiative, it has also been called the SUPERCHARGED Initiative. That word — all caps and now trademarked — is Jones’ mantra. She wrote it more than a decade ago to psych herself up, and it continues to define her personal outlook. Jones calls herself the Queen of Energy and her circle the “Kwanzaverse.”

The mantra is a series of 25 inspirational statements to get you moving, get you dreaming, get you reaching for more, she says. “They’re the words you repeat to yourself when you can’t get out of bed in the morning,” Jones writes on her website. “They’re the words you chant when you’re still working at 11:30 at night.” They’re also words that can be ordered on 12-by-18-inch posters, as well as T-shirts, hoodies, and various other



**HAPPY HALLS**

*From left, President Christopher Eisgruber '83, Kwanza Jones '93, and José E. Feliciano '94 at the 2023 ribbon-cutting for the dorms that bear the latter two's names.*

COURTESY OF KWANZA JONES '93 AND JOSÉ E. FELICIANO '94

merch. A sampling gives their flavor:

YOU ARE SUPERCHARGED.

DON'T DOUBT IT. JUST BELIEVE IT.

YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES, SO TURN IT UP.

EVEN IF THINGS SEEM TOUGH, CARRY ON.

YOU ARE ABSOLUTELY FLAWLESS.

LOOK IN THE MIRROR AND SMILE, BECAUSE IT'S TRUE.

"I think everyone should make a statement to themselves about who they are, what they want to do, and how they want to show up in the world," she says.

To a cynic, the statements might read like Norman Vincent Peale and Oprah had a baby. But Jones is not a cynic. She does not do negativity. Or ennui. (Or lower case, if she can avoid it.) Neither does Feliciano. When it comes to their charitable and investment philosophies, they say they "dream in decades" and tend to speak in alliterations.

"Our pillars are education, empowerment, entrepreneurship, and equity," Jones declares. "The vehicles through which we do a lot of the work to live those pillars are culture, community, and capital."

Far more than just living the life of the rich and famous, they share a relentless emphasis on striving, improving, doing more. Both come from relatively humble backgrounds, light years from where they sit now, but they still believe they can do better every day. So can you. And they are here to help you do it.

It has been quite a ride. Sometimes, one can't help but feel as though it's Kwanza Jones' and José Feliciano's world and the rest of us are just living in it.

OK, maybe not. But a couple hundred undergrads in New College West are.

**As fortune would have it, Jones and Feliciano Halls stand on about the same spot where Jones and Feliciano had their first date in 1994.**

The daughter of two lawyers, Jones came to Princeton from Washington, D.C. Her mother was a graduate of Bennett College, an HBCU in North Carolina to which Jones and Feliciano donated \$1.5 million in 2019. Jones majored in what was then called the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, a name that would figure into her relations with the University later on. She also ran track, specializing in the 800 meters, and made a close group of friends living in since-demolished 1942 Hall, who have remained sisters ever since.

"I remember her being fairly quiet in the beginning but always the most positive person you've ever met," says one of those friends, Dean of Admission and Financial Aid Karen Richardson '93. That positivity is obvious on Jones' *Nassau Herald* page, which leads off, in bold type, "Proud Strong Beautiful Creative Confident Optimistic Determined Dedicated Continuously Strive for more and better ... ." It closes with a crescendo: "BE WHAT YOU WANT, BUT ALWAYS BE YOU." Having that read back to her today, Jones laughs but concedes that she hasn't changed. Growing up, her parents gave her and her sister, Meta DuEwa Jones '95, weekly reading assignments, usually from books about perseverance and optimism.

"It was a given in our household that you cannot expect the



**'ALWAYS BE YOU'**

*Feliciano and Jones had their first date in 1994 on campus and return often, including for this selfie taken in 2017.*

world to be for you, so you have to make sure you were for you," Jones says.

Not to say that she couldn't find mentors. Music has always been a passion; at Princeton, she sang in the gospel choir and co-founded Culturally Yours, an all-female a cappella group dedicated to music by people of African descent. Jones says when she saw producer Quincy Jones during his visit to campus, she went up and introduced herself, remarking that they shared the same last name; he later sent her a handwritten note encouraging her to pursue her musical interests. While still an undergrad, Jones entered an amateur night competition at Harlem's Apollo Theater — and won — singing Jennifer Holiday's "And I Am Telling You I'm Not Going" from the musical *Dreamgirls*.

By contrast, Feliciano calls his own path through Princeton "bittersweet." He attended a small private school in Puerto Rico and jokes that Disney World was the only part of the American mainland he had ever seen before arriving on campus for orientation. The transition wasn't easy; engineering classes were tough and Feliciano was self-conscious about his accent. Every day, he would cross the Springdale Golf Club, he says, but not to play. It was on the route from his dorm room in Forbes College to his work-study job in the dining hall at the Graduate College.

"Eventually, I found my group, my tribe," Feliciano says. He majored in mechanical and aerospace engineering and graduated with high honors.

The couple's "meet cute" story occurred during Jones' senior

year, when Feliciano was a junior. She had injured herself and was on crutches, heading toward a meeting up campus. Feliciano offered to carry her books. They did not get serious, however, until a year later, when Jones returned for her first reunion and nearly stood him up for a date. Arriving more than an hour late, Jones suggested that they walk down to Lake Carnegie, along a path where their dormitories now stand.

"I think it's as simple as the old saying that opposites attract," suggests Alex Done '93, Feliciano's former roommate and a longtime friend of both. "They share similar values, chiefly the bonds of family, a strong work ethic, and an ethos of paying it forward." They married in 2002.

In the meantime, Jones pursued several paths. She was named Miss Baltimore and earned a degree at the Cardozo School of Law followed by a master's degree in dispute resolution from Pepperdine University. While teaching cross-cultural negotiation at NYU and working as a mediator in the New York City court system, she also pursued a singing career. Her single, "Think Again," made the Billboard Hot Dance/Club Play charts in 2011, peaking at No. 21. She has since cracked the Billboard charts eight more times.

Feliciano decided not to become an engineer, but like so many Princeton graduates of his generation went into finance instead. He was an analyst at Goldman Sachs before attending Stanford's business school. After a brief stint at a startup that failed in the dot-com bubble, he joined Tennenbaum Capital Partners. In 2006, he co-founded Clearlake Capital, which made a fortune buying up depressed assets at low prices following the 2008 financial crash.

The couple now leads a high-flying lifestyle few can imagine. In 2023, they upgraded from the \$20 million Pacific Palisades mansion they already owned to a \$50 million mansion in the same neighborhood. The six-bedroom, nine-bathroom home, which overlooks the Riviera Country Club golf course, is built into a hillside, with rooms that open to the air in good weather, a 20-foot long sculpture in the atrium, and a large infinity pool. ("[I]t appears at first glance to merely be a [sic] standard and somewhat humble for the price," *Palisades News* reported of the house.) In December 2023, they hosted a fundraiser for President Joe Biden. "Thank you for inviting me to your incredible home," Biden said in his remarks. "Whoa, I hope you won't be offended if we don't leave." Almost four years ago, Feliciano and a partner bought a stake in the Chelsea Football Club, which sold for about \$5.7 billion. He and Jones previously looked into buying several NFL teams, including the Denver Broncos, Los Angeles Chargers, and Washington Commanders.

They formed the Kwanza Jones and José E. Feliciano Initiative in 2014 to focus their charitable giving. As Anita Ortiz '93, another college friend and their longtime philanthropic adviser, notes, "The money is the easy part, right?" The harder question is, "How do you forge meaningful relationships with organizations and institutions?"

#### **You may have a best friend. But do you have a Boost Friend™?**

A Boost Friend, Jones explains, "is like one of your great, trusted friends and a trusted mentor rolled into one. Someone that's going to help elevate and boost you, may say some

things like thinking bigger, broader, helping you to be more accountable." It's a digital self-help and mentoring group. Those who sign up for the Kwanza Jones Boost Friends Community receive motivational messages from Jones herself, as well as access to online classes, workshops, and feedback sessions.

"Align with the ambitious," the website exhorts. "It's not about #GOALS, it's about #LIFE."

Boost Friends is one of several enterprises under the SUPERCHARGED umbrella, all of which promote the couple's brand and are cross-pollinated with Jones' energy and catchphrases. Other entities include Jones' media and music company and the Jones-Feliciano charitable initiative. They are headquartered in a newly renovated building in Santa Monica full of cutting-edge video and recording equipment. Employees sit in large, open workspaces, but meeting rooms have themed names taken from Jones' song titles and lyrics: Supercharged. Boosted. Ignite. Power Up. And of course, We Buildin'. Their strong Princeton connection is evidenced by the nearly half a dozen alumni who work for the Jones-Feliciano businesses in some capacity. Jones calls them a "teamily," a portmanteau of "team" and "family."

The initiative works with nonprofit and for-profit groups that align with themes of education, empowerment, entrepreneurship, and equity. Many of the couple's biggest gifts have been to institutions with which they had a connection, such as Princeton, Cardozo School of Law, Bennett College, and the Apollo Theater. Jones now sits on the Apollo's board, and she and Feliciano were prime sponsors of its 90th anniversary gala in 2024. They have also given money to a Puerto Rico hurricane relief fund, the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank, the Women's Reproductive Rights Assistance Project, PFLAG (an LGBTQ+ advocacy group), and various groups providing scholarships to disadvantaged students.

Hoping to do well by doing good, they also make what they call "strategic investments" in firms that serve underrepresented groups, particularly firms providing capital for business startups. In an interview at a conference hosted by the National Association of Investment Companies last October, Feliciano said, "Access to economic capital is a human right, critical for a nation built by immigrants."

**Their \$20 million gift to Princeton was bracketed by** campus affinity conferences. Jones, who boasts a perfect Annual Giving record, says discussions about making a much more significant donation began at the 2017 ¡Adelante Tigres! conference celebrating Latino alumni. She and Feliciano signed their agreement two years later at the Thrive conference for Black alumni.

Their gift, Jones said in an announcement statement, "demonstrates that people of color belong in the room and sit at the table as patrons and co-creators to help the University to do the work of service to humanity." They also wanted to make a mark on the landscape so future generations of Black and Latino students could feel fully part of the campus. "Now," says Feliciano, "when you look at the map [of] Princeton, you see Rockefeller. You see Forbes. You see Kwanza. You see Feliciano. I think that's important to reflect the full spectrum of excellence that not only Princeton has, but our country."



#### MARQUEE MOMENT

*Feliciano and Jones at the Apollo's 2024 spring benefit, more than 30 years after Jones first performed at the famed theater.*

Still, their relationship with the University has not been entirely smooth.

Early in the Venture Forward campaign, Jones says she made inquiries about an even bigger donation but never heard back. “I remember calling and sending emails and trying to get feedback, saying, ‘Hey, I’m really interested in [giving] a residential college. What’s involved for X, Y, and Z?’” she recounts. “No one got back to us. No one.” Despite the generosity of the gift they ultimately made, Jones says that, had the University courted them properly, they might have given even more. Princeton, she says, “left a lot on the table.”

Jones has also complained that after giving \$1 million to Annual Giving in 2018 for her 25th reunion, she was not allowed to bring Feliciano to a meeting for major donors with Eisgruber, insinuating that this was related to the color of their skin. “We were the most obvious Black and Brown people in the Faculty Room in Nassau Hall,” she wrote in an email to the president that she also shared on her website. “And we were the only ones who were told we did not belong.” Jones wrote that the incident left her “shocked, saddened, frustrated, dismayed, and outraged.”

On the other hand, there don’t seem to be any lingering hard feelings. Jones moderated a panel discussion with Eisgruber during the president’s visit to Los Angeles in January 2024. Both Jones and Feliciano attended a dinner in Princeton last October to mark the end of the Venture Forward campaign.

On at least one occasion, Jones has weighed in on University policy. In the summer of 2020, following the murder of George Floyd, Jones wrote what she called an “open love letter” to Eisgruber and Vice President for Advancement Kevin Heaney — “open” because she also posted it on her website — denouncing what she called the racist legacy of Woodrow Wilson 1879 and calling on the University to remove his name from campus buildings. “Princeton can take away his name being associated with its physical structures,” the letter said. “In so doing, Princeton would be taking a significant step toward dismantling other structures whose time has passed ... the structures of racism.” Jones said that Eisgruber called her shortly afterward to inform her that the trustees had voted to remove Wilson’s name from the School of Public and International Affairs and a residential college.

“When you’re thinking of being taken seriously at a place like Princeton, words matter,” Jones told PAW at the time. “Actions matter equally as much, and money matters. And why money matters is Princeton, like a lot of nonprofit institutions, needs the funds.”

#### In fiery remarks at the dedication of Jones and Feliciano

Halls, Michael Eric Dyson ’93, a professor at Vanderbilt University, characterized the significance of their gift. “What you see here today is diversity at its best,” Dyson declared, calling the dormitories “a lasting monument to the beautiful creativity of equity.” That was in the spring of 2023. Given the vibe shift since then, nationally and even to a certain extent at Princeton, Dyson’s talk of diversity and equity hits the ear a little differently now.

Asked if she is able to maintain her sense of optimism in the current political climate, Jones pauses. “Some days are harder than others,” she finally replies. Those may be the most downbeat words Jones has ever uttered.

Of course, she brings it right back. “If we keep doing the things that are important to us, we can stay the course, even though all around the waters are very rough. That gives me optimism, because I know I can believe in me.” Through philanthropy, investment, and motivation, Jones insists, she and Feliciano still aim to “boost” a billion lives.

“Diversity is under attack right now,” Feliciano acknowledges. “But we are made better when we see the differences, understand where those are, and work together. Because diversity breeds innovations, breeds excellence, breeds possibilities that you would never even think of.”

Jones echoes that theme of endless possibility with a story of her own. One day when they were living in New York and just getting started, she persuaded Feliciano to leave work early. Taking along a sketchpad and some colored pencils, they spent the afternoon in Central Park, walking and dreaming.

“I ended up asking a series of questions for us to think about,” she recounts. “And it wasn’t about how much money do you want to make. It was, what’s the impact we want to make? What are some of the things we want to do? Oftentimes people leave things on the table because they’re not dreaming big enough.”

No one would ever accuse them of that. **P**

MARK F. BERNSTEIN ’83 is PAW’s senior writer.

**POWERING UP**

*After graduating, Angelo Campus '16 returned home to Nevada City, California, where he started BoxPower, which provides clean energy in rural areas.*





## SMALL TOWN WONDERERS

*There may not be many Princetonians  
who've settled in rural America, but here  
are several of their stories*

BY DANNA LORCH

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDRI TAMBUNAN

**A**NGELO CAMPUS '16 LIVES IN A SMALL HOUSE at the end of a dirt road in Nevada City, California (population 3,244). Chickens peck around the yard, and he has plans to raise goats soon. He shares his homesteading dreams with his wife, Sabrina, and their 5-month-old baby, Cedar. Even though his base is just a few miles from where he grew up, Campus feels like an outsider when he tugs open the door of the local dive bar on a Friday night.

Campus chose to return home after attending Princeton for two reasons: His grandparents, who played a significant role in raising him, were aging and needed help caring for their farm and 150-year-old house. He was the only family member who could offer support. Also, he was in the process of bootstrapping his business, BoxPower, and could live cheaply on their property and ultimately, he hoped, create more jobs in his community.

As a teen, Campus washed dishes in the back of a local restaurant to pay for his expenses. He got to Princeton with the support of a guidance counselor and QuestBridge, an organization that acts as a kind of higher-education fairy godmother, pairing low-income, high-achieving students with four-year schools.

Because he came from a different background than many of his peers, Campus describes his Princeton experience as both an incredible opportunity and an “uncomfortable experience.” So uncomfortable that he contemplated dropping out before he became focused on using the University as a launchpad for his startup. Ultimately, BoxPower was a spinoff of a Princeton EPICS (Engineering Projects in Community Service) project, which Campus worked on exhaustively.

Yet when he came back home, he caught flak for leaving town to pursue an Ivy League education, with folks assuming he was now looking down on them.

“Sometime during undergrad, I realized I’m an outsider at Princeton because I come from this background, and I will now always be an outsider from my community that I come from because I went to Princeton,” Campus says.

He sees not really fitting in anywhere as the cost of leaving and coming back — but it was worth it. Campus was able to be with his grandfather until he died and is now caring for his grandmother, who is retired from working in the cafeteria of the local juvenile detention center.

Today, BoxPower has grown to more than 55 employees, half of whom live in the Nevada City area, and provides clean energy products to utility and commercial customers in rural areas.

“Just making ends meet is the norm here,” Campus says of Nevada City. Folks often bounce between restaurant gigs and work within the local cannabis industry. “Not a lot of people went to prestigious colleges, and very few of them came back.”

Even fewer of them came back and started a business. That’s because, unless it happens to be located near a booming urban center, the opportunities needed to pay for life, save for retirement, and advance professionally just aren’t always available. That’s true for many small towns around America — once thriving places that have been hit hard by mines closing, military bases or factories shuttering, or industrial jobs going elsewhere, and are now facing issues such as unemployment, food insecurity, an increase in natural disasters, and opioid addiction. Who is stepping in to offer these communities a hand, pathways to rebuild, or investment in their economic growth?

Over the years, academics, the news media, and alumni have argued over what happens when the best and brightest from small towns leave to attend Princeton and other elite institutions. Students graduate and tend to pursue the best jobs available, attaining upward mobility and sufficient financial security to pay off debt and support family members who remain home. The issue has become more acute as tech-related and high-paying jobs concentrate in urban areas.

Robert Wuthnow, a Princeton professor of sociology emeritus and author of the 2018 book *The Left Behind: Decline and Rage in Rural America*, explains the phenomenon like this:

“You’re a kid from a small town. All of a sudden you’re thrown into a place of 50,000 people. The college prides itself on recruiting students from other states and from other countries and so your friends now aren’t even from your state. Who are you going to date? Who are you going to marry? Probably somebody from another place. Of course, you’re going to move on. It might be that your job is one that you could have had back in your hometown, but by that time, you’ve kind of left your roots. That’s part of the dynamic that certainly applies to Princeton.”

PAW connected with alumni and faculty members from or living in small towns across America. A few of these towns are affluent, while others are struggling financially and have dwindling populations. Some alumni attended Princeton with a deep sense of loyalty to their roots and the single-minded purpose of bringing back skills that can strengthen their communities. Others grew up in cities but found their way to small towns, falling in love with the shared values, fresh air, and gentler pace.

**T**HE U.S. CENSUS BUREAU DEFINES A “SMALL TOWN” as an incorporated area with 5,000 residents or fewer, while a “town” has 20,000 residents or less. Altogether, between 30 million and 50 million Americans live in small towns today.

Wuthnow left a small town. He was raised in rural Kansas, and after many years at Princeton, he retired to the Washington, D.C., area. He points to the economic reality: “How many neurosurgeons do you need in a small town? How many computer scientists do you need? How many economists do you need? Not that many.”

The pattern of folks in small-town America leaving to seek higher education opportunities and not returning is nothing new, Wuthnow explains. And the term often used to describe it, “brain drain,” is insulting to those who choose to stay behind or don’t have the opportunity to leave.

“Speaking as a sociologist, I have to lay some blame on my own discipline, which was founded at the end of the 19th century by people who were generally from small towns and had moved to cities,” Wuthnow says. “There was an argument about migration that said the smart people were capable of getting out, and so they did. The smart people went to the cities and the dumb people stayed behind.” Wuthnow vehemently disagrees with that assessment.

There are reasons to choose small-town life, say some Princetonians.

Kanoa Mulling ’15 made a big deliberate circle from his hometown of Homewood, Illinois (population 19,868), to Princeton, to Princeton in Asia, to grad school at Columbia University, and back to Homewood. He’s now an English teacher in Flossmoor, Illinois (population 9,700), at the same high school where he was a student. Standing in his classroom, he points to the desk where a teacher pushed him to fall in love with writing. Now he hopes he’s that teacher to his students.

Homewood is an easy train ride from Chicago, and Mulling describes it as a “minority-majority” community. As a kid, Mulling lived for after-school baseball practices at Izaak Walton Ballpark, which he describes as a family-friendly movie set, a field that is “all lit up at night in the forest.” His dad was his team’s coach, and then Mulling in turn helped coach his little brother’s team a few years later.

“I felt really enveloped growing up here,” Mulling says. “There are some beautiful traditions.”

At Princeton, Mulling attended career fairs but wasn’t tempted by consulting firms flaunting attractive starting salaries. There weren’t any recruiters trying to persuade students to work in rural America or faculty mentors generously offering to hook them up with phone calls to colleagues in small towns.

Princeton is known for its exceptional network, but its center of gravity points to big coastal cities and the sectors that boom within their limits.

Occasionally, alumni find their way to small towns, nonetheless.

Bonnie Lieu ’06 and her husband Andrew ’06 left Manhattan for Pennington, New Jersey (population 2,840), a wholesome yet affluent spot — about 9 miles from Princeton — with a median household income of \$171,282, where the town turns out for the Fourth of July parade and a community Easter egg hunt.



### SAFE AT HOME

*Kanoa Mulling '15 fondly recalls being a kid at Izaak Walton Ballpark in Homewood, Illinois. "I felt really enveloped growing up here," he says.*

They dreamed of their three kids being able to walk around on their own and staying off devices.

"It has played out for my kids exactly as I was hoping," says Lieu, a homemaker, PTO president, and church Bible study leader.

Lieu, who previously worked as a secondary school educator with the Princeton University Preparatory Program, is one of five people in TigerNet who describe their current position as "homemaker." She says that when she goes back to Princeton and sees all the things her peers are doing, she worries they think she's "wasting" her education. Yet she feels a real sense of purpose in her volunteer work, which fills more than 12 hours a week.

"These systems — the church, the school — rely on people in the community, volunteers who are organized and on top of things, or else they can't survive," Lieu says.

From the time she was 10, Lieu's oldest child was allowed to walk to the local pool alone. "She can't make it to the pool without six people telling me that they saw her," Lieu jokes. "That's part of the small town thing. There's something special about a community where you know and see everyone."

"We have a romance with small towns," says Kathryn J. Edin, a Princeton professor of sociology and one of the nation's leading poverty researchers. "Yet small towns are struggling across the board."

Edin, who comes from a tiny town in Minnesota where she says there would be "no job" for her as an academic, co-authored the 2023 book *The Injustice of Place: Uncovering the Legacy of Poverty in America*, the result of a five-year odyssey through South Texas, the Cotton Belt, and Appalachia.

"The small towns that I wrote about are of a particular kind. They're these very disadvantaged places that have this history of resource extraction and human exploitation that you don't find elsewhere in the U.S.," Edin says.

She points to a tiny town where a pastor profiled in her book was successfully battling the local opioid epidemic on a shoestring budget. "You can do a lot of good in small towns," she says.

That's a story that would resonate with Jack Busche '19, a pastor at Grace Lutheran Church in Gwinn, Michigan (population 1,268). Busche grew up in Stratford, an agricultural town in Wisconsin where he milked cows on dairy farms during summer breaks when he wasn't a counselor at a Christian youth camp. A religious studies major, Busche found that Princeton's scholars of diverse faith traditions fueled his curiosity and ultimately led him to the seminary.

He watched as many of his peers were recruited to high-paying jobs with Fortune 500 companies instead.

"The Orange Bubble is real, if you know what I'm talking about," Busche says. "It's not even a critique of the kids who are going to the school. What are they supposed to do? The environment is shaped by the money that's all around. I think it's good that Princeton advocates for service, but just to be frank, I

think there's a disconnect between the student population and what the actual needs of working-class communities are."

Busche doesn't have generational wealth to draw upon and would make a higher salary leading an urban church — but that's not where he feels called.

"Rural places often have a lack of resources or connections to resources that urban centers have," he says. "I was drawn to serving families that I understand a little better."

Wuthnow, whose book research involved seven years of fieldwork across America, noted that a once-booming small town — lifted by a meat-processing plant or logging company — can quickly fall into unemployment and poverty when its economic mainstay shuts down.

That's the pattern Busche is trying to break in Gwinn, a community with a median household income of \$52,609. He and his wife live on land that was part of K.I. Sawyer, a U.S. Air Force base once home to 6,000 servicemen and women and their families that shuttered in 1995.

Gwinn was originally founded as a model town by a mining company in 1907. Later, when Sawyer was operating, "there



was a sense that Gwinn was part of the wider world,” Busche explains. But nowadays the town has significant problems with drug and alcohol addiction and food insecurity, as well as infrastructure challenges such as buckling roads.

People ring up the church office for help when the government doesn’t come through.

“The church is here to fill the gaps for the person who won’t qualify for rent assistance but needs something to get through the month, or their gas tank is empty and it’s just one extra bill that they can’t pay,” Busche says.

**F**OR YOLANDRA GOMEZ ’88, IT WAS NEVER ABOUT the money. From her first day on campus, she knew, “I always wanted to go home.” Born and raised on the Jicarilla Apache Nation reservation as one of 10 children, Gomez grew up just south of Dulce, New Mexico, a community of 2,141 on the reservation. Her intergenerational ranching family raised livestock outside town and lacked regular access to electricity and indoor plumbing.

“Traditionally, Apache people were very nomadic, and we were kind of like that,” Gomez says of her family. “We spent our summers traveling, following our herds of sheep and cattle.” One day she read about Princeton in a magazine and got it into her head that she would go there. The more everyone around doubted her, the harder she studied.

During her freshman year, Gomez missed a major Apache feast day, Go-Jii-Ya, and promised herself she would never again let an important cultural event slip by. After graduating

#### ‘JUST LISTEN’

*After living in the Albuquerque area, Yolandra Gomez ’88 returned to the Jicarilla Apache Nation reservation, where she works as a pediatrician and advocates for access to medical care.*

with a degree from the School of Public and International Affairs, she went home and started job hunting.

“I felt like an outsider,” she says. Potential employers would skim her résumé and ask: “Why did you go to Princeton? Why didn’t you go to a state school? What’s wrong with our schools?”

She did eventually attend the University of New Mexico School of Medicine and became a pediatrician. In the past five years, she sensed an increase in discrimination against Native Americans in the health-care system and decided to move back to the reservation after 35 years living and working in the Albuquerque area.

“Yoli’s back,” people would say when she first moved her practice to Jicarilla. Young kids, her patients, run up to her, hug her knees, and call her “Auntie.”

According to Gomez, 40% of kids on the reservation live in poverty, and families often have to drive two to three hours for their little ones to receive basic pediatric care, be seen by specialists, or be treated in a pediatric hospital. She recently wrote and received a five-year grant from the state of New Mexico to get home-visiting services for pregnant women and children under age 5.

“I’m now working on projects to create a public health department run by the tribe and setting up a data and health information repository so we can collect, analyze data, and

make our own research priorities in health care,” she says.

Gomez is a member of Princeton’s Board of Trustees and a founding member of Native Alumni of Princeton, a group that supports and strengthens Native students and alumni. She doesn’t have official numbers but insists, “Students who are enrolled in federally recognized tribes, a majority of us come home. Family is important to us. Our culture is important to us. The commitment to helping our tribal community is strong.”

She often asks tribal elders to share the parts of their Apache culture that should be taught to her young patients. They usually tell her some variation of the same thing:

“Take your children outside and tell them to listen to the sounds around them. The sound of the wind going through the different types of trees, the sound of things walking on the earth. Take your time and just listen,” she says.

In Gomez’s opinion, it’s nearly impossible to connect with the natural world and with one another to that degree in a noisy American city.

**T**HAT SENTIMENT IS ALSO WHAT DREW Karin Teague ’87 to a small community. Unlike Gomez, she lives in a town with tons of amenities available in nearby Aspen, Colorado, a playground for the 1%. Before she jumped from a fast-moving corporate train, Teague was on her way to joining them.

“I graduated in 1987 at the height of the Reagan era and all my friends at Princeton were going to Wall Street to make their millions,” she says from her kitchen table in Carbondale, Colorado, which has a population of 6,553 and killer views of a 13,000-foot-high mountain peak. She began her current work as director of the Independence Pass Foundation at 50.

After graduating from Princeton, she spent a year in New York City as a paralegal, attended UCLA School of Law starting in 1988, and then followed her peers to a corporate law firm. The Exxon Valdez oil spill brought her to Anchorage, Alaska, in 1993 as part of the team representing the multinational oil and gas company.

It was an extraordinary legal experience for a young lawyer but an even bigger life experience. From her temporary office, she could see the mountains, the icebergs floating in the bay, and moose hoofing their way through the outskirts of town. She vividly remembers flying back to Los Angeles. The plane circled the smoggy urban sprawl on its final descent and she burst into tears.

Although she loved the first chapter of her career, Teague yearned to live in nature and to no longer be fenced in by big law or the big city and to work on the other side of environmental law cases. At 30, in what she describes as “an epiphany born under the shadow of Mount Rainier,” Teague quit her job and moved to Colorado sight unseen. She practiced law locally until stepping away after the birth of her first child in 2001. She later returned to full-time work as co-founder and legal director of Public Counsel of the Rockies before transitioning to her current role.

Teague’s job involves collaborating on climate change-related scientific research, conducting wilderness restoration work to return the Independence Pass to its natural state, leading natural history outings, and maintaining trails, day use areas, and infrastructure on the pass.

Her most meaningful project involves connecting with crews of inmates on the pass as they work shoulder to shoulder on restoration. While her salary is modest compared to what she made as a lawyer, she has stayed afloat even as year-round populations ballooned and home prices skyrocketed.

“The things we do in a small town for entertainment are largely free,” she says. “We spend our time in the mountains. That can mean just putting on a pair of tennis shoes and climbing. You don’t need a lot of money to do that.”

Teague urges more Tigers to consider moving to small towns.

“The point I want to make about small-town living is that you really can make a difference at the local level.” She points to the divisiveness at the national level and says, “Focusing locally is empowering and it’s how you can escape that hopeless feeling.”

Christina Maida ’14, a recently elected local supervisor of Doylestown Township, Pennsylvania (population 17,945), finds that to be true. While taking a midday walk through the golden autumn foliage to break up eight hours of remote work as an investment operations manager at Pitcairn, she shrugs. “I had such a wonderful childhood in a small town. It’s just what I envisioned for my family.” Her kids will attend the same schools that she did, and shop in the same grocery store where they will often bump into someone they know. Her mom, who lives nearby, has popped over to watch Maida’s 4-month-old baby girl and toddler. That’s a support system that would never have been possible when Maida and her husband lived in New York City, and she worked longer hours at a job she describes as “a finance meat grinder.”

She walks past the railroad tracks that can get her to Philadelphia, the nearest major city, in less than 90 minutes, and yet Doylestown feels like a world away. “Shortly after the pandemic, we moved back down to Pennsylvania. I got a job that afforded me a lot more of a work-life balance, and I gained some perspective after my first child. I really just wanted to start giving back meaningfully,” she says. So she ran for local supervisor and won in November.

Her platform focused on affordability and giving younger voters a voice.

“We don’t have a lot of ethnic diversity, but we have a lot of socioeconomic diversity,” she explains. People are getting priced out. Maida’s biggest concern is that her town is becoming increasingly unaffordable, especially for those who want to own property.

Because Princeton is just an hour away, she wasn’t the only one from her town to attend the University, or even to have played on the field hockey team. But she did get a few snide remarks about her big city ways when she moved back years later.

Maida acknowledges that there can be a disconnect between people who live in small towns and those in big cities, but, she says, “I think you can still have a lot of common ground as it relates to things like your social and moral values.

“There were some people who said, ‘You’re bringing your New York City politics to Doylestown.’” She smiled and replied, “No. I’m bringing my Doylestown politics back to Doylestown.” ■

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DANNA LORCH is a freelance higher education writer and journalist based in Boston.



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# PRINCETONIANS

ALUMNI STORIES AND PERSPECTIVES



## GARDEN GURU

Kevin Zhang '16's interest in carnivorous plants blossomed in the third grade during a visit to a plant nursery with his father. Zhang had a rough start as a plant parent; he estimates he killed his first 10 Venus flytraps before discovering that he was giving them the wrong water. He brought his horticultural experience to Princeton, where he served as president of the Princeton University Botany Club and participated in the Princeton Garden Project. In between graduating from Princeton with a degree in molecular biology and earning a combined M.D./Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania, Zhang established the nonprofit Mid-Atlantic Carnivorous Plant Society (MACPS) in 2017. In October, MACPS held its first plant show, where more than 650 carnivorous plant enthusiasts and newbies mingled at Haverford College. Zhang is pictured inside his greenhouse with a variegated *Nepenthes ampullaria*.

KYLE KIELINSKI



CLAUDIA PEIRANO \*01

# Making Argentina's Forests Safer: 'I Need the Trees'

BY JIMIN KANG '21

**T**HE FIRST TIME Claudia Peirano \*01 left her native Argentina for the United States, in 1988, she spent a lot of her days working at a McDonald's in Columbia, Missouri.

"I was an accountant and manager at a bank," she says of her prior life in Buenos Aires, "but I couldn't work like that in the U.S. So, McDonald's was a way to work flexibly with my son and with my husband doing his Ph.D."

Within three months, Peirano — who had worked in agribusiness financing in Argentina — went from being a crew member to a shift manager at her local restaurant. She also befriended a frequent customer whose half-Uruguayan daughter also worked at McDonald's. The customer,

Michael Cook, was a University of Missouri professor who had just launched a new master's program in agricultural economics; he suggested Peirano apply to the program, which she did — and got in.

She graduated from the program in 1992. Then, after nine years at a think tank, she was invited to lead the Argentine Forestry Association (AFOA) as its executive director, a role she has now occupied across two decades, five Argentine presidencies, and dozens of policies that have worked to make Argentina's forestry sector safer, greener, and less susceptible to extreme weather events due to climate change.

"Well, you know — it's serendipity," she says, smiling, on a hot afternoon

while sitting beside a lake in Buenos Aires. "Things go that way."

When asked what location in the city best represented her line of work, Peirano suggested meeting at one of the city's beloved *Bosques de Palermo*: a stretch of parks in the Palermo neighborhood — often likened in size and atmosphere to New York's Central Park — that stud the city's eastern border with the Río de la Plata estuary. The place reminded her, she said, of her hometown in Paraná, where her childhood among seven siblings revolved around the Paraná River.

"I need nature, I need the trees," she says. Especially in a busy city such as Buenos Aires, "a person cannot be without a good environment around them." But it is one thing to write and research the environment, and another to act as its advocate. While working at an Argentine think tank after returning from Missouri, Peirano grew frustrated with the amount of writing she was doing relative to the degree of acting.

"How do you bring closer what you say, what you study, and the papers you write

GASTON ZILBERMAN

with political decisions?” she wondered, before quickly realizing: “Probably what I need to do is to write less and do more.”

A serendipitous encounter with an advertisement in *The Economist* led her to Princeton in 2000, where Peirano pursued a master’s in public policy at the School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA). Her return to America was a fruitful and memorable one: Highlights include meeting Bill Clinton when he came to visit Princeton; working with Nobel Prize-winning economist Paul Krugman; and befriending classmates such as Kevin Sullivan ’01, who would go on to become the deputy chief of mission at the United States embassy in Argentina.

**To serve as an intermediary between** the private sector and the government in relation to Argentina’s forests is not a job for the weak. Established in 1946, AFOA is a consortium composed of hundreds of businesses, students, professionals, and industry experts who research, work, and trade in all things forest-related, including paper production, furniture, construction, and carbon markets. There are more than 1 million hectares of managed forests in Argentina, where over 100,000 people are employed by a forestry sector that in 2022 exported about \$328 million worth of wood products. (Argentinian forests are, compared to the global average, incredibly productive: A pine tree that takes about 60 years to grow in Finland or Canada takes 16 years in northern Argentina due to the region’s climate and soil quality, Peirano explains.)

Yet the industry has struggled with a lack of government-supported infrastructure, as well as regional conflicts with neighbors such as Uruguay. In 2004, when Argentina and Uruguay fell into a dispute over the construction of pulp mills along the Rio Uruguay, Peirano’s team worked to educate the public and combat misleading information on the environmental effects of the project.

“The government has changed a lot in 20 years, but I’ve been the same,” she says. “I’ve been responsible for going to the new minister and saying, ‘OK, we are here. Let’s start here. Let’s not start at zero again.’”

The election of Javier Milei in 2023



**“The government has changed a lot in 20 years, but I’ve been the same. I’ve been responsible for going to the new minister and saying, ‘OK, we are here. Let’s start here. Let’s not start at zero again.’”**

— CLAUDIA PEIRANO ’01

Executive director,  
Argentine Forestry Association

has sparked a fresh batch of challenges for not just Peirano but those who work in the environmental sector writ large. Milei, who has significantly downsized the nation’s environment ministry under austerity measures, has previously described climate change as “a socialist lie.”

For Peirano, however, climate change is not only an unmistakable truth but a major policy issue on which AFOA, under her leadership, has seen impressive results. Of the over 500,000 hectares of forests that were burned by a massive wildfire in Argentina’s Corrientes region in 2022, less than 2% of forests protected under AFOA’s fire management policies were affected, Peirano said. AFOA’s “biodiversity monitor” training programs have reached Indigenous communities such as the Mbyá Guaraní in Misiones, where young people are being trained to translate ancestral environmental

knowledge into jobs and sustainable forestry techniques.

Beyond leading initiatives to combat climate change, one of Peirano’s biggest achievements has been significantly improving labor safety among forestry workers, who have historically struggled with poor working conditions. During the first six years of Peirano’s leadership, the incidence rate of forest accidents — from potentially dangerous activities like felling trees and dressing timber — was halved with the introduction of an industry-wide labor competency program and worker safety evaluations that have rendered forestry work less informal and better protected.

“My job is to identify the best practices in the sector,” Peirano says. “We see how they work, and we translate these into general norms that we use to evaluate working conditions.”

This October, AFOA was recognized by the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization for modeling best practices and innovative approaches relating to forestry, which Peirano considers “the best recognition that we could’ve aspired for.” Though Peirano, now 66, plans to retire in the next couple of years, she remains optimistic and motivated about the role she has played in her country over the past two decades. “What makes me happiest is that I’ve always done what I wanted to do,” she says of her career to date. “This doesn’t mean I didn’t face any resistance, but I could always be honest with myself and do the things that I believed in.” **P**



JOE KRAKORA '76

# From Public Defender to Clemency Mentor

BY MARK F. BERNSTEIN '83

**I**N JUNE 2024, as he approached the end of his second and final term in office, New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy issued an executive order expediting the state's large backlog of clemency cases. Recognizing that they would need additional manpower, state officials responsible for implementing that order turned to Princeton's School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA) and several dozen students for help.

Starting in the spring of 2025, more than 50 Princeton students, ranging from freshmen to graduate students, have worked as clemency fellows under the supervision of the SPIA in New Jersey initiative. The initiative seeks to engage

the school with public policy issues in Princeton's backyard. The clemency program also came along at a convenient

**"The student body here is much more social justice minded. They won't call it the 'criminal justice system' anymore. They call it the 'criminal legal system,' because they don't think there's any justice in it."**

— JOE KRAKORA '76

time for Joe Krakora '76, who is overseeing the students. Krakora retired in 2024 after a career as New Jersey's longest-serving public defender.

Murphy's executive order established a Clemency Advisory Board to review the applications of incarcerated individuals. It prioritized four types of cases for expedited consideration: victims of domestic violence who were convicted of a crime against the perpetrator of that violence; those who declined a plea deal, were convicted at trial, and received a much longer sentence as a consequence; those serving time for an offense that is no longer a crime; and those serving time for an offense that now carries a lesser penalty.

After an initial screening by the American Civil Liberties Union and the public defender's office, possible clemency cases were referred to Princeton. Working in pairs under Krakora's supervision, students interviewed incarcerated individuals via video conference, reviewed their files, and then, if they concluded that the person deserved clemency, wrote a three- to five-page supporting legal memorandum to accompany the application. The students also helped clemency applicants polish their personal statements, collected reference letters from family members and, if available, obtained letters from prospective employers who could vouch that they would have a job if released.

Krakora says he was particularly impressed by the quality of the students' writing. "I have to say, some of what they produced was as good or better than lawyers would."

After all the paperwork was assembled, applications were filed with the state clemency board, which makes recommendations to the governor. Through the end of November, Murphy had granted seven clemency petitions worked on by Krakora's students, and Krakora says he hopes more will be granted before Murphy leaves office on Jan. 20. Incoming Gov. Mikie Sherrill has not indicated whether she will continue the initiative.

COURTESY OF JOE KRAKORA '76

The project proved attractive to the current generation of students, who are increasingly interested in issues such as mass incarceration and penal reform, Krakora notes.

“The student body here is much more social justice minded. They won’t call it the ‘criminal justice system’ anymore. They call it the ‘criminal legal system,’ because they don’t think there’s any justice in it,” he says. “My hope is that some of the clients get their petitions granted because the students got pretty invested in their cases.”

Krakora, who is serving as a faculty fellow with SPIA in New Jersey and is a SPIA lecturer this semester, worked as a public defender for 34 years. From 2011 to 2024, he served as the state’s chief public defender. In 2017, he was one of the key players in negotiating a change in New Jersey law doing away with cash bail. (See “How New Jersey Made a Bail Breakthrough,” PAW, Nov. 24, 2020.)

Anastasia Mann, a SPIA lecturer and founding director of SPIA in New Jersey, notes that because many Princeton undergraduates come from New Jersey, issues of local policy might be particularly relevant to them.

“We have an obligation to be engaged in these pressing questions,” Mann says. “So many of the kids are keen to be involved in real-world problems.”

In addition to supervising the clemency project, Krakora shared some of his long experiences as a guest lecturer in several classes, advised instructors setting up a post-conviction representation clinic, and led a panel for students interested in exploring careers in public interest law. For the current academic year, Krakora will be advising students on two types of cases that are part of what he calls a “second chance” project. The first will help people listed as registered sex offenders have their names removed from the registry after at least a 15-year period of no offenses. The second will help people on parole be released from further parole obligations after seven years without any violations. ■

PRINCETON  
ALUMNI WEEKLY

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KAY GAYNER '86

# Creating an Inclusive Space for Children to Dance

BY JACLYN GREENBERG

**I**N KAY GAYNER'S JUNIOR PAPER at Princeton, she designed a participatory arts program for children with Down syndrome who partnered with typically developing children. She had been inspired by a mother in her hometown who was an advocate for her son with Down syndrome.

"[The mother], as part of her advocacy for her son, was beginning to run arts programs and had written a book, I think, about visual arts and the way that could be used for what we would now call inclusive learning opportunities," says Gayner. During her time at Princeton, Gayner also performed in the Triangle Club and Theatre Intime, choreographed annual dance concerts, and sang with the Katzenjammers.

After graduation, Gayner moved to New York City with friends from college. "I was all ready to do the auditioning thing and go be a performer," she says. "But I'm from a very small town in Georgia and realized that it was too nerve-racking for me to rely just on auditions and that I needed some kind of steady source of income."

She answered an ad to work at the National Dance Institute (NDI), a nonprofit arts education organization, founded by Jacques d'Amboise, that brings children together through inclusive dance and music programs.

"Part of the reason the ad resonated so much with me is because I personally feel like the arts saved my life, changed me, helped me cope as a kid," says Gayner. She worked as d'Amboise's assistant for years, began teaching for NDI in 2000, and in 2014, served as co-creator and co-founder of the Dancers Realize Excellence through Arts and Movement (DREAM) Project, an inclusive dance program where children with

**"Inclusion elevates everyone, not as a sentimental concept, but as a rigorous philosophical study of what it is to be human."**

— KAY GAYNER '86

Co-creator and co-founder, DREAM Project



GAYNER '86

a wide range of physical, intellectual, developmental, and neurodivergent disabilities dance with children without disabilities.

**The focus of the DREAM Project is** on partnership, and the rehearsals are conducted in a way that teaches kids how to communicate and connect. For example, they might introduce a step that starts seated and glides through space but then break it down and teach the kids how to make a version of the dance that highlights the skills of each partnership. "They start to understand how to make, partnership by partnership, their own versions of the dance," says Gayner.

The DREAM Project performances are held in front of a public audience, and Gayner says one of the goals is to teach the children, as well as the audience, that performances can look different. Each dance "is now a piece of choreography that maybe the audience has never seen before, but that really comes out of the heart and spirit and unique abilities of every single person in the room," Gayner says. "And the point is to celebrate that."

"There is a high level of artistic integrity to the performances," she adds. "But it comes out of this process of really understanding many things. One is [that] inclusion elevates everyone, not as a sentimental concept, but as a rigorous philosophical study of what it is to be human." **P**

## NOMINATE OTHER INSPIRING ALUMNI.

This story is part of a series highlighting the stories of alumni doing inspiring work. To nominate others, please email your ideas to [paw@princeton.edu](mailto:paw@princeton.edu).

# CLASS NOTES

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# MEMORIALS



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### THE CLASS OF 1946

#### LLOYD STEPHEN RIFORD JR. '46

Steve was a New York State legislator who served eight terms as an assemblyman and senator representing five counties in central New York. He died July 20, 2025, in Kihei, Maui, Hawaii, at 101 years old.



A World War II veteran who served as an ambulance driver in the American Field Service from 1942 to 1945 in the Middle East, North Africa, Sicily, Italy, France, and Germany, he was also a leap year baby and had only 25 actual birthdays.

Steve attended a one-room school in Half Acre, N.Y., from kindergarten to eighth grade. He graduated from Phillips Exeter Academy and Princeton, with graduate work at Cornell and Dartmouth.

He was active in community and service organizations and served on several boards, including as chairman of the Cayuga County (N.Y.) planning board. He also served as vice chairman of the Central N.Y. Regional Planning Board; on the Seymour Library Board of Trustees, the Auburn, N.Y., YMCA board of directors, and the Wells College (N.Y.) Board of Trustees, and as deacon of Keawala'i Congregational Church in Kihei, Maui. He received several awards and recognitions over his many years of constituent and community service.

Steve was married for 50 years to Susan Crawford Riford, who died in 1997. He married Joan Chayka Riford in 1999. She died in 2021.

Steve is survived by children Suzanne Riford Toman, Lloyd, and Thomas; and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

### THE CLASS OF 1948

#### BISSELL JENKINS MIDDLETON '48

Jenks died June 15, 2025, at age 98.

Born in Charleston, S.C., Jenks grew up in Rochester before graduating from Phillips Exeter Academy and then entering Princeton. He graduated *summa cum laude* and Phi Beta Kappa from the School of Public and International Affairs. He was a cheerleader and a member of Cottage Club. Jenks served in Japan, the Philippines,



Germany, and the Netherlands while in the U.S. Maritime Service in 1945-46.

After earning his J.D. at Harvard in 1952, Jenks had a six-decade career practicing law, which involved both private practice in New York and with the Civil Division of the U.S. Department of Justice. He served as a vice president of the Import-Export Bank of the United States before concluding his career with 25 years of private practice in Washington, D.C., focusing on international trade, investment, and finance law. He retired in 1994.

Jenks' ties to Princeton were deep: Two brothers — E.W. Middleton '46 and J.G. Middleton '53 — attended, as did two cousins — Thomas H. Middleton '48 and Augustus L. Middleton '52. Jenks served as class treasurer and volunteered for several class and University activities. In our 50th-reunion yearbook, he said: "Princeton provided a solid educational base for career and living and established lifelong friendships and interests."

Jenks and his wife, Lydia, who married in 1964, spent most of their married lives in Great Falls, Va. Lydia died in 2004. He is survived by his two daughters, Lydia and Jennifer; three grandsons; and two great-grandsons.

### THE CLASS OF 1954

#### FABYAN COURT MATHEY '54

Court died March 26, 2025.

He prepared at White Plains High School



and Hotchkiss, where he was active in soccer, dramatics, and glee club. He majored in chemical engineering, joined Dial Lodge, sang in the freshman Glee Club, and played freshman soccer. He left the University after his junior year and served in the Army from 1954 to 1956. He graduated from the University of Arkansas in 1957 with a mechanical engineering degree as Outstanding ME Graduate and earned an MBA in management.

Court married Gail O'Rear in 1958 and worked for Peat Marwick Mitchell in Dallas and then for the *Dallas Times Herald*. He

also worked for two nonprofit agencies, the Deaf Action Center of Dallas and the Good Shepherd Community Daycare Center, where he was president.

A dedicated volunteer, he served as a Scoutmaster, board president of his UU Village Church, and gave time to CASA, AARP, and other local groups. He enjoyed camping, cycling, swimming, golf, singing, acting, and domestic and international travel.

He was predeceased by his father, Cecil Fabyan Mathey 1924; his first wife, Gail; and his second wife, Lynn and their son Rob. His wife Shirley died May 9, 2025. Court is survived by his son F. Courtenay II; daughter-in-law Karen Mathey; stepson Robert Brackett; four grandchildren; and several great-grandchildren.

### THE CLASS OF 1955

#### JOHN P. WILSON '55

Jack died Sept. 19, 2025, at his home overlooking San Francisco Bay in Greenbrae, Calif.



He attended Mercersburg Academy. At Princeton, he studied at the Woodrow Wilson School and joined Tiger Inn. His sports activities included freshman crew and IAA football and basketball. Jack served on Orange Key and was on the staff of the *Bric-a-Brac*. His senior year roommates were his identical twin brother Dick, Hayes Walker, and Sam Trump.

Jack joined the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, then was drafted and volunteered for the Navy. He went to Monterey Language School, where he learned Polish and was sent to the National Security Agency. He then graduated from Harvard Law School, where he became an assistant dean of admissions. He helped in the first major effort to bring Black students north to law school from segregated Southern colleges. Boston University lured him to become associate dean and director of the Legal Studies Institute. He set up and administered inner-city clinical programs, directed the Center for Law and Health Sciences, and taught courses and seminars.

Jack authored a book on the rights of adolescents in the mental health system. He also served on several boards, served as a consultant to a national commission, arbitrated cases for two national arbitration organizations, and participated part time with several dozen affiliates of local and state government.

Right up to the end Jack firmly enjoyed his family, groups of friends, travel, local restaurants, samples of chardonnay, and the fine scenery nearby.

Jack was predeceased by his first wife,

Elizabeth; his brother Buddy, and his sisters Peggy, Pat, and Cicely. He is survived by his wife, Tedi Christensen; children David, Lee '81, and Cicely; his twin brother Dick; three grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

### THE CLASS OF 1957

#### JAMES F. HAZEN '57

Jim died July 18, 2025, in Las Vegas.

He came to Princeton from Upper Arlington High School in Columbus, Ohio. Jim majored in English, worked on *The Daily Princetonian*, was a member of Whig-Clio, and joined Key & Seal Club. He was on the club bicker committee, served as club treasurer, and played intramural football, squash, and softball. Senior year he roomed with Dale Busch, Jim Canniffe, Charlie Cookson, Ed Katz, Norm Rousseau, and Jim Youngelson. In our 10th-reunion yearbook he observed that at college he became interested in many subjects of which he was not aware of when he arrived.

An ROTC student, Jim served at Fort Sill and Fort Knox after graduation, attaining the rank of first lieutenant. Thereafter he obtained his Ph.D. in English at the University of Wisconsin and married a Swarthmore alumna and fellow Ph.D., Lynn Shuford. They had two children, Charles and Jessica. Jim then taught three years at Yale, became an assistant professor at the St. Louis University, and finally settled at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. He spent the rest of his career there, becoming a full professor and head of the English department, while publishing numerous articles and books about Victorian authors, as well as some of his own poetry and short stories. He taught both freshman and graduate students with zest.

Jim believed in the joys and love that came from family and friends, from both classical and popular music, and from the way that Princeton and his classmates enriched his life.

Jim was predeceased by his wife, Lynn. He is survived by his two children and two grandchildren.

### THE CLASS OF 1959

#### ROBERT M. ADAMS '59

Bob, one of eight ordained ministers in our class, died April 16, 2024, in Montgomery, N.J.



Born in Philadelphia, Bob graduated from East High School in Rochester, N.Y., where he was named a Regents Scholar. At

Princeton, he majored in philosophy and was a member of Prospect Club, the Student Christian Association, the Westminster Foundation, Phi Beta Kappa, and recipient

of the Stinnecke Prize for the highest marks on a rigorous three-hour exam in Greek and Latin. He went on to study at Oxford, obtaining an M.A. in theology, then to Princeton Theological Seminary, from which he received a divinity degree in 1962. He completed his academic education with a Ph.D. in philosophy from Cornell in 1969, where he met wife-to-be, Marilyn McCord, who was also studying for the ministry.

Both Bob and Marilyn were educators and publishers, holding sequential faculty positions at the University of Michigan, UCLA, and Yale (where Bob helped to transform a struggling philosophy department into one of the 10 foremost in the world), then to Oxford before taking joint positions at the University of North Carolina and then at Rutgers.

Marilyn succumbed to pancreatic cancer two years after they retired in 2017. Bob is survived by a niece, a nephew, and several great-nieces and great-nephews.

#### WILLIAM H. BUCHANAN JR. '59

Bill, a former president of our class, died April 21, 2025.



Born in Summit, N.J., he graduated from Pingry School in 1955, where he was involved in class government and multiple sports. At Princeton, he was on the Freshman Council and class secretary sophomore year. He majored in the Woodrow Wilson School and was a member of Cap and Gown. His roommates were Huddleston, Moore, C.M. Smith, Ryan, and D.E. Stewart.

Following Princeton, Bill enlisted in the Marine Corps for six months, then went on to Harvard Law School. His first job with Shearman & Sterling extended until 1970, when he joined Reuben H. Donnelley as general counsel. He was later promoted to its parent company, Dun & Bradstreet, as vice president, secretary, and associate general counsel. He retired in 1997, then joined Spencer Trask, focusing on startups.

Throughout his life, Bill was involved in Princeton and community activities. He was president of the board of the Friends of the Library in Naples, Fla.; a member of the Princeton Alumni Council; on the boards of the Princeton clubs of Southwest Florida and New Canaan; and vice president of the Princeton Club of NYC, to name only a few.

Bill enjoyed tennis, squash, and golf and was noted for his quick wit, infectious laugh, and playful sense of humor.

He survived by his wife, Ellie; his daughters Diana and Jessica; three grandchildren; and his sister, Wendy.

#### H. CALVIN COOK JR. '59

Calvin died Sept. 30, 2024, in New Bedford, Mass.

Born in Steubenville and raised in Ohio, he graduated from Choate in 1954, then studied in England Bishop's Stortford College on an exchange student fellowship, entering Princeton in the fall of 1955. As a freshman he was a member of the golf team that upended Yale. As a sophomore he joined Campus Club. Due to illnesses and injuries, he left Princeton in the winter of his sophomore year and enrolled at Clark University, graduating in 1963. Nevertheless, he maintained a strong fondness for the orange and black, serving as Princeton's official delegate at the inauguration of the president of Southeastern Massachusetts University in 1985.

Calvin was interested in public service and continued his graduate work in that field. He earned a master's degree in city planning at Yale in 1965 and returned for advanced work at Yale's School of Forestry and Environmental Studies in 1971. He completed an academic triple crown by going to Harvard the next year to its Graduate School of Design. He loved his work as town planner of Dartmouth and Needham, Mass., focusing on the preservation of open spaces.

Calvin was an avid golfer. He was a champion at the Kittansett Golf Club in Marion, Mass., a qualifier for the Massachusetts State Amateur Championship, and a medalist for the state mixed-pair championship.

Calvin is survived by his wife of 60 years, Annette. His son, Christopher, predeceased him.

#### G. RAYMOND EMPSON III '59

Ray died April 29, 2025, in Stamford, Conn. He was 87.



Born in Memphis, Ray came to Princeton from Nichols School, where he played football and basketball, captained the track team and, in 2023, was inducted into the Nichols School Athletic Hall of Fame.

He continued his outstanding athletic career at Princeton, where he ran winter and spring track and played three years of varsity football as a tailback. Dubbed the "Splendid Splinter," he never weighed more than 148 pounds on the varsity football team. He majored in English literature, was a member of the Keycept Steering Committee, the Honor Committee, and a Chapel deacon. A member of Ivy Club, he served as vice president his senior year when he roomed with Ford, Heyd, and Hubbell.

Following Princeton, Ray attended Harvard Law School. His professional career was multifaceted, beginning in law and culminating in years of public-minded service at nonprofits: president

of Keep America Beautiful, chairman of the Arbor Day Foundation, and president of SeriousFun Children's Network. In his limited spare time, he enjoyed tennis and golf, the occasional jog, and travel, particularly to Sun Valley.

He is survived by his wife of 46 years, Gay; Josh '94, his son from his first marriage; Rip, his son with Gay; two grandchildren; his brother Walter; and his daughter-in-law.

#### FRANCIS C. EVANS '59

Born on Staten Island, Fran graduated at the age of 16 from New Dorp High School,



where he was president of the discussion club and manager of the football team. At Princeton, he majored in biology, served as a Keyceptor, belonged

to the Pre-Med Society, managed the 150-pound football team, and ate at Prospect Club. Following graduation he went to Harvard Medical School. An internship and residency in general surgery at Boston City Hospital preceded a residency in surgery at Hartford Hospital, followed by a year in Chu Lai Vietnam with the 27th Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (27th MASH). Discharged as a major, he entered private practice in Ticonderoga, N.Y., then on to New London (N.H.) Hospital, where he was chief of surgery from 1976 to 1998.

Fran's wife, Karen, died in 1996. In 1998, he married a longtime friend, Susan Foster, and relocated to Atlanta, Ga., where Fran continued his practice, broadening it by serving as an expert witness on legal cases. In retirement the couple moved to Palm Coast, Fla.

A travel enthusiast, a Red Sox superfan, a theater aficionado, and recipient of dozens of awards and recognitions for his contributions to the general surgery field, Fran died May 14, 2025. He survived by Susan and his three children, Susan, Amy, and David.

#### ROBERT J. LIVINGSTON '59

Skip died March 1, 2024, in Tallahassee, Fla., of Lewy body dementia.



Born in Jersey City and raised in Ridgewood, N.J., Skip was valedictorian of his class at Ridgewood High School. At Princeton, he graduated *cum laude*

with an A.B. in religion, rowed on freshman crew, played varsity rugby, and ate at Cap and Gown. Senior year he roomed with Al Bueno, Dick Dortzbach, Ray Fite, Fred Schrader, Bob Shepardson, and Doug Stewart.

Skip discovered the world of marine biology while traveling post-Princeton in France, and to overcome his lack of

background in the natural sciences took on graduate work in biology at Columbia and Scripps Institution of Oceanography, leading to a M.S. and Ph.D. in marine biology from the Institute of Marine Science at the University of Miami.

Skip then joined the department of biological sciences at Florida State in Tallahassee and taught for 35 years, retiring as a professor emeritus. He was elected as Florida scientist of the year by the Museum of Science and Industry in Tampa. His academic specialty focused on the ecology of aquatic systems (lakes, rivers, oceans), and he authored more than 150 publications and five books. Among a host of public service activities, he helped free Puerto Rico's Vieques island of U.S. Navy weapons debris.

Skip is survived by his wife of 62 years, Marilyn; four children; and one grandchild.

#### THE CLASS OF 1961

##### ADRIAN A. COLLEY '61

Known to us as "Aids," Adrian died April 24, 2025.



Born in San Francisco, he grew up in Lancaster County, Pa., and Princeton. He came to us from Taft School. At Princeton, he majored in history, graduated *summa cum laude*, ate at Cottage Club, played varsity soccer and ran track, was a member of Whig-Clio, the Orange Key and the Keycept Program, and managed the Princeton U.G.C. charter flights out of New York City. His senior thesis was on Pierre Laval and the Popular Front in France before the Nazi invasion. His senior year roommates were Chip Hatch, Alex Forrester, Fred Sheehan, Curtis Campaigne, and Sam Rea.

After Princeton Adrian earned a J.D. and MBA at Columbia. His law career included private practice in New York and Oman as well as general counsel with Chevron and Gulf Oil. He traveled extensively from offices in the Bay Area and London to Europe and the Middle East.

Adrian served as a judge pro tem in the San Francisco Superior Court for several years prior to his passing.

He is survived by his widow and partner of 40 years, Annella Wynyard; and his brother David.

##### DOUGLAS F. GREER '61

Doug died June 12, 2025, in Washington, D.C., after a long struggle with a pulmonary illness.

Born in Charleston, S.C., he grew up in a military family and came to us from a high school in Poitiers, France. At Princeton, he was in Triangle and Theatre Intime and rowed freshman heavies. He took his meals



at Dial and Wilson Lodge and roomed with Dan Bryant.

After Princeton Doug earned a medical degree at the College of Physicians & Surgeons at Columbia, then interned at Roosevelt Hospital and the Harkness Eye Institute. After service in the Navy as a ship's doctor, he embarked on a long career in Washington in solo private practice as an ophthalmologist and ophthalmic surgeon — which explains his email address, shortsight@aol.com. He was noted in his obituary as a physician "who truly listened, understood, and healed."

Avocationally, Doug was a renaissance man, performing on violin with the American University Orchestra and engaging in the performing arts, novel-writing, tennis, skiing, and much more. In his later years he overcame cancer and a stroke.

Doug is survived by his wife of 45 years, Annette; daughter Christianne '06; son Clifton; and two grandsons.

##### FRANCIS A. TOWNE '61

Frank died June 15, 2025.

A son of the Class of 1926, he was born



and raised in Verona, N.J., and came to Princeton from Verona High School. Frank majored in chemistry and went on to earn a master's degree in chemistry at

Purdue University. He was a member of the Savoyards, took his meals at Court Club, and roomed with David Johnston.

After Princeton and a stint with Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., Frank dedicated the next four decades of his life to the Peddie School in Hightstown, N.J., where he taught chemistry and found a deep passion for the performing arts. After retiring he lived in nearby Manasquan for 20 years before moving to Applewood Village in Freehold Township, where he immersed himself in the performing arts, especially his lifelong love of music as a performer and singer.

Frank was predeceased by his partner, Jeffrey Holcombe. He is survived by a brother, George Towne.

##### ROBERT B. WILKINSON '61

Bob died Oct. 26, 2024, in San Diego, Calif.

Born in Camden, N.J., he came to us



from Vineland High School. At Princeton, he majored in chemical engineering, participated in track for two years, played IAA sports, and was an NROTC midshipman,

which foreshadowed his long career in the Navy. He took his meals at Cloister Inn and roomed with Damon Runyan and Ed Zschau

in Patton Hall.

Following Princeton, Bob entered the Navy's Submarine Service and retired as a captain after 27 years of service. Along the way he earned a master's degree in mathematics at Purdue University. After retiring from the Navy, he worked for the Department of Energy in environmental cleanup work and had leadership assignments with Allied Technology Group, Duke Engineering, and Perkin-Elmer. Roomie Ed Zschau observed that "Bob's contributions to the energy field after his military retirement are significant and inspiring." As persons of deep faith, he and his wife of 63 years, Judy, were deeply involved in their churches wherever they lived.

Bob is survived by Judy; daughters Beth '84 and Lisa; and their families, which include six grandchildren.

### THE CLASS OF 1962

#### MATTHEW J. MILLER '62

Matt died May 29, 2025.

He came to us from Columbia High School in Maplewood, N.J. He majored in philosophy, although he had a mechanically oriented mind. Matt roomed with Tom Corwin, Jim Robinson, and Jim Newman freshman year, joined Dial, and later lived in singles.

After graduation, he earned a master's degree in philosophy at Tufts while his longterm girlfriend, Marjorie Cantor, finished her studies at Brandeis. Although he was admitted to the Ph.D. program at Penn, plans changed. Given that his new wife Marjorie was expecting a child, he "temporarily managed" the paint department for a family business in Brooklyn for 30 years.

Eventually, Marjorie earned a Ph.D. and became a prominent philosophy professor. The couple moved to Shanghai when she won a Fulbright. Matt became a self-taught computer network person after reading technical manuals. He set up three LANs for State Department offices in China, staying an extra year to complete the work.

After returning home, Matt built and managed a network for New York City's Department of Consumer Affairs, joining Marjorie in Seoul on another Fulbright.

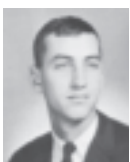
Matt is survived by Marjorie, and by daughters Lisa Hotung and Catherine Miller-Wilson.

### THE CLASS OF 1965

#### JOHN M. TRUOG '65

John died March 26, 2024, in Seattle.

He grew up in Southern California, in the towns of La Jolla and Rancho Santa Fe. He came to Princeton after attending the



Thacher School in Ojai, Calif., where he played on the tennis and basketball teams.

At Princeton, John majored in English and wrote his senior thesis on "Archetypal Relationships of Motherhood in Greek and Modern Drama." He joined Campus Club but found that the Prospect Street scene and club atmosphere were not what he was looking for in his Princeton social life, so he decided to go independent. Junior and senior years John lived in Little Hall, just a few steps from the main entrance to Dillon Gym. That gave him ready access to the building where Princeton's Bradley-led basketball glory days were being played out before the eyes of all '65ers. John rarely missed a game at Dillon.

After graduating from Princeton, he served in the Coast Guard Reserve in San Diego. In 1976, John moved with his wife and two children to Seattle. He became an established art dealer in Seattle's Pioneer Square neighborhood, where he shared treasures he found throughout his travels. His varied collections included Japanese woodblock prints, Edward Curtis photogravures, and delicate, hand-painted antique boxes.

John is survived by his two children, Michael John Truog and Laura Truog Fierce; grandchildren Vinh Le-Truog and Hanh Le-Truog; and by ex-spouses Judith Platt and Darlene Albright.

### THE CLASS OF 1966

#### DAVID ALLAN HORWICH '66

Allan died July 1, 2025, after a five-month battle with pancreatic cancer.



He came to Princeton from Westside High School, in Omaha, where he won the Brandeis Award and was a member of the state championship mathematics team. At Princeton, he majored in philosophy and wrote his senior thesis on religious language. He was a member of the Woodrow Wilson Society. Roommates included John Godich, Ken Boudwin, and Dave Garlow.

After graduation, Allan enrolled in the University of Chicago Law School, earning his J.D. degree in 1969. He then joined the Chicago law firm Schiff Hardin & Waite (now known as ArentFox Schiff), where he worked until retiring in 2024.

Allan had an outstanding career at Schiff Hardin, where he concentrated in securities regulation and served on the firm's management committee. He also taught securities law and was professor of practice at Northwestern Law School. He published numerous articles on securities law and related subjects.

He resided in Old Town, in Chicago, with his wife, Carolyn, whom he met at Schiff Hardin. In addition to Carolyn, he is survived by son Benjamin '99 and daughters Diana, Eleanor, and Flannery, to all of whom the class sends its heartfelt condolences.

### THE CLASS OF 1969

#### BRUCE W. MacDONALD '69 \*72 \*73

Bruce, a loyal friend of so many in our class, died Dec. 8, 2024.



Coming to Princeton at 16 from Cincinnati, Bruce majored in aerospace engineering and was a spirited and affable member of Dial Lodge who loved organizing a bridge game after dinner. He is described by friends as the most good-natured person they ever met.

Bruce continued for an MSE in 1972 and an MPA from the Wilson School in 1973. His career at the State Department, on Capitol Hill, as assistant director for national security in the science adviser's office at the Clinton White House, and as senior director for science and technology on the National Security Council encompassed a life of distinguished public service. Later Bruce continued with work that he passionately believed in, particularly arms control. An early pioneer in space policy and security, he edited and co-authored, *Crisis Stability in Space: China and other Challenges* and, at the end of his career, he was pleased to teach both nuclear nonproliferation and space policy and security at Johns Hopkins' School of Advanced International Studies.

A man of boundless curiosity and unwavering kindness, Bruce had a joy for life that touched everyone around him. He loved to say that plutonium was the reason he met his future wife, Rita Campion. He rests in Glengarriff near their home on the shores of Bantry Bay in Ireland. The class extends its condolences to Rita; siblings Charles and Charlene; and Bruce's extended family and friends.

### THE CLASS OF 1970

#### STEPHEN E. CHRUPKA '70

Though with us only freshman year, Steve celebrated aspects of our graduation throughout his life. He died April 9, 2025, from dementia, stroke, and pancreatic cancer.

Following freshman year, Steve returned to Hamilton, Ohio, then entered the Navy, where he served nine years, participated in its early work on computers, and completed many college courses. Once discharged, he graduated from Miami University and began a career as an IT programmer. In retirement, he continued enjoying golf and bowling, remained active in his Presbyterian church,

and became a Stephen Minister, serving those recovering from great personal losses.

Steve loved studying insects. He had extensive collections and was fond of catching cicadas, which he would entrap, bring inside his home, perch on a drape, and show his grandchildren. During his illness, Marcia, his wife of 45 years, played tracks from his favorite musician, Bob Dylan.

In addition to Marcia, Steve is survived by his three children, Sarah, Shawna, and Rob. Our sympathies and spirit are with them. How he would have loved our graduation day.

#### THE CLASS OF 1973

##### JOHN E. BOCK '73

John died July 11, 2025, at his home in Willis, Texas, while surrounded by his family.



He was born in Huntsville, Texas, and attended high school in Illinois. He entered Princeton as a pre-med student with the Class of 1968 but left

school and joined the Army as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam. After the war, he returned to finish his degree. He toured with Triangle and was a member of Ivy Club. He majored in psychology and graduated in 1973. He earned a medical degree from Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons.

John practiced medicine in Texas, where he found he had a gift for explaining complex ideas in simple, accessible terms and took pleasure in sharing what he knew.

At home, he built things from the ground up. Creating from raw materials gave him deep satisfaction. He built wagons and chicken coops, and managed sheep, cows, pigs, and children with equal parts logic and care. In retirement he built a raw-milk dairy and devoted himself to cultivating legumes and native grasses. Farming was not a hobby, but devotion.

He was married to Camille for 47 years in a partnership marked by friendship and shared purpose. Together they raised four children — Courtney, Gretchen, David, and Rachel — who carry forward his legacy of hard work, curiosity, and the occasional impulse to take up beekeeping. He lived deliberately and thought deeply. He mended fences in every sense of the word. And in the end, he left behind not just children and grandchildren, but a legacy grown green and lasting under a Texas sun.

#### THE CLASS OF 1974

##### NANCY RISK ROLLINGS '74

Nan died July 20, 2025, after a series of medical events suffered as she was visiting her beloved Michigan cottage with her family.

She was born in New York City and grew



up in Chevy Chase, Md.

After graduating from Walt Whitman High School, she and her sister Barbara became the first pair of female twins admitted to

Princeton. Nan majored in English and later received a master's degree from the University of Arizona in that subject.

She married classmate Donald Rollings Dec. 21, 1974. Shortly thereafter, they returned to Tucson, where Nan filled many important roles in the community. She was editor of *Kiva*, a journal that focuses on the archaeology, anthropology, and history of the American Southwest. Nan was also active with nonprofits working for youth drug prevention and as a volunteer with Clinica Amistad and the University of Arizona Poetry Center. The First United Methodist Church in Tucson was another passion, and she devoted much time recently to the Inn Project that helped documented immigrants.

Nan is survived by daughter Elizabeth; son Jim; two grandchildren; her twin Barbara de Boinville; and brother, Clay. A celebration of her life was held Sept. 6, 2025, at her church.

#### THE CLASS OF 1975

##### THEODORE R. AMGOTT '75

A well-respected and compassionate physician, Ted died April 23, 2025, in



Melbourne, Fla., after a 15-month battle with glioblastoma. Born in Brooklyn, he grew up in Cranford, N.J., and came to us from Cranford High School.

At Princeton, which always remained close to his heart, Ted majored in biology, joined Quadrangle Club, and played club table tennis. After graduating *summa cum laude* and Phi Beta Kappa, he headed to Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. He remained at Johns Hopkins Hospital for his internal medicine internship and residency. During his pulmonary fellowship at Duke University Medical Center, he met Colleen Suchan, who became his wife of nearly four decades.

After moving to Florida in 1984, Ted served the internal medicine, pulmonary, sleep, and critical care needs of the Brevard community during his 38-year career. He interviewed prospective students for Princeton and presented an annual book award on behalf of Princeton at his children's high school. He retained his lifelong zeal for learning, a wonderful sense of humor, strong integrity, and admirable generosity to those in need.

Ted was a devoted husband to Colleen and the proud father of his children, Jonathan and Natalie. We join them celebrating the life of this extraordinary classmate.

##### CASCEIL M. ARONSON '75

Casceil died May 31, 2024, in Scottsdale, Ariz., of complications of hip replacement



surgery. She was born in Dallas, where she attended Bryan Adams High School and was known by her classmates as not only smart but also gentle and kind. She

was active in speech tournaments and took part in summer stock with the Harlequin Players in Dallas.

At Princeton, Casceil was an English major and was among the first women on the fencing team. She went on to law school at the University of Texas, where she flourished and became a member of the Law Review. The Phoenix firm of Brown & Bain made her a partner, specializing in computer-related antitrust, trade secret, and contract litigation.

After 12 years, Casceil joined the Arizona Supreme Court as a staff attorney and worked there for 30 years. Her areas of expertise were domestic relations, estate and trust cases, and commercial litigation. She also was the training coordinator for the staff attorneys' office and judicial suites.

Casceil is survived by her husband, Peter, and their children, Jay and Alexander. We join them in mourning the loss of this gifted and kind classmate.

##### STEPHEN R. CUDDY '75

Steve died April 3, 2025, in Memphis, Tenn., after a brief illness.



He grew up in Niskayuna, N.Y., and was a graduate of Niskayuna High School. At Princeton, he majored in physics and wrote a thesis titled "Enzyme-Substrate

Binding in Subtilisin BPN." After graduation from medical school at the SUNY Upstate Medical University in Syracuse in 1979, he completed a medical internship at SUNY Buffalo, a residency in internal medicine at St. Vincent Hospital in Indianapolis, and a fellowship in invasive cardiology at the Cleveland Clinic.

Board-certified in both cardiology and internal medicine, Steve had a long career in medicine, including private practice, managed health care, and serving the Indian Health Service at Fort Defiance in the Navajo Nation, where he was honored with an award for his care.

Steve was a devoted and loving husband, father, son, brother, and uncle. He loved to learn new things and continued to educate himself and his family throughout his life. He especially enjoyed chess, video games, exploring the outdoors, golf, tennis, and *Star Trek*.

Steve is survived by his wife, Mary Linda;

sons Kevin and Ryan; mother, Lucille Sponberg; and sister Jane Corradi. We share their loss.

### THE CLASS OF 1976

#### JOHN I. COOK '76

John died July 9, 2025, in Puerto Viejo, Limon, Costa Rica, where he lived in retirement.



Born and raised in New York, John graduated from St. Paul's School, where he played basketball and ran track. At Princeton, he

majored in sociology, worked at WPRB, and earned a teaching certificate. John was a member of the Association of Black Princeton Alumni.

After graduation, he taught 10th-grade history and 11th-grade social studies at White Plains High School for more than a decade. He was well loved by his students and made a lasting impact.

John published three memoirs: *From the Projects to Princeton: aka The Cook Book; Three Strikes, You're Out!!!: The Cookbook, Part II* and *Cookin' With Life! Cook Book III*. He also published a blog titled Educational Excellence. John was active on Facebook with over 3,700 friends, including many former students who wrote emotional testimonies to the positive influence he had on them as a teacher years ago. He is described in tributes as "a beautiful soul, icon, more than a teacher," "a towering figure," "an inspiring teacher," and "a passionate jazz enthusiast." John was living his dream in retirement in Costa Rica.

The class sends sincere condolences to his daughter, Ayanna Belton; grandson; sister Edna; nephew Brandon Shyne; and extended family.

#### KEVIN A. MATERNA '76

Kevin died April 15, 2025, in New Jersey, of pulmonary failure following an infection.



Born and raised in Passaic, N.J., he graduated from Pope Pius XII High School. At Princeton, Kevin sang in the Glee Club, majored in anthropology, and was

a member of Cap and Gown. He was recognized in *The Daily Princetonian* for building a large communication board in his dormitory as a social experiment named "Crabb's Corner" in honor of his professor.

Kevin was a devoted family man; he made a family tradition out of regularly attending Princeton basketball and football games with his sons. He was a doting grandfather to his two grandsons. He was professionally recognized in the field of implantable pacemakers and defibrillators.

The class officers extend sincere condolences to his wife, Krystyna; his sons,

Alexander and his wife Greta, and Mark and his wife Malgorzata; two grandsons; and brother Thomas.

### THE CLASS OF 1979

#### LINDA EASTMAN FIELD '79

Linda died of cancer July 21, 2024, shortly after attending our 45th reunion.



She grew up in Livingston, N.J. At Princeton, she majored in religion. She had a glorious voice and sang in the Freshman Singers and then in the Katzenjammers,

eventually becoming their director. She was a member of Cloister Inn.

Linda was an active member of the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, where she met her husband, Curtis. They had two children, Mickey and Susannah, and in our 45th-reunion yearbook, she wrote, "Being a parent is my greatest joy; I have learned so much about myself and about other people, and my children enrich my life in myriad ways. Watching them become mature, caring adults makes me feel that I've contributed in some small way to making the world a better place."

Linda received a master's degree from Teachers College at Columbia. She joined the staff at the Nightingale-Bamford School in 1982, retiring in June 2024. She primarily taught history. In addition to her many roles, she had a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion manifested by her involvement in making the school's curriculum more inclusive.

Our class joins her family in mourning the loss of this generous and vivacious friend.

### THE CLASS OF 1980

#### RICHARD GREENBERG '80

Rich died of cancer July 4, 2025, in Manhattan.



He was born and raised in Long Island, N.Y. He majored in English at Princeton, studying creative writing under Joyce Carol Oates and graduating *magna cum laude*.

His senior thesis was a 438-page work titled "A Romantic Career – A Novel." He went on to the Yale School of Drama, where he began a long and successful career as a playwright.

He wrote more than 30 plays, being nominated twice for the Pulitzer Prize and winning a Tony Award in 2003 for his best-known play *Take Me Out*, about a biracial MLB player who comes out as gay. The play won another Tony for Best Revival in 2022. He developed several of his plays at the South Coast Repertory Theatre in California before taking them to Broadway.

Some of his other plays on Broadway included *Eastern Standard*, *Three Days of Rain*, *The Violet Hour*, *The American Plan*,

*The Assembled Parties*, and adaptations of *Breakfast at Tiffany's* and Strindberg's *Dance of Death*.

At Princeton, aside from his academic pursuits, Rich acted in plays by Coward, Williams, and Shakespeare, and had a fine singing voice, serenading his friends during study breaks. He valued his privacy but was kind and companionable to all.

Rich is survived by his brother Edward; sister-in-law Janet; and their children and grandchildren. Our heartfelt condolences to his family. He will be missed.

#### JOSEPH K. MYERS III '80

Joe died May 14, 2025, of complications from pneumonia.



Originally from Jamesville, N.Y., he joined the Princeton community in 1977, where he ran varsity cross country and track and was a member of Cottage Club. Princeton runs deep in Joe's family, with father Joe Jr. in the Class of '55, brother John in the Class of '89, and daughter Rachel in the Class of '15.

After earning his economics degree, Joe settled in Westport, Conn. He had a lengthy career in finance before retiring in 2019. Those who knew Joe appreciated his passions for musical theater, distance running, sailboat racing, road cycling, and skiing. He retired to Flagstaff, Ariz., where he sang with the Master Chorale and enjoyed time on the golf course with friends.

While Joe was a man of many talents and hobbies, what made him happiest was spending time with his family. He is survived by his wife of 35 years, Karen; children Rachel, Hannah, and Christian; sister Barbara; brother John; and numerous nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his father Joseph Jr. and sister Elizabeth. His mother Sarah passed away June 3, 2025. Joe will be deeply missed.

### THE CLASS OF 1984

#### CHARLES E. KELLER '84

Kel died in his sleep of heart disease in Detroit, Mich., in December of 2024.



He grew up in Grosse Pointe, Mich., entering Princeton as a member of the Class of '83; he graduated with the Class of '84 after taking a year

off to study abroad. Kel majored in anthropology with a minor in visual arts, studying under both Emmet Gowin and Hildred Geertz. His photography thesis documented Harvest Queen festivals across Kell's beloved Michigan; the Special Collections of Firestone Library subsequently acquired a group of these photographs, now housed at Marquand Library. Although Kel lived off campus

his senior year, he was a regular at Terrace Club and 185 Nassau St. After graduating, he pursued photography, earning an MFA at the University of Michigan in 1988.

Kel's interest in photography took him around the world, including Minneapolis, Atlanta, Lisbon, Italy, and Brazil, where he both taught and exhibited his work. In 2007, after moving into a family home built in 1844 in Romeo, Mich., Kel wrote a novel based on its history as a station on the Underground Railroad. His interest in history led him to complete a master's in African American studies and library science at Wayne State. Later writings included *My Revolting Memoir*, a personal narrative about the Michigan Department of Corrections' mishandling of the COVID-19 pandemic, and *The Mistress of Monticello*, a fictional biography of Sally Hemings, the slave and lover of Thomas Jefferson.

His friends and classmates remember Kel for his high-spirited nature and willingness to pursue almost any adventure, no matter how fantastical.

#### THE CLASS OF 1992

##### JENNIFER L. LEE '92

Jenny died July 23, 2024, after a nearly two-year battle with glioblastoma. She is survived



by her parents, John and Lina, her brother John, and her nephew Kyle.

She was born in Niskayuna, N.Y., and lived in Silver Spring, Md., through her high school years. After graduation from Princeton, Jenny obtained a master's degree in electrical engineering from Johns Hopkins University. She then served her country as a civilian intelligence analyst/computer specialist for the Department of Defense, mostly in Europe.

Jenny was also very musically engaged. Through her high school years, she trained in classical piano and became quite proficient. Especially during the COVID-19 lockdown, she would enjoy performing Mozart piano-violin duets with her preteen nephew Kyle. Jenny never had children, so she doted on Kyle and guided his musical violin development.

Jenny's personality and character were best exemplified by her struggle against brain cancer. During her many treatments at NIH, she was still able to make close friendships with everyone on the teams that treated her. Her cheery disposition and humor impressed everyone, including her doctors, nurses, speech and physical therapists, and administrators.

The Class of 1992 extends its deepest sympathies to Jenny's family and friends.

#### GRADUATE MEMORIALS

##### HOLLISTER BENJAMIN SYKES \*48

At age 101, Ben died June 13, 2025, in Westfield, N.J.

Born Sept. 18, 1923, in Polson, Mont., he entered the chemical engineering program at the University of Pennsylvania in 1942. His education was interrupted for service in the Naval Reserve as an officer on a minesweeper that cleared areas around the Panama Canal Zone and the Philippines during and after World War II. Following his Navy service, he completed his undergraduate studies at Penn and earned an M.S. in chemical engineering from Princeton in 1948.

After Princeton, Ben joined Exxon. He was responsible for new venture investments in computer technology and energy alternatives, including fuel cells, solar cells, and electric vehicle batteries. He retired as senior vice president in 1982.

In retirement Ben became an adjunct professor of entrepreneurship at New York University and a consultant for AT&T, Kodak, DuPont, and Motorola on new business development projects. He published several papers in the *Harvard Business Review* and *The Journal of Business Venturing* and posted articles on the Social Science Research Network. Under the sponsorship of Rutgers, Ben chaired the New Jersey Entrepreneurs Forum executive committee for six years.

Ben is survived by his wife, Adele, and sons Robert and Richard.

##### FREDERICK C. CREWS \*58

Fred died June 21, 2024, in Oakland, Calif., at age 91.

Born in Philadelphia in 1933, he graduated with a degree in English from Yale in 1955. He earned his Ph.D. in English from Princeton in 1958.

Fred served on the UC Berkeley faculty from 1958 until his retirement in 1994. After publishing more conventional academic works, in 1963 he published a bestselling satire on literary criticism, *The Pooh Perplex*, using parody to lampoon fashionable academic trends. In 1974, he published *The Random House Handbook*, which took a humorous approach to teaching good writing; it went through six editions and reached more than a million readers.

Fred published critiques of Freudian doctrine, which he considered a pseudoscience. They included *Skeptical Engagements* (1986), and a 1993 article in *The New York Review of Books* entitled "The Unknown Freud." That piece and protesting letters and Fred's replies became *The Memory Wars* (1995). His 2017 biographical study *Freud: The Making of an Illusion*, was described by Louis Menand in *The New Yorker* as having driven a stake "into its

subject's cold, cold heart."

Fred is survived by Elizabeth, his wife of almost 65 years; children Gretchen and Ingrid; four grandchildren, and one great-granddaughter.

##### JOHN S. DRISCOLL \*60

John died in Rockville, Md., April 4, 2025.

Born in Jamestown, N.Y., May 31, 1934, he received a B.S. in chemistry from Michigan State University in 1955 and earned a Ph.D. in organic chemistry from Princeton in 1960.

After eight years as a research group leader at Monsanto Research Corp. in Boston, John joined the National Institutes of Health, where he spent 30 years in new drug research at the National Cancer Institute. He started an anticancer drug discovery laboratory and was the technical monitor for numerous chemistry contracts between the NCI and various universities. During his first 15 years at the NCI, John's research emphasized finding new anticancer drugs for the treatment of brain tumors. He specialized in anti-AIDS drugs during his final 15 years, and this research introduced three additional anti-HIV drugs into clinical trials.

John's work generated approximately 150 publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals and more than 20 U.S. patents. He made technical presentations on anticancer and anti-AIDS drugs at numerous national and international meetings and organized international scientific symposia. After retiring in 1999, he wrote a textbook on antiviral drugs.

John is survived by his wife, Katherine; children John, Margaret, and Laura; and five grandchildren.

##### PETER B. ANDREWS \*64

Peter died April 21, 2025, in Burlington, N.C.

Born in New York City Nov. 1, 1937, he completed his undergraduate work at Dartmouth in 1959 and received his Ph.D. in mathematics from Princeton in 1964. His adviser was Alonzo Church.

Peter joined Carnegie Mellon's mathematics department in 1963 and remained there for 49 years, retiring in 2012. His expertise was in the theory and applications of higher-order logic and automated reasoning. His research was motivated by a desire to develop tools that could enhance human reasoning with a vision for the eventual formalization of virtually all mathematical, scientific, and technical knowledge, as well as the development of automated reasoning tools to assist in managing this knowledge. His work focused primarily on automated deduction within Church's version of higher-order logic based on the simple theory of types.

Peter led the development of TPS (theorem proving system), an automated theorem prover for higher-order classical logic. A subsystem, ETPS (educational theorem proving system), was created to help students learn logic by interactively constructing natural deduction proofs.

In 2024, he received a patent on a bandage for critical wounds.

Peter is survived by his wife, Cate; sons Lyle and Bruce; and former wife, Linda Fitch.

#### **JONATHAN L. ROSNER \*65**

Jon died May 24, 2025, in Chicago.

Born in New York July 23, 1941, Jon did his undergraduate work at Swarthmore, graduating in 1962, and earned a Ph.D. in physics from Princeton in 1965.

He was a postdoc at the University of Washington, a lecturer at Tel Aviv University, and a professor at the University of Minnesota before serving as a professor at the Enrico Fermi Institute at the University of Chicago, where he researched and taught for 43 years, retiring in 2011.

Jon's expertise was in high-energy particle physics and standard model and flavor physics. His publications include papers in the fields of theoretical physics, experimental physics, and molecular biology. He had visiting appointments at Caltech, the Institute for Advanced Study, Cornell, and the University of Tokyo, and was a member of the board of trustees of the Aspen Center for Physics.

In 2013, Jon chaired the division of particles and fields of the American Physical Society, when much of his time was devoted to a long-range planning exercise for the U.S. high-energy physics program Snowmass on the Mississippi.

Jon is survived by his wife of 60 years, Joy; children Hannah and Ben; and granddaughter Sadie.

#### **RAND U. CARTER \*66**

Rand died in Utica, N.Y., June 12, 2025.

Born Sept. 17, 1937, in Corpus Christi, Texas, he was named for his godmother, the dancer and actress Sally Rand. As an undergraduate at Columbia, from which he graduated in 1959, Rand became interested in art history and hosted a radio program on WKCR called "Let's Talk Books" to broadcast reviews of stage plays, Broadway shows, opera, and concerts.

At Princeton, Rand earned an MFA in art and archaeology, then studied at the Courtauld Institute of the University of London as a Fulbright scholar. In 1962, he became assistant professor of fine arts at McGill, where he remained for eight years. In 1966, he earned his doctorate from Princeton. In 1970, he became an associate

professor at Hamilton, establishing a concentration in art history and serving 15 years as chairman of the art department.

His interests included European art of the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries; neoclassicism; the history of furniture; environmental and ecological implications of architectural design; and urban planning. He lectured across North America and Europe, including at a conference on "The Venice Charter Revisited" at the 2006 Venice Biennale.

Rand is survived by his brother, Dildford; and several nephews and nieces.

#### **TERRENCE E. COOK \*71**

Terry died at his cabin on Hood Canal in Washington state Nov. 21, 2024, after a protracted decline from Alzheimer's disease.

Born in Washington, D.C., July 27, 1942, he grew up in Unity, Wis. Terry earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Wisconsin in 1964. He began graduate study in political science at Princeton but left after three years to teach at Washington State University to avoid the draft. He finished his Ph.D. in 1971.

He remained at Washington State in Pullman, achieving the rank of full professor. His specialty was political theory, but he also taught comparative politics, international relations, and world civilizations. He traveled professionally to Slovakia on a Soros Foundation grant, and to China, India, Japan, and Ukraine with WSU programs.

Terry's seven books include *Separation, Assimilation, or Accommodation: Contrasting Ethnic Minority Policies*; *Nested Political Coalitions: Nation, Regime, Program, Cabinet*; and *The Great Alternatives of Social Thought: Aristocrat, Saint, Capitalist, Socialist*.

Terry is survived by his children, Andrew and Eryn Cook; his former wife, Annabel Kirschner; four siblings; and several nephews and nieces.

#### **STEPHEN J. GAIONI \*76**

Stephen died June 24, 2025, of Lewy body dementia in Webster Groves, Mo.

Born Aug. 19, 1949, in Providence, R.I., he earned his undergraduate degree at Brown in 1971 and a Ph.D. in psychology from Princeton in 1976.

Stephen joined the Washington University psychology department, where his work focused on imprinting in ducks and echolocation in bats. He left WashU to obtain a Ph.D. in clinical psychology at the University of Missouri, St. Louis.

In his public service career, Stephen helped veterans at the St. Louis VA Medical Center, where he began as a psychologist, rose to chief of psychology, and eventually became associate chief of staff and chief of mental health services. He helped obtain grants that enabled the VA

to expand the scope and quality of mental health services for St. Louis-area veterans. Stephen helped establish the Hope Recovery Center to provide mental health, substance abuse, and housing support for homeless veterans to assist them in getting back on their feet. Even as a senior administrator, he continued to treat patients, which he considered the most rewarding part of his job.

Stephen is survived by his wife, Pauline; children Mark '09 and Anna Hummel; and four grandchildren.

#### **SEAN M. WAGNER \*93**

Sean died June 23, 2025, of glioblastoma multiforme, in St. Paul, Minn. He was 58.

Born Feb. 15, 1967, in Evanston, Ill., Sean completed his undergraduate studies in architecture at Iowa State University in 1991 and earned a master's in architecture from Princeton in 1993.

Sean was CEO of NewStudio Architecture, a design firm he founded in 2011. One of Minnesota's first LEED-accredited architects, he received the Minnesota AIA Young Architects Award in 2010. He had projects across the United States and Canada, including with URBAN and clients in Philadelphia. He earned several patents, taught at the University of Minnesota, and mentored young protégés.

Sean is survived by his wife of 35 years, Melissa Martyr-Wagner; his son Rowan and his daughter Livia; his parents Nancy and James; and his siblings Jim, Bob, Dan, and Dana.

#### **RYAN A. NORMAN \*10**

Ryan died June 7, 2025, of cancer in Plainsboro, N.J. He was 46.

He was born Jan. 13, 1979, in Denver and grew up in Lakeland, Fla. He graduated from the University of Florida in 2002 with a bachelor of science degree in biochemistry and microbiology. At Princeton, Ryan earned a Ph.D. in molecular biology and neuroscience in 2010 and continued at Princeton as a postdoctoral researcher studying embryonic development.

He taught a course titled Themes in Biology as an adjunct lecturer at The College of New Jersey and provided tutoring in central New Jersey until 2018. Prior to his illness, he worked for Amazon at the Cranbury, N.J., fulfillment center in roles focused on increasing efficiency and safety.

Ryan was predeceased by his father, Tex Norman. He is survived by his mother, Kathie; and his aunt Melain.

*Graduate memorials are prepared by the APGA.*

*An undergraduate memorial appears for Bruce W. MacDonald '69 \*72 \*73.*

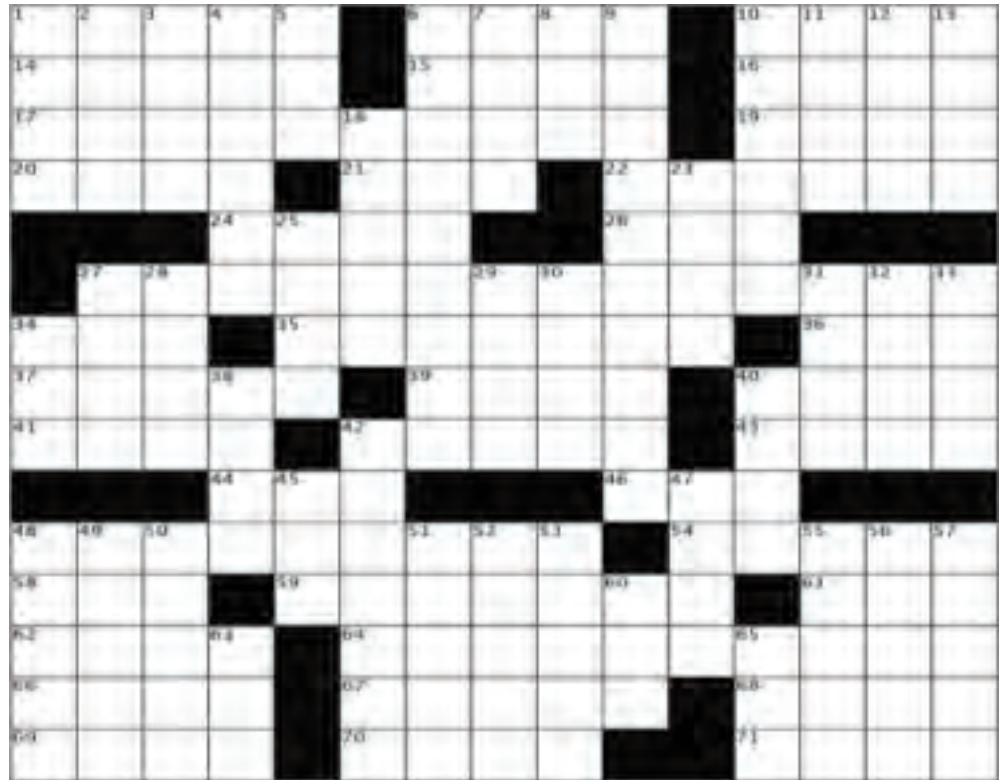


BY STELLA (DAILY) ZAWISTOWSKI '00

# Transformational Impact

## ACROSS

1. Robert George and Paul Starr, for short
6. In good health
10. The basics, metaphorically
14. Way to protect a natural Black hairstyle
15. Last word in Handel's "Messiah"
16. Perform with no backup
17. Computer science pioneer who received a Ph.D. from Princeton in 1938
19. Shut in anger
20. Egotist's focus
21. Aaron Burr 1772 et al.
22. "Am I the problem?"
24. Therapist's comment
26. Complain and complain
27. Physics Nobel laureate who received a Ph.D. from Princeton in 1942
34. Oxford teacher
35. Variations studied in the department of molecular biology
36. Fair \_\_\_\_ (copyright doctrine)
37. Expressed one's curiosity
39. Vehicle that might be discussed in Princeton's Program in Sustainable Energy
40. *Our Kind of People* author Lawrence \_\_\_\_ Graham '83
41. Untidy area
42. 2024 Olympic opening ceremony location
43. Unlike a 41-Across
44. Acronym that may be preceded with "BI"
46. \_\_\_\_ January
48. *A Theory of Justice* philosopher who received a Ph.D. from Princeton in 1950
54. Early-March events on campus, for short



58. Be in the hole
59. Employee of the fictional Princeton-Plainsboro teaching hospital
61. Key and Peele, e.g.
62. Ctrl-Z action
64. *Race Matters* author who received a Ph.D. from Princeton in 1980
66. Sonic the Hedgehog's company
67. \_\_\_\_ Kagan '81
68. Touched down
69. Outdoor Action outing, perhaps
70. OpenTable alternative
71. Style of the 1920s

## DOWN

1. Smartphone predecessors: Abbr.
2. Render a judgment
3. Word before "history" or "hygiene"
4. Genre for noncanon stories
5. Army NCO
6. Atticus Finch's creator
7. Author Kingsley or Martin

8. Former *Dancing With the Stars* judge Goodman
9. Masterminded
10. Hand out, as tasks
11. Abruptly leave
12. "Razor" mollusk
13. Not none, but not all
18. Of an eye layer
23. Puts into words
25. Herring relative
27. Flower seen by Palmer House in the spring
28. Tattoo artist's supplies
29. Tenth: Prefix
30. Crème caramel by another name
31. Zoom option
32. Home of 48 countries
33. A squirrel's is called a drey
34. Sire's counterpart
38. Ainer of many NCAA games
40. Material for some cameos
42. More difficult to find
45. Chicago airport code
47. Rod's partner
48. Medieval competition
49. Jeff Bezos '86, to Blue Origin

50. Natural barrier in Princeton's Wyman Garden
51. Skim alternative
52. Like some blurry images
53. Like P-rade weather, hopefully
55. "Someone Like You" singer
56. Michael Pratt's department
57. \_\_\_\_ voce (under one's breath)
60. *The Old Man and the \_\_\_\_*
63. Acorn-bearing tree
65. Glob of gum

## STUMPED?

Scan the QR code or go online to [paw.princeton.edu](http://paw.princeton.edu) to try an interactive version of the puzzle and reveal answers.



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JOHN BRIGHT (1811-1889)

## Hidden Chapel Pulpit Honors a Civil War Friend of America

BY ALLEN C. GUELZO

**T**HE IMPOSING University Chapel that dominates Princeton's central plaza was built between 1921 and 1928. It was designed by the great architect Ralph Adams Cram to replace the old Marquand Chapel and its 104-foot tower, which had burnt down on May 14, 1920, in a fire that also devoured Dickinson Hall. The new chapel was the largest such building on any American campus at the time and cost \$2.3 million to build — which meant that President John Grier Hibben 1882 had to embark on a major fundraising campaign. As a result, scattered throughout the chapel's immense collegiate Gothic spaces are memorials to its numerous donors — the Braman Transept, the Milbank Choir, even the Hibben Garden.

One of the easiest of these memorials to miss, however, appears on the chapel's

south side, where a door opens to an exterior stone pulpit bearing on one face this inscription:

IN MEMORIAM  
JOHN BRIGHT  
1811-1889  
THE GREAT BRITISH  
COMMONER AND  
FRIEND OF AMERICA  
IN HER TIME OF NEED

FLORENCE BROOKS-ATEN

Florence Cornelia Ellwanger Brooks-Aten was in many ways the classic wealthy eccentric. Born on Christmas Day in 1875, she spent lavishly on projects that ranged from sponsoring a contest to write a new national anthem to building a woodland estate near the

Monadnock Region in New Hampshire. One of her projects in 1924 was the creation of the Brooks-Bryce Foundation for the Furtherance of Friendly Relations between Great Britain and the United States, the Brooks half of the title coming from her great-great-grandfather, a soldier in the American Revolution. And since the purpose of the foundation was to promote "Anglo-American amity," she made the name of a famed 19th-century parliamentarian, John Bright, the center of her bequest to the new chapel — and therein lies one of Princeton's most unsuspected connections to Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War.

**Nothing held out greater possibilities** for the success of the Confederacy during its brief years of life from 1861 to 1865 than the sympathies it generated in Great Britain. Britain was, after all, a monarchy, albeit a constitutional monarchy, and it looked deeply askance at the example the American democracy was setting for the peoples of Britain's empire around the world. No sooner had the Civil War begun than British aristocrats rushed confidently to predict that the breakup of the United States would offer proof-positive of the instability of democracy. The Earl of Shrewsbury eagerly prophesied in 1861 in the *Nottingham Daily Guardian* that the Civil War "would show that the separation of the two great sections of that country was inevitable, and those who lived long enough would ... see an aristocracy established in America."

Besides, Britain's economy fed ravenously on Southern cotton, and an independent Confederacy would guarantee the flow of that cotton — all of which meant turning a blind eye to the fact that the cotton was the product of nearly 4 million enslaved African Americans. But the Navy's blockade of the Confederate coast imposed a stiff cost on Britain's cotton economy. For the first three years of the war, there were numerous proposals in Parliament and in the cabinet of the prime minister, Lord Palmerston, for British intervention and mediation, proposals that everyone knew would be pointed toward securing independence for the Confederacy.

No one stood more firmly in the path of those plans in Parliament than Bright, the member for Birmingham. Born in 1811 to a Quaker cotton mill owner, Bright's Quakerism made much more of a difference as he matured than his family's involvement in the cotton business. Bright was drawn into politics by his longtime friend and ally, Richard Cobden, of Manchester, and won a seat in Parliament in 1843. (He would serve in Parliament, with only one brief interruption, until his death in 1889).

An egalitarian to his Quaker core, Bright shook his head in dismay over the British class system. "What a country we live in," exclaimed Bright, "where accident of birth is supreme over almost every description and degree of merit."

The great contrast in his view was with the United States:

"Everywhere there," said Bright about the United States, "is an open career; there is no privileged class; there is complete education extended to all; and every man feels that he is not born to be in penury and in suffering, but that there is no point in the social ladder to which he may not fairly hope to raise himself by his honest efforts."

On those terms, he had no interest in protecting an economic system built on slavery, or in seeing Britain throw its influence behind the Confederacy. If anything, Bright maintained that the South's attempt at secession had unwittingly placed both secession and slavery in the path of destruction, and Bright did not want Britain to do anything that might prevent that.

"I believe that in the Providence of the Supreme, the slaveholder" has been "permitted to commit ... the act of suicide upon himself," Bright said in 1864. "He must be deaf and blind, and worse than deaf and blind, who does not perceive that through the instrumentality of this strife, that most odious and most indescribable offence against man and



#### HIGHER POWER

*The Bright Pulpit, named in honor of John Bright, is on the University Chapel's south side.*

against heaven, the slavery of the South — the bondage of our fellow-creatures, is coming to a certain and rapid end. And Britain must not in the remotest manner, by a word or breath, or the raising of a finger, or the setting of a type, do one single thing to promote the atrocious object of the leaders of this accursed insurrection."

No wonder Bright and Cobden were known in Parliament as "the Members for the United States." And no wonder Lincoln's diplomatic envoy to France, William Dayton 1825, believed that "our only real friends are men like John Bright ... who believe that we are fighting for freedom as well as for our national union."

**Lincoln particularly noticed Bright's** championing of the Northern cause. Rep. William Kelley of Pennsylvania remembered Lincoln greeting a visiting delegation of "English friends" with "an inquiry as to the health of John Bright, whom he said he regarded as the friend of our country, and of freedom everywhere." Lincoln kept a

picture of Bright in his White House office, and in April 1863, he had Charles Sumner, the chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, forward to Bright a series of resolutions Lincoln hoped Bright would promote in Parliament, refusing diplomatic recognition to any "new nation" formed anywhere "upon the basis of, and with the primary, and fundamental object to maintain, enlarge, and perpetuate human slavery."

Bright was, almost literally, on Lincoln's mind right up to his death. Lincoln had a newspaper clipping of an endorsement speech, given by Bright in 1864, in his pocket the night of his assassination. And in 1871, Bright inherited Lincoln's gold-headed walking stick from its first recipient, Rev. James Smith, a Scots Presbyterian who had pastored the Lincoln family's church in Illinois and who served

the Lincoln administration in his retirement. "I may mention," wrote the executor of Smith's will to Bright, "that the late president's family are much pleased at Dr. Smith's bequeathing it to you as it was the president's wish that you eventually should get it."

In the process, Bright never lost his interest in American affairs, and in March 1882, even composed an introduction to a British edition of the autobiography of Frederick Douglass. He applauded Douglass for demonstrating "what may be done, and has been done, by a man born under the most adverse circumstances — done, not for himself alone, but for his race, and for his country." But, Bright added, the Civil War also had a lesson, for the war had shown "how a great nation, persisting in a great crime, cannot escape the penalty inseparable from crime."

The Bright Pulpit is one of the more easily missed points of Princeton's architecture. It shouldn't be. It memorializes one of the closest and most sincere friends of freedom and liberty that Lincoln and the Union had. ■

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