

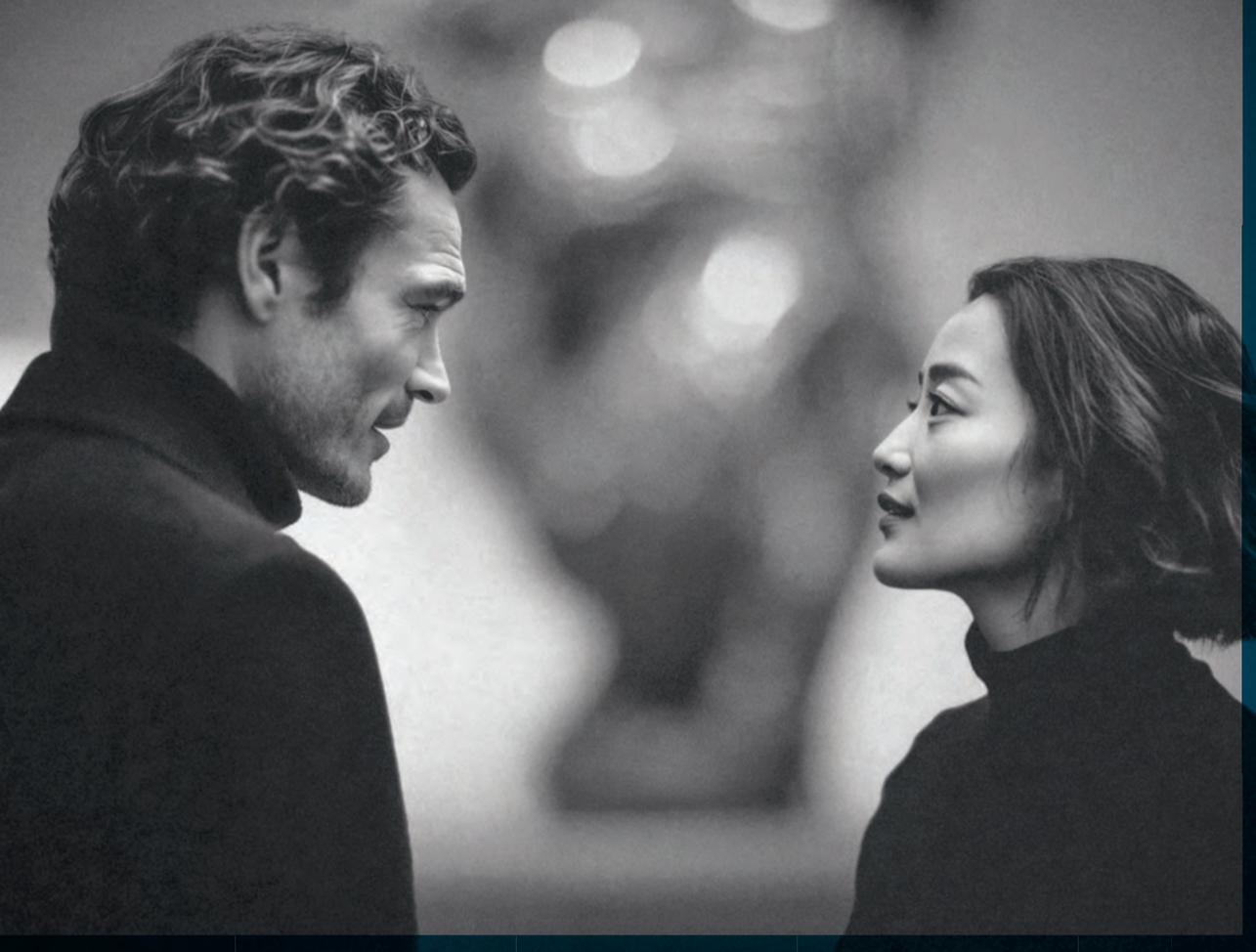
KUDOS FOR AUSTERITY / NEW SOUNDS AT OLD NASSAU

# PRINCETON ALUMNI WEEKLY

APRIL 2026

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An editorially independent magazine by alumni for alumni since 1900



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## ON THE COVER

From the central stairs near the Roper Lane entry of Briger Hall, visitors can see several levels of the new environmental studies building, as well as the Allosaurus formerly displayed at Guyot Hall. *Photograph by Tori Repp/Fotobuddy*

TORI REPP / FOTOBUDDY

# Standing Strong for Academic Freedom

*In February, I published my 10th annual State of the University letter to the Princeton community. I included this year a section on academic freedom, and its distinction from free speech, which I excerpt here. — C.L.E.*

Princeton and other universities have over the past year faced a variety of threats to research funding, the immigration status of community members, free speech, academic freedom, diversity and inclusion programs, and our endowments.

Addressing these issues has been a major priority for the University and for me personally. I stepped up my work with the Association of American Universities, met more often with Washington policymakers, and sought out opportunities to communicate publicly about the principles that define this University and other great research institutions. We are in a crisis, and universities have an obligation to speak up.

While all of the issues that I have mentioned are important, universities and their leaders have a special responsibility to defend and explain academic freedom, which is crucial to the excellence of research and teaching. The principle is sometimes conflated with free speech, but academic freedom is distinct from free speech and even more directly connected to the core mission of universities.

## What is academic freedom?

Academic freedom enables researchers and teachers to pursue truth and advance knowledge in their fields and disciplines. It protects scholarship and teaching from interference by

government officials, university administrators, donors, and anyone else who might want to substitute their will, preferences, opinions, or judgments in the place of academic standards.

People sometimes misunderstand academic freedom as allowing professors to say or do whatever they like. That is a mistake. Academic freedom does not insulate scholars from evaluation

or accountability. On the contrary, it depends upon and presupposes a rigorous system for evaluating the quality of research.

Scholars' work is and must be judged all the time: when they submit articles for publication, when they seek appointment or promotion, and when they apply for funding from the government or other sponsors.

The point of academic freedom is not that scholars should be free to say what they like; it is instead that scholarly work should be evaluated through the good-faith application of academic norms and standards, not on the basis of what somebody in power—at the university or outside it—would like to hear.

**American universities have become world leaders in no small part because they have insisted on academic freedom and because our governments have, for the most part, respected it.**



Academic freedom was on the agenda at my annual staff Town Hall for the State of the University letter. Photo by Matthew Raspanti, Office of Communications

## Academic freedom is not the same as free speech

The connection to academic standards, and to scholarly responsibility, explains why academic freedom is simultaneously distinct from free speech and more fundamental to what universities do.

Free speech rights permit everyone to express opinions, regardless of how those opinions were derived or how qualified the speaker is to pronounce them. They govern controversies like the ones about outside speakers and campus protests at colleges across the nation that have attracted so much attention in recent years.

Academic freedom, by contrast, recognizes the right and the responsibility of scholars to investigate questions and express judgments about matters within the scope of their learning and fields of research.

Free speech and academic freedom are complementary principles; both are essential to the life of a great university. It is academic freedom, however, that ultimately guarantees faculty members here and elsewhere the freedom to seek knowledge even when doing so may anger officials, disrupt industries, upset orthodoxies, or inflame controversies.

Research universities depend upon the capacity to pursue uncomfortable truths and publish controversial ideas. American universities have become world leaders in no small part because they have insisted on academic freedom and because our governments have, for the most part, respected it. If universities cede that right, they compromise not only their own missions but also the vital contributions they make to our country's health, culture, prosperity, and security.

I have accordingly been heartened by the strong support that Princeton faculty, students, staff, and alumni have given to academic freedom and higher education as part of our Stand Up for Princeton and Higher Education initiative. Your voices make a difference.



Willem de Kooning, *Black Friday*, 1948, Princeton University Art Museum. Gift of H. Gates Lloyd, Class of 1923, and Mrs. Lloyd in honor of the Class of 1923. © 2026 The Willem de Kooning Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

# Willem de Kooning

## The Breakthrough Years, 1945-50

Through July 26

This project is made possible by the generous support of individual and institutional donors.

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# INBOX

YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE LATEST ISSUES

## LIVES REMEMBERED

PAW readers responded to February’s annual Lives Lived and Lost feature with their own tributes.

John Weatherly Tinglin ’75 remembered the “infectious laughter” of attorney, judge, and jazz musician **Jerrauld Jones ’76**: “Whether through his music or conversation, he had an ability to lift your spirits.” Aida Lupe Pacheco ’77, a Princeton friend who reconnected with Jones professionally as an appointee to Virginia’s Juvenile Justice Board, wrote that Jones “had a vision and such conviction to making a difference.”



Edward Z. Walworth ’66 noted that **Starling Lawrence ’65**, the famed editor memorialized by Michael Lewis ’82, “was also a star on the stage at Princeton, playing leading roles in Triangle shows.” Robert Morgan ’65 added that Dan Douglas ’65 (known to classmates as Daniel Deitch) was a Triangle co-star, lifelong friend of Lawrence, and “the photographer of the poignant portrait that accompanies the moving memorial.”

Aaron Harber ’75, who had interviewed foreign policy scholar **Joseph Nye Jr. ’58**, wrote that he hoped “those in power today will somehow gain a greater appreciation of ‘soft power’ and deploy it strategically.” John Milton Cooper Jr. ’61 paid tribute to Nye and suggested another alumnus worthy of recognition in the Lives issue: diplomat **Frank Wisner ’61**, whose contributions to the nation and the world included “a record range of ambassadorships” and service as assistant secretary of both the state and defense departments.

The talented playwright **Richard Greenberg ’80**, John Packman ’80 recalled, was an engaging and empathetic friend. “His cleverness was exceeded by only his caring,” Packman wrote. “We will all miss him dearly.”

Readers can share their memories and tributes on this year’s Lives profiles — and every alumni memorial — online at [paw.princeton.edu](http://paw.princeton.edu).

## COVER-WORTHY CONTRIBUTIONS

I wanted to write in to mention what I believe was a missed opportunity from the January issue. The cover story, “Empower Couple,” was an engaging story about two amazing people, doing amazing things, with amazing amounts of money. I truly am impressed with all that Kwanza Jones ’93 and José E. Feliciano ’94 have accomplished and how they continue to help so many who are less fortunate than themselves. Immediately following that article was (in my opinion) an even more heartfelt story, “Small Town Wonderers,” about multiple amazing people, doing amazing things, *without* amazing amounts of money.

While both stories told about Tigers who are all clearly living out our motto of “in the nation’s service,” it would have been refreshing to see the cover story showing the latter individuals who have chosen to forgo lucrative opportunities to instead return home and contribute to their communities in a very different but equally (or perhaps more?) meaningful way. But then again, I doubt any of the Tigers in that story have buildings with their names on them.

**DANIEL SATTIZAHN ’99**  
*Plano, Texas*

## HOUSING ADVOCATES

I was glad to see PAW cover the role of Princetonians in the burgeoning YIMBY

movement, working to ensure abundant housing for all Americans. I was surprised, though, at who the article chose to mention. Many of the strongest pro-housing reforms in the country were passed by Gov. Jared Polis ’96 in Colorado, which has been the rare blue state to rapidly increase its supply of housing, supporting robust population growth, including in city centers. Massachusetts Attorney General Andrea Campbell ’04 has been aggressively pursuing legal action against cities and towns that fail to meet their obligation to build more housing and leads one of the most avowedly pro-housing AG offices in the country. She is a close ally of Massachusetts’ YIMBY groups, some of which are among the oldest in the country. I am sure there are many more Princetonians active in our movement who should have been mentioned, too.

**JACOB OPPENHEIM ’09**  
*Boston, Mass.*

*Editor’s note: The writer is co-founder and board vice president of Abundant Housing Massachusetts.*

In the February issue, a fellow Virginian described the commendable efforts of alumni to address the demand for housing. As president and board member of our neighborhood civic association in Arlington, we have been following this issue. So has Princeton. A prior notice in PAW led us to professor Aaron Shkuda, who is teaching a course on Affordable Housing in the United States.

We take no issue with the general concern that many would benefit from cheaper homes. This does not, however, mean that one size fits all.

At one end of the income scale, many recognize we do not have sufficient “affordable” housing (i.e., for those making less than area median income). However, low-income housing is extremely difficult to build in areas like Arlington, where land is expensive. At

such lower income levels, we need more public funding. As Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez has put it, “outsourcing development to the private market” is not a solution to the affordable housing problem.

For middle- and upper-income residents, the issue is different. It is simply not clear that more housing lowers prices for everyone. As the article recognizes, some studies show that if we dispense with zoning protections, developers will simply build more luxury homes. The homes built following such a change in Arlington reflect this marketplace behavior. The litigation referred to in the article challenges this zoning change as increasing density without adequately considering impacts on transportation, traffic, schools, and other crucial services.

**BILL RICHARDSON '73**  
Arlington, Va.

**CHARLES HENKIN '64**  
Arlington, Va.

Thank you for lifting up Princetonians on the front lines of the YIMBY movement. The fight for more homes is about affordability, access, and building great, walkable neighborhoods for young families and older Americans alike. Here in New York the legislative push for more housing is being led by my colleague Brian Kavanagh '89 as chair of the New York State Senate Housing Committee. He has had some huge successes with programs to help renters and homeowners stay in their homes and to secure funding in the budget for more housing construction and renovation.

I'm also proud to have championed a host of housing legislation tailored to upstate communities like Syracuse. My single-stair bill made it into the budget omnibus two years ago (though it is still stalled in the fire code process); last year we got a revolving loan fund for housing development into the budget; and this year the governor is pushing some of my proposed reforms of our

State Environmental Quality Review Act to boost infill development and reduce the pressure for more sprawl. I'm also spearheading an effort to allow cities to test a land value tax that would allow them to identify areas where differential taxation could spur owners of vacant land and surface parking to develop housing. Sen. Kavanagh and I have also supported the “YIGBY” (Yes in God's Backyard) movement, to relax zoning restrictions to allow houses of faith that have extra land to develop it for affordable and potentially supportive housing.

**RACHEL MAY '78**  
Syracuse, N.Y.

*Editor's note: The writer is state senator for New York's 48th District.*

Though many of the ideas espoused in the article may be good in principle, the author's embracing of the YIMBY and NIMBY labels is not constructive. It's important to keep in mind that

## SAVE THE DATE:

# ANNUAL 1746 SOCIETY REUNIONS BREAKFAST SEMINAR

**Saturday, May 23**

Princeton University Art Museum  
8-10 a.m.



Photo: Joseph Hu

### James Steward

Nancy A. Nasher-David J. Haemisegger,  
Class of 1976, Director of the  
Princeton University Art Museum

### FEATURED SPEAKER:

## James Steward

Nancy A. Nasher-David J. Haemisegger, Class of 1976,  
Director of the Princeton University Art Museum

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS

 for the annual 1746 Society Reunions Breakfast Seminar.

The 1746 Society gratefully acknowledges alumni and friends whose estate plans and life income gifts support Princeton's future. All members will receive an emailed invitation with a registration link. Those who are considering making a planned gift to Princeton are also welcome to register.

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the NIMBY name is a pejorative first created to attack those who oppose the so-called “pro-housing” movement. My personal experience trying to engage with these activists (who might be better categorized as YIYBY, or “Yes In *Your* Back Yard”) is that it’s much easier for them to label their opponents as obstructive than it is for them to understand the valid concerns many of us have about the negative aspects of neoliberal, market-based solutions to the housing problem.

**DOUG BROWN '91**

*Cambridge, Mass.*

**KEEPING IT REAL**

My heart sang when I read that the Class of 2026 had rejected an AI-derived beer jacket design (On the Campus, February issue). Lately it seems that in work, school, and daily life, many people are blithely embracing generative AI tools in spite of the fact that they consume enormous amounts of electricity and water, run on stolen intellectual property, and threaten to dim the spark of human creativity. Bravo to the Class of '26 for taking a stand!

**STEPHANIE SNOW RAMBLER '95**

*New York, N.Y.*

**COLLEGE SPORTS OUTLOOK**

The men’s basketball headline in the February issue asked, “Does a Sitting Star Signal Trouble for the Ivy League?” The Ivy League has lost some sports stars to high-profile athletic scholarship and friendly booster schools for years. It seems certain that revenue sharing and

NIL money will increase the losses. Are those losses of sports stars a threat to the institutional goals of any Ivy school?

**WILLIAM D. WATSON '65**

*Denver, Colo.*

Say goodbye to the days of Princeton men’s basketball making any noise at the national level. NIL means that the team’s best players will heed the siren call more and more. It’s only a matter of time before the same happens to the nationally ranked women’s team.

**PAUL HAUGE '80**

*Westfield, N.J.*

**MOUNT ATHOS TRAVELERS**

Why do people travel to Mount Athos in Greece? And is there a connection between Princeton and Mount Athos? We believe there is, and this belief led us to launch a multiyear project, “Connecting Histories: The Princeton and Mount Athos Legacy,” a collaborative effort supported by the art and archaeology department, the Seeger Center for Hellenic Studies, PIIRS, and several international grants.

Mount Athos is a remote peninsula in northeastern Greece governed by monks. Entrance is limited for men and prohibited to women. Yet Princeton houses remarkable materials connected to Mount Athos — such as Byzantine and post-Byzantine manuscripts, engravings, watercolors, photographic prints, lantern slides, and reels of film — because Princeton students and faculty have been drawn to Mount Athos time and again, bringing back with them or

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acquiring these collections. In some cases the collections have been forgotten or ignored, and in others, they have not been fully cataloged, digitized, and researched.

We are particularly interested in learning what draws travelers to Mount Athos. If you are a Princeton alumnus and have traveled to Mount Athos, we want to hear from you! We are compiling stories that will inform a symposium to be held on campus in September 2026. To plan this event, we are appealing to alumni to respond to a few prompts about your experiences, which you can either submit to have appear on our website or just share with event organizers, at [bit.ly/athoslegacy](http://bit.ly/athoslegacy).

**JULIA GEARHART**

Department of Art and Archaeology  
Princeton, N.J.

**MARIA ALESSIA ROSSI**

The Index of Medieval Art  
Princeton, N.J.

**YOUR PERSPECTIVE**

Let us know what you think

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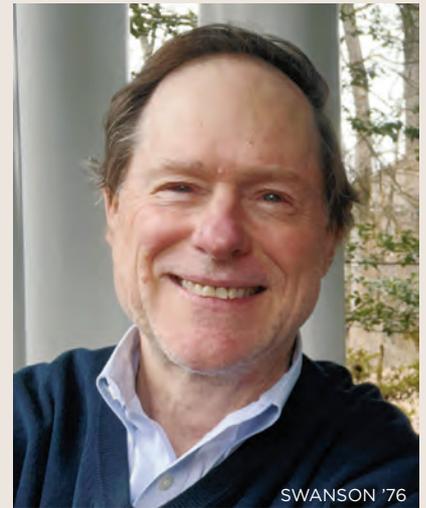
**Digging for Dinos**

Princeton's Allosaurus has moved from Guyot to the new Briger Hall. But how did the University acquire a dinosaur in the first place? In an essay from the PAW archives, **William W. Warner '43** recalls a memorable excavation in the Utah desert in the summer of 1941. Read it at [paw.princeton.edu/opinion](http://paw.princeton.edu/opinion).

**ESSAY**

**Wake-up Call**

**Brad Swanson '76**, an adjunct finance professor at George Mason University and author of the new book *Profit vs. Progress: Why Socially Responsible Investment Doesn't Work and How to Fix It*, penned an essay for PAW on the thesis of his book: The idea of socially responsible finance is a fraud. "What we do does not help solve critical social and environmental crises. In fact, it worsens them, by supporting a profits-first mentality, regardless of the consequences." Read it at [paw.princeton.edu/opinion](http://paw.princeton.edu/opinion).



SWANSON '76

**PAW BOOK CLUB**

**Upcoming Authors**

The PAW Book Club's latest author interview is ready for you to listen:



JAOUAD '10

**Suleika Jaouad '10** brilliantly answered members' questions about *Between Two Kingdoms*, her memoir of battling cancer and afterward finding her way

again. In a way, the book started with journaling, a passion she shared later in *The Book of Alchemy*. "There's a kind of power," she said, "when you dare to inhabit the first person with unvarnished vulnerability and honesty." Find the podcast at [paw.princeton.edu/pawcasts](http://paw.princeton.edu/pawcasts).

Now — drumroll, please — we're ready to announce our next two reads, selected by book club readers who answered our call for votes in January. (Thank you!) First up is *Fun City Heist*, a comedic crime novel by **Michael Kardos '92**, who grew up on and set this novel at the Jersey Shore. It follows a former drummer whose rock band wants to play one last show at their old beachfront amusement park — and rob it.

And then we'll read **Melody Chu O1's** breakout novel, *Mathey Girls*, about a group of friends named after their Princeton dorm. When one of them dies in childbirth, another steps in to support her husband and child.



# YOUR ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

## ALUMINARY

### Patrice Jean \*99

Chair, Princetoniana Committee

The Alumni Council Princetoniana Committee was established to preserve and share historical artifacts that help celebrate the culture and traditions of Old Nassau, so to chair that committee in 2026 — during the bicentennial of the Alumni Association and the semiquincentennial of the United States — is a special privilege for Patrice Jean \*99. “This campus is a part of the creation of this nation,” Jean said. “That gives you an extra special place in your heart for this community.”

Jean, an intellectual property attorney for Hughes Hubbard & Reed in New York City who was the second Black woman to receive a Princeton Ph.D. in molecular biology, has always loved research. As an undergraduate at Xavier University of Louisiana in New Orleans, she spent a summer conducting research on the Princeton campus with professor Mark Rose. When she subsequently enrolled as a graduate student, she focused on cancer research at the intersection of chemistry and biology. Members of her cohort visited the nearby Bristol Myers Squibb facility for collaborative research, and Jean was intrigued by the work of the patent attorneys she met there. With encouragement from her Princeton advisers, she enrolled at Columbia Law School a month after defending her dissertation. Today, she is the chair of Hughes Hubbard’s Life Sciences group, counseling leading and startup pharmaceutical, chemical and biotechnology companies in all areas of intellectual property law. “It’s the best of both worlds: I get to practice the law, which I find fascinating, and I still get to practice science, which I still love,” she said.

Jean became involved because she saw an opportunity for graduate students and alumni to have a larger voice in the community. She chaired Graduate Alumni Annual Giving, chaired the Reunions Committee for the Association of Princeton Graduate Alumni and co-chaired the Commission on Graduate Alumni Relations, which released a 2010 report with recommendations on how the University could make the experience of graduate students and alumni more equitable with that of undergraduates.

Joining the Princetoniana Committee presented a different — but equally fulfilling — opportunity to pursue Jean’s passion for research. During one Reunions, she had accompanied a group to Firestone Library and was amazed



Photo: Andrea Kane

to view an original copy of the Declaration of Independence and a block of tea from the Boston Tea Party. When she was invited to join Princetoniana, she didn’t hesitate. “It’s just so cool,” she said. “The University gets emails from people all the time asking about historical things, and those requests usually get directed to us. I’ll spend hours over at Mudd Library, and we try to find answers if we can.”

To celebrate 200 years of the Alumni Association, which began in 1826 with James Madison ’1771 \*1772 as its first president, the Alumni Council tapped Princetoniana to gather information about the history of the association. At Alumni Day on Feb. 21, Ryan Ruskin ’90, president of the Alumni Association, announced plans for an extended celebration and series of events — a joint effort between the Alumni Council and University Advancement — that will last more than 200 days and culminate with Orange & Black Day on Oct. 22. At the luncheon, Jean and University Archivist Dan Linke led a “Tiger Trivia” segment about the history of the Alumni Association.

Jean and the Princetoniana committee are providing 200 fun facts for the commemorative website. “Going through that whole process of trying to dig out gems of information about the University and its alumni has been thrilling,” she said. “And we’re preparing something special for the P-rade this year, where we’ll take a walk down memory lane. There’ll be lots of surprises throughout this celebration.”

# 2026 ALUMNI TRUSTEE ELECTION



Photo: Office of Communications, Denise Applewhite (2025)

Board of Trustees, 2025-26

## AT-LARGE ALUMNI TRUSTEE CANDIDATES

**EVERY YEAR**, the volunteer committee of the Alumni Council known as the Committee to Nominate Alumni Trustees (CTNAT) develops slates of alumni candidates for election to the Board of Trustees. Alumni trustees are elected for staggered four-year terms across the following categories: At-Large, Graduate Alumni, Recent Graduate School Alumni and Regional Alumni. There are two slates of candidates for the 2026 Alumni Trustee Election. Polls will open on April 8 and will close on May 13. All undergraduate and graduate alumni are eligible to vote on both slates. For more information visit: [alumni.princeton.edu/ctnat](https://alumni.princeton.edu/ctnat)



Owen D. Garrick '90  
*Oakland, CA*



John P. Lavelle Jr. '85  
*Bryn Mawr, PA*



Katharine O. Strunk '99  
*Gladwyne, PA*

## REGION III ALUMNI TRUSTEE CANDIDATES



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*Pasadena, CA*



Yung Bong Lim '87  
*Chicago, IL*



Jane H.S. Park '93  
*Seattle, WA*



# YOUR ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



Ryan Ruskin '90  
President of the Alumni Association and  
Chair of the Alumni Council

## DEAR TIGERS,

Perhaps it was the unusually cold weather that chilled swaths of the country in January and February, but the smiles and laughter that accompanied this year's Alumni Day have never felt so warm and welcome. To see old friends and make new ones on the campus that means so much to all of us was the perfect antidote to an uncooperative groundhog.

During Alumni Day on Feb. 21, we had the opportunity to celebrate Kevin Gover '78, the Woodrow Wilson Award winner, and Terence Tao '96, the James Madison Medalist, for excellence in their fields and their contributions to society. That the same ceremony in Richardson Auditorium included presentations from the Pyne Prize recipients and Jacobus Fellows — extraordinary undergraduate and graduate students, respectively — inspired such pride in the institution that molded them all. We also paid tribute to beloved Princetonians at the Service of Remembrance in the chapel, a uniquely Princeton event that embodies the lifelong relationship all alumni have with the University and each other.

This year's Alumni Day was particularly special because the Annual Meeting of the Alumni Association at Jadwin Gymnasium served as the kickoff celebration of the association's 200th anniversary. A video narrated by Charlie Gibson '65 was just the beginning of 200+ days of celebration and activities that will culminate with Orange & Black Day this fall. A 200 logo was unveiled and applied to special merchandise, celebratory pins were distributed and a website ([200.alumni.princeton.edu](http://200.alumni.princeton.edu)) was launched

to promote bicentennial events in the regions, provide fascinating historical trivia, report and track alumni volunteers' service hours and more. In addition, alumni groups can purchase fiberglass tigers to paint and decorate in spectacular fashion.

The Ad Hoc Committee on the 200th Anniversary has been working for more than a year to mark this milestone properly; and I'm so grateful to its chairs, Jennie Thompson '90 and Melissa Zdrodowski '94, for their creativity and leadership. The committee launched the Spark Fund to provide financial support for new and innovative ways to engage alumni throughout the regions, in their classes and through the affinity groups. Applications can be made through the 200th website.

Combined with our nation's semiquincentennial, our community has a lot to celebrate. Princeton's history is intertwined with America's; and it's humbling to stand in Maclean House and admire the portrait of James Madison, the inaugural president of what became our Alumni Association. For 200 years, our Alumni Association has grown and evolved alongside our University and our nation. Whatever decade we each graduated in, this is *our Princeton*, and this is *our time*. As we turn towards Reunions, we send a locomotive cheer to honor our history and the strength of 100,000-plus Tigers as we celebrate this incredible milestone.

Ryan Ruskin '90



More than 1,000 alumni and friends attended Alumni Day on campus, where they (1) heard presentations from this year's award winners, (2) posed with the supersized 200th anniversary foam sculpture in Jadwin Gymnasium, (3) attended the Service of Remembrance to honor Princetonians who had passed away, and (4) displayed their support for the Stand Up for Princeton and Higher Education initiative.

Photos: Andrea Kane; Sameer Khan/Fotobuddy; Tori Repp/Fotobuddy



# ON THE CAMPUS

NEWS, SPORTS, AND STUDENT LIFE



## STATE SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL

*Members of the New Jersey General Assembly and Senate convened in the Faculty Room of Nassau Hall on Feb. 5 for a special ceremonial session marking 250 years since the legislature's first official meeting there on Aug. 27, 1776. Assembly Speaker Craig J. Coughlin described the event as "a return to our beginnings ... at the dawn of a new and uncertain democracy."*

MATT RASPANTI / PRINCETON UNIVERSITY



## ALUMNI DAY

# Alumni Association Begins 200th Anniversary Celebration

Annual winter festivities honor math whiz Terence Tao '96, Smithsonian executive Kevin Gover '78, and star students

BY LIA OPPERMAN '25

**P** RINCETON KICKED OFF THE 200th anniversary of the Alumni Association at its Feb. 21 Alumni Day celebration, which drew more than 1,000 alumni and guests to campus.

"We want to engage as many of our 101,307 [alumni] as possible in this anniversary year," said Ryan Ruskin '90, Alumni Association president.

At a luncheon at Jadwin Gym, Ruskin encouraged alumni to participate in the hundreds of events coming up over the next 200 days to mark the bicentennial, from athletic gatherings to lectures. For less engaged alumni, he said: "Let them know that there's a place for them in the worldwide Princeton community."

Patrice Jean '99, chair of the Princetoniana Committee, and University archivist Dan Linke led a "Tiger Trivia" segment, highlighting the history of the Alumni Association.

They asked questions such as, "What founder of the United States was also

the first president of the Princeton Alumni Association?" The answer: James Madison, Class of 1771.

This year, a registration fee of \$45 for alumni who graduated before 2016, or \$25 for recent alumni, was reinstated for the first time since 2021. Attendance was roughly in line with the average of the four years since the event returned after a pandemic pause (ranging from about 750 attendees in 2022 to 1,400 last year, according to the Alumni Association).

**Alumni Day began in a nearly full** Richardson Auditorium with an awards presentation honoring notable alumni and current students.

Terence Tao '96, a professor of mathematics at the University of California, Los Angeles, and this year's James Madison Medal recipient, was the opening speaker. The award is annually presented to an alumnus of the Graduate School "who has had a distinguished

## FEBRUARY FETE

*Ryan Ruskin '90 kicks off the Alumni Association bicentennial at Jadwin Gymnasium. Opposite: Terence Tao '96, left, and Kevin Gover '78 speak in Richardson Auditorium.*

career, advanced the cause of graduate education, or achieved a record of outstanding public service."

Rodney Priestley, dean of the Graduate School, introduced Tao as the "Mozart of math," whose work has led to multiple pathbreaking discoveries and real-world tools, including developing algorithms to speed up MRI scans. In 2014, Tao won the Breakthrough Prize in Mathematics and gave away much of the \$3 million award to endow fellowships for graduate students from developing countries and for gifted American high school students. He has also spoken up against federal cuts to university research and funding.

Tao, raised in Australia, was brought to the Institute of Advanced Study by his father when he was just 9 years old to meet with famed mathematicians and judge his potential. "His father wanted to know, 'Does this kid have real talent?'" Priestley said. The answer was clear eight years later when Tao entered Princeton for graduate study at 17. "I skipped a lot of grades," he said.

Tao credited Princeton and his adviser, Elias Stein, for pushing him to mature professionally and academically. He said that Stein told him mathematics is not just about proving theorems: Service is important, and he should always look for ways to serve his broader community.

In his lecture, Tao argued that mathematics is entering a period of transformation driven by new technologies, including artificial intelligence. He explained a shift from "math by depth" to "math by breadth," in which large sets of problems, including the longstanding Erdős problems, can be scanned with computational and AI tools. Recent AI tools, he said, have helped uncover solutions previously missed in literature, and in a small number of cases, have found solutions to some of the easier Erdős problems. These tools, he argued, lower the barriers to math research.

Tao spoke up against federal funding



cuts as a “combination of both general philosophy and existential need,” after his work had its National Science Foundation funding suspended for several months in 2025 before it was restored with a court order.

**Kevin Gover '78, under secretary** for museums and culture at the Smithsonian, won the Woodrow Wilson Award, which is awarded each year to an undergraduate alumnus or alumna whose achievements exemplify the phrase, “Princeton in the nation’s service.”

Michael Gordin, dean of the college, introduced Gover, a Pawnee Nation citizen, as a longtime leader in federal Indian law and public service. Gover spent years advancing tribal sovereignty and served as assistant secretary for Indian affairs in the Department of the Interior during the Clinton administration. He rebuilt long-neglected schools run by the Bureau of Indian Affairs that had been unsafe and unfit for children and learning and expanded tribal and Bureau of Indian Affairs police forces throughout the country. He later directed the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian for 14 years before assuming his current position.

While at Princeton, Gover attended student protests against apartheid in South Africa and wrote opinion pieces for *The Daily Princetonian*. “Kevin stood up for his fellow classmates and spoke up for access and inclusivity,” Gordin said.

In his lecture, Gover reflected on the past half-century of Native American



advocacy and described bipartisan legislative milestones that strengthened tribal sovereignty, including self-determination policies and the establishment of the National Museum of the American Indian, and emphasized the progress tribes have made in governance, economic development, and cultural preservation.

He also addressed the challenges facing federal institutions and argued that attacks on the Smithsonian are “an attack on knowledge itself.” He remained optimistic and emphasized that truth will prevail. “There are more of us who believe in the virtue of knowledge than there are those who don’t,” he said, noting that while President Donald Trump proposed a 12% decrease in the Smithsonian budget, Congress ultimately approved a 1% increase.

Gover praised Princeton’s Native alumni and students. “Princeton has been in the service of the Native nations. Having met with the small but mighty cohort of Native students now at Princeton and the faculty working on Native American subjects, I’m confident that Princeton will continue to serve the Native nations,” he said.

**President Christopher Eisgruber '83** recognized current students with two of Princeton’s top academic honors, the Moses Taylor Pyne Honor Prize and the Porter Ogden Jacobus Fellowships.

Braeden Carroll '26, a civil and environmental engineering major from Kinnelon, New Jersey, and Katie Daniels '26, a neuroscience major from Newtown, Pennsylvania, were awarded

the Pyne Prize, Princeton’s highest general distinction for undergraduates.

Carroll, a varsity lightweight rower, described the experience of finding community in the boathouse and the classroom alike, and credited teammates, professors, and classmates with pushing him to pursue his goals. His research has ranged from sustainable infrastructure design to modeling structural forces in historic timber barns, all rooted in building both physically and socially sustainable systems.

He framed his Princeton experience through the metaphor of an elevator, one that’s lifted him to new possibilities. “I will step forward determined to uphold the generosity, leadership, and character that the Pyne Prize represents, and I’m absolutely certain that when I step out of the elevator in a few short months, the view will be nothing short of breathtaking,” he said.

In her speech, Daniels focused on messages of affirmation and inspiration that shaped who she is and who she aspires to be. Following her experiences with multiple concussions as a teenager, Daniels felt inspired to pursue research on the neurological impact of repetitive brain injury, work that has already led to a peer-reviewed publication.

“I aim to live by the lessons I learned at Princeton ... to answer the big ‘I don’t know’ questions while also finding moments to support individuals, one at a time, by treating the smallest interactions with great care and attention,” said Daniels, who aims to have a career in academic medicine.

Four doctoral students, Philip Decker (history), Victor Geadah (applied and computational mathematics), Sayash Kapoor (computer science), and Eliana Rozinov (English and gender and sexuality studies), received the Jacobus Fellowships, which provide a year of tuition and stipend for the honorees.

The program concluded with the annual Service of Remembrance at the University Chapel, which paid tribute to alumni, faculty, and staff who died in the last year. At a closing reception at the Art Museum, alumni toasted the 200th anniversary of the Alumni Association. ■



PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER  
EISGRUBER '83

## ADMINISTRATION

# Experts Debate Eisgruber's 'Constrained' Budget Strategy

BY JULIE BONETTE

**D**ECLINING AVERAGE endowment returns, political headwinds, and a gradual change to Princeton's income structure over the past few decades are some of the reasons financial experts largely endorsed President Christopher Eisgruber '83's announcement that the University is adopting a new, more austere budget strategy.

Directly following the conclusion of Venture Forward — which Eisgruber called Princeton's most successful capital campaign at a Council of the Princeton University Community meeting in February — the University is focusing on "efficiency and substitution rather than addition," according to Eisgruber's annual State of the University letter, released Feb. 2. The University's operating budget will recognize "a lot of constraint," he said at the February CPUC meeting.

PAW spoke with six experts — including former members of the University's Board of Trustees, major University donors, former employees of Princeton University Investment Co. (Princo), and managers of investment

firms — and five supported Eisgruber's new financial strategy.

Ted Karns, a managing director at Princo from 2008 to 2023 and author of the 2026 book *A Compounding Life: Lessons in Long-Term Thinking from a Leading Endowment*, praised Eisgruber's "reasoning and honesty," and said the issue "is not one institution's problem, it is a secular shift," adding that he "watched this compression happen in real time." In his letter, Eisgruber included a graph of annualized returns for Princeton and several peer schools that showed a decline across the board over the past two decades.

Karns cautioned that "a lower expected return does not just change a spreadsheet, it means telling a campus and a board that there will be less to go around. It means making hard choices."

University departments have already cut 5% to 7% of their budgets since last spring, according to Eisgruber's letter, including changes such as the cancellation of Wintersession. This year, Princeton is planning to have a

smaller incoming graduate cohort and a 1% raise or no raise for many faculty and staff. In a February email to faculty and staff, the University said headcount will decline but has not announced any layoffs.

Paul Haaga Jr. '70, a former University trustee, former chair of the Capital Research and Management Co., and a major donor to Princeton, maintains cutting the budget won't be that difficult. "I see [cutbacks around 5%] as being within the desirable range of rethinking things more than being disruptive," he said, adding that Princeton would likely be slowing down spending anyway given that most of the 10-year campus plan has been completed.

**Not everyone supports Eisgruber's** new strategy. Leonard Milberg '53, a major University donor and chairman of the commercial finance firm Milberg Factors, wrote an op-ed in *The Daily Princetonian* last year warning that "Princeton's investment strategy is, I believe, far too risky," because of its dependence on illiquid assets, such as private equity investments. In his February letter, Eisgruber noted that the University previously benefited from investing in long-term, illiquid assets, which have become increasingly popular with investors outside of the higher ed sector.

In an interview with PAW, Milberg criticized the timing of the budget shift, announced so soon after the end of a successful campaign. "How can you go around to the people who gave you [funds for Venture Forward] ... and say, 'Oh, by the way, we need [more]?"

Brad Swanson '76, a partner at Developing World Markets and author of the forthcoming book *Profit vs. Progress: Why Socially Responsible Investment Doesn't Work and How to Fix It*, said Eisgruber is "smart to recognize the new conservatism coming about in portfolio management" given that "every institution has to deal with the decreasing profitability relative to other assets" such as private equity. But Swanson also warned that expecting 8%

average endowment returns, as Eisgruber noted, “frankly ... seems a bit optimistic to me.”

Given that “we are in a very difficult period in terms of financing higher education,” expecting lower endowment returns than in the past is “completely reasonable,” said Phillip Levine ’90, an economics professor at Wellesley College, but it’s not an exact science. “You’re making an informed but imperfect forecast.”

Levine authored a piece published by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* two weeks before Eisgruber’s letter that predicted long-term financial problems for higher education due to factors such as new Trump administration policies and operating costs in the sector that have been rising faster than inflation for decades. In addition, an upcoming demographic cliff — an annual decline in the number of high school graduates — could pose problems.

Levine told PAW that Eisgruber’s decision to scale back “is placing [Princeton] in a better position than what many other institutions are experiencing, which are outright cuts.”

Carl Ferenbach III ’64, a former director of Princo, co-founder of Berkshire Partners, and co-founder with his wife of the High Meadows Foundation, a major University donor, recalled when Eisgruber as provost helped steer the University through the 2008 recession while Ferenbach was on Princeton’s Board of Trustees. “He’s tried, true, and tested in terms of needing to make an adjustment like the one that he’s laid out, and it’s absolutely the right thing to do.”

Ferenbach said universities as a whole now rely more on endowments to fund operating budgets than previously. According to a 2026 *Higher Ed Dive* article, “On average, endowments funded 15.2% of colleges’ annual operating budgets last year. That’s up from 14% in fiscal 2024 and 10.9% in 2023.” This academic year, the endowment will fund 64.5% of Princeton’s operating budget. In 2012-13, the year before Eisgruber became president, the endowment funded 47% of the budget. ■

## HEALTH AND WELLNESS

# Alumni Form Coalition To Support Mental Health

BY JULIE BONETTE

**W**HEN TIFFANIE CHENG WU ’24 celebrated Reunions on campus, it was the first time since her first few days as an undergraduate that she felt “at ease, truly, at Princeton.” The pressure that often comes along with being a Princeton student had melted away.

As a former mental health committee co-chair for the Undergraduate Student Government (USG), Wu was inspired after Reunions 2025 to reach out to other alumni to “continue that effort, because I know there’s so much work that needs to be done” when it comes to addressing mental health at the University.



WU ’24

The first meeting of the new Princeton Alumni Mental Health Coalition was held in July with about 10 people. Now there are about 40 members, and the group meets monthly, according to Wu, who is currently working toward a master’s in social work at Columbia. The coalition has a website ([princetonalumnimhc.org](http://princetonalumnimhc.org)) and applied for 501(c)(3) status in February in order to fundraise as a nonprofit.

At this year’s Reunions, the coalition plans to exhibit submissions from alumni and current students sharing personal stories about mental health. Submissions can be a song, dance, poem, or other formats, and participants may share anonymously if they choose.

“Hopefully we can learn something by talking to one another and help the [University] administration learn from our experiences as a broad array of alumni from different decades, different regions, different experiences,” said Michael Salama ’24, a documentary filmmaker who is leading the coalition’s storytelling and testimonial subcommittee. Salama hopes current students will relate to and be encouraged by alumni speaking about some of the same mental health difficulties they faced while at Princeton, but who still went on to lead successful lives.

The coalition is partnering closely with the current USG administration on the exhibit as well as the new joint One Too Many campaign, which is also meant to raise awareness about student deaths and mental health. (According to the campaign website, seven Princeton students have died by suicide since 2021.) The two groups have been regularly attending meetings together and are currently drafting a letter to the administration, which they hope to send in April, outlining related policy proposals.

“I would just love for the coalition to be more looped into some of the things that

**“Hopefully we can learn something by talking to one another and help the [University] administration learn from our experiences as a broad array of alumni from different decades, different regions, different experiences.”**

— MICHAEL SALAMA ’24  
Leader of the Princeton Alumni Mental Health Coalition storytelling and testimonial subcommittee

the undergraduates are currently struggling with,” said Aakash Yerpude ’27, the current USG mental health chair, because “students see so much value in alumni.”

According to Yerpude, the USG and alumni coalition partnership is “an effort to make Princeton students feel less alone in their mental health struggles.” ■



PINE BARREN GENTIAN

## STUDENT DISPATCH

# Princeton and the Pine Barrens

BY HANNAH FLOYD '27



**L**ESS THAN AN HOUR SOUTH OF Princeton's stone archways and ivy-covered walls, the landscape transforms dramatically. Suburbia gives way to one-lane traffic in both directions, the sides of the road decorated by the rich greens of cedars and pines and, in the fall, the kaleidoscopic golds and reds of oaks and beeches. The soil underfoot becomes sandy white and acidic, and the air thickens with the scent of sun-warmed pine resin. This is the New Jersey Pine Barrens, over one million acres of some of the last remnants of the Atlantic coastal pine barrens ecosystem. Despite its proximity to campus, the region remains largely unknown to most Princeton students and even some lifelong New Jersey residents.

I first set foot in the Pine Barrens two months into my freshman year

at Princeton. I grew up near Boulder, Colorado, where pine forests belonged, in my mind, to mountains and to the West. So, when I heard about a weekend trip sponsored by the student-run Princeton Conservation Society (PCS) to a "pine forest" in New Jersey, I was immediately intrigued. I clambered into the crowded backseat of a rental car with other students, watching the familiar Princeton landscape whiz by and the Pine Barrens take shape.

That crisp October morning, we met with Jason Howell, the public lands advocate for the Pinelands Alliance. He took us on a tour of parts of Wharton State Forest, explaining how the ecosystem's sandy, nutrient-poor soils shape everything from native plant biodiversity to water flow — and how fire is a necessary and natural component of how the Pine Barrens function. He picked up a peeling pinecone, telling us that this was from a pitch pine, a species that depends on recurring fires to reproduce.

PCS continues to work closely with the Pinelands Alliance, returning annually for fall outings and participating in local activism. For example, in December 2023, PCS members, alongside dozens of local supporters and residents, were

involved in a successful effort to advocate for the repeal of a redevelopment agreement at a Pemberton Township Council meeting. The council voted 4–1 in favor of the repeal. For me, this off-campus activism and engagement has been integral to my experience as a Princeton student: learning not only in lecture halls and seminar discussions, but also in civic spaces beyond the University's borders.

At the time of that first visit, I was unaware of a rich history of Princeton student and alumni involvement in the Pine Barrens. But months later, as a PAW student intern, I stumbled across the Pine Barrens in an April 1971 issue of the magazine.

## In the 1970s, Princeton student

Tom Givnish '73 \*77 — along with a team of other undergraduates and Professor David Kinsman — were awarded a National Science Foundation grant to study the potential impacts of a water withdrawal scheme on the cedar swamps of the Pine Barrens. Over a series of email correspondence and Zoom meetings with Givnish, now professor emeritus of botany at the University of Wisconsin, I learned more about this project spanning ecology, geology, chemistry, and land use issues. Givnish recalled how drawing down water tables could leave these rare wetland habitats "high and dry." Such exposure effectively eliminated the natural barrier to potentially rapid wildfire spread. Additionally, cedar swamps support some of the rarest plants in the Pine Barrens, and draining these areas degrades the soil until they are essentially unlivable for these species. In another conversation, Givnish told me that the project received attention at the time and that now, decades later, groundwater protection still demands public attention.

Just before Givnish came to Princeton, another Princeton alumnus was also exploring these sandy backroads. John McPhee '53's *The Pine Barrens* first appeared in *The New Yorker* in 1967 and was published as a book in 1968, helping to make this region legible to a national audience. Last fall, I visited McPhee, the longtime Ferris Professor of Journalism, at

his home in Princeton, where we chatted about his decades-long involvement in the Pine Barrens. White-tailed deer ambled across his backyard as McPhee told me how he initially went looking for a story to write for *The New Yorker*, discovering the Pine Barrens almost by accident after a friend suggested it to him. He remembers it as a wild place that simply existed, with little political oversight. When I asked him how the landscape has changed, I was surprised to hear him say that it still seems the same to him. Nevertheless, McPhee worries, saying he hopes “that some semblance of it still exists” in the future.

I returned to the Pine Barrens again in November, this time with a notebook and pen in hand. Speaking again with Howell, I more clearly appreciated how the pressures Givnish recognized decades ago persist, in addition to newer challenges with recurring land disputes and disruptions in natural fire cycles. As Howell wove deftly around potholes down winding backroads, he pointed out groves of blackened trunks from large fires, as well as yellow signs demarcating a confusing web of public and private lands. We stopped at one point to look at a bulldozer parked in a clearing where he reflected on the “race” to buy private land and protect it for future generations.

We visited the Black Run Preserve, a hotbed of activism today and also reminiscent of Givnish’s concerns from half a century ago. The area is a critical watershed, and old zoning rules would have allowed the habitat to be built over, degrading special habitat and water quality. Howell and the Pinelands Alliance are currently advocating for a total protection of this land. Development proposals still surface, and successful, enduring preservation will depend on sustained vigilance and engagement.

For Princeton, the Pine Barrens is a place that has been repeatedly encountered, interpreted, studied, and defended by a small but dedicated cadre of students and alumni. Whether experienced through coursework, storytelling, or a weekend visit, the Pine Barrens continue to ask what role future Princetonians will have. ■

## CLASS CLOSE-UP

# Politics Course Branches Into Executive Power

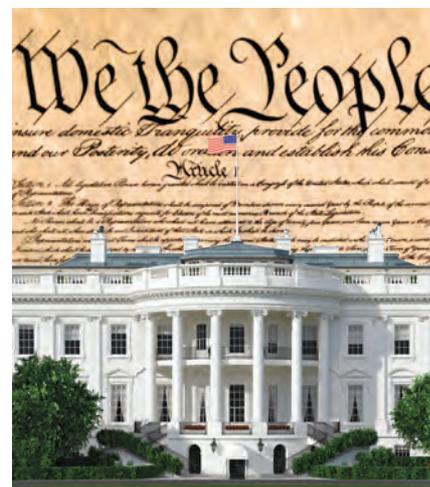
BY JULIE BONETTE

**I**N A COURSE OFFERED FOR THE first time this spring, The Constitution and the Presidency, students reference hundreds-of-years-old documents to support their judgments on pertinent issues, including some cases currently before the courts. Matthew Franck, a lecturer in politics at Princeton and professor emeritus of political science at Radford University, hopes that by the end of the semester, students will have a foundation from which to answer complicated questions about the executive branch that are up for debate.

“We’re living in a very interesting time for issues regarding the constitutional law ... surrounding various presidential decisions that are being made on immigration and so forth,” said Franck. “And I want students to be able to relate the constitutional history we learn about in this course to those events so that they have an intelligent understanding of the boundaries of executive power, the limitations on executive power, [and] the relationship that branch has with the other branches of government.”

In one class on the removal power of the president, students reviewed a 1935 Supreme Court case — *Humphrey’s Executor v. United States* — in which the court decided that the Constitution allows Congress to enact laws to limit the president’s power to remove people from roles at independent quasi-judicial agencies, like the Federal Trade Commission. The precedent “is directly under challenge right now,” Franck said, in *Trump v. Slaughter*, in which former FTC commissioner Rebecca Slaughter is contesting her firing by the president.

The seminar, which has 10 students across a range of majors and years, meets twice a week in Morrison Hall to discuss readings and topical questions



that arise. The reading list leans heavily on primary sources, such as the Constitution and Supreme Court cases, but also includes authors spanning from Founding Fathers Alexander Hamilton and James Madison 1771 to Keith Whittington, a professor emeritus at Princeton who is now at Yale.

“We’re having fun already with very good discussions,” Franck said two weeks into the semester, “so it’s a lively bunch — good students.”

For the midterm and final, students are handwriting closed-book, closed-note essays. They’re also responsible for a book review presentation and paper.

Sophie O’Connor, a sophomore politics major, enrolled because executive power is “a very prevalent topic right now. So, I was excited to dive into all sorts of aspects of the executive to really understand what’s going on in our country.”

Economics major Andrew Park ’26 appreciates that Franck attempts to present material without a point of view. “I think you have people from different perspectives here,” he said. “So, I think it’s very helpful to just genuinely be able to enter a political theory class that is relatively unfettered by political biases.” ■



## ACADEMICS

# A's Are Rising at Princeton, With No Changes in Sight

BY SOFIA CIPRIANO '27

**T**WO-THIRDS OF PRINCETON course grades are in the A range, according to the most recent annual Undergraduate Grading Report, published in December. While several peer institutions have recently faced scrutiny for climbing GPAs — including Harvard, where flat A's dropped from 60% to 53% in the fall semester after instructors were urged to curb grade inflation — Princeton has largely stayed out of the spotlight. But the numbers show that the University is no exception to trends elsewhere.

Until 2014, Princeton's so-called grade deflation policy recommended that no more than 35% of course grades in each department were A's. Engineering professor Clarence Rowley '95, who chaired an ad hoc committee tasked with reviewing the policy in 2014, told PAW that the policy was often misunderstood to mean that only 35% of grades in each course could be in the A range (A+, A, or

A-). The 2014 ad hoc committee report recommended abandoning the policy, citing the stress it was causing students.

"The biggest negative side effect was really the perception that there was this cap on A-range grades, and that led students to feel stress," Rowley told PAW in January. Since 2014, it has been up to individual departments to establish and periodically review grading standards. This policy had the unintended effect of steadily increasing the number of A-grades awarded.

The 2014 committee may have been "overly optimistic to think that we could curb grade inflation by leaving things up to departments," Rowley said. He sees this trend as concerning, as grade inflation "blurs the distinction between work that is adequate and work that is exceptional."

Professor Fred Hughson, who teaches molecular biology, noted that grade inflation makes it harder for medical

schools and other graduate programs to make distinctions between applicants.

Princeton's old grading policy "was helping students who could send a very clear signal that they were really academically outstanding, which is a lot harder to send now," Hughson said. He added, however, that he did not think most faculty were concerned about grade inflation. In an email to PAW, Dean of the College Michael Gordin said there are currently no plans to change the University's policy on grading.

"It does devalue individual work when a wide range of products that differ quite a bit in quality receive the same grade, and I think that frustrates students," said Sander McComiskey '26, a senior in the School of Public and International Affairs. "It's harder for employers or professors or departments to tell who is really putting in the most work and who's the best performer."

The 2014 committee found that, despite what many claimed, grade deflation at Princeton did not adversely impact students in graduate school applications or the job market search. Kimberly Betz, the executive director of the Center for Career Development, said that grade inflation does not hinder students, either.

"Across the board, employers know that Princeton has students who are strong academically, who do good work. So employers value a Princeton education. The extent to which they look at GPAs is just really going to vary by industry and by employer," she said, emphasizing that most employers consider applicants holistically.

## Not all professors see grade inflation

as an issue. In an emailed statement to PAW, Smita Brunnermeier, an economics professor and the department's executive director of undergraduate studies, said that rising grades in economics courses "accurately reflect student performance on exams and the rising quality of thesis submissions." She added, "This isn't because students have become smarter over time or that standards have been lowered; rather students have access to significantly more resources to turn in

excellent work than were available to them a decade ago.”

English professor William Gleason, who has been teaching at Princeton since 1993 and was part of the 2014 committee, maintains that fears of grade inflation are overblown. He said that use of the word “inflation” makes it “feel like grades are being artificially puffed up” when this is not necessarily the case.

“If you set out clear guidelines, give students clear feedback, and show them how to achieve what you’ve asked them to achieve, then they’ll get the grades they deserve. If those are higher than they used to be, then it’s because more students are doing that, and because we’re not capping [A’s] anymore,” he said. He stressed the importance of giving students detailed feedback on their work — one of the main recommendations from the 2014 committee’s report.

Undergraduate Student Government president Quentin Colón Roosevelt ’27 suggested that grade inflation is not top of mind for most students. Focusing on grade inflation “obfuscates how challenging Princeton is, no matter what. I hear from people who get straight A’s that they’re still being very challenged by their coursework,” he said.

He added that A-range grades are a marker of the student body’s strong academic performance. “As Princeton has gotten more and more selective, the kids who get here are going to be more and more committed to academics, more and more prepared to handle Princeton’s level of rigor,” he said.

Hannah Feinberg ’28, who plans to major in chemistry, said, “I’m glad there are high standards, and I am definitely being challenged, but I often feel stressed, and I know fellow students feel the same way. I think there should be a happy middle.” She added: “I appreciate the fact that my grades are earned.”

The latest grading report said that only the natural sciences awarded A grades to fewer than 50% of students in 100- and 200-level courses. Historically, natural sciences and engineering courses have given fewer A’s than those in the humanities and social sciences.

Despite rising GPAs, students and faculty noted that student stress seems higher than ever.

“Students are much more focused on grades now than they were when I was a student, even though grades are, as you can see from that data, far higher than they were in the 1990s,” said Rowley, who majored in mechanical and aerospace engineering as an undergrad.

Hughson, who has been teaching at Princeton for 31 years, also said students seem more pressured than ever. “When most of the grades are A’s, the perceived insult of getting a B is much higher,” he said.

“Students here struggle under academic rigor and inflexibility,” said Colón Roosevelt, the USG president, who pointed to numerous factors contributing to students’ mental state. “This is an institution where you tie your success and your self worth so often to your academic performance.”

## IN MEMORIAM

**Wolfgang Danspeckgruber**, an influential scholar of international diplomacy and founding director of Princeton’s Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination, died Feb. 17 at age 70. Danspeckgruber, a member of the School of Public and International Affairs



faculty for nearly four decades, mentored aspiring diplomats and drew on his experiences to lead campus discussions of current events, from the war in the Balkans in the 1990s through the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan in the 2020s. Andrew Moravcsik, current director of the institute, said in a University obituary that Danspeckgruber “had a nose for hot emerging issues and the energy to get involved and up to speed fast, even in the most difficult environments.” He also brought prominent leaders to campus, teaching courses alongside former Portuguese prime minister José Manuel Durao Barroso and former German vice-chancellor Joschka Fischer.

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CONNOR ODOM '27, LEFT,  
AND JOE MCLEAN '27

## STUDENT LIFE

# Campus Goes Hollywood with Princeton Pictures

BY JAMES SWINEHART '27

**C**LINTON, 20, SCROLLS THROUGH his phone until he comes across a video of Momo-Chan, a cream-coated Shiba Inu from Japan. He grows increasingly obsessed with the pooch, consuming hours of videos and breaking up with his girlfriend when she cannot fulfill his newfound desire for belly rubs. Tensions climax as Clinton performs a dramatic performance art piece, undergoing metamorphosis and becoming Momo-Chan himself. Viewers learn that chasing pet-like adoration is ultimately futile compared to real, human love.

When Joe McLean '27 first pitched this outline for what would become the short film *Momo-Chan* to Princeton Pictures (PPic) in fall 2025, it was unlike any idea Princeton's student filmmaking club had ever heard. But the pitch worked, and McLean received the green light. *Momo-Chan* would see the silver screen of the McCosh 10 lecture hall and become the club's most lauded project.

PPic, founded in 2023 as a post-COVID spinoff of the now defunct Princeton Film Productions, acts as a production company, overseeing student-run

film projects and providing them with resources and structure. Student filmmakers such as McLean pitch their ideas to PPic's board of student executives, and in turn PPic supplies filmmakers with equipment, crew, streamlined casting, and a glamorous premiere event. The club now produces three films per semester, totaling a dozen in its brief history.

Connor Odom '27, former president and a founding member of PPic, started the club with Kate Stewart '25, an art and archaeology and visual arts student, and Hailey Mead '24, the treasurer of Princeton Film Productions.

"Our goal is to encourage community involvement in the filmmaking process," Odom said. "If you're a part of the films, you'll meet like-minded peers, you'll meet filmmaking alumni, you'll have a great network in the process."

**In addition to aspiring filmmakers,** the club features athletes, tour guides, a cappella singers, and more to create and act in the films. From writer-directors pitching scripts at the beginning of the semester, to the executive greenlight, to

the grand release, each project enlists upward of two dozen cast and crew members. Anyone with a boom mic, camera, or the will to act is invited.

Where campus really comes together around PPic, though, is at the premieres. Once a semester in McCosh 10, the club swaps the hall's usual microeconomics or neuroscience lectures for an evening screening — and they go all out.

As Odom explained, groups like the Triangle Club and dance ensembles generate hype for "huge 'you-have-to-go' events." So Odom decided to take a similar approach, drawing on Hollywood premieres. PPic rolls out a red carpet at McCosh and stations photographers alongside as attendees enter for the showing. Some wear suits or gowns (and others wear Princeton hoodies) as cameras flash before a PPic-branded step and repeat backdrop. "It's less of a 'let's go support my friends' event now, and more of a 'let's go to this because it's fun' thing," Odom said.

At the last premiere in December, students from all walks of campus life rushed away from the flickering cameras and poured into the lecture hall to take their seats. The building roared with applause as students enjoyed the semester's three films — rom-com mockumentary *Proof of Love*, the psychological thriller *Baby Bagel*, and the aforementioned doggy drama, *Momo-Chan*.

"Our campus is a small orange bubble made up of even smaller orange bubbles," Odom said. "The way you build a thing here is by combining those things together. Film is one of the most collaborative mediums there is, and that's why people come."

The club intends to keep its three-films-per-semester model, but Odom has bigger aspirations, hoping to expand to providing resources to more independent films across campus and ultimately situate Princeton as a player in the media world. "Harvard was a hub for *SNL*, Oxford and Cambridge were hubs for *Monty Python*, and I hope for Princeton to be a hub for the next big thing," he said. "We have the creativity, community, and entrepreneurial drive to have that here, and we ought to fulfill that vision." ■

COURTESY OF CONNOR ODOM '27



# Dear Tigers,

We can't wait to see you back on campus for Reunions 2026, **May 21-24!**

Here are a few things to keep in mind as you plan your trip back to the Best Old Place of All!

- ✓ **Registration is open and required prior to check-in!** Reminder: Satellite class alumni can register only **one guest**.
- ✓ Plan to attend the **Annual Meeting of the Alumni Council** at 11 a.m. on Friday, May 22, in Richardson Auditorium. Celebrate your fellow alumni, learn more about the Alumni Association and cheer on award winners.
- ✓ Sign up your kids for **Tiger Camp**, administered by YWCA Princeton, on May 22 and 23. Spaces are filling up quickly, so don't delay.
- ✓ The **Stadium Parking Garage** is a great option for parking and offers electric vehicle charging stations. Electric buses will be transporting alumni and friends to locations around the perimeter of the campus, and Tiger Trolleys will be shuttling alumni up and down Elm Drive.
- ✓ Alumni with accessibility needs can indicate them on the Reunions registration form. Questions? Contact [pureunions@princeton.edu](mailto:pureunions@princeton.edu)
- ✓ **Be Green.** Bring your own water bottle to campus and place compostable cups in the proper collection bins.
- ✓ Get ready to celebrate the Alumni Association's **200th anniversary**. (Extra orange-and-black attire required!)
- ✓ Visit [reunions.princeton.edu](https://reunions.princeton.edu) to learn more and read the latest updates!

With love,  
*Princeton*



Photos: Andrea Kane; Fotobuddy



## FACULTY

# Padilla Peralta '06 Headed to ASU, Says He Was Targeted at Princeton

BY JULIE BONETTE

**A**FTER A DECADE OF TEACHING at Princeton, classics professor Dan-el Padilla Peralta '06 is departing this summer both to fulfill his desire to work at a public institution and to leave an environment in which he said he feels targeted and undermined.

At Arizona State University, where Padilla Peralta will start in August, he will be a professor in the School of International Letters and Culture and will teach courses on “ancient Mediterranean histories, literatures, and cultures,” according to an Arizona State announcement.

Regarding his departure from Princeton, Padilla Peralta told PAW via email that when news of his recommended promotion to full professor in the summer of 2024 leaked

to *The Washington Free Beacon* before it was official, it “effectively put a target on my back.” After another leak of materials he had prepared for faculty in advance of a faculty meeting, “it became hard to escape the impression that some faculty were intent on undermining if not actively jeopardizing the careers of their colleagues who spoke out in defense of Palestinian rights and/or in support of a more empowering and publicly minded approach to faculty governance.”

He cited a “senior faculty member in the sciences who stared me down” as they called who Padilla Peralta assumes was a member of the media following a faculty meeting.

“In response to an email from me about [the second] leak, Dean [of the Faculty Gene] Jarrett regretted the

‘unfortunate breach of our protocol’ but stated that there would not be an investigation into how these materials became public,” according to Padilla Peralta.

The University declined to comment to PAW.

Padilla Peralta was a vocal advocate for Palestinians during the Israel-Hamas war, working with colleagues to introduce proposals at faculty meetings that defended student activists. In 2020, he campaigned for Princeton to do more to dismantle inherent racism and biases after University trustees removed Woodrow Wilson 1879’s name from the School of Public and International Affairs and

a residential college, given the former president’s racism.

Padilla Peralta told PAW he hopes Princeton can develop new governance structures to cultivate “an ethos of shared governance that acknowledges, and wherever possible seeks to act on, the responsibilities of the University to the local community at times of crisis and around specific crises” such as the Israel-Hamas war, immigration issues, and trans rights.

Padilla Peralta has a history going back several years with Arizona State; he spoke in 2021 at a symposium for RaceB4Race, which is “a cross-institutional scholarly community for scholars and students of premodern critical race studies,” according to the organization’s website, and later became an executive member of the board, a position he still holds. Padilla Peralta will be an affiliate of the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies (ACMRS), which houses RaceB4Race; he is currently a member of the ACMRS press editorial board.

As a self-described “mission-driven person,” he is excited to join the Arizona State faculty. “I relish few things more than being in community with fellow knowledge-workers who understand excellence in research and teaching holistically, and not as an aridly compartmentalized end in itself.”

Padilla Peralta came to Princeton on a full scholarship to study classics and graduated *summa cum laude* as salutatorian. Upon his graduation, Padilla Peralta was awarded a two-year scholarship to study in England as a Sachs Scholar. He received his Ph.D. in classics from Stanford University, then spent two years as a postdoctoral researcher at Columbia before joining Princeton’s faculty in 2016.

In addition to his role in the Department of Classics at Princeton, Padilla Peralta is faculty coordinator of the University’s Mellon Mays Fellowship.

When asked what he’ll miss most about Princeton, Padilla Peralta said he doesn’t “incline much towards nostalgia. That said, I suspect I will miss Bent Spoon a great deal.” ■



DAN-EL PADILLA PERALTA '06



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## WOMEN'S LACROSSE

# Feeding Frenzy

Assist leaders Haven Dora '26 and Jami MacDonald '26 spur a Princeton attack that finds plenty of ways to score

BY BRETT TOMLINSON

**F**OR PRINCETON WOMEN'S lacrosse head coach Jenn Cook, the signs of a healthy attack are right on the score sheet: When more players are assisting and scoring, the defense has more to worry about. And this year, two seniors are leading the Tigers' offense with remarkable skills for setting up goals.

Haven Dora '26 and Jami MacDonald '26 are "the eyes and ears" of the attack, Cook said. Dora is Princeton's career assists leader with 113 through early March; MacDonald, who ranks eighth all-time with 78 assists, is on pace to reach the No. 2 spot by the end of the season and also has been a prolific goal scorer, finding the net 121 times in 57 collegiate games.

"They just do such a good job drawing attention, moving the ball, making the right choice with the ball, and setting others up for success — along with themselves, obviously," Cook said.

In the past two seasons, Princeton averaged more than 15 goals per game and won NCAA Tournament games in both years, advancing to the quarterfinals in 2025. This spring, the



Tigers dropped two early games to tough opponents on the road — Maryland and Loyola — but showed promise in a 15-9 win over Rutgers that included goals by seven different players.

While the Tigers lost record-breaking scorer McKenzie Blake '25 to graduation, MacDonald expects the team to fill that gap with a range of scoring options, set in motion by associate head coach Kerrin Maurer. "Kerrin tries her best to create these offenses that play to each

## DYNAMIC DUO

*Haven Dora '26 looks to pass in a 2025 game at Dartmouth.*

*Below, Jami MacDonald '26 celebrates Princeton's win against Brown last year that clinched the Ivy League title.*

individual's strengths," MacDonald said. "This year I feel like we're much more dynamic in what we have."

Dora and MacDonald both have a knack for feeding passes to their teammates, but their skills are more complementary than duplicative. Dora likes to work from behind the cage and sees her role primarily as a distributor — the lacrosse equivalent of a point guard, which was her position in high school basketball. "When you have people on your team that can cut and finish really well, you really lean into that," she said.

MacDonald also works from behind the cage but is more likely to maneuver for her own shot and read how the defense reacts. "When you draw that double team, it's so helpful to be able to feed," she said. "Especially in these past two years, I've been working on that."

Beyond that distinction, though, Dora and MacDonald seem to be traveling on parallel tracks. Both were on the preseason watch list for the Tewaaron Award, lacrosse's equivalent of the Heisman. Both starred in the 2024 Under-20 World Championships in Hong Kong — Dora for the United States, MacDonald for Canada — and faced off in the gold-medal game, which the U.S. won. Both are majoring in the School of Public and International Affairs. And both have siblings who've played or are playing Ivy League lacrosse. MacDonald's brother Mike '15 shared conference player of the year honors in his senior year at Princeton, and Dora's sister Hayla is a sophomore at Harvard.

For Cook, another key similarity is the competitiveness Dora and MacDonald bring to practice each day, which in turn pushes their teammates to match their level.

"They're a critical part of what this year is going to be for us," she said. "We're excited to see how they develop and the things that they do throughout the spring." 📍

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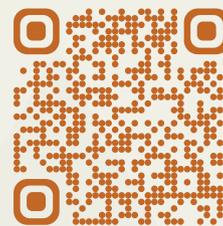
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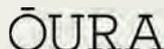
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# FORWARD

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**PRINCETON UNIVERSITY**



# RESEARCH

ADVANCING THE FRONTIERS OF KNOWLEDGE



## SPACE SUCCESS

*In February, the team behind the Princeton-led NASA mission the Interstellar Mapping and Acceleration Probe (IMAP) celebrated the project's success and reflected on the decades of research that made it possible. "IMAP exemplifies what a successful partnership between government, industry, and higher education can achieve," President Christopher Eisgruber '83 said during the event.*

*In addition to a panel discussion, the event featured an expo of student projects and clips from an IMAP documentary. Pictured from left are Jamey Szalay, lead for IMAP's Combined Access Visualization and Analysis tool; Jamie Rankin, instrument lead for the Solar Wind and Pickup Ion instrument; Joseph Westlake, director of NASA's Heliophysics Division; and David J. McComas, Princeton professor of astrophysical sciences and principal investigator of the IMAP mission.*

SAMEER A. KHAN 11/21 / FOTOBUFFY



## MECHANICAL AND AEROSPACE ENGINEERING

# An Electrifying Maritime Mission

A company founded at Princeton focuses on building a powerful and sustainable electric boat motor

BY JEANNE DEVOE

**A**S A ROWER ON PRINCETON'S heavyweight crew team, Jonathan Lord '18 would often be out on Lake Carnegie before dawn rowing in tandem with his teammates, their oars knifing into the glass-like water as the sun rose.



LORD '18

But sometimes that bucolic scene would be interrupted. "As rowers, we were constantly surrounded by gas-powered launch boats with fumes and noise, and it was obvious there had to be a better way," says Lord, who was named to the



SORKIN '17

*Forbes* 30 Under 30 list for transportation and aerospace.

Today, two of those boats have Flux Marine propulsion systems. "It's revolutionary," says Greg Hughes '96, head heavyweight men's rowing coach. "They are so quiet, you don't even hear them. And the performance is significantly better. You push the throttle, and it just takes off."

For the past 10 years, Lord, the chief technical officer of Flux Marine, and his partners Ben Sorkin '17, the chief

**"If we build a killer company and an incredible product that people actually want to use, the sustainable impact follows naturally."**

— JONATHAN LORD '18  
Chief technical officer, Flux Marine

executive officer, and Daylin Frantin, the chief financial officer, have been working to build a better way to power boats. They have designed and built a powerful motor that is virtually silent. It is powered by a battery and produces zero emissions, and it can go from 0 to nearly 30 mph in four seconds. The motor has a range of 30-50 miles at a cruising speed of 20-24 mph and more than 100 miles at 5 mph.

Sorkin, 30, began exploring the idea for the company as a sophomore studying mechanical and aerospace engineering (MAE) at Princeton in 2015. He and Frantin are childhood friends who grew up in Melville, New York, on Long Island. Sorkin spent summers boating and tinkering with motorboats on Lake George. As he looked for a career that combined that passion with his engineering skills, he hit upon the idea of building electric boats. He brought in Lord, who is from Oxford, England, and was equally passionate about boating, having grown up rowing on the Thames.

The three partners say they have always been inspired by the idea of building boat technology that doesn't harm the environment. Unlike car engines, which have been required to have pollution-reducing catalytic converters since 1975, there are few federal regulations governing boat

engines. Exhaust from boats contains carbon dioxide and other chemicals linked to global warming and air pollution. Boats, especially older boats, also release oil and gasoline into the water. Noise from commercial and recreational boats can affect the habitats of wildlife, like bottle-nosed dolphins and manatees.

But while sustainability is at the heart of their mission, the partners realized the key to success was to focus on building a better product. “If we build a killer company and an incredible product that people actually want to use, the sustainable impact follows naturally,” Lord says.

**The electric motor boat was invented** in 1839, but by the 1920s, electric motors were overshadowed by powerful internal combustion engines. Today’s high-powered battery technology has produced a growing electric boat market with 100 manufacturers worldwide developing new electric motors, according to Mobility Foresights’ Global Electric Boat Market report.

Sorkin and Lord say their company stands out from other electric boat companies because they built the system from the ground up rather than basing it on combustion engine technology. They replaced the driveshaft with a belt drive and designed a motor that has far fewer parts and has a closed cooling loop rather than being cooled with seawater. A computer replaced the digital shifting and throttle. A specially designed battery provides high-voltage power, and the system can be plugged in at virtually any marina, home, or charging station. It takes about eight hours to bring the charge from 20% to 80%.

A boat with a Flux Marine propulsion system costs several thousand dollars more than a boat with a traditional engine. But the Flux Marine partners say the buyer recovers the difference in a few years. Over the lifetime of a boat, they say, an electric boat could save its owner tens of thousands of dollars in gas and maintenance.

Sorkin first developed his idea during MAE’s Summer Practical Research Experience. He built a rudimentary electric



#### BOLD BUILD

*Flux Marine’s boats are equipped with a motor the team designed, which has fewer parts than a traditional motor and a closed cooling loop. The company’s boats can go from 0 to 30 mph in four seconds, and the motor has a range of 30 to 50 miles at a cruising speed of 20 to 24 mph.*

motor, which he tried out at Lake Carnegie. “Princeton gave me the freedom, space, and mentorship to explore something unconventional,” he says.

Craig Arnold, vice dean for innovation, University innovation officer, and the Susan Dod Brown Professor of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, taught Lord and Sorkin and is one of Sorkin’s mentors. “Ben was not a traditional student,” Arnold recalls. “He was passionate and energetic. Jonathan was more technically focused — very strong on nuts and bolts. Together, they were exceptional at seeing opportunities and connections.”

In his senior year, Sorkin was accepted into the Keller Center for Innovation in Engineering Education’s eLab Summer Accelerator program, which provided housing for his fledgling company, stipends for the three partners and two others, and plenty of advice about how to develop their business.

The three partners have developed a close relationship during their 10-year journey of building the company since

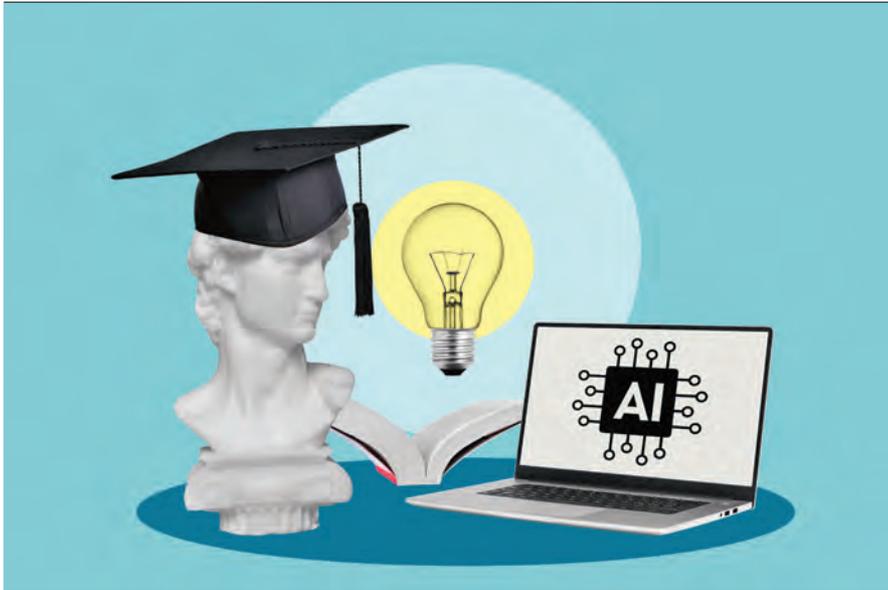
then. They have roomed together, Sorkin and Lord got their first jobs out of college at the same company, and they worked out of their homes when the space they were renting shut down during the COVID-19 pandemic. Each partner brings his own skills to their effort to build the company, Frantin says. “Ben is more of the visionary,” he says. “Jon is very good at explaining complex engineering in a way people understand and building relationships. I focus more on risk, numbers, and structure. There’s a lot of overlap, but the differences complement each other.”

The partners raised \$1.5 million in seed money from family, friends, and Princeton Alumni Angels. They went on to raise more than \$30 million from a host of high-profile investors, including Robert Hugin ’76, retired chairman and CEO of the Celgene Corp. and member of the Princeton Board of Trustees. The partners hope to raise another \$35 million in 2026. While they plan to continue developing electric outboards and boat packages, “we also want to do more on the energy side of things — everything from microgrids to mobile DC fast charging,” Sorkin says.

Customers, like the Princeton rowing team and the East Bay Sailing Foundation in Rhode Island, helped test early versions of the electric motor. The company has produced nearly 100 propulsion systems, including for defense contractors working on applications such as underwater drones and unmanned surface vehicles.

In 2025, Sorkin, who lives in East Greenwich, Rhode Island, bought a 22-foot Scout boat equipped with a Flux Marine outboard motor. He uses it for a 10-mile commute to the Bristol Marina, half a mile from the Flux facility. He commutes to work most days during the spring, summer, and fall, and even once or twice a week when it’s possible in the winter.

“What motivates us to keep doing this is a lifelong passion for boating, sustainability, and the challenge of moving a really hard industry forward,” Sorkin says. “Seeing our product out in the world and watching customers use it — that’s what keeps us going.” ■



## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

# Using AI in the Classroom

BY LIA OPPERMAN '25

**E**IGHTY-SIX PERCENT OF COLLEGE students have used artificial intelligence academically, according to a 2024 global survey. But students aren't the only ones grappling with when and how to use the technology. Faculty across Princeton have questioned whether AI is a powerful collaborator that can enhance student learning or something that makes students think less critically — and have debated whether to use it in their courses at all. Fears of cheating are top of mind, and the University is currently weighing a proposal to require proctoring for all in-person examinations, a shift from a 133-year-old tradition of unproctored exams under the Honor Code.

Princeton Societal AI, a new transdisciplinary group of researchers across campus in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and engineering, has been thinking about the relationship between humans and computers.

One of them, Janet Vertesi, an associate professor of sociology and specialist in science, technology, and society, says she tries to create a classroom environment where students feel like they're the creative engine behind their work and feel ownership over their ideas.

In one course she taught in the fall, she and her colleague, whom she described as "very pro-AI," created an AI policy

document to make clear to students that they are responsible for their own work, and if they choose to use AI, they have to disclose it. In addition, students must share how they protect their work against well-known problems with AI, including hallucinations and factual inaccuracies.

In a design course Vertesi taught, she says, students conducted a "cultural probe" to explore how their peers felt about AI. Rather than taking a quantitative approach, they asked questions about what pressures push students to use it. The responses revealed that students are navigating heavy course loads, distribution requirements that may be out of their realm of expertise, and intense career pressures — conditions that can make the "choice" to use AI feel less voluntary than it appears.

Andrés Monroy-Hernández, an associate professor of computer science and co-leader of the Princeton Human-Computer Interaction Lab, says that he is "on team humans rather than team machines."

Monroy-Hernández designs his courses so that AI cannot replace student thinking. He creates semester-long projects for students connected to real-world partners, including nonprofits and international organizations. The assignments are complex, requiring interviews, quantitative data analysis,

and building prototypes, so large language models can only be used in part of the process.

He tries to "create opportunities for the kinds of problems that people are trying to solve in the classroom to be so big and complex that the AI can only be a partner."

More broadly, Monroy-Hernández argues that AI is revealing deeper problems that already existed. In education, he says, learning has become "industrialized," focused on memorization and completing tasks rather than meaningful intellectual engagement. When AI can automatically complete assignments, the issue is not just misuse of AI but how courses are structured in the first place. He worries that automated systems may worsen existing inequalities and wonders how AI should work in entry-level courses. If students never learn foundational skills, he says, it may be hard for them to use sophisticated tools later.

A similar tension is shaping conversations in the humanities, where professors are experimenting with AI's potential while teaching students to approach it critically. Meredith Martin, a professor of English and director of the Center for Digital Humanities, says her courses incorporate AI directly into the classroom, but as one tool among many.

In her Data and Culture course, students spend part of the semester learning the history of natural language processing and the other part using tools to break down a humanistic and computational question and write about it. "They really become fluent in the language that underpins AI development, but also fluent in the humanistic and historical skills that are really necessary to contextualize and critique it," she says.

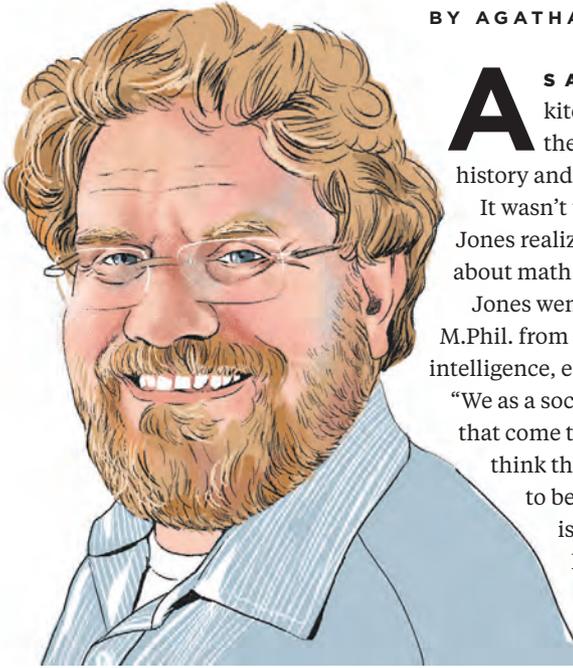
Her goal is to prevent students from using AI as a form of "cognitive offloading," and help them build judgments to effectively analyze it and acknowledge when models might be wrong, incomplete, or misleading.

Whether professors should incorporate AI into their courses largely depends on their field and whether it meaningfully supports a class's pedagogy, Martin says. But she believes that universities should treat this moment as more than a policy debate. ■

BEHIND THE RESEARCH: MATTHEW JONES

# Putting Data in Context

BY AGATHA BORDONARO '04



**A**S A KID, MATTHEW JONES COULD OFTEN BE FOUND SITTING IN HIS FAMILY'S kitchen, programming on one of the first personal computers. At the same time, the native of Reno, Nevada, was deeply interested in the humanities, particularly history and public policy.

It wasn't until he took a course on the history of science his freshman year at Harvard that Jones realized he could blend his passions. "The combination of my interests was to think about math historically and philosophically," he says.

Jones went on to earn his Ph.D. in history and science from Harvard, as well as his M.Phil. from Cambridge. He focuses his work on the history of information technologies and intelligence, early modern science, and data collection.

"We as a society build intellectual and technological systems that come to take on such an imposing presence that we think things can't be otherwise. It's something we need to be able to analyze critically," Jones says. "The point is not to call into question everything around us. Rather, it's to draw upon historical ways of thinking to understand how things came about and to understand that there is the possibility they could be otherwise."

## Quick Facts

### TITLE

Smith Family Professor of History

### TIME AT PRINCETON

2 years

### RECENT CLASS

*The Scientific Revolution*

## JONES' RESEARCH

# A SAMPLING

### THE HUMAN ELEMENT IN DATA

For seven years at Columbia University, Jones co-taught, with Chris Wiggins '98, a course on the history of quantitative reasoning and machine learning from the 1800s through the modern AI era. In 2023, he and Wiggins published *How Data Happened: A History from the Age of Reason to the Age of Algorithms*, named a *New Yorker* Best Book, which expands on their course and probes the social and political contexts that produced and fundamentally shaped these tools. "The development of statistics was deeply enmeshed in the social problems and ways of thinking of its day. Biases are baked into the datasets, and those tend to be replicated by predictive algorithms," Jones explains. "How then do we deal with these algorithms and models

as they become evermore central to government, corporate, and academic institutions?"

### SURVEILLANCE STATE

Starting in the 1980s and expanding after 9/11, the United States has engaged in state-sanctioned digital monitoring of residents' communications. In his next few book projects, Jones will explore the evolution of this surveillance and the gulf between technological advancements and the law — particularly around privacy and the Fourth Amendment. "How was it that in the immediate wake of 9/11, the U.S. government stood up a massive surveillance operation that included U.S. persons? How was that possible politically, technologically, legally?" he asks. While the prevailing argument is that technological advances necessitate specific legal

changes to balance privacy with security, Jones argues that "the internet and generative AI don't produce that law. That distinction is one of the key things I'm interested in."

### HOW AI FITS INTO OUR WORLD

This spring, for the second time, Jones is co-teaching the course *Data and Culture* with English professor Meredith Martin. By first examining the history of data and analytics from both a quantitative and humanistic perspective, the course questions what the growing centrality of large language models (LLMs) and AI will mean for our world. "How do we think about the coming of machine learning and generative AI as a question of labor, a question of

knowledge, a question of practice?" he asks. "We're really aiming to provide students with an armature of ways to understand not just the technology, but also how it fits into the knowledge and work landscape." ■



ILLUSTRATIONS: AGATHA NOWICKA (TOP); MIKEL CASAL (BOTTOM)



**TIME TO SHINE**

*Natural light brightens classrooms and common areas in Briger Hall, the new environmental studies building, and a dynamic globe, inset, shares data visualizations.*



# A Hub for What's Next

## New paths for research take shape at the Environmental Studies and School of Engineering and Applied Science complex

BY **BRETT TOMLINSON**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **TORI REPP / FOTOBUDDY**

**B**ioengineering professor Cliff Brangwynne visited the Environmental Studies and School of Engineering and Applied Science complex (ES and SEAS) at nearly every step of its construction, often in a hard hat, as director of the Omenn-Darling Bioengineering Institute, one of the new site's residents. But it wasn't until early in the fall semester that he was able to bring his lab group into the spaces where they'd soon be working.

"Seeing it through their eyes for the first time, blank slate ... was kind of amazing," he says. "They were just like, 'Whoa!'" The new building provides facilities for microscopy, biofabrication, and cell engineering that will be "game-changing," Brangwynne says, as researchers pursue technologies that interface with living cells.

The ES and SEAS complex is the largest construction project in Princeton's history and one of the last pieces of the 2017 campus plan. Offices and labs began filling up after Commencement in 2025 — a year defined by angst about federal funding for scientific research, particularly in areas such as climate change — and the move-in process has continued through the early months of this year. With 666,000 square feet, the four buildings have more interior space than the University's last three major science construction projects combined (Frick Chemistry, Peretsman Scully Hall/Princeton Neuroscience Institute, and the Andlinger Center for Energy and the Environment). The University declined to share the cost of its construction.

The complex includes new homes for three University departments — chemical and biological engineering, ecology and evolutionary biology, and geosciences — as well as the High Meadows Environmental Institute (HMEI). But for Brangwynne and the Omenn-Darling Institute, it's a *first* home.

Jointly appointed faculty who previously sat with six different departments are coming together in one building, with room to add more labs and researchers as the institute continues to take shape.

"For us, it really is formative," Brangwynne says. "It's a physical manifestation of the community we're building."

When faculty and administrators talk about ES and SEAS, "community" ranks high among the keywords, along with "interaction," "crossroads," and "hub." While the departments and institutes may be somewhat compartmentalized in different buildings or hallways, the complex was created with mingling in mind. Briger Hall boasts a range of naturally lit common areas, some large enough for departmental poster presentations and others best suited for small group chats over coffee. The Commons, centrally located, features a new interdisciplinary library and a visualization laboratory for presentations. Outside the buildings, courtyards and gathering spaces are situated among newly planted trees and grasses.

Stretching about 1,900 feet from end to end, the complex traces a continuous public pathway that enables a "shirtsleeve connection" (no jacket needed to go from place to place), as Ron McCoy '80, the University architect, said at a recent meeting of the Council of the Princeton University Community. It's also a short walk from the E-Quad, the Lewis Science Library, and a half-dozen other science buildings alongside Washington Road.

"We love it that we're closer to physics, we're closer to the Lewis-Sigler Institute for Integrative Genomics, we're closer to neuroscience, we're closer to molecular biology," Brangwynne says. "Biological systems are the most complex systems that we know of. ... No one's kidding themselves that a single discipline is going to house all the knowledge in order to understand that complexity and harness it."





**Briger (rhymes with bigger), the largest of the four buildings,**

houses environmental studies and boasts some of the most visually striking spaces in the new complex: walls lined with fossil-filled limestone panels, exposed wooden beams, and soaring stone staircases. It's also the new home for Guyot's famed resident dinosaur, Al the Allosaurus, freshly refurbished and positioned near the entryway by Roper Lane.

Gerald Carter, an associate professor of ecology and evolutionary biology who studies the social behavior of vampire bats, says that in just a few months, he's noticed changes in how faculty in his department interact in the new space. "We all walk the same path to our offices, which makes a huge difference because you run into people," he says. When Carter steps out of his office, he can usually tell which colleagues are in their offices because they have glass walls and doors — clear at the top and bottom but frosted in the middle for "just the right amount" of transparency, he says. "Obviously a lot of thought went into it."

Mary Caswell (Cassie) Stoddard, a professor of ecology and evolutionary biology, calls Briger "modern but inviting," designed for both style and function. Stoddard, who researches bird coloration, was able to work with the architects to arrange the specific functions of her lab, including a microscopy room, a hyperspectral imaging facility, a wet lab for experimental work, and areas for collaboration. "Having all of these spaces integrated in a flexible, state-of-the-art lab has been a huge benefit for my research group," she wrote in an email to PAW.

Stoddard is looking forward to seeing the Princeton Bird Collection, with its 6,000 avian taxidermy specimens, on display at Briger. There's also a dynamic globe on the ground floor that can be programmed to present different global environmental data and niches to show fossils and minerals. Princeton's mineral collection includes acquisitions from the early 1800s, and its fossils were once so prized that they were displayed in a museum space at Nassau Hall.

For geosciences, the research facilities at Briger "literally go down from the deepest level to the tallest level," says professor Frederik Simons, who asked project team members if they could dig custom holes on the basement level so that he could collect seismic measurements near the bedrock. (They obliged.) On the rooftop, the department has sensors that gather environmental data and GPS readings. Both will be used as teaching spaces, Simons says.

While much of the long-term focus is on the research that faculty, graduate students, and postdocs will produce at ES

**IN THE DETAILS**

*Briger may not have Guyot's gargoyles, but its fossil-filled limestone walls offer a tangible link to the past. Opposite: The ES and SEAS complex stretches roughly a third of a mile from Ivy Lane to Prospect Avenue.*

*The Commons building, at right, is expected to be a hub for engineering and the sciences.*

and SEAS, the complex has had an immediate impact on Princeton's undergraduates. HMEI now has its own classroom for courses in the Program in Environmental Studies, its own teaching lab, and access to a broader range of shared spaces, which executive director Katharine Hackett '79 says has increased interaction among affiliated faculty and students.

Several students who have taken classes and labs at Briger told PAW that they've enjoyed

its comfortable classrooms, quiet study spaces, and communal events, including HMEI guest lectures and the afternoon “cookie time” hosted by geosciences. Ally Robertson ’26, an architecture major and environmental studies minor, says details like bird-safe glass and natural wood and stone surfaces “operate in the background,” but the overall effect “aligns with the environmental purpose of the building.”

**If you’re trying to visualize what used to occupy the space** where the new science complex stands, think football tailgates. The western side of the site used to be parking lots behind the Prospect Avenue eating clubs, including some popular pregame haunts for Tiger fans headed to Princeton Stadium (and Palmer Stadium before that).

As early as the mid-1960s, the area was discussed as a site for possible future development, and it was formally labeled as such in Princeton’s 2008 campus plan. The 2017 campus plan finally set that development in motion.

In preparation for the new construction, the University razed the Computer Center, once home to coveted mainframes, and the Ferris Thompson Apartments, built for junior faculty in the late 1940s. It also bought land to complete the site, paying Ivy Club \$7.29 million for a roughly half-acre parking area, according to a 2020 agreement shared with PAW by the Office of Communications, and resolved a somewhat contentious planning board process by agreeing to preserve 91 Prospect Ave., the former Court Club, by moving it to a lot on the other side of the street.

On the western half of the site, Briger hosts two venerable science departments that were in Guyot Hall for more than a century, geosciences and ecology and evolutionary biology, as well as HMEI, founded in 1994 as the Princeton Environmental Institute, which has affiliates in 30 academic disciplines across the University. At the northeastern end, bordering Prospect Avenue, is Sarofim Pavilion, home to chemical and biological engineering, which traces its history at Princeton back to the 1920s. The Omenn-Darling Bioengineering Institute links those



#### OPENING UP

*Geosciences professor and HMEI director Gabriel Vecchi teaches a course at Briger. Below, a glimpse inside one of the new labs at the Omenn-Darling Bioengineering Institute.*

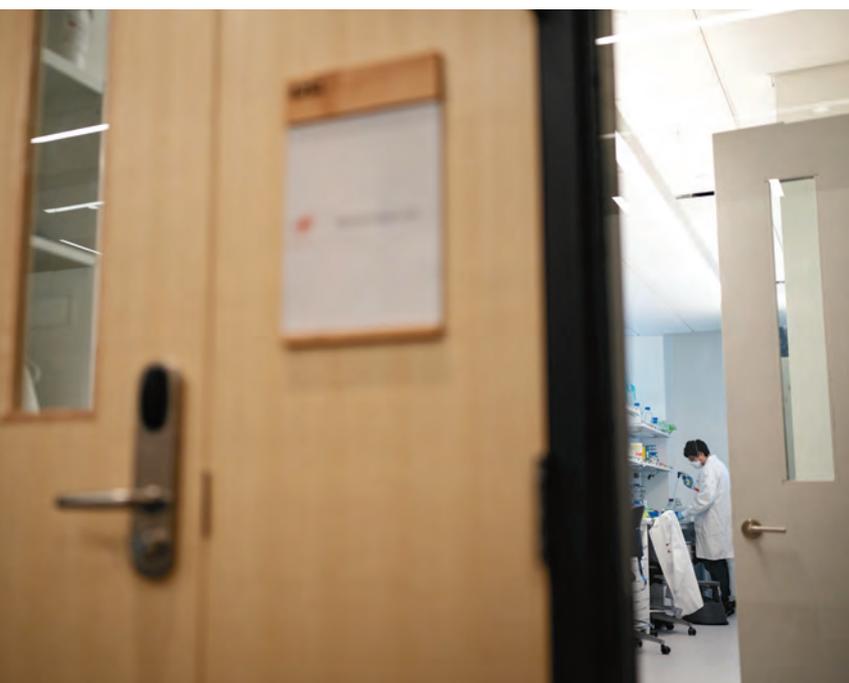
two buildings, and the Commons is just south of a pathway between Briger and Omenn-Darling.

Originally targeted for a fall 2025 opening, ES and SEAS began to move departments into Briger in late May. The process has seen delays and disruptions, with eight labs at Briger still waiting for their spaces to be ready as of early March, but the rest of the complex is now fully occupied, according to University spokesperson Ahmad Rizvi, who told PAW the move is expected to be complete by mid-2026. Leaders of the five departments and institutes taking residence in the new buildings say they believe the finished complex will be worth the wait.

“We have experienced challenges related to the fact that we moved into the building so soon after it was inhabitable, and some of the lab spaces designed four-plus years ago did not operate as we had expected,” professor Jonathan Levine, chair of the ecology and evolutionary biology department, explained in an email to PAW in the fall, adding that the University and its contractors were working through the required fixes.

Professor Thomas Duffy, chair of the geosciences department, says it wasn’t easy to say goodbye to a beloved historic building like Guyot, which will be repurposed as Eric and Wendy Schmidt Hall for the computer science department. “It’s maybe a little disruptive at first, and you don’t want to give up what you’ve known for a long time,” Duffy says. “But once you get over that hump, the new environment and the better lab spaces and the better layout — it’s all very positive. So we’re happy with it, again, despite some bumps in the road.”

**What new advances will researchers develop** at ES and SEAS? Brangwynne, the bioengineering institute director, says it’s too soon to possibly know — and that’s the exciting part. The founders of Princeton’s science and engineering departments could not have foreseen today’s technologies, and while today’s



MATT RASPANTI / PRINCETON UNIVERSITY (CLASSROOM)



**FROM THE FORMER WORLD**

*Jack Wilson, a fossil preparator and field anthropologist in geosciences, reorganizes the department's teaching collection.*

faculty can speak about what's on the research agenda, not even they know where it will lead. In bioengineering, Brangwynne says, applications in human health often come to mind first, but faculty jointly appointed in areas like civil and environmental engineering are exploring different paths such as “living electronics,” using electrochemical properties of cells to create remote sensors that can detect pollutants in waterways.

In the chemical and biological engineering department, core areas such as catalysis, materials science, and systems engineering could have wide-ranging applications in renewable energy, battery technology, pharmaceuticals, and chemical production. Christos Maravelias, the department chair, has a joint appointment with the Andlinger Center for Energy and the Environment and is also an associated faculty member in HMEI. Many in Princeton's engineering departments have these formal connections to other institutes and centers, he says, and informal ties are abundant.

“I would say the size of the University also helps,” says Maravelias, who previously taught at the University of Wisconsin. “It's easier to have these collisions, and people learn what others do.”

The ecology and evolutionary biology department has

been building on its strengths, such as theoretical ecology, the use of mathematics to study nature's dynamics, which “was essentially founded at Princeton in the 1970s and '80s,” according to Levine, the department chair. Faculty are applying these theoretical perspectives to study the spread of human disease, the genetics of insect behavior, and life on the savannas of Africa, Levine says. The work also relates to other areas of inquiry — such as the global loss of biodiversity — that have been top of mind for ecologists and HMEI's Grand Challenges research funding.

Modern geosciences departments cover both the “fluid earth” — the atmosphere and the oceans — and the solid earth, as well as how these systems interact, how they are changing, and what their histories can tell us about today, as Duffy, the department chair, explains. He is particularly excited about a shared facility for isotope geochemistry. Isotopes help geoscientists reconstruct the past, giving insights on everything from the diets of prehistoric organisms to shifts in atmospheric conditions that date back more than a million years. “A good fraction of our faculty use isotopic measurements in one form or another,” Duffy says, and having the tools together — along with the technical staff to maintain them and train students to use them — will be a boon for future research.

**With the opening of ES and SEAS** and other construction projects on the horizon, such as Schmidt Hall and an institute for quantum science, the University has made a massive investment in science and engineering. The outlook for federal research funding, however, has been clouded by cutbacks.

The Trump administration's budget requests for 2026 included massive cuts to the National Science Foundation (down \$5.1 billion, or 57%, from the 2024 fiscal year), space science and earth research at NASA (down \$3.4 billion), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (down \$1.8 billion, or 28%, from the 2024 fiscal year), which reduced line items for climate research, weather and air chemistry research, and ocean and coastal research to zero. In January, a bill that preserved most of the research funding was passed with bipartisan support in the House and Senate and signed by President Donald Trump a week later. How the funds will be directed remains to be seen.

Simons, whose work focuses on geophysics, says that funding for the “unfettered, curiosity driven” research that many Princeton labs pursue has become significantly harder to find, often for reasons that have little to do with the science itself.

“All we can do, I think, is through our work show that science is a stronger force than political winds,” he says.

Moving into new spaces amid that uncertainty has been particularly meaningful for HMEI, according to Hackett, the executive director, who says the move acted as a “counterbalance” to the threats against climate science's future.

“I think the faculty and students who are doing environmental work feel really supported by the University — that this work is important and it will continue,” she says. “I'm not in any way dismissing what we went through, particularly in the spring [of 2025]. ... But this, on the other side, was incredibly uplifting.” ■

BRETT TOMLINSON is PAW's managing editor.

**JAM SESSION**

*Rudresh Mahanthappa is backed by faculty member Matthew Parrish on bass and students Ryder Walsh '26 on drums and Charles Dutta '27 on piano.*



# NEW SOUNDS AT OLD NASSAU

How Rudresh Mahanthappa  
reshaped Princeton's jazz program  
amid an Ivy League surge

BY ERIC OLSON

PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
TORI REPP / FOTOBUDDY



FOR REASONS  
BETTER EXPLAINED  
BY A METICULOUS  
AMERICAN STUDIES THESIS,

the Ivy League has not historically been a hotspot for jazz music. Part of this is logistical: None of the Ivies offers enough courses to earn a conservatory-style bachelor of music degree. (Yale does have a loophole involving graduate school.) Another aspect is cultural. Jazz is traditionally a late-night, city-centric art form, more often learned on the bandstand than in the liberal arts classroom.

More recently, this paradigm has begun to shift. This spring marks 10 years since Princeton announced that its jazz program would be led by saxophonist Rudresh Mahanthappa, not just a known quantity in the jazz world but one of the genre's major contemporary players. A touring maestro coming off multiple first-place finishes in the prestigious *DownBeat* Critics Poll, Mahanthappa had been quietly exploring job listings around his New Jersey home in 2016, looking for stability as he settled into fatherhood.

"I have a family full of academics," says Mahanthappa. "But my hesitation [with teaching] didn't have to do with that. There's this phenomenon where people enter academia and disappear."

Large research institutions should exhort new hires to continued excellence in their fields. In jazz, this means improvising before live audiences. Princeton assured Mahanthappa that he would be able to maintain a strong touring schedule. "They encourage us to do what we do," he says. But even as the saxophonist continued his rounds of international jazz festivals and clubs, he began to oversee a radical transformation back in New Jersey.

Mahanthappa grew up in Boulder, Colorado, and later studied at the Berklee College of Music and DePaul University, breaking out in New York City both as a solo artist and as a sideman for the pianist Vijay Iyer. He took over the Princeton program from longtime head Anthony Branker '80, an accomplished composer who held the reins for 27 years. Mahanthappa, a seasoned musician but a newcomer to academia, found that he had to earn the trust of both existing staff and upperclassmen after getting the job. This was no easy task. But you don't win fistfuls of awards without a bit of pluck.

"I went in there and saw a program that seemed like it needed a boost in a couple different ways," says Mahanthappa. "I wanted to make sure everyone teaching was out there playing. I wanted people in the program that students could get excited about, that they could go see play in a club in New York or Philadelphia. I didn't feel like that was necessarily the case."

In a program without much footing in the national jazz ecosystem, this was an extraordinary first step. Mahanthappa knew that if he wanted to keep touring, he'd need to quickly onboard new teachers or be buried by the procedural workload.

His first significant hire was Grammy-nominated jazz composer Darcy James Argue, a Guggenheim fellow (like Mahanthappa) who took over the school's large ensemble. Bassist Matthew Parrish, who's toured with jazz stalwarts such as Stefon Harris and Orrin Evans, followed soon after. In the coming years, trumpeter Ted Chubb, guitarist Miles Okazaki, and pianists Elio Villafranca and Sumi Tonooka — all of them active, dynamic performers — were added to the roster.

These notable moves also contributed to an ongoing jazz arms race among Ivy League schools. Harvard instigated things in the winter of 2014 by bringing on Mahanthappa's old bandmate Iyer, a Ph.D.

and fellow *DownBeat* champion, as the Franklin D. and Florence Rosenblatt Professor of the Arts. As Harvard professor Ingrid Monson told *The New Yorker* in 2016, "It's always been my dream that we have a prominent jazz artist on the faculty."

Other Ivy League schools either felt similarly or were pressured to react. "Seldom, if ever," wrote *DownBeat* in 2016, "have so many poll-topping bandleaders stepped offstage and into the classroom in such a





short time.” Harvard followed the Iyer hire with an even more impressive one, that of bassist Esperanza Spalding, in 2017. (She left in 2022, citing ideological differences.) Yale hired Grammy-nominated saxophonist Wayne Escoffery a few months after Mahanthappa got the nod. Across the country, Stanford has lately outdone all of its East Coast counterparts by adding venerable composers and instrumentalists Joshua Redman and Ambrose Akinmusire to its faculty.

Saxophonist Matthew Clayton, a lecturer in jazz history at Princeton, spent three decades hopping around the Ivy League — Yale, then Harvard, then Penn — before winding up at Princeton in 2018. “Part of the surge of jazz interest in Ivy League schools,” he says, “is in line with how the music has become more institutionalized over the last 40 years.”

He cited his own career as a case study. After receiving acceptances to Columbia, Yale, and Harvard in 1998, Clayton called Juilliard, who offered a joint music program with Columbia, to express his interest in auditioning on the saxophone. Juilliard balked. “They said, ‘If you play sax, you can’t come here. We only have the clarinet and flute.’”

Three years later, trumpeter Wynton Marsalis founded the jazz studies program at Juilliard, signaling a sea change at the highest levels of American education. But Clayton was already in New Haven. “Jazz has been embraced by elite institutions now,” he says. “Ivy League schools have definitely caught wind of that.”



**IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT IVY LEAGUE MUSICIANS,** by dint of their acceptance letters, are terrific students. But the pathway to professional jazz playing, which often involves at least one prolonged stint in New York City, is rooted not just in raw intelligence but in accumulated practice, thousands upon thousands of hours with an instrument in (or under) your hand. This type of drive, more of an obsession, doesn’t always line up with classic GPA-style metrics.

Musical applicants can submit an “arts supplement,” 10 to 15 minutes of recorded music, when they apply to Princeton. Mahanthappa and his staff rank these incoming samples each year and make recommendations. “But we don’t quite know how much weight that carries,” Mahanthappa says. “I imagine it’s not quite the same as being the next power forward for the basketball team.”

As he packed his bags for the Princeton gig — metaphorically; he didn’t actually have to move — Mahanthappa was candid about who would and would not be attending the program. “It’s an interesting situation because the University doesn’t offer a jazz studies degree,” he told *DownBeat* at the time of his hire. “I’m not going to kid myself that my students are going to practice 10 hours a day. These are people who are going to be running the world someday. I mean, it’s Princeton, right?”

Asked about that quote today, Mahanthappa says that his opinion hasn’t changed. “I still think these folks are going to be running the world,” he said. “But these skills that they take from improvising, and from playing music in a group, I’d like to think that these are applicable in whatever it is that they pursue.”

On the brass tacks level of playing an instrument, Mahanthappa will push his pupils as far as they’re willing to be pushed. He’s been surprised by how musically invested some of his students are, even while they’re studying other majors. “There are students where I’m a little bit concerned,” Mahanthappa says, chuckling. “Like, ‘you do major in something else, right? You’re spending an awful lot of time here’ [in the jazz department].”

It wouldn’t be Princeton without go-getters. And there are a few students who do vie for professional music careers after college. One of them is saxophonist Alex Laurenzi ’20. Before Princeton, Laurenzi completed a precollege program at the Manhattan School of Music, one of the country’s major jazz institutions, and realized, “I didn’t want to *only* study music. I was playing a lot and knew that I’d always be playing in some capacity. But I was also interested in politics and history.”

Laurenzi contacted the Princeton music department as a high school senior and was told that it was on the brink of changing the program’s direction. “They alluded to the fact that they were looking at *DownBeat* winners, so I figured Rudresh was in the mix,” Laurenzi says. “And right from my first few weeks on campus, the vibes were really strong.” In addition to the new director, Princeton had been building the Lewis Center for the Arts complex, which opened during Laurenzi’s sophomore year. “The big band had been playing in an old building before and the combo in a small, windowless room,” he says. “A year later, you have this whole beautiful new space to play in.”

Mahanthappa had been corralling other resources for the department as well, bringing in influential national players

as guest lecturers. Laurenzi, who eventually majored in African American studies, didn't find many hopeful pros in his freshman-year class. But a few years later, he says, "we had three or four people show up who were really talented, who were serious about playing after college. People were seeing the momentum of our program, seeing that you could almost get a conservatory thing here. It was a perfect storm."

Graduating at the height of the pandemic, Laurenzi taught virtual lessons while he waited for live music to return. "I was scrappy and sustained through that first year. Then the city reopened and I started to gig. I feel like going to Princeton allowed me to choose whether I wanted to be a musician or not," Laurenzi says. "If I had gone to a conservatory, there wouldn't have been a choice. But at Princeton, I actually got to make the choice."

This decision is the major crossroads in any artist's career. It's one that Mahanthappa himself grappled with en route to Berklee. "I really relate to these students because they're doing the opposite of what I considered," he says. "I was on the fence of going to music school or doing something else. I was a serious number theory guy. I decided I wanted to be a professional musician in high school. But I saw the conflict and knew I had to choose. My dad said, 'Why don't you go someplace and double major?' But I said, 'Nah. If I'm doing music, I'm doing music.'"

For his strongest set of students, Mahanthappa says, "If I'm afraid they're going to get bored, I'll find ways to engage them. I'll just play with them once a week. And I'll let them know, my door's always open. We can play, we can talk about stuff. So they don't feel like they're alone trying to figure this stuff out."

Personal mentorship from a nine-time *DownBeat* winner is a novel offering in the Ivy League and can attract many gifted prospects to Princeton. But the program has also changed the intellectual trajectories of students who attended the school for nonjazz reasons. Take current senior Allison Jiang '26, who dipped into the jazz program her junior year. "I really didn't have knowledge of the genre at all," she says. "I was drawn to the sound." Jiang grew up playing classical violin but began singing in high school, branching out into other genres. She auditioned for Princeton's vocal jazz ensemble as a junior. "To my surprise," she says, "I was placed in one of the jazz combos [with instruments]." She's risen quickly through the ranks and now sings with Princeton's premier big band, the creative large ensemble.

"The program has been very supportive," Jiang says of these last two years. "You get a lot of one-on-one time with these incredible players, artists in the real world." Her academic studies focus on environmental policy, but Jiang's experience in jazz has opened her up to the possibility of performing after college. "Everyone's sort of a conflicted musician and academic," she says of her fellow students. "I've heard this conversation so much. Someone asks, 'If there's nothing else in life you'd have to worry about, what would you do?' And a lot of people say, 'Become a musician.'"

#### WHY JAZZ MUSIC? THE ANSWER IS RELATIVELY

straightforward, even if the manner — learning how to improvise melody over shifting harmonic movement on the fly — is more complex. A liberal arts education is meant to

teach students how to think, and the language of jazz provides a rich template for problem-solving as a member of a team. Furthermore, the art form is deeply connected to American history.

While *playing* jazz is rather involved, decoding the genre's basic ideas, even as a listener, can unlock mental doorways. Critically acclaimed guitarist Miles Okazaki joined the Princeton faculty in 2021 and teaches a class aimed at explaining jazz to the school's general public. "I don't teach it like a music theory course," he says, "which is how I used to teach at [the University of Michigan's] conservatory. My classes don't have any books, or many materials or notes. It's like a language class, like Portuguese 101."

Okazaki, who went to Harvard as an undergrad, had an idea of what his new students would be like. "Princeton is a magnet for uniquely talented people," he says. "And a lot of their skills overlap with music in some way. My job is not necessarily to prepare them for a next step, musically. My job is more to teach them about what this music can teach you about how to think."

As one of the nation's leading jazz guitarists, Okazaki says that students in other majors — even those with no musical background — can benefit from his courses. "My take on it is, you're studying the highest form that human improvisational music has ever reached," he says. "If students can understand how it was created, it can complement all these other analytical tools that they're learning in other classes. For me, this is much more valuable than information. Information, you can forget. You can look it up. This stuff, you get it in your bones."

#### MUSIC VIDEO

Check out PAW's Instagram account (@pawprinceton) to watch the photographed ensemble in action.



Like Clayton, Okazaki has marveled at the growth of Ivy League jazz, which during his undergraduate days could be deemed peripheral at best. He credits Mahanthappa's "high-functioning" intellect and Princeton's inquisitive student population for the program's current success.

This momentum can best be seen and heard April 12 at the 2026 Princeton Jazz Festival. In addition to student group performances and a faculty septet that includes Mahanthappa, Clayton, and Okazaki, the creative large ensemble — with Jiang singing — will feature the legendary saxophonist Gary Bartz, a one-time bandmate of Miles Davis.

Bartz played with Davis' band at Princeton's Alexander Hall on Nov. 14, 1970. But they certainly didn't invite any students onstage to perform. This new age of jazz brings many a new possibility, and to hear the faculty tell it, things are just kicking into high gear.

"All the greatest music, regardless of genre, engages your intellect and your heart and soul simultaneously," says Mahanthappa, reflecting on his first decade of teaching. "It hits you in the heart and totally engages your brain. I'm trying to figure out as many ways to emphasize that, in as many different paths as possible." ■

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ERIC OLSON is a Seattle-based writer whose work appears in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *Slate*.

# *Because of you...*

I interned at the Department of the Treasury last summer, and I could not be more grateful to Princeton for providing the resources to have that experience and discover the different types of policy that I'm really interested in.

— ALISTAIR WRIGHT '27, *Little Neck, New York*



In three years, Princeton internships have enabled Wright to work in Washington, New York and Thailand.

Photo: Steven Freeman

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IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.  
A DECLARATION  
BY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,  
IN GENERAL CONGRESS ASSEMBLED.

**W**HEN in the Course of human Events, it becomes necessary for one People to dissolve the Political Bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the Earth, the separate and equal Station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent Respect to the Opinions of Mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the Separation.

We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness—That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its Foundation on such Principles, and organizing its Powers in such Form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient Causes; and accordingly all Experience hath shewn, that Mankind are more disposed to suffer, while Evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the Forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long Train of Abuses and Usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a Design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their Right, it is their Duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future Security. Such has been the patient Sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the Necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The History of the present King of Great-Britain is a History of repeated Injuries and Usurpations, all having in direct Object the Establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid World.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public Good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing Importance, unless suspended in their Operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the Accommodation of large Districts of People, unless those People would relinquish the Right of Representation in the Legislature, a Right inestimable to them, and formidable to Tyrants only.

He has called together Legislative Bodies at Places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the Depository of their public Records, for the sole Purpose of fatiguing them into Compliance with his Measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly Firmness his Invasions on the Rights of the People.

He has refused for a long Time, after such Dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative Powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the Dangers of Invasion from without, and Convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the Population of these States; for that Purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their Migrations hither, and raising the Conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary Powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the Tenure of their Offices, and the Amount and Payment of their Salaries.

He has erected a Multitude of new Offices, and sent hither Swarms of Officers to harass our People, and eat out their Substance.

He has kept among us, in Times of Peace, Standing Armies, without the Consent of our Legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a Jurisdiction foreign to our Constitution, and unacknowledged by our Laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For quartering large Bodies of Armed Troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from Punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all Parts of the World:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us, in many Cases, of the Benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended Offences:

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an arbitrary Government, and enlarging its Boundaries, so

as to render it at once an Example and fit Instrument for introducing the same absolute Rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with Power to legislate for us in all Cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our Seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our Towns, and destroyed the Lives of our People.

He is, at this Time, transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the Works of Death, Desolation, and Tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty and Perfidy, scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous Ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized Nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the Executioners of their Friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic Insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the Inhabitants of our Frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known Rule of Warfare, is an undistinguished Destruction, of all Ages, Sexes and Conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions we have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble Terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated Injury. A Prince, whose Character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the Ruler of a free People.

Now have we been wanting in Attention to our British Brethren. We have warned them from Time to Time of Attempts by their Legislature to extend an unwarrantable Jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the Circumstances of our Emigration and Settlement here. We have appealed to their native Justice and Magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the Ties of our common Kindred to disavow these Usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our Connections and Correspondence. They too have been deaf to the Voice of Justice and of Consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the Necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of Mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace, Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, in GENERAL CONGRESS, ASSEMBLED, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the World for the Rectitude of our Intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly Publish and Declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be, FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES; that they are absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political Connection between them and the State of Great-Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which INDEPENDENT STATES may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm Reliance on the Protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.

*Signed by ORDER and in BEHALF of the CONGRESS,*

JOHN HANCOCK, PRESIDENT.

ATTEST.  
CHARLES THOMSON, SECRETARY.

PHILADELPHIA: PRINTED BY JOHN DUNLAP.

# 250 YEARS LATER AND COUNTING

**T**WO HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS AGO, the United States was birthed when the Founding Fathers put pen to parchment and crafted the Declaration of Independence. In honor of the semiquincentennial anniversary of that extraordinary event, Princeton University Library will display for the first time in 50 years its original copies of both that document and the Constitution, as well as letters written by George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, an 18th-century cannonball, color maps with details of troop movements, and other period artifacts that illustrate what life was like during the Revolutionary War.

Nearly as impressive as the exhibit itself are the items in Princeton's collections that didn't make the cut, such as an early printing of the Stamp Act of 1765. Curators Michael Blaakman, an associate professor of history, and Gabriel Swift, librarian for early American collections in Special Collections, were determined to choose the 100 or so items that are undeniable highlights, "that sing," and that "push people to think differently about the Revolution and to see it through different perspectives," especially that of Princeton locals, according to Blaakman.

Princeton, which served as the nation's capital for a brief period during the Revolutionary War and saw battles within its borders, is "such a wonderful location to explore this kind of rich history," Swift says.

The two curators met in 2019 when Blaakman taught a lecture course called Revolutionary America and often brought his students to Special Collections to view related materials. This semester, the pair are co-teaching Revolution in the Archives, an undergraduate seminar that immerses students in Princeton's immense collections.

The exhibit was inspired by that first course and the desire to make Special Collections materials accessible to the public, according to Blaakman, as well as to recenter history in this time of highly politicized debates, particularly about how best to remember and interpret the founding era. "Early American history and especially the Revolution have of course long been battlegrounds for the culture wars, but perhaps never to the extent that they are nowadays," says Blaakman.

The curators and research assistant Zoe Zimmermann, a third-year graduate student in the history department, began the undertaking in 2023 by hunting for months for hidden treasures in the University's collections, sifting through hundreds of boxes of archival material, including thousands of letters.

"We challenged ourselves to survey as much of Princeton's Revolutionary-era holdings as we could," says Blaakman. "It was an immensely rewarding experience. I learned a tremendous amount about the University's collection in ways that will shape my teaching for years and years to come."

*Nursery of Rebellion: Princeton and the American Revolution* is scheduled to run from April 15 through July 12 in the Milberg Gallery at Firestone Library. The gallery will be open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekdays and from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekends. A digital exhibit is also planned. Free guided tours — registration is required — will be offered several times each month, including during Reunions, but for those who can't get up close and personal with the pieces, PAW selected a few favorites to share.

BY JULIE BONETTE

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY  
OF PRINCETON UNIVERSITY  
LIBRARY

OPPOSITE:

## THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

**THE EXHIBIT WILL OPEN** with one of only 26 surviving copies of the Dunlap Broadside — the version of the Declaration of Independence that "literally was used to declare independence," according to Blaakman. Historians estimate Philadelphia printer John Dunlap originally produced about 200 copies.

The Dunlap Broadside was "meant for public dissemination of the knowledge" that the nation had declared its independence, according to Swift. It was printed on the night of July 4, 1776, and immediately sent to other colonies and overseas. There are only three names — those of Dunlap; John Hancock, president of the Continental Congress at the time; and Charles Thomson, then the secretary of the Continental Congress. (It took months to obtain all the Founding Fathers' signatures for the final document.)

Look close and you'll notice odd spacing between some words, which Swift says corresponds to author Thomas Jefferson's notations to take a breath. "This was to be read out loud," says Swift, but Dunlap "didn't quite recognize" the purpose of the marks, hence the errors.



## CANNONBALL

THE MOST INFAMOUS CANNONBALL at Princeton is the one that blasted through Nassau Hall into a portrait of King George III during the Revolutionary War. Through their research, the curators confirmed that seemingly unbelievable tall tale, but this is not *that* cannonball. This one was dug up near the Princeton Battlefield in 1896 and is thought to be from roughly 1777.

“One of the things that we want to impart” to visitors of the exhibit as well as students of the Revolution in the Archives course “is that this is a war and there are human costs,” says Swift. “And something that the students always respond to is this item. ... It does kind of bring the war aspect to life.”

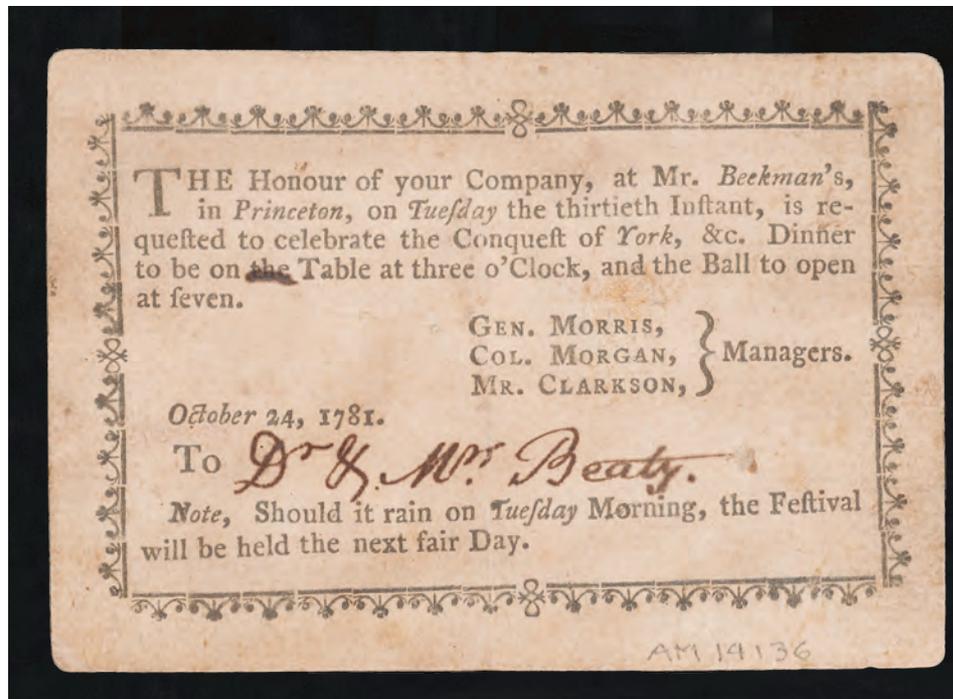
Grapeshot — tiny projectiles packed together and used as ammunition — and a powder horn, which was used to store gunpowder, will also be on display.

## INVITATION TO A BALL CELEBRATING YORKTOWN VICTORY

THIS UNIQUE INVITATION to a 1781 ball celebrating the colonists’ victory at Yorktown, the last major land battle of the Revolutionary War, is one of the pieces the curators discovered during their months-long archive review.

It had previously been “cataloged as ‘invitation to a ball.’ And then that was ... in something called the general miscellaneous manuscripts collection — scores of boxes of anything,” explains Swift.

“One of the really delightful things about this item is that you can imagine a bunch of these, maybe 52 of them, going out to different guests at once, because this is printed on the back of a playing card,” Blaakman says as he flips over



the small invitation to reveal 10 clubs. “I don’t think we know exactly what the significance of that was, but Gabriel and I like to imagine people showing up and maybe there’s a table that’s for the spades and a table that’s for the hearts.”

One of the three senders named on the invitation is “Col. Morgan.” Col. George Morgan was the owner of the land where Prospect House now sits, though it was not part of the University at the time.

The BLOODY MASSACRE perpetrated in King-Street BOSTON on March 5<sup>th</sup> 1770 by a party of the 29<sup>th</sup> REG<sup>t</sup>



Engrav'd Printed & Sold by PAUL REVERE BOSTON

Unhappy Boston! see thy Sons deplore,  
Thy hallow'd Walks besmear'd with guiltless Gore:  
While faithless P—n and his savage Bands,  
With murderous Rancour stretch their bloody Hands;  
Like fierce Barbarians grinning o'er their Prey,  
Approve the Carnage, and enjoy the Day.

If scalding drops from Rage from Anguish wring,  
If speechless Sorrows lab'ring for a Tongue,  
Or if a weeping World can ought appease  
The plaintive Ghosts of Victims such as these:  
The Patriot's copious Tears for each are shed,  
A glorious Tribute which embalms the Dead.

But know, Fate summons to that awful Goal,  
Where Justice strips the Murderer of his Soul:  
Should venal C—ts the scandal of the Land,  
Snatch the relentless Villain from her Hand,  
Keen Execrations on this Plate inscrib'd,  
Shall reach a JUDGE who never can be brib'd.

*The unhappy sufferers were Mess<sup>rs</sup> SAM<sup>l</sup> GRAY SAM<sup>l</sup> MAVERICK, JAM<sup>s</sup> CALDWELL, CRISPUS ATTUCKS & PAT<sup>r</sup> CARR  
Killed. Six wounded two of them (CHRIST<sup>l</sup> MONK & JOHN CLARK) Mortally*

## PAUL REVERE BOSTON MASSACRE ENGRAVING

THIS 1770 ENGRAVING of the Boston Massacre by Paul Revere was part of the propaganda effort by patriots to portray the British as forceful instigators. Revere titled his work *The Bloody Massacre*, and it shows “orderly, disciplined redcoats aggressively and intentionally firing into an unarmed crowd” in front of the Boston Custom House, rather than “a confused kind of melee,” which Blaakman says is likely closer to the truth. A woman and a dog on the patriot side are meant to evoke innocence and loyalty to the cause; meanwhile, the British troops stand in front of a “butcher’s hall.”

The engraving will likely be a familiar sight to many, though astute observers may notice differences in color. That’s because copies were printed in black and white and known to be colored in by recipients using watercolors. “Sometimes you get actually pretty gory, hand-colored details here,” Blaakman says with a laugh. “This one, I think, is pretty par for the course.”

# THE CONSTITUTION

THE EXHIBIT WILL END with one of only 13 surviving original copies of the Constitution. Blaakman calls it “very much a draft,” as it was printed before the Bill of Rights was adopted. Historians believe more copies of this document were printed than the Dunlap Broadside Declaration of Independence, but the curators say the Constitution is rarer now because of the long and intense ratification deliberation that followed its printing. “People were trading these copies with each other. ‘Oh, you gotta get a load of this thing. Take a look, see what you think.’ ... This thing was read and debated so thoroughly,” says Blaakman of the Constitution.

“You can see a little bit of that history if you look closely,” adds Swift of the Princeton copy.

“Somebody is marking up this text, and you can also see that they dated it.”

Two letters will accompany the Constitution in the exhibit — one from Jefferson, then the ambassador to France, giving his opinion of the document. Jefferson writes he’s concerned about “seeds of danger” because the writers of the Constitution assume that the country’s future leaders “would be as honest as they are,” says Blaakman. The Constitution is “a document that stands on the assumption that governing officials are going to be virtuous, are going to have integrity, and Jefferson saw that as one of its vulnerabilities.”

The second letter is from Washington, written to James Madison 1771, to update “a friend about the progress of ratification, cheering on a couple of states that had approved the document, and saying, ‘I think we’ll get it together and get this thing through,’” Blaakman says.

Both letters are in the authors’ original handwriting and include signatures, which is particularly notable given that both men employed secretaries who often wrote on their behalf. 

17. Septemb. 1787

WE, the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

## ARTICLE I.

Sec. 1. ALL legislative powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

Sec. 2. The House of Representatives shall be composed of members chosen every second year by the people of the several states, and the electors in each state shall have the qualifications requisite for electors of the most numerous branch of the state legislature.

No person shall be a representative who shall not have attained to the age of twenty-five years, and been seven years a citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an inhabitant of that state in which he shall be chosen.

Representatives and direct taxes shall be apportioned among the several states which may be included within this Union, according to their respective numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole number of free persons, including those bound to service for a term of years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three-fifths of all other persons. The actual enumeration shall be made within three years after the first meeting of the Congress of the United States, and within every subsequent term of ten years, in such manner as they shall by law direct. The number of representatives shall not exceed one for every thirty thousand, but each state shall have at least one representative; and until such enumeration shall be made, the state of New-Hampshire shall be entitled to chuse three, Massachusetts eight, Rhode-Island and Providence Plantations one, Connecticut five, New-York six, New-Jersey four, Pennsylvania eight, Delaware one, Maryland six, Virginia ten, North-Carolina five, South-Carolina five, and Georgia three.

When vacancies happen in the representation from any state, the Executive authority thereof shall issue writs of election to fill such vacancies.

The House of Representatives shall chuse their Speaker and other officers; and shall have the sole power of impeachment.

Sec. 3. The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two senators from each state, chosen by the legislature thereof, for six years; and each senator shall have one vote.

Immediately after they shall be assembled in consequence of the first election, they shall be divided as equally as may be into three classes. The seats of the senators of the first class shall be vacated at the expiration of the second year, of the second class at the expiration of the fourth year, and of the third class at the expiration of the sixth year, so that one-third may be chosen every second year; and if vacancies happen by resignation, or otherwise, during the recess of the Legislature of any state, the Executive thereof may make temporary appointments until the next meeting of the Legislature, which shall then fill such vacancies.

No person shall be a senator who shall not have attained to the age of thirty years, and been nine years a citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an inhabitant of that state for which he shall be chosen.

The Vice-President of the United States shall be President of the senate, but shall have no vote, unless they be equally divided.

The Senate shall chuse their other officers, and also a President pro tempore, in the absence of the Vice-President, or when he shall exercise the office of President of the United States.

The Senate shall have the sole power to try all impeachments. When sitting for that purpose, they shall be on oath or affirmation. When the President of the United States is tried, the Chief Justice shall preside: And no person shall be convicted without the concurrence of two-thirds of the members present.

Judgment in cases of impeachment shall not extend further than to removal from office, and disqualification to hold and enjoy any office of honor, trust or profit under the United States; but the party convicted shall nevertheless be liable and subject to indictment, trial, judgment and punishment, according to law.

Sec. 4. The times, places and manner of holding elections for senators and representatives, shall be prescribed in each state by the legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by law make or alter such regulations, except as to the places of chusing Senators.

The Congress shall assemble at least once in every year, and such meeting shall be on the first Monday in December, unless they shall by law appoint a different day.

Sec. 5. Each house shall be the judge of the elections, returns and qualifications of its own members, and a majority of each shall constitute a quorum to do business; but a smaller number may adjourn from day to day, and may be authorized to compel the attendance of absent members, in such manner, and under such penalties as each house may provide.

Each house may determine the rules of its proceedings, punish its members for disorderly behaviour, and, with the concurrence of two-thirds, expel a member.

Each house shall keep a journal of its proceedings, and from time to time publish the same, excepting such parts as may in their judgment require secrecy; and the yeas and nays of the members of either house on any question shall, at the desire of one-fifth of those present, be entered on the journal.

Neither house, during the session of Congress, shall, without the consent of the other, adjourn for more than three days, nor to any other place than that in which the two houses shall be sitting.

Sec. 6. The senators and representatives shall receive a compensation for their services, to be ascertained by law, and paid out of the treasury of the United States. They shall in all cases, except treason, felony and breach of the peace, be privileged from arrest during their attendance at the

### MORE SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS

Scan the QR code to see more images of artifacts on display and read about other events taking place at Princeton this year.





# PRINCETONIANS

ALUMNI STORIES AND PERSPECTIVES



DAVID W. CERNY / REUTERS VIA IMAGN IMAGES

## SILVER SKATER

*Canada's Sarah Fillier '24 is denied on a scoring chance by United States goalie Aerin Frankel in the Olympic women's ice hockey final in Milan, Italy, Feb. 19. Canada lost in overtime, 2-1, and Fillier and teammate Claire Thompson '20 earned silver medals to go with the gold they won in Beijing four years ago. Both returned to their pro teams — Fillier plays for the New York Sirens and Thompson for the Vancouver Goldeneyes — for the remainder of the Professional Women's Hockey League season.*

**AIRSTRIKE AFTERMATH**

*An armed security man monitors an area while standing in front of a police headquarters that was completely destroyed in U.S.-Israeli attacks in Tehran, Iran, on March 2.*

**MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT**

# Perspectives on the Iran War

Calling it ‘a new era of geopolitics in the region,’ professors and Princetonians reflect on initial days of fighting

BY JULIE BONETTE AND MARK F. BERNSTEIN '83

**M**ANY IRANIAN CITIZENS “see this moment” — following Israeli and American airstrikes against Iran on Feb. 28 — “as the only conceivable path toward finally being free of the Islamic regime,” said Poorya Mollahosseini, a graduate student from Iran studying electrical and computer engineering at Princeton.

The war is the fault of the regime, Mollahosseini said, because its leaders refuse “to relinquish power despite lacking public support and relying solely on violence to maintain control.”

Reactions to the initial days of war and Iran’s retaliation, which stretched across the Middle East, were varied across campus and alumni in the region, from terror to outrage to questioning America’s long-term strategy. As Mollahosseini described, the war is

“frightening, of course. But what is far more frightening is watching IRGC [Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, a branch of Iran’s armed military] forces kill unarmed civilians with live ammunition.”

Sheikh Nawaf al-Sabah '94, CEO of the Kuwait Petroleum Corp., one of the largest oil companies in the world, told PAW in early March that “Kuwaitis are outraged. Iran is specifically targeting us and trying to drag us into a fight that is not ours. We are longtime friends and allies of the United States and certainly have been targeted by Iran in the past, but we have always maintained that dialogue is the best way to resolve differences.”

He added that the Iranian regime is “flouting every norm of international law and good neighborliness to drag us and the rest of the Gulf countries into the fight.”

In his first interview since the start of the war, al-Sabah provided a firsthand account of life under Iranian attack and his assessment of the geopolitical situation. “I’m at home in Kuwait and I can hear missiles flying. It’s now day six [of the war] coming on, and it is unnerving,” said al-Sabah.

In addition to, by some estimates, thousands of casualties, the ongoing attacks and counterstrikes caused oil shipping through the Strait of Hormuz to be closed, roiling financial markets.

“After eight decades, we have now entered a new era of geopolitics in the region, where we now have five or six days of practically zero traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, which is where you get 20% of the world’s oil supply,” al-Sabah said.

Referencing countries such as Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Lebanon, and Israel that have seen military action since the start of the war, he said, “There is a distinct fear that this could spiral into an uncontrollable situation.”

Abdulaziz al-Sabah '28, al-Sabah’s son, was supposed to take a flight to Kuwait for spring break in early March, but



SHEIKH NAWAF AL-SABAH '94

al-Sabah said he would instead stay with family and friends in the U.S.

**University spokesperson** Jennifer Morrill told PAW that planned spring break travel to the region had been canceled. In addition, Princeton International's Global Safety & Security (GS&S) unit "has been in direct contact with each person currently in the region on University travel and continues to actively engage with them to monitor conditions and support any needs that arise as the situation evolves."

The GS&S team has "increased the destination risk level for multiple countries in the region," Morrill said.

Michael Holl '03, a U.S. Air Force veteran with 20 years of combat experience, moved to Qatar in 2024 as a civilian helping train the Qatari air force to fly F-15 fighters purchased from the U.S. His family had already been planning to leave the country but decided to leave ahead of schedule because they noticed warning signs similar to what occurred prior to the June 2025 U.S. bombing of Iranian nuclear facilities. At 2 a.m. on a day in late January, the Holl family made the decision to leave, and they were on a flight out 16 hours later.

Holl praised his former colleagues in the Qatari air force for shooting down "more than 25 drones so far," as of early March, as well as a report of "two Iranian Su-24 fighter bombers that were just two minutes from their targets when they engaged them. So, pretty good work."



#### FAMILY FIRST

*U.S. Air Force veteran Michael Holl '03 moved to Qatar in 2024 to help train the Qatari air force to fly F-15 fighters. In late January, Holl and his family quickly decided to leave the country as they began to see early warning signs of a conflict brewing.*

**"Kuwaitis are outraged. Iran is specifically targeting us and trying to drag us into a fight that is not ours."**

— NAWAF AL-SABAH '94  
CEO of the Kuwait Petroleum Corp.

Gregory Treverton '69, professor emeritus at the University of Southern California who was chair of the U.S. National Intelligence Council from 2014 to 2017, said he believes President Donald Trump should declare victory in degrading Iran's nuclear and offensive capabilities and leave Iran to work out its own regime change. "If we did that, I think we could still prevent this from spiraling into a regional war."

He compares the current situation to the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, when "we blundered into war in Iraq with no plan for it."

Princeton professors offered thoughts on another point of contention: that President Trump did not seek congressional approval before the attack, even though "the Constitution says only Congress has the power to declare war," Sam Wang, a professor of neuroscience at Princeton who is currently running for Congress, explained via email. "The failure of the branches of government to work together, or even to deliberate in public view, has led to domestic and foreign policies that contradict the public will and, in this case, violate international law."

Julian Zelizer, a professor of history and public affairs at Princeton, described congressional approval of war as "a way to force presidents to outline their arguments for sending troops before that is done, to test the basic proposition in the court of democratic opinion, and to give Congress a chance to push back. While this has not been a cure-all for the erosion of congressional power, it has checked a dangerous long-term trend where presidents feel increasingly able to make decisions about war and peace simply based on the preferences of themselves and their advisers." ■



ANTHONY ROTH COSTANZO '04 PERFORMS DURING *HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS* AT THE WANAMAKER BUILDING

ANTHONY ROTH COSTANZO '04

## A Force On and Off the Opera Stage

BY MARK F. BERNSTEIN '83

**P**HILADELPHIA'S ICONIC Wanamaker Building has been unoccupied since March 2025, but the grand court was full again for a few hours on Sept. 8. Patrons, who snapped up several hundred free tickets in less than an hour, were treated to a show of music, dance, and a recital on the Wanamaker pipe organ, the largest in the world. They also heard Grammy-winning countertenor Anthony Roth Costanzo '04, who sang an aria from the Handel opera *Rinaldo*.

These days, Costanzo wears several hats. Since 2024, he has been the general director and president of Opera Philadelphia, which also organized the event. He has been fighting to bring the organization back from the financial brink, the consequence of the pandemic and a more or less perpetual struggle to make the art form relevant to modern listeners. Getting people to turn out for opera is challenging at any time, but especially since the Trump administration has cut funding for the National Endowment for the Arts while

attaching new conditions to the grants it does make.

Meanwhile, Costanzo has been keeping up his own singing career, performing on stages around the world. While it is not unheard of for opera singers to work simultaneously as arts administrators — Beverly Sills ran the New York City Opera while continuing to sing occasionally — Costanzo is still in the prime of his performing career, and still determined to do things his way. *The Wall Street Journal* summed it up best last September when it wrote that Costanzo “has a seemingly endless appetite for work and risk.”

Costanzo's decision to apply for the job at Opera Philadelphia was unusual, although he was certainly familiar with the company. He had sung with them several times since his first appearance in 1996, at the age of 14, when he appeared alongside Luciano Pavarotti with a small part in Puccini's *Tosca*. But Costanzo knew that a countertenor's career doesn't last forever. He was convinced that he had the skills to succeed in an administrative role as well.

“I've been producing shows for 15 years or more, so I had a sense of how to make a budget and how to make some of the changes I wanted to make,” he says.

Changes were necessary immediately. COVID had toppled Opera Philadelphia's precarious business model, forcing it to lay off staff and slash its schedule from 10 productions and 30 performances in 2018-19 to just three productions and nine performances in 2023-24. The company, which was running a \$4 million operating deficit, had only sold 30% of its tickets for the upcoming 2024-25 season. Costanzo says he had just weeks to address that or Opera Philadelphia would have faced bankruptcy.

Although Costanzo has long wanted to broaden opera's appeal to a younger, more diverse, and less wealthy audience, Opera Philadelphia's financial crisis made that imperative. His most aggressive innovation, and so far his most successful, has been to introduce a “pick your price” option for all seats. All tickets to all Opera Philadelphia performances are now just \$11, with patrons asked to pay more if they are able. Costanzo says that Opera Philadelphia sold out its entire 2024-25 season in just three weeks after the change was announced, and with a much more diverse audience. Two-thirds of new subscribers are under age 45. They have also come from 34 states.

**In the fall, Opera Philadelphia** embarked on a three-year, \$33 million fundraising campaign, intending to use the money to support its flexible pricing plan, commission new projects, and create a reserve to help it weather downturns. Although the company has received funding from the National Endowment for the Arts in the past — Costanzo won't say exactly how much, only that it was “never a huge part of our budget” — it has decided not to apply for new grants going forward, even if they are available. Opera Philadelphia declined to accept the conditions the Trump administration placed on NEA funding, requiring the agency to prioritize programs that, among other things, “foster AI competency, empower

houses of worship to serve communities, assist with disaster recovery, foster skilled trade jobs, [and] make America healthy again ... .”

“I want to respect our audience and staff and not have anyone feel like we’re selling our values for funding,” Costanzo says.

Instead, Costanzo has turned to private organizations. The September show at the Wanamaker Building and several others were funded by the Wyncote Foundation; TF Cornerstone, which owns and is renovating the Wanamaker building; and the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage. To appeal to a broader audience, Costanzo has also collaborated with other arts groups across Philadelphia. The Wanamaker show included performances by the Philadelphia Ballet, the Bearded Ladies Cabaret (a “queer, experimental cabaret company,” according to its website), and FringeArts.

Just days after the Wanamaker show, Costanzo was back on stage at New York’s Little Island theater for a performance of *Galas*, a musical play about an opera singer loosely based on the late soprano Maria Callas. “The part,” a *New Yorker* reviewer predicted, “should fit the extravagantly gifted Costanzo like a long buttoned glove.” Just a year earlier, Costanzo staged an adaptation of *The Marriage of Figaro* in which he sang all the parts. During the current season, he also is scheduled to sing in Paris, Barcelona, and Amsterdam.

“Who knows how long it will last,” Costanzo says of his dual roles as artist and administrator, “but as things are still going well, I wanted to take on this challenge to see how I could have more impact, and how I could connect in a deeper way with the art form and connect it to more people.”

As Opera Philadelphia celebrates its 50th season, Costanzo says that a thriving opera company is not only a civic asset but a civic necessity.

“Lots of people talk about the arts as an escape, but I don’t think about it that way,” he observes. “It’s not about ignoring what’s happening in the world. It’s about giving us the capacity to survive it.” ■



RICK WOLDENBERG '81

#### TACKLING TARIFFS

# SCOTUS Ruling Was a Matter of ‘When We Would Win’

BY DAVID SILVERBERG

**I**N THE LATE MORNING OF FEB. 20, Rick Woldenberg '81 was wrapping up a business meeting in his Chicago-area office when his son Stephen, who manages sales at their toy company, Learning Resources, glanced at his phone.

“Dad, we won!” he exclaimed after reading a post on Scotusblog.com, where weekly Supreme Court decisions are posted on Friday mornings.

The U.S. Supreme Court had just struck down the application of most of President Donald Trump’s tariffs in response to lawsuits filed by 10 small businesses, including Learning Resources.

It was a remarkable feat “by some guy you never heard of running a company you never heard of and who goes to the highest court in the country to argue for how a law is misapplied,” Woldenberg says.

But Woldenberg wasn’t alone in his fight. He was joined by two other Princetonians, and a third in spirit.

Woldenberg’s lawyer, Pratik Shah '98, spent countless hours since the suit was filed in April 2025 to fine-tune his arguments on why the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) shouldn’t enable the president to unilaterally impose and adjust tariffs against dozens of countries.

Woldenberg’s daughter, Elana Woldenberg Ruffman '15, who works as vice president of marketing at Learning Resources’ sister company, hand2mind, leveraged her social media platforms to create videos on how tariffs hurt small businesses.

And Woldenberg acknowledged another Princetonian: “James Madison [1771] didn’t know he would be involved in this case, but we stand shoulder-to-shoulder with him,” says Woldenberg,

his voice hoarse from the many news media interviews he conducted since the decision.

“His idea of a specific form of government is something worth defending,” he adds, referring to not just Madison’s proposal to split government branches into legislative, executive, and judicial, but also his support of modest tariffs.

Woldenberg stressed how his underdog story reveals the importance of standing up for “foundational principles this country was built on.”

Shah also learned of the decision by scouring Scotusblog.com. He was thrilled to see the ruling in February side with Learning Resources and hand2mind. But he always knew the suit had a strong chance of winning.

“IEEPA was an unusually broad grant of authority,” he says in an interview, “and what you saw was the president using it on a whim to impose tariffs of any amount for any duration against any country in the world.”

Woldenberg Ruffman was in a more distracted environment when the ruling came down. By her daughter’s hospital bed before a procedure, her phone was buzzing, and an hour later she caught up on the flurry of texts and missed calls.

“I think it was a strong statement that our country is stronger than any individual,” she says of the decision, “and what happened is completely historic.”

She says what President Trump had sought to do was unprecedented and deserved legal action.

“There is no parallel to where Congress has delegated taxation authority without specifically saying what it is delegating and how it is delegating it,” she says, “and so we felt very confident in our legal footing.”

Woldenberg is more straightforward. “It wasn’t a matter of *if* we would win but *when* we would win,” he says.

As of early March, the next step was sorting out refunds. The Trump administration urged a federal court to allow 90 days for refunds of tariffs collected from U.S. companies to begin, a request the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit rejected March 2. More than \$175 billion could be subject



#### CASE CLOSED

*Rick Woldenberg '81 stands with his family outside the Supreme Court Building in Washington, D.C. From left, Ben Woldenberg, Stephen Woldenberg, Elana Woldenberg Ruffman '15, Nadine Woldenberg, and Rick Woldenberg '81.*

to refunds, according to Penn Wharton Budget Model economists.

With tongue firmly planted in cheek, Woldenberg says, “We spent around \$11 million on IEEPA tariffs in 2025 and 2026, so the government should rebate us all of that including interest. I’m already running to the mailbox every day, but so far, nothing.”

In April 2025, Learning Resources and hand2mind were among the first small businesses to bring a lawsuit against the tariffs. They were the only plaintiffs in the case to use their own resources to fund their court battles, as the nine other businesses involved were partnering with governmental departments or interest groups inviting plaintiffs to a joint suit.

A month later, U.S. District Judge Rudolph Contreras ordered the administration not to collect tariffs from the toy companies. The government appealed and the injunction was stayed. But Woldenberg and his team knew they would have their day before the highest court and spent hours reading case law and discussing the next steps.

“I told Pratik that I would be available

to him anytime he wanted, and that my time was his,” says Woldenberg, whose educational toy companies offer more than 1,800 different products. “Probably around 80% of my time from April to February was spent on this suit.”

In September 2025, the U.S. Supreme Court told Shah and lawyers from the other small businesses and advocacy groups they would be invited to Washington to share their arguments. The justices only wanted to hear from one lawyer representing the businesses, forcing Shah “to flip a coin with [lawyer and former Acting Solicitor General] Neal Katyal, who was defending V.O.S. Selections, Plastic Services and Products, and other firms, and he won the flip so he had his 20 minutes up there,” Shah says.

The argument presented in November against the Trump administration was clear and simple, Shah says. “We contended that IEEPA never mentioned tariffs in its law, which means it wouldn’t apply in this case either,” he notes.

Woldenberg, Shah, and the rest of his legal team left Washington after the oral arguments were delivered, unaware when a decision would be announced.

Looking back at the suit’s origin story, Woldenberg says, “I just had to jump in the pool, and I knew it wasn’t going to be an easy path, but I had to follow it.

“I didn’t relish the idea knowing that I could’ve done something and not doing it.” ■

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The survey is administered by  
Princeton University's Office of Advancement  
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# CLASS NOTES

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# MEMORIALS



## LISTEN TO OUR NEW MEMORIALS PAWCAST

Visit [paw.princeton.edu/podcasts](http://paw.princeton.edu/podcasts) to hear a podcast discussion where we reminisce about an alum who recently died.

### THE CLASS OF 1951

#### EDWIN P. ALYEA JR. '51

Ed was born in Baltimore, Md., and came to Princeton from the Lawrenceville School. He



majored in history and was a member of Cloister Club. He roomed with R.W. Brown and Fred Schultz.

From 1951 to 1953 Ed served with the Marine Corps, assigned to the second Marine Air Wing. After military service, he began work at American Tobacco Co. While settled in Kentucky, his work as a leaf buyer afforded him the opportunity to spend time exploring parts of the South, specifically Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina. Ed was a lifelong lover of Kentucky bluegrass, horses, and farmland.

Ed died peacefully Oct. 24, 2025, at his home in Georgetown, Ky. He is survived by his wife of 67 years, Margaret Ann; daughter Sarah; and son Edwin III.

### MAURICE E. GOLDMAN '51

Maury graduated from Philadelphia Central High School. At Princeton, he majored in



biology, was a member of Court Club, and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. He roomed with Thomas Ewing Day Jr.

After graduation, he attended the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine and went on to Beth Israel Hospital in Boston. In 1964, Maury left his private practice to join the medical department of the Exxon Corp., traveling extensively in Latin America and the Far East, and then settling in Livingston, N.J. Maury received the 2003 Medical Executive Award from the New Jersey Academy of Medicine.

Maury died July 6, 2025. He was predeceased by his wife of 60 years, Julia. He is survived by his son, Philip; and daughters Susan, Donna, and Linda.

### THE CLASS OF 1953

#### ROBERT L. FRYE '53

Robert was born in Denver, Colo., and prepared for Princeton at East High School in Denver. He majored in sociology, was a



member of Dial Lodge, and sang with the Tigertones.

Six months after graduating, he married Shirley Jane Clark, and she traveled with him to Sasebo in Japan when he was stationed there with the Navy. He later served as officer-in-charge of a Navy radio station on Bainbridge Island, Wash.

Returning to Denver, Bob went to the University of Denver Law School, where he served as editor of the law journal. He practiced law in Denver until his retirement except for four years in Washington on the staff of a senator from Colorado. He was involved in the Lions Club, especially in creating an eye institute on the campus of the University of Colorado.

Robert died Dec. 8, 2025. Predeceased by a daughter, Cheryl, he is survived by Shirley, his wife of 72 years, and their two sons, four grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

### ROBERT C. KENAGY '53

Bob died on Christmas Day 2025, in Norwalk, Conn.



Born in Hartford, Conn., Bob graduated from high school in Summit, N.J., before coming to Princeton. He joined Campus Club and majored in history, writing his thesis on "The Ethics of the New Deal."

After graduation, Bob spent a year at the Wharton School before being called into military service and spending two years at Fort Bliss in Texas. After leaving the Army, Bob went to work for IBM and stayed with that corporation for 12 years before joining with several others to form a new data processing services business. Later he joined classmate Sid Staunton and one other to create a merchant banking firm in New Canaan, Conn.

At home in Simsbury, Conn., Bob found joy in singing with the choir at the First Church of Christ and serving on its board. He also spent many years as class treasurer.

Bob is survived by his wife, Karen; their three children, Neil, Lynn, and Gretchen (Chang-ming); and grandchildren Evan, Margot, Emily, and Justin.

### SHELDON C. REYNOLDS '53

Sheldon died April 16, 2025.

He was born in Cleveland, Ohio, and came to Princeton after graduating from Cleveland University School and Lawrenceville School. He joined Cannon Club and majored in architecture.



After graduation he established himself as an architect in the Cleveland area and continued in that activity until retiring and moving to Sun Valley, Idaho, seven years ago to live with his daughter and son-in-law.

Predeceased by his wife, Patricia, he is survived by their two sons, two daughters, and 11 granddaughters.

### THE CLASS OF 1954

#### RUSSELL M. ROBINSON II '54

Russ died Sept. 5, 2025.

He prepared at Woodberry Forest School and was active in football, baseball, and student government. At Princeton, he majored in English, joined Cottage Club, and participated in freshman and varsity baseball as a catcher. His suitability for the position was demonstrated when he won a bet by throwing a baseball over Blair Arch.

He left Princeton after his sophomore year, reputedly passing up a possible Rhodes scholarship, to attend Duke University. His intended, Sally Dalton, was then an undergraduate, and they married in September 1953. He skipped his senior year and entered the Duke Law School, where he became editor in chief of the Duke Law Journal and graduated in 1956.

The descendent of generations of distinguished attorneys and jurists, he established a firm (now Robinson Bradshaw), wrote the definitive book on North Carolina corporate law, served on numerous corporate and nonprofit boards, received many accolades, and was characterized as a "Pillar of North Carolina."

Russ' loyalty to Princeton never wavered. He quipped, "My only regret is that the enlightened University administration policy on student marriages came too late for me to make a Tiger out of my favorite Duke alumna."

Russell is survived by his wife of 72 years Sally; children Cammie, Russell III, and Sally; four grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by two older brothers, John and Rod.

### DAVID B. ROSENBERG '54

David died Sept. 9, 2025, in Vineland, N.J.

He was a graduate of Vineland High School. At Princeton, he was a member of Cannon Club and was on the basketball team



four years under Franklin "Cappy" Cappon. Among his lifelong friends at Princeton were Paul Sarbanes, Frank Lovecchio, William "Bud" Stewart, Ron Miller, and Sanford Weiss. He first saw Barbara Spitzer, who was to become his wife of nearly 70 years, at a football pep rally under Blair Arch.

After majoring in biology, he attended NYU Medical School and completed his residency in pediatrics at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP). He then returned to Vineland and practiced actively until he was 85.

David devoted his life to learning, teaching, and service. For years, he taught medical students and residents at CHOP clinics. He went on Rotoplast missions around the world to help children with cleft lips/palates and other facial deformities and supported a wide range of Jewish and community causes with his time and resources.

He was predeceased by his wife, Barbara, and son Daniel. He is survived by his children Michael, Diane Strauss, Linda \*90, and Julie; nine grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

#### THE CLASS OF 1956

##### JEFFREY M. ALBERT '56

Jeff was born in Trenton, N.J., and died in a hospice near his home in Bluffton, S.C.



He attended the Lawrenceville School, where he seemed to be involved in everything. At Princeton, he joined Quadrangle Club and majored in international affairs at the Woodrow Wilson School. He worked at WPRU, participated in Whig-Clio and the Hillel Foundation, and served as a Keyceptor.

Jeff earned a law degree from Harvard Law School in 1959 and a LL.M. from New York University in 1962. He then worked as assistant general counsel of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers followed by service in Washington, D.C., for the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and as an associate professor at George Washington University Law School. At some point, he moved to Honolulu, Hawaii, where he served as deputy prosecuting attorney.

Jeff enjoyed horseback riding, acting, and reading Jewish history. He was writing a screenplay when he passed away. He was also a member of Mensa International. Jeff married Stephanie Rose Schnitzer in 1957 followed by a second marriage to Monica Christina Weckman in 1984.

He is survived by his children John, Tim, and Niki; and grandchildren Hanah, Emily and Sophie.

#### EUGENE C. ANDERSON '56

Gene died June 5, 2025, near his home on Grosse Ile, Mich.



He came to Princeton from Berkeley (Calif.) High School but stayed with us only two years, leaving to transfer to the University of California at Berkeley. While with us, he

joined Tiger Inn, played freshman football, joined the Pre-Med Society and chose chemistry as his major. Gene went on to earn a medical degree from McGill University in 1960. During his residency, he married Ann Schroeder followed by service in the Navy.

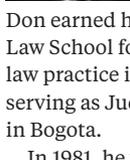
Gene is remembered by family and patients for his sense of humor and generosity — making house calls in his ever-present khakis and blue button-down shirts. He loved gardening in his strawberry patch, walking with the Grosse Ile Nature Conservancy, and exploring Michigan winters. Many family and friends gathered in 2024 to celebrate his 90th birthday.

Gene is survived by his wife, Ann; their three children Kirsten Anderson Braun, Paula Anderson, and Gene Anderson; and grandchildren Isabelle, Christopher, Lars, and Jimmy.

#### DONALD W. de CORDOVA '56

Don died Oct. 10, 2025, in New Jersey.

He came to Princeton from Bogota High School, where he was editor of the newspaper and president of the student council. He joined Cloister Inn and majored in Public and International Affairs.



Don earned his juris doctorate from Rutgers Law School followed by 20 years in private law practice in Bergen County as well as serving as Judge of the Municipal Court in Bogota.

In 1981, he was appointed to the New Jersey Superior Court eventually being elevated to presiding judge of the special civil part before his retirement from the bench in 2004.

In addition to his judicial career, Don served in the Navy after his NROTC commissioning. He graduated from the Naval School of Justice and was active for 32 years in the Naval Reserve Intelligence Program, attaining the rank of captain.

Don's private life was similarly committed as a member of the Bogota Memorial Reformed Church, where he served as a deacon and elder while cooking highly praised church dinners.

Don is survived by his wife of 54 years, Mary Ann; their children Wendy Ann Buttgerit and her husband Paul and William '97 and his wife Pamela; and grandchildren Julia, Lindsey, Xavier, and Quentin.

#### JAMES E.C. TINSMAN '56

Jim died Aug. 22, 2025, in Shawnee Mission, Kan.



After graduating from Pembroke Country Day School in Kansas City, Jim followed his father Charles H. '28 and brother Charles '55 to Princeton. He

majored in basic engineering and joined Colonial, where he was deeply involved in IAA sports, including rugby and squash (in which he was undefeated). After graduating from Harvard Business School, Jim and his brother Humbert founded or acquired a series of successful businesses, including Capital Services, University Bank in Lawrence, Kan., and NBKC Bank. A strategic and inspirational leader, NBKC has been repeatedly recognized as a "Best Place to Work in Kansas City."

An avid squash player, Jim won several local and regional tournaments in both singles and doubles. He was an active community member volunteering his time and resources with United Way.

Jim married Carole Shanklin in 1959 and together they had three sons. Upon her passing, he married Elizabeth Haw with whom he spent 21 happy years. He is survived by Elizabeth, three sons, James and his wife Ann, Garrett '84 and his wife Diane, and William and his wife Elissa; stepchildren Brooke Spenser, Bill Haw and his wife Hitomi, and Kate Haw; 10 grandchildren; and one great-grandson.

#### THE CLASS OF 1958

##### FITZ LEE H. COKER '58

Fitz died July 14, 2025, in Boseman, Mont.



He was 89.

He came to Princeton from Woodberry Forest, where he was on the football, wrestling, and track teams. At Princeton, he was on freshman football and played rugby. Fitz was the secretary of Cottage Club, majored in mechanical engineering, and was a member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers.

After graduation, Fitz served six months in the Army and then went to work for Sonoco Products Co. in Hartsville, S.C. He held many positions with that company and retired in 1979 as senior vice president and CEO of Sonoco International.

Fitz married Edna Wardlaw between junior and senior years at Princeton, and they had five children, five grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. In 1979, they moved to Key West, Fla., and spent half a year in Boseman.

The class extends its deepest sympathy to them all.

#### STEPHEN W. FELDBERG '58 \*61

Steve died June 11, 2024, in Brooklyn, N.Y.



He was 86.

He came to Princeton from Haverling (N.Y.) Central School, where he played tennis and was active in publications and the school band.

At Princeton, Steve joined Prospect Club and played several IAA sports. He was a pre-med student but got excited about chemistry, which became his major.

After graduation, he remained at Princeton to earn a Ph.D. in chemistry in 1961. Then he went to Brookhaven National Laboratory in eastern Long Island for a two-year post-doctoral appointment and remained there for his entire career. During his time at Brookhaven, Steve also took mini-sabbatical leaves to teach analytical chemistry at the University of Kansas, Colorado State University, Tel Aviv University, and Caltech.

Steve never married and had no siblings.

#### W. STEPHEN MELOY '58

Steve died Jan. 23, 2025, in Poland, Ohio. He was 88.



He came from Maumee Country Day in Toledo, Ohio, where he participated in student government, football and tennis. At Princeton, Steve majored in history and joined Tower Club.

While at Michigan Law School, he met Virginia "Ginny" Myers, who was teaching elementary school in Ann Arbor. They married and moved to Poland, Ohio, where they raised three children. Steve joined the Manchester, Bennett law firm in Youngstown, became a senior partner, and later started his own practice.

Steve's zest for ideas was evident early at Princeton, where friends affectionately dubbed him "the mind." His enduring passions included history, art, dinghy sailing, Donald Duck, antiques, and travel. An avid reader and book collector, he loved local history and founded the Poland Preservation Society to preserve local historic sites and architecture. He and Ginny restored a Second Empire mansion, which they ran as a bed and breakfast. On its walls he hung his favorite Pennsylvania Impressionist paintings, collected on annual trips to Manhattan, where he bunked in hostels and frequented art auctions.

Steve is survived by Ginny, their three children, and four grandchildren.

The class extends sympathy to them all.

#### RICHARD Y. MOSS II '58

Dick died Nov. 26, 2025, in Los Altos, Calif. He was 89.

He came to Princeton from Western Reserve Academy in Hudson, Ohio, where he participated in track, publications, and debating. At Princeton, Dick was a member



of Cloister Inn, where he played IAA football, billiards, hockey, and softball, was club treasurer, and was a member of the house and bicker committees. He was chairman of the Mace and Gavel Club, an associate editor of the *Nassau Herald*, and a member of the freshman fencing team and the freshman 150-pound crew.

Dick majored in electrical engineering and after graduation he accepted a job as an electronic design engineer on Long Island. After 15 months, he enrolled in Stanford for a degree program in semiconductor physics. There, he earned a master's degree and took a job in research and development with Hewlett-Packard. He stayed with Hewlett-Packard from 1960 until 1999.

Dick married Susan Munter in 1965, and they had one daughter, Anja, and two grandsons, Jake and Nate. They all survive him. The class extends its deepest sympathy to them all.

#### THE CLASS OF 1959

##### LEWIS T. BARRINGER JR. '59

Lew died Sept. 25, 2025, at CareOne Hospice in Hamilton, N.J. For the past 20 years he



lived at Windrows in an apartment with a view of both the Cleveland and Chapel towers.

Born and raised in Memphis, Tenn., Lew

prepped at Choate. At Princeton, he majored in economics, managed the freshman swimming team, ate at Cloister Inn, and served as its treasurer. Upon graduation, he married his high-school sweetheart, Diane Taylor, and went on to receive an MBA from Harvard Business School in 1961. That same year he began what would become a lifelong career at Chase Manhattan Bank.

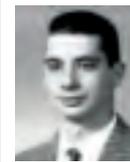
After two decades in corporate and private banking, the Barringers moved to Hong Kong, where Lew served as managing director of Chase's Hong Kong Trust Co. and helped lead the bank's private banking operations in Asia. After a year back in Princeton, Lew spent a year with Chase in Singapore before again returning to Princeton, retiring in 1993 after 32 years with Chase.

Lew and Diane made Princeton their enduring home, raising four children there and remaining active in community and University life. Lew took history courses at Princeton, swam regularly at DeNunzio Pool, supported Tiger athletics, and, together with Diane, traveled widely — often by ship.

Predeceased by Diane in 2016, Lew is survived by their four children, Lewis III, James, Robert, and Carolyn; and by three grandchildren.

##### LEE D. BRAUER '59

A charter member of Wilson Lodge, as its senior-year president Lee oversaw



its nascent growth to 58 members and its plans for expansion into Madison dining hall. Lee also served as secretary of the Hillel Foundation, played in the

University Band, and on his violin played in the Triangle and Savoyard Orchestras. As a fledgling pilot he was treasurer of the flying club. A physics major, he roomed with Avron Maletsky, Frank Peluso, Neil Shore, and Howard Silber.

Studies at the University of Maryland Medical School followed Princeton graduation. While there his lab partner "kept interposing herself between [Lee] and the cadaver and since she was intrinsically more interesting" he married her. Both Lee and Rima, his former lab partner and then his wife, completed their residencies at Yale, and following Lee's completion of his military obligation as a surgeon with the U.S. Public Health Service, both pursued lifetime careers in psychiatry and psychoanalysis. When not treating patients, Lee played violin with the Connecticut Valley Chamber Orchestra, skied at Stowe, and sailed and raced on Long Island Sound.

Lee was predeceased by his wife, Rima, in 2015. Lee died Aug. 19, 2024. He is survived by children Samuel, Nathan, and Jennifer, and his fiancée, Anne Hamilton.

##### NORMAN A. JACOBS '59

Lawyer, banker, and teacher, Norm died March 28, 2025.



Norm graduated from Shaker Heights (Ohio) High School, where among other honorifics, he was a delegate to Buckeye Boys State, also serving on student council,

playing football, and running track. At Princeton he played freshman football and was active in IAA sports for Cannon Club. A politics major, his senior year roommates were Bird, L. Blau, Burns, Callaghan, Ho, Martin, and Tocher.

An old injury led to his discharge shortly before receiving an Army commission, and he enrolled at Michigan Law School where he was a member of Phi Delta Phi Academic Honor Society. Upon graduation he joined First National Bank of Chicago, and during his tenure with First National he taught contract law at John Marshall Law School. In time he became president of Marine Bank Trust and later of Huntington Bank Trust.

Active in his community, Norm participated in local politics, served on several municipal and nonprofit boards, including the Northbrook Planning Commission and St. Mary's Hospital,

and continued his volunteer work into retirement. He will be remembered for his years of community service, his great sense of humor, and his quick wit.

He is survived by his wife of almost 65 years, Jan; their children, Gretchen and Norman; five grandchildren; and two great grandchildren.

#### FRED RICHMAN '59

Fred died from vascular dementia Feb. 16, 2024, at his retirement community in Boca Raton, Fla.



He was born in Philadelphia and attended West Philadelphia High School. At Princeton, he majored in mathematics and

was a member of Wilson Lodge. Though matriculating with the Class of '59, Fred finished his AB in three years and enrolled at the University of Chicago for graduate studies in math. There he met fellow UC student Sue Critten at a bridge game, and they were married in 1960.

While finishing a Ph.D. in 1963, Fred was recruited to New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, N.M., where he was a major contributor to a flourishing research program in the math department and was recognized with the university's most prestigious faculty award in 1980. In 1990, he joined the math department at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton and remained there until his retirement in 2015.

Fred was a caring husband and father, a talented pianist, and an avid competitive bridge player. He was thoughtful about most everything in the world.

Fred is survived by and missed by his wife Sue; sons Ben and Sam '90; and four granddaughters.

#### CLEMENS P. STARCK '59

Born and raised in Rochester, N.Y., Clem attended two years at Princeton, rooming his first year with Bill Volckhausen, whom he had met in the summer of 1954 as a fellow exchange student in West Germany. The following year Clem left Princeton and began life riding freights, hitchhiking, and working diverse jobs: welder and laborer, ranch hand, newspaper reporter, railroad hand, vibrating furniture salesman. He shipped on as a merchant seaman. He read, wrote, camped, and fished, and, in his words, "whatever I wanted to do." He married, and by 1968 had remarried. But he was drawn to carpentry, working on construction sites up and down the West Coast, and writing his poetry.

His first book *Journeyman's Wages*, rejected by publishers 59 times, won the Stafford Memorial Poetry Award and the Oregon Book Award when finally put to print. By 1998, he was poet-in-residence at Willamette University. He was a dynamic

presenter of his poetry, giving readings to diverse audiences throughout the western United States and Europe.

His two travels to Russia served as inspiration for his second book, *Studying Russian on Company Time*, followed by four more, all of which were gathered in *Cathedrals & Parking Lots: Collected Poems*, published in 2019.

Predeceased by his second wife, Barbara, in 2012, Clem died of mesothelioma at his Dallas, Ore., home March 21, 2024. He is survived by his three children and four grandchildren.

#### THE CLASS OF 1960

##### JOHN G. GREGORY '60

Born in Philadelphia, John came to Princeton from St. Andrew's School in Middletown, Del., where he rowed crew and was captain of the football team. With us, he played freshman football, rowed varsity crew, majored in biology, and joined Tower Club, the Outing Club, and the Pre-Med Society. He also enjoyed squash, tennis, and swimming.



John earned a medical degree at Columbia Physicians and Surgeons, interned at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal, served a year with the National Institutes of Health both before and after, then completed his residency in urology at Pennsylvania Medical School in 1972. He joined St. Louis University as professor of urology then, rising to university professor and chair of the department in 1975.

He retired from his university position in 1988 to undertake private practice in St. Louis. He moved to Belfast, Maine, in 1999 and continued private practice there until final retirement in 2019. He was a devoted mentor to young physicians throughout.

John was a keen woodworker, active in the Episcopal Church, a lifelong scholar, and a rower into his last years. He married Sandy in 1964. She survives him, along with their three children, eight grandchildren, and two great-granddaughters, to whom the class send its condolences.

##### MICHAEL B. PULMAN '60

Born in Liverpool, U.K., Mike attended St. Edward's School in Oxford, then served in the U.K. Armed Forces before coming to the United States. He prepared for Princeton at Pomfret School in Connecticut. At Princeton, Mike played on the tennis team, debated at Whig-Clio, served on *The Daily Princetonian*, majored in history, and dined at Ivy Club.

On graduation Mike earned a master's degree and a Ph.D. in history at U.C. Berkeley in 1964. His career began with six years of teaching history at Florida State University, both in Tallahassee and at its Florence, Italy,

campus. He also became a U.S. citizen in 1968. He moved to the University of Denver, where he taught from 1970 until 1991, when he took early retirement and moved to Santa Fe, N.M.

Mike thrived in Santa Fe. He lived out his days there, active in civic life, and was particularly devoted for many years to the Santa Fe Botanical Garden, of which he said he was "almost" a founder and certainly was a very early president.

Mike died June 6, 2025. He is survived by his companion of 37 years, Eric Lindstrom, to whom we extend the class's sympathies.

#### MICHAEL RICE '60

Mike came to Princeton from Georgetown Preparatory School. He majored in



engineering, worked at WPRB, joined Cannon Club, and managed for the basketball team. He left briefly, married Dorothy in 1959, and came back to graduate in 1961. He joined a mechanical engineering firm in Philadelphia but also began studying law at night at Temple University, where he graduated in 1970.

He began his law career in New York with Cravath, Swain & Moore in 1970. Eventually he specialized in railroad equipment lease financing, which his engineering background complemented. He authored several books on the highly specialized field.

On retirement, Mike returned to his favorite pastime of working with his hands on cars and houses. No job was too large or small and some of them contributed to his repertory of travel, camping, and mechanical mishaps. Mike was active in public affairs, too. While living in Southport, N.C., he became a founder of the successful Save The Cape effort to protect the Cape Fear region from industrial development and a mega port there.

Mike was particularly proud of his seven daughters with Dot. She and one of the daughters predeceased him. He is survived by six daughters; 17 grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren. Our sympathies to them all.

#### THE CLASS OF 1961

##### LAWRENCE D. TORNEK '61

Larry died Sept. 30, 2025, at home in Coconut Grove, Fla.

Born in New York City, he came to Princeton from Erasmus Hall High School. At Princeton, he joined Triangle Club, *The Princeton Tiger*, the Orange Key, the Pre-Law Society, and Whig-Clio. He majored in politics and took his meals at Tower. He roomed with Ernie Ehrens, Steve Stiles, Bob Ochsner, Jim Diaz, Steve Kurtin, and John Bjorkholm.

After Princeton, Larry earned an MBA at



Wharton and then embarked on a lifelong career in the insurance business. In 1971, he founded his own agency as a brokerage general agent for Bankers Life, setting sales records along the way and qualifying for the Million Dollar Round Table several times over. He was venerated in his industry personally and professionally. A man of many hobbies, he was a scuba diver and a marathon runner, competing in the New York City Marathon in 1992 with his daughter, Beth.

Predeceased by his beloved wife of 61 years, Lynn, Larry is survived by his children Scott, Beth, and David and their families; five grandchildren; and his brother, Terry '67.

**THE CLASS OF 1962**  
**JAMES W. COOK '62**

Jim died Oct. 14, 2025, in Ann Arbor, Mich., from Parkinson's disease.



He grew up in West Virginia and came to us from Episcopal High School in Alexandria, Va., majored in chemical engineering, and dined at Quadrangle Club.

In his senior year Jim lived in the Taj Mahal suite with seven roommates who kept in touch with each other throughout their lives. He later earned a master's degree in nuclear engineering from Penn State.

In his diverse and distinguished career, Jim was a leader in the energy industry in New York, Boston, and above all for Consumers Energy and CMS Energy in Michigan. He contributed to the design and development of multiple types of power plants all over the world, as well as alternative energy projects.

Retiring in 2002, Jim redirected his energies to community service in Ann Arbor, his home since 1990. He became a mentor for a younger colleague who has developed projects around the world at the forefront of alternative energy.

Jim is survived by his wife of 63 years, Constance; son Jay and his wife Rita Chin; daughter Amy and her husband Mike Glass; and six grandchildren.

**RICHARD A. WALLACE '62**

Dick died June 12, 2025, in Cloverdale, Calif.

He came to us from Port Jefferson (N.Y.)



High School, where he played tennis, was active in school clubs, and a member of the National Honor Society.

At Princeton, he was a member of Whig-Clio, the Woodrow Wilson Society, played IAA tennis and squash, and majored in aeronautical engineering.

After graduation he received a master's

of science degree in aeronautics and astrophysics from the University of Washington in 1964. After working briefly for Boeing, he went to the Jet Propulsion Laboratory at Caltech. His work there was followed by short employments elsewhere. In 1971, he returned to JPL/Caltech for the rest of his career. In our 20th-reunion yearbook, he noted he was lucky to have helped get off the drawing boards almost all the planetary missions that the U.S. had launched.

In 1985, Dick married Madeline Ryder, whom he had met on a project at JPL. During his career he received numerous team and individual awards, including the NASA Exceptional Service Award in 2000. Personal interests were backpacking, reading, music, and painting.

Dick is survived by his wife, Madeline, and daughter Cary Finale.

**THE CLASS OF 1964**  
**JAMES R. BENOIT '64**

Jim died Dec. 4, 2025, at his longtime home in Santa Rosa, Calif.



He was born Feb. 1, 1942, and grew up in Sandpoint, Idaho, though he completed his secondary education at St. George's Prep in Spokane, Wash.

At Princeton, Jim majored in politics, joined Dial Lodge, participated in intramural sports, and enrolled in Air Force ROTC. In his last two years, he roomed with Lenny Thal, with whom he remained close until his death. His classmates always found Jim to be exceptionally likeable, kind, and empathetic.

After Princeton, Jim enrolled in Hastings College of Law in San Francisco prior to serving in the Air Force as an active-duty JAG officer for four years (continuing in the reserves until 1988). After completing his active duty, he decided to live and work in Santa Rosa, Calif., establishing his law practice there and hiring an administrative assistant, Lynn Cook, whom he married shortly thereafter. In turn, they raised two sons, Justin and Brad, and celebrated their 50th anniversary some weeks before Jim lost his lengthy battle with Parkinson's disease. In Santa Rosa, he loved his decades-long involvement with Rotary, second only to his total devotion to his family.

Jim is survived by his wife, both sons, one daughter-in-law, and two grandchildren.

**WILLIAM P. CARGILE '64**

Bill died Sept. 20, 2025, at his home in Woodside, Calif., with his wife, Shelley, at his side.

He was born in Montgomery, Ala., where he attended Sidney Lanier High School. He was both a National Merit Scholar and National Science Fair finalist. At Princeton,



he majored in electrical engineering and dined at Court Club.

Immediately following graduation, Bill drove his 1949 Chevrolet to California

to embark on his career in then-emerging Silicon Valley. He began at Hewlett-Packard, where he worked on the company's first computer and was project manager for one of its first minicomputers. He subsequently co-founded and led several tech start-ups. He held five patents in fields ranging from digital oscilloscopes to data security. He then transitioned to venture capital, where he advised high-tech companies and helped shape the next generation of digital innovation.

After retirement, Bill dedicated himself to his other passion, conchology. He spent years conducting fieldwork and meticulous study of museum collections of shells. His diving expeditions and collecting trips led to his discovery and naming of four new species and subspecies.

Bill loved a good joke, classical music, dark chocolate, and fine wine. He is survived by Shelley; son Rich; daughter Julie; and stepchild Nikki. He was predeceased by his first wife, Kathy, and son Sterling.

**CLAUDE W. CASE '64**

Claude died July 30, 2025, surrounded by his wife of 58 years, Susan, and their family.



Born in Phoenix, he attended Scottsdale High School, spending his junior year in Sweden as an American Field Service exchange student, which led

him to become a lifetime "AFSer," hosting and leading tours for foreign students visiting the United States.

At Princeton, Claude majored in history, played trombone for the band and Triangle Club, and was a member of Terrace Club. His brother Michael was in the Class of '66.

Claude spent two years in the Peace Corps, earned an MAT at Harvard, taught high school math in Massachusetts, then worked at GE, taking him and Susan back to Phoenix. In 1970, he joined the tire company founded by his father. After becoming CEO, he and Susan led it to substantial success, enabling its sale in 2002. Thereafter, Claude focused on philanthropy, becoming a board member of Social Venture Partners International, the largest international network of engaged donors, with over 3,000 donors in seven countries supporting 580 nonprofits worldwide.

Claude and Susan retired to Santa Barbara, enjoying spending time with their three children and four grandchildren. They were also enthusiastic travelers, having visited

over the years all continents except Antarctica.

The class extends its condolences to Susan and the Case family.

#### HOUGHTON R. HALLOCK JR. '64

Howie died April 16, 2025, in Washington, D.C.



Howie's father was an Army colonel (West Point '37) who, with Howie's pregnant mother, was stationed in Hawaii Dec. 7, 1941. After the Pearl Harbor attack, she returned to Berkeley, Calif., where Howie was born March 15, 1942. Howie grew up on various Army posts, including Okinawa and West Point. He prepped at The Hill School, where he ran track and was a National Merit Scholarship finalist.

At Princeton, Howie majored in history, ate at Tower, where he formed many lifelong friendships, ran the hurdles in track, and participated in Whig-Clio, the Orange Key Society, and the Trenton Tutorial Project. Following Princeton, he obtained a J.D. at Harvard in 1967 and then an MBA at NYU in 1973. After several years at a New York City law firm focusing on corporate and securities matters, he moved to Washington, D.C., where he joined the SEC and spent the remainder of his legal career serving as special counsel in the Office of Investment Company Regulations for 40 years. He reported that the enormous growth of the mutual fund industry during that period "resulted in an extremely interesting, challenging, and rewarding career for me".

Howie is survived by brothers Geoffrey, Kenneth '70, and James; several nieces and nephews; and his longtime companion, Jean Eckert, an artist. The class extends its condolences to them.

#### ANTHONY NOWELS '64

Tony died Aug. 15, 2024, in Newberry, Fla., of atypical Parkinson's disease.



Born in Irvington, N.J., Tony graduated from Manasquan (N.J.) High School. At Princeton, he majored in electrical engineering and wrote his

thesis on "Analog of the Nervous System" advancing his pre-med interests. He joined Cloister and was active at WPRB, the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers, and in interclub sports.

Following graduation, Tony earned a medical degree from the Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons, married Kathleen Bloch, a Columbia nursing school graduate, and did his medical internship at UCSF Moffitt Hospital. Tony and Kathy then moved to Bethesda for a stint with the U.S. Public Health Service at NIH, rising to

the rank of lieutenant commander before completing a psychiatry residency at Columbia.

In 1974, he moved to the University of Miami, where Tony established an adolescent psychiatry program. Three years later he moved his practice to nearby Grant Center Hospital. Kathy ultimately joined his program as a psychiatric nurse practitioner, and they focused on child and adolescent psychiatry augmented by combinations of biological, social, and psychotherapeutic interventions.

Tony retired in 2002, refocusing his attention on gardening, cooking, woodworking and, especially, six grandchildren who lived nearby. Kathy and Tony were married 56 years and had two sons, Michael and Matthew.

The class extends sincere condolences to Kathy and their family.

#### THE CLASS OF 1966

##### EUGENE C. STRUCKHOFF III '66

Gene died Sept. 21, 2025, in Enfield, N.H.



He came to Princeton from Phillips Exeter Academy, entering with the Class of 1967. He majored in history, belonged to Cloister Inn, and played interclub sports.

A Harvard Law grad, Gene practiced law in New Hampshire with the firm of Lothstein Guerrriero. He became one of the country's leading experts in defending those charged with driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. He was one of the founders of the National College for DUI Defense.

Gene reported in our 55th-reunion yearbook that he resided in McLeod, Mont., but he moved back to Enfield toward the end of his life. He was an avid photographer and was especially interested in bird photography. He was one of the founders of The Fourth Place, in Hanover, N.H., "a community space for everyone who loves games, comics, and geek culture."

A photograph of Gene wearing a mask was the inspiration for our Masked Man project during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Gene is survived by his son, Ian, to whom the class extends its condolences.

#### THE CLASS OF 1967

##### PETER N. GREGORY '67

Peter died of a sudden heart attack March 19, 2025, at home in Starksboro, Vermont.



He came to Princeton from Bronxville High School in New York, studied art history, joined Ivy, and volunteered at the New Jersey Neuro-Psychiatric Institute, where he also worked for a year after graduation. Peter remained lifelong friends with Ivy classmates Bill Stanard, George Wanklyn,

and Doug Penick.

After military service in Thailand, Peter headed to California, first studying Japanese language and history at Claremont College, then taking intensive Japanese in Tokyo for a year, and finally pursuing a Ph.D. in Asian studies at Harvard, specializing in medieval Chinese Buddhism. He was ordained a lay practitioner of Zen Buddhism at the Los Angeles Zen Center and was instrumental in developing what became the Kuroda Institute for the Study of Buddhism, a nonprofit organized in 1976 to promote scholarship on Buddhism and its historical, philosophical, and cultural influences. Peter led Kuroda for 30 years as its executive director and president.

Peter taught briefly at UCLA and Stanford before joining the religious studies department of the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana for 15 years. Peter moved to Smith College, where he held an endowed professorship in religion and East Asian studies. His scholarship was distinguished by his groundbreaking books on the Chinese monk Guifeng Zongmi, a seminal figure in the development of both Chan and Huayan Buddhist traditions. The range of his work was demonstrated by his production of a documentary exploring Zen Buddhism in America.

Peter is survived by his wife Margi; and two daughters.

#### J. RICARDO POMA '67

Ricardo died Aug. 24, 2025, at his home in El Salvador, from kidney cancer.



He graduated from Hackley School. At Princeton, Ricardo roomed with Richard O'Connell at 423 Cuyler. An Ivy Club member, he played freshman soccer and was a leader of the Latin America Conference Committee. He majored in basic engineering.

Ricardo received his MBA from Harvard in 1970 and began his career in successive posts with the family company Grupo Poma. He managed and expanded its divisions and philanthropic foundations, operating across 10 Central and Latin America countries and the United States. As president and CEO, the portfolio of businesses included Real Hotels; automotive dealerships in Central America, EXCEL Corp, a real estate development and construction company, and a metal and glass industrial company.

Ricardo was a director of International Bank of Miami, Harvard Advisory Council, International Leadership Board of Cleveland Clinic, Bain Capital Fund, and Telefonica de Centroamerica. In 1993, he founded the Higher School of Economics and Business in El Salvador. For many years he led the Poma Foundation for Health

and Human Development.

Ricardo received many honors, including the Order of Civil Merit from the king of Spain in 2015, and the corporate Citizen Award from the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington in 2019.

Ricardo is survived by four children with his first wife; three sons and daughter Alejandrina Salaverria-Mejia '94; and a daughter with his second wife.

### THE CLASS OF 1968

#### STANLEY D. BYNUM '68

Stanley died Oct. 28, 2025, in Birmingham, Ala.



He was raised in Talladega, Ala., where he excelled in tennis and became an Eagle Scout. He came to us from Indian Springs School, where he sang in the Glee Club,

played basketball and tennis, and was mayor of the student community.

At Princeton, Stanley graduated cum laude from the Woodrow Wilson School, was a member of Cap and Gown, and was active in Chapel Choir and *The Daily Princetonian*. He continued his commitment to Princeton by chairing the Alabama Alumni Schools Committee for many years.

After graduating, he received a J.D. from the University of Alabama School of Law, where he was editor in chief of the law review and a Hugo Black Scholar. He joined Bradley Arant Rose & White in Birmingham, with primary areas of practice in construction contracts and litigation, product liability defense, and international law. He remained a partner in the construction procurement group until his retirement.

In addition to tennis, he enjoyed canoeing and hiking in the Sipsey Wilderness. As a member of the Kiwanis Club of Birmingham, he had perfect attendance for 30 years.

The class extends its deepest sympathies to his wife, Lucie; children Julian '02 and Mary '05; and eight grandchildren. His son Dowe '00 predeceased him.

### THE CLASS OF 1969

#### CHARLES K. WIGGINS '69

Charlie died May 27, 2025, on Bainbridge Island, Wash., from complications of



Parkinson's. His life was shaped by kindness, optimism, and a deep passion for justice.

The son of a chief warrant officer, Charlie grew up traveling the world with his family. He came to Princeton from Orleans American High School in Orleans, France. At Princeton, he was active in the Princeton Evangelical Fellowship and the Westminster Foundation and played interclub volleyball for Wilson College. He majored in philosophy, graduated

Phi Beta Kappa with high honors, and was commissioned in the Army Reserves.

After receiving an MBA from the University of Hawaii in 1973 and a J.D. from Duke in 1976, Charlie began his legal career at the firm of Edwards, Sieh, Wiggins and Hathaway, specializing in appellate law. In 2010, Charlie was elected to the Washington State Supreme Court. While Charlie was perhaps best known for his battles with billionaire donors who tried to sway judicial elections, he considered the McCleary v. Washington decision to be the most impactful of his tenure. That ruling resulted in the state increasing funding for basic K-12 education by billions of dollars.

You might have found Charlie building a wooden kayak, digging geoducks, or juggling. He snowboarded well into his 70s. Charlie was a dedicated member of Rolling Bay Presbyterian Church, serving as an elder and joining youth mission trips to build housing in Tijuana.

Charlie is survived by his wife, Nancy; children Amy and her husband Michael, and Sam and his wife Kayla; grandchildren Jude, Thora, and Abel; and sisters, Jane, Helen, and Elizabeth.

### THE CLASS OF 1984

#### PAUL A. ROBINSON JR. '84

Paul died June 11, 2025.

He graduated from South Side High School in Memphis, Tenn., where he was salutatorian and senior class president. At Princeton, he participated on the Princeton Debate Panel.

An ordained minister, Paul also practiced law in Memphis for more than 30 years after earning a history degree from Princeton in 1984 and a law degree from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville in 1990. He is revered for having devoted countless pro bono hours to community organizations and individuals.

Paul is survived by his son, Paul "Trey" Robinson III; three grandchildren; and a large circle of friends and colleagues deeply mourning his loss.

Our class shares this remembrance to honor a remarkable man whose dedication to uplifting people and his community exemplifies the Princeton charge to serve humanity. We will miss his hearty laugh, which seemed to echo and fill any room.

### THE CLASS OF 1986

#### GARY SQUIRES '86

Gary, the kind-hearted swimmer, engineer and consultant, died Oct 7, 2025, of complications after surgery. He was 61.

Growing up in McMinnville, Ore., Gary came to Princeton, where he competed with the swim team, joined Cottage Club, and majored in civil engineering. His thesis, "Stock



Index Fund Creation as an Alternative for the Individual Investor," explored applying some engineering techniques to maximizing investment stability. In the pool, he swam freestyle sprints but mainly butterfly as he did for the medley relay that went to the 1986 NCAA championship.

Following graduation, he worked as a consultant in New York and Paris before returning to Oregon and settling into West Linn, where he raised three sons with his wife, Lynn. In 2024, he retired from a 34-year career at Rubicon to tend to a family business and start an RV storage business back in his hometown. He continued to swim in masters meets as well as compete in marathons and triathlons with his wife and sons.

To his wife Lynn, his three sons, and two grandchildren, the Class of 1986 extends its deepest condolences at the loss of a kind and steadfast student athlete.

### THE CLASS OF 1987

#### LeGRANDE A. GREEN '87

LeGrande died Dec. 2, 2025.

Known as "Grandie" to his friends, he grew up in Wilmington, N.C., and attended Emsley A. Laney High School. On campus, LeGrande lived in Mathey and majored in history. He danced with Expressions and Center Line Jazz Dance Companies, led tours as an Orange Key guide, and was part of Triangle Club. His ties to Triangle remained strong, serving on its board of directors.

LeGrande was endlessly funny and creative. After Princeton, he launched a successful television production career. For eight years, he produced *The Oprah Winfrey Show* with rousing success: He was nominated for five Daytime Emmys and won four consecutively. He won an NAACP Image Award for the episode on *Unsolved Hate Crimes of the Civil Rights Movement*. He was supervising producer at *The Sally Jessy Raphael Show* and founded his own production company, Spirit Media Works. We can't forget about his memorable *Jeopardy!* showing and winnings during his time at Princeton!

His love and memories will remain in the heart of his stepmother, Sonja, brothers Lawrence and Morgan, stepbrother Parrish, and a host of friends. His perseverance and resilient spirit remain inspiring for all that know him.

### THE CLASS OF 1992

#### JASON CONSTANTINE '92

Jason died June 3, 2025.

He brought Southern California sunshine to Princeton. Wilson College could not contain his infectious enthusiasm or ever-present video camera. Late night Wawa runs inspired



his original, classic anthem “Wawa Girl” and his love for performing led to the creation of the campus Christmas caroling sensation, The Princeton Out-a-Tunes. He

rowed heavyweight crew for a year, founded and directed the Princeton Christian Repertory, and performed a legendary *Henry IV* in the sanctuary of the Chapel. For his senior thesis, he wrote not one, but two plays — “Passionate” and “Give and Take” — to complete his degree in English with a concentration in theater. He loved so many Princeton friends, especially the young woman he kept casting as his girlfriend, fiancée, and wife, until she became all those things, Kristin Gleeson Constantine ’91.

Jason earned his MFA in film from Loyola Marymount University, where his “Ashes” won the Producers Guild of America Award for Best Student Short Film. He went on to become co-president of the Lionsgate Motion Picture Group and a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Jason shepherded teams that created franchises such as *John Wick*, *The Expendables*, *Saw*, and other successful and award-winning films.

Jason is survived by Kristin and their sons Lucas, Xander ’27, and Nicholas, as well as the grateful hearts of all of those made better by knowing him.

#### GRADUATE ALUMNI

##### ROBERT H. ROMER \*55

Bob died in Amherst, Mass., Nov. 2, 2025.

Born April 15, 1931, in Chicago, Bob received a B.A. from Amherst in 1952 and a Ph.D. in physics from Princeton in 1955. He joined the faculty of Amherst, where he spent his entire career.

One of Bob’s specialties was low-temperature physics. In 1976, he authored the book *Energy: An Introduction to Physics*, which presented the basic principles of physics within the framework of the energy crisis. From 1988 until retiring in 2001, he was editor of the *American Journal of Physics*. He published articles in *Physical Review*, *Physical Review Letters*, and *The Physics Teacher*.

Acting on his belief in social justice, Bob spent a year as a visiting professor at Voorhees College, a historically Black college in Denmark, S.C. After retiring, Bob became interested in the history of slavery in New England. His research on slavery in Old Deerfield led to the installation of Witness Stones commemorating enslaved individuals. He wrote the books *Slavery in the Connecticut Valley of Massachusetts*, and *I am a Bitter Enemy to Slavery: An Amherst College Student Goes to War*.

Predeceased by his wives Diana and Betty, Bob is survived by his Evan, David ’80, and Theodore; grandchildren Katherine, Paul, Matthew ’18, and Ciara; and five great-grandchildren.

##### JAMES W. NORDYKE \*59

Jim died at the age of 95 in La Paz, N.M., Oct. 31, 2025.

Born June 21, 1930, in Rock Springs, Wyo., Jim earned a bachelor’s degree in economics from Stanford in 1952. He began graduate work at Princeton, then left the University to serve as an intelligence specialist in the Army from 1953 to 1955. He completed his Ph.D. in economics in 1959.

Jim’s first academic appointment was at Kenyon, where he taught economics from 1958 to 1964. He then joined the economics faculty at New Mexico State University (NMSU), where he remained until retiring in 1992. He taught undergraduate and graduate students in elementary economics, the development of economic thought, and international economics. He assisted in establishing a master’s degree in economics at NMSU and was instrumental in starting the undergraduate major in international business. In 1973, he received NMSU’s Westhafer Award for excellence in teaching.

Jim’s doctoral dissertation, *New York and International Finance*, was published in 1976, and he co-authored a textbook, *Comparative Economic Systems*, which went through several editions in the 1970s.

Jim is survived by his long-time companion, Ingeborg Volpi; her son Wolf; and her daughters Ute and Gunda.

##### JONATHAN L. ALPERIN \*61

At age 88, Jon died June 22, 2025, in Chicago.

Jon was born in Boston, June 2, 1937. He completed his undergraduate studies at Harvard in 1959 and earned a Ph.D. in mathematics from Princeton in 1961. He was a postdoc at Oxford.

Jon was a professor of mathematics at the University of Chicago and a visitor at the Institute for Advanced Study. His dissertation, “On a Special Class of Regular p-groups,” marked the beginning of an interest in groups of prime power order that culminated in a collaboration with George Glauberman, establishing an existence criterion for such groups to have abelian normal subgroups of prescribed size.

The Alperin Fusion Theorem, the main result of his 1967 paper “Sylow intersections and fusion,” makes precise the sense in which conjugation can always be understood locally and allows for a unified treatment of several nonsimplicity criteria.

In 1986, Jon announced Alperin’s Weight Conjecture, identifying a simple way in which the number of irreducible representations of a finite group in positive characteristic is determined locally. Many consider this to be one of the major currently outstanding problems in the theory of finite groups.

Jon is survived by his nephew, Greg, and his niece, Courtney.

##### JEROME V. CONNOY \*68

Jerry died Sept. 5, 2025, in Lenox, Mass., at the age of 82.

Born Sept. 28, 1942, in Minneapolis, Jerry earned a bachelor’s degree in chemical engineering from the University of Minnesota in 1964, and a Ph.D. in chemical engineering from Princeton in 1968. His dissertation topic was electrical changes during heterogeneous catalysis.

After Princeton, he began his career at Exxon, then earned an MBA from New York University in 1972 and became a Wall Street analyst. In 1984, Jerry and his wife, Renee, moved to Lenox, where they created and operated The Lenox Gallery of Fine Art, which became the largest art gallery in Lenox and a cornerstone of the local arts scene. He served on local boards including the Ventfort Hall Association, and chaired Lenox Citizens Against Fluoridated Water, which led a successful referendum campaign against fluoridation.

Predeceased by his wife, Renee, Jerry is survived by his sons Kevin and Brian; and his five siblings.

##### HEATHER NADELMAN \*93

Heather died suddenly Aug. 6, 2025, while attending the Kingston Sheepdog Trials in Ontario, Canada. She was 58.

Born in New Haven, Conn., Oct. 1, 1966, Heather majored in religion at Yale, graduating in 1988. She served as editor in chief of the 1988–89 edition of *The Insider’s Guide to Colleges*. She earned a Ph.D. in religion from Princeton in 1993, focusing on American religious history.

Heather worked at Educational Testing Service as an assessment specialist for more than 25 years. More recently, she worked as an independent consultant in educational test development and narrative design. Her work included creating virtual reality training programs in a variety of fields, including an instructional program for firefighters.

Dog-centered all her life, Heather became an expert in Border Collies. Combining her interests in technology and Border Collies, Heather developed a website aimed at making knowledge of the working stock dog world accessible to newcomers. She operated Outrun Press, focusing on Border Collie-related books. Among the books Heather edited and published were Donald McCaig’s *The Dog Wars*, Mike Neary’s *Sheep for Sheepdogs*, and *Top Trainers Talk About Starting a Sheepdog*. Heather was also a writer of fan fiction.

Heather is survived by her many friends.

*Graduate memorials are prepared by the APGA.*

*An undergraduate memorial appears for Stephen W. Feldberg ’58 \*61.*

# CLASSIFIED



## For Rent EUROPE

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LUIGI CROCCO (1906-1986)

## Gifted with the Right Stuff, He Helped Put Men on the Moon

BY HARRISON BLACKMAN '17

**W**HEN WE THINK OF Princeton's prominent role in the history of 20th-century science, we might conjure the image of theoretical physicists like Richard Feynman \*42 scrawling dense formulas on chalkboards. Yet, in the 1950s, Princeton was also playing host to a much more visceral expression of scientific innovation, with perhaps the only ivy-covered "rocket pit" in existence. Princeton's aerospace legacy owes a debt to Harry F. Guggenheim, one of several scions of the family also known for its art museums in New York City and Bilbao, Spain. This Guggenheim sponsored key figures in aviation, including Charles Lindbergh's tour across America following his historic 1927 transatlantic flight and Robert H. Goddard's experiments in rocketry. In 1948, Guggenheim funded the expansion of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory on the Caltech campus, and the creation of a second lab at Princeton, initially hosted in cinderblock buildings next to the old Palmer Stadium and relocated in 1951 to the newly established Forrestal Campus. Guggenheim also endowed a professorship in jet propulsion named for Goddard.

To fill this position, Princeton hired Italian aeronautical engineer Luigi Crocco, whom his former student Thomas Brzustowski \*63 recalled as "a patrician Italian, white-haired, distantly related to Pope Pius XII, and with a fabulous accent he cultivated." Aeronautics ran in Crocco's blood: His father was Gaetano Crocco, a pioneer of Italian aviation, designing airships that saw combat in World War I. Later in life, the elder Crocco also looked to the stars, modeling how a spacecraft could make a transit of Mars, Venus, and Earth in one year, a forerunner of the "gravity assist" technique used by most unmanned NASA probes today.

But before such extraterrestrial missions could be pursued, Gaetano's son would have to develop better rockets. While Luigi studied at the University of Rome in the late 1920s, he conducted rocketry experiments under his father's watch. In 1930, Luigi successfully tested a regeneratively cooling rocket motor, meaning that the motor was cooled by one of its own propellants during its firing. In doing so, he had developed a technology eight years ahead ahead of his American peers. In 1935, Crocco wrote a study that became the theoretical "bible"

of supersonic wind tunnels, thereafter a crucial part of aerodynamic testing.

Around the same time, Crocco conducted rocketry experiments that employed nitromethane as a propellant (a chemical now used in some motorsports), and in one of these experiments the rocket blew up. According to his protégé, Princeton professor Irvin Glassman, Crocco was "seriously wounded, acquiring an enormous scar where a piece of shrapnel had pierced his arm." The injury sent him back to the classroom in Rome, where he taught from 1937 until his 1949 Princeton appointment, becoming a figure of the campus community, eventually building an Italian villa for himself on Fitzrandolph Road.

**After World War II, many former Axis-aligned scientists were pulled into the competing sides of the Cold War space race, such as Wernher von Braun, the architect of Nazi Germany's V-2 missile, who then oversaw the development of the Apollo lunar missions. Crocco's work at Princeton also played a key role in the U.S. space program. High-frequency combustion instability — the tendency of rockets to tear themselves apart due to acoustic resonance — was plaguing American efforts. Crocco's investigations were crucial to the success of the F-1 rocket engine, part of the Saturn V primary stage that brought Neil Armstrong and his succeeding astronauts to the moon.**

Often, Crocco's work at Princeton generated scenes reminiscent of Tom Wolfe's 1979 book about the space race, *The Right Stuff*. In a 1951 *New York Times* article, reporter B.K. Thorne observed Crocco encouraging his students to "relax more" during a rocket test, their hearing protection only consisting of pencil erasers.

In that same article, when asked if the Soviets could beat Americans in rocket research, Crocco insisted the U.S. held the long-term advantage. The Soviets "have profited by German help," he said, "but it's not likely that they'll get ahead of us." Sputnik's fateful 1957 orbit may have proved Crocco wrong, but it was only with his help that the U.S. won the race to the moon. ■



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