

PRESSURES ON CAMPUS SPEECH / RESILIENCE IN LEBANON

# PRINCETON ALUMNI WEEKLY

MAY 2026

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then turn to page 34.



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



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Taking a cue from the Strother School of Radical Attention.

*Photograph from Adobe Stock*

COURTESY OF LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

## Princeton Pre-read, 2026: 'Reader, Come Home'

*With every year's Princeton Pre-read, I introduce incoming first-year students to the intellectual life of the University through the experience of reading and discussing a book together. The Class of 2030's book is Maryanne Wolf's Reader, Come Home: The Reading Brain in a Digital World. This is my foreword to the Pre-read edition, which the incoming class will receive this summer. I encourage all alumni to read along with us!*

**D**ear Members of the GREAT Class of 2030, Warm greetings from Princeton! My colleagues and I look forward to welcoming you to campus in August. Your talents, interests, and perspectives will add tremendously to this community, and I am confident that you in turn will develop and grow through the experiences, interactions, challenges, and opportunities that await you here.

I am delighted to share with you this copy of the Princeton Pre-read selection for 2026, Maryanne Wolf's *Reader, Come Home: The Reading Brain in a Digital World*. The Pre-read is one of many traditions you will encounter at Princeton and is part of a series of activities that will introduce you to the scholarly and communal life of the university. I like to think of it as a scholarly counterpart to the Pre-read, a joyous ceremony in which incoming undergraduates mark their arrival at Princeton by parading out from Opening Exercises.

I chose *Reader, Come Home* as this year's Pre-read because it addresses a question of vital importance to every entering student: Why should we continue to read long, challenging books when artificial intelligence agents can quickly summarize them for us? Or, to take it down a notch, when we can plug into an audiobook at the gym?

Deep, immersive reading is at the heart of a Princeton education, but today, more than ever, that activity depends upon conscious and energetic commitment. We are most likely to read books fully and well only if we understand why they offer us something distinctive, valuable, and irreplaceable.

Professor Wolf approaches this topic with perspectives drawn from literary studies, cognitive neuroscience, and developmental psycholinguistics. She is a leading expert on dyslexia, and her work on that subject has earned her awards and fellowships around the world. Professor Wolf thus exemplifies what scholars call "interdisciplinarity": the capacity to combine insights from multiple academic fields to produce new understanding and knowledge. Interdisciplinarity is an important feature of academic research today and the Princeton curriculum that awaits you.

I like *Reader, Come Home* for another, very straightforward reason: The book is a pleasure to read. It is an epistolary book, organized as nine letters. Professor Wolf's writing is clear, imaginative, humane, and occasionally whimsical. I first encountered her book several years ago, when it enthralled me over the course of a transatlantic flight. *Reader, Come Home* made a long journey seem short! I hope that you enjoy the book as much as I have—both on my first, midair reading and when I reread it this year.

Professor Wolf will take the stage during Orientation Week to talk with us about *Reader, Come Home*. Over the course of the fall semester, I will host Pre-read discussions in the residential colleges that will provide us with opportunities to talk about the book and the broader issues



Maryanne Wolf Photo by Rod Searcey, book cover courtesy of HarperCollins

it raises. I anticipate that these conversations will range over many topics, but here are four you might consider as you read the book this summer:

1. Professor Wolf devotes Letter Three to "deep reading." What does she mean by that concept? Is the experience of "deep reading" familiar to you? Do you agree with Professor Wolf's account of its character and value?
2. In Letters Five through Eight, Professor Wolf examines how children learn to read in a digital world. What do you remember about how you developed into a skilled reader? What roles did print and digital sources play in that evolution? Did *Reader, Come Home* change how you thought about your education before Princeton and your development as a reader?
3. In Letter Nine, Professor Wolf talks about the three lives of a "good reader" (pp. 188-190). What does she mean by this idea? How does she describe the connections between reading, reflection, and contemplation? What kind of reading life do you want for yourself, at Princeton and afterward?
4. When describing the aims of a college education, Judith Shapiro, a former president of Barnard College, once said, "You want the inside of your head to be an interesting place to spend the rest of your life." Does Professor Wolf's book help you understand the meaning of President Shapiro's statement? How does reading matter to well-being?

I look forward to examining these topics and others with you, and to welcoming you when you arrive on campus later this year. In the meantime, I hope that you enjoy *Reader, Come Home*, and I hope, too, that you have a wonderful and refreshing summer.

With very best wishes,

Christopher L. Eisgruber  
Princeton, New Jersey  
March 2026



YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE LATEST ISSUES

## PERSPECTIVES ON THE IRAN WAR

I appreciate graduate student Poorya Mollahosseini’s perspective on the war in Iran, and his personal experience is obviously valid (Princetonians, April issue). I would gently note that what might be the view of “many” doesn’t necessarily mean “all.” I’m married to a Kurdish Iranian American who came here as a teenager, and what I’ve witnessed has been profound concern and anxiety. Among his family, there is deep worry about the safety of family still there, frustration at the lack of clear information from the administration, and an underlying sense of dread rooted in lived history. The fear is that this may follow the same painful pattern as past conflicts: that outside powers will intervene, create instability, and then withdraw, or that the Kurds in Erbil will once again be armed and left to face a fight they cannot win alone.

Communication has been incredibly difficult. Updates come only through a hard line that we are unable to dial back into, so we can only wait to hear from them. We’ve received word once every few days that his family is safe, and even that small reassurance comes with the knowledge that they are surely going through something traumatic. I think many of us, regardless of background, share a sense of uncertainty about what comes next, particularly as the approach from the White House continues to evolve.

**MEAGHAN BYRNE '10**

*Washington, D.C.*

## LESSONS FROM LIVES

Nobody loves war but the arms-maker, which begs the question why the separate ideas of Joseph Nye Jr. '58 and David Paton '52 are not yet merged, mixed, and married (“Lives Lived and Lost,” February issue). Mr. Nye coined the term “soft power” and Mr. Paton pioneered the concept for a flying teaching hospital of ophthalmology.

Mr. Nye (“the dean of political science”) defined soft power as “the ability to achieve your goals ... because people in other countries find your ideas attractive, identify with your culture, and follow your example.” Mr. Paton’s concept became Orbis International, training over a thousand foreign doctors in its first year of service. That initial aircraft was called “the best example of functional diplomacy ... ever seen.”

Which leads one to wonder why no administration of our federal government has considered one less squadron of F-35 fighter aircraft or one less battalion of M1 Abrams battle tanks in order to support two or three hospital

ships, or medical teaching airframes, to share U.S. medical expertise globally.

Continued investment in nuclear weapons for use against other nations will only lead to the eventual (and disastrous) use of one such item. Alternatively, gradual and incremental investment in sharing-and-caring for peoples of other nations may eventually end wars altogether. In the words of the old bromide, “nothing ventured, nothing gained.”

**ROCKY SEMMES '79**

*Alexandria, Va.*

## BUDGET OUTLOOK

President Eisgruber '83 has been a steady hand at the wheel during turbulent times for other highly competitive universities. Further, I applaud his serious budget reviews (On the Campus, March and April issues). However, two points. First, those whose performance exceeds expectations should be rewarded. Second, it’s unclear why there is such a conservative forecast on investment returns. The U.S. stock market is at record levels currently. Certainly a drop is possible, but the

current administration — with which Princeton may not agree — is taking every possible action to increase stock market performance.

**RODERICK MCNEALY '72**

*Hillsborough Township, N.J.*

## PROFESSOR’S DEPARTURE

I completely support professor Dan-el Padilla Peralta '06’s decision to leave Princeton (On the Campus, April issue). No scholar should have to endure what he did.

I am also disappointed that PAW continues to default to the “Israel-Hamas war” framing while sidestepping the term genocide. Credible legal and human rights bodies and scholars are accurately applying this term, and so should PAW. Such journalism minimizes the gravity of the moment.

**MICHAEL SOLIS '07**

*Brighton, N.Y.*

## SUPPORT FOR EATING CLUBS

For decades, I have observed with disappointment the administration’s adversarial attitude toward the eating clubs, yet have not been able to square this with the consistently positive feedback from undergraduates, professors, coaches, and even the research conducted by former President Shirley Tilghman’s 2010 Eating Club Task Force, on which I was an active participant. Students overwhelmingly believe the eating club system is an important part of their Princeton experience, as the 70%-plus participation rates in the selection/sign-in process affirms.

Yet the administration occasionally serves up ill-conceived initiatives that would weaken Prospect Avenue and potentially reduce dining options. In the face of budget cuts, increased competition from its peers, and other challenges, the administration should work constructively on improving the club system and increasing its capacity to satisfy student demand.

I bring some standing to this argument. Cuban born, I emigrated to the USA at age 6 and became a recruited athlete from a high school without links to Princeton and

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**MORE TIGER TALES**

*March's cover story, "Behind the Stripes," about the Princeton mascot sparked memories from readers who once wore the suit (or knew someone who did). Read additional comments online at [bit.ly/behind-the-stripes](http://bit.ly/behind-the-stripes).*

I read your mascot article with interest, but nowhere could I find mentioned the most essential concept for this critical role.

I happened to be the head cheerleader, so for several seasons I had the opportunity to study Charles Stephenson '62 '64's interpretation at close range, yearning to have the experience.

Eventually Stephenson gave me the honor to inhabit the dank mammal for the second half of the 1961 Brown game my junior year. When he agreed to let me do it, I asked him for advice.

He looked at me and said, "Remember: It's not a man trying to act like a *tiger*. ... It's a tiger trying to act like a *man*."

**CHRISTOPHER PULLMAN '63**

*Cambridge, Mass.*

I was a substitute Tiger in 1991 for a single basketball game the men's team was playing as the eighth seed in the March Madness tourney against the ninth seed Villanova Wildcats at the Carrier Dome in Syracuse. My girlfriend at the time was the actual Tiger but couldn't go and sent me. This was during a run of several years in which we made the tourney, and being seeded eighth was a big deal.

Each year, we'd managed some TV

time, and the Tiger had gotten a teeny piece of it, so I prepped my best Dancing Homer routines, but to no avail. This was the one year when the Tiger would not be televised. I did get into a small brouhaha with the Wildcat after the game ended and had to turn on the jets to escape with my dignity (and costume) intact. And yes, it smelled really bad. Unfortunately, we lost by two at the buzzer, 50-48, so my Tiger time came to an abrupt end, but I'll never forget it.

**PAUL GAZZERRO '92**

*Brooklyn, N.Y.*

My favorite Tiger is my son, Will Scharf '08, who is now assistant to the president and White House staff secretary. Good training for the vicissitudes of life in the political arena.

**MICHAEL SCHARF '64**

*Palm Beach, Fla.*

In the fall of '65, I had the dubious distinction of following the previous year's great, inimitable Tiger, Graham Findlay '66, whose hilarious halftime antics I tried and miserably failed to emulate. Perhaps the closest I came was at the home game against Penn, a warm day when I discovered too late the inadvisability of imbibing a few beers before donning the sauna-like Tiger outfit. That may have been why, as the band formed a mattress on the field while playing "A Hard Day's Night," I found myself in the middle of the formation trying some gyrations which might have made sense if I'd remained upright but seemed to capture unusual notice in the sellout crowd since I was prone as I went through my limited repertoire of dance moves. As I returned to the sidelines to what seemed like thunderous applause, the head cheerleader, Phil Handy '67, asked me if I had any idea of what I was doing out there. The truth? Not a clue.

The epilogue came a few days later, when Dean of Students William Lippincott '41 "invited" me to his office to tell me about all the angry letters about my unseemly antics he'd received from irate alumni. He told me I'd likely have to write an apology in PAW, to which I replied that I agreed that I probably should do

that, except, as I explained to him, “The Tiger never apologizes.” He laughed and shoed me out of the office.

**JOHN FISHER '67**  
*Saratoga Springs, N.Y.*



The “unnamed” Tiger mascot in your 1970 photo is the late, great Jim Brink '72.

**DOUG HARRISON '72**  
*Reston, Va.*

As the Princeton Tiger in 1969-70, I read with interest your cover story. The reason I became the Tiger was because of my predecessor Peter Plympton Smith '68, who proceeded me by two years — two Peter Smiths in three years!

My best story was being hijacked from the Princeton side of the field in Hanover by a large gang of Dartmouth freshmen who definitely “had me” only for them to be stopped dead by the Princeton rugby team, which was just entering the stadium. The battle was fierce and I was nose down in the scrum, but when it was over, I was triumphantly carried back to the right side!

I believe that’s me in the photo in your article with the [inflatable] bottle of gin. Unfortunately, I later might have had a little too much of something and fell on the bottle as it popped apart.

My favorite thing about being the Tiger was wearing the uniform in Manhattan on Saturday nights after the games. You can imagine how much fun that was!

**L. PETER SMITH '70**  
*Vero Beach, Fla.*

Your splendid article contained the 1998 *Prince* editorial lamenting the sad condition of the Tiger costume, which doubtless inspired CBS sportscaster Gus Johnson, during a break in the Princeton-Michigan State tournament game, to comment, “This is the sorriest looking Tiger I’ve ever seen,” and then

use a telestrator to identify the frayed and torn spots on the costume.

**STEPHEN T. WHELAN '68**  
*New York, N.Y.*

I would like to offer a minor correction to Tom Culp '69’s contribution. I was in Tom’s class and was a cheerleader my junior year. When Tom arrived at Princeton, the head cheerleader was Phil Handy '67, Tom Handy '69’s older brother. Tom Handy was my roommate and a cheerleader but never the head. That honor in 1967-68 was held by Bruce LaPierre '69.

Our gang successfully fended off an attack on Tom Culp by Yale cheerleaders during the 1967 Yale game. I’ve often related that it was my first, but far from last, strong objection to the actions of George W. Bush, a Yale cheerleader during that era.

**STEPHEN GRAHAM '69**  
*Manchester, Vt.*

A natural, family bias added to my enjoyment of Mark Bernstein '83’s excellent cover article about the generations of Princetonians who have played the role of the Tiger mascot. Our family will always be proud of how Fred Fox '39 was the first person to don a tiger skin and march in as a member of the band. He loved to tell that story, as it included the generous creativity of his father, who got him the costume at a New York City furrier for the 1936 home game against Yale. But he would sometimes also tell a not-so-glorious sequel: the 1937 game when he tried to do the same thing in New Haven. That game was played in a downpour. And when my father left the very wet costume at the Princeton Club in New York for the furrier to pick up, he was not charged the \$15 rental fee, but its total cost (of \$178.50) as the owner deemed it “ruined beyond repair.” The damaged tiger suit turned into ... a lawsuit! It eventually got settled in what my father called “an initiation into adulthood.”

**DONALD H. FOX K'39 S'76**  
*La Crosse, Wis.*

without appreciation of the eating club system. I ended up being undergraduate president of Cottage Club, board member, and ultimately chairman for 17 years, witnessing many improvements to Prospect Avenue, including better coordination among clubs, the reinstatement of multi-club bicker, improved governance, implementation of codes of conduct, increased diversity, and significant alumni fundraising.

The clubs have come a long way, and it is time for the administration to publicly recognize that they are integral to the undergraduate experience. This message would resonate among alumni, rekindle their affection for Princeton, and stimulate financial support to clubs in need of capital.

**CARLOS A. FERRER '76**  
*Palm Beach, Fla.*

## FOR THE RECORD

In the March feature article about microbiologist Rob Knight \*01 (“Microbes for the Masses”), the late professor Henry S. Horn was mistakenly identified as a Princeton alumnus.

## YOUR PERSPECTIVE

### Let us know what you think

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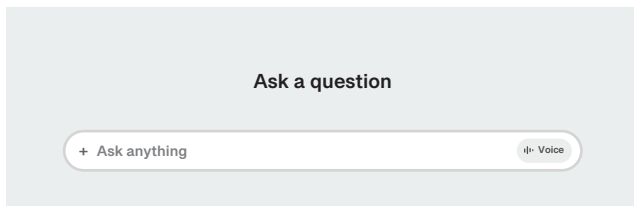
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## GUEST ESSAY

## HOW PRINCETON CAN SAVE YOUNG MINDS FROM THEMSELVES

By Kirtland C. Peterson '82

**I** WAS RECENTLY KNOCKED ON my teacher keester when a student handed in an AI-generated essay. I am a change-of-career elementary teacher. The student in question was 11 years old.



PETERSON '82

As part of their preparation for an upcoming writing assessment, my fifth-grade students wrote an “exciting story” about an “unexpected animal encounter.”

In my pile of yellow exercise books — there between two typical, error-ridden writing assignments — was a glaringly perfect five-paragraph essay sporting a catchy introduction and pithy conclusion. This essay wasn’t perfect only because the student had not copied the AI-generated verbiage with enough care.

Confronted with the “A-plus” essay, the student lied, claiming it was all his own work. My withering British schoolmaster glare inspired a revision: “Mom helped me. A lot.” “MomGPT?” “Well ...”

This student has tremendous scholarly potential. But if he can get away with offering AI work as his own, he will end up less educated, less fulfilled, with less to offer society. Like all my young students, this student needs a lot of writing practice. Practice may not make perfect, but it certainly facilitates progress.

Lying about your work and getting caught is one thing. Embarrassing, yes, but at least there’s a life lesson there. Lying about your work and getting away with

it, however, is another matter altogether. It blocks students from reaching their potential, blunts practice effects and skill acquisition, develops a lying habit, and derails character development.

Protecting students from the above is not rocket science. It does, however, take full-blooded commitment and gads of energy from teachers and educational institutions.

Thus far, Princeton has left decisions on AI use in the classroom to individual faculty members. It is currently weighing a proposal to require proctoring for in-person examinations, a good start if adopted. Should it commit to a broad set of solutions and generate the institutional energy required to implement them, the University would model positive change for educational institutions at all levels.

The fixes are obvious. Yet obvious fixes are often not made thanks to apathy and inertia, resistance to change, torpidity, investment in the status quo, lack of imagination, and defeatism. Meaningful change requires energy and commitment for the long haul, on the part of a sufficiently large number of people.

### Eliminate writing “homework.”

It used to be that work completed outside the classroom or lecture hall represented students’ work. In 2026 this is a dangerous assumption.

Thus, teachers and professors should eliminate all writing homework aimed at learning or assessment.

Hoping that AI detection software will save the day is a losing proposition as large language model (LLM) sophistication

increases. But that doesn’t mean that homework needs to be abandoned.

Many assignments remain worthwhile: reading papers, articles, and books; watching online lectures and tutorials; preparing for tests and examinations; research; field work; and much more.

Princeton might go a step further, eliminating applicant essays. These have been suspect since long before LLMs entered the mainstream, as tutors, coaches, and parents have been known to take control of the keyboard from students.

### Write in a controlled environment.

In the 1970s, I took my high school-level exams in a proctored hall. I wrote my essays by hand. This is a viable way to assess student knowledge and writing ability.

For those who cringe at the thought of suffering stacks of abysmal handwriting, there is hope. I took my clinical-psychology licensing examinations at a dedicated computer, at a specific testing location. I took nothing — could take nothing — into the exam. The computer had no internet connection. All written work was word-processed.

Permanent controlled testing rooms could be set up on university and high school campuses. Through relationships with established testing centers, students might have the option to take exams off campus. Students need not sit for an assessment all at the same time. Teachers and professors worried that early exam takers will share questions with other students can develop several equivalent exams.

If Princeton required that all to-be-graded writing be completed in a controlled testing environment, many other institutions would follow suit.

Princeton might also require applicants to provide writing samples in similar circumstances, perhaps asking students to write about difficult-to-prepare-for-in-advance topics. High school seniors’ writing skills would improve nationwide.

Common sense is required. Recent attempts to implement some of the above allowed students to use their own laptops. It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to figure out what happened.

I firmly believe Princeton has the intellectual heft — and streetwise smarts — to make a go of implementing a high-quality, self-correcting system of AI-free writing assessment.

### Why has so little changed?

Much has been written and many hands wrung over the negative impact of AI in education, with some attention paid to the impact this has on learning, character development, and social mores.

So, why has there been so little effort to reduce the negative impact?

Sadly, it seems a great many would prefer to bemoan the impact of AI than do anything meaningful about it. If this is unfair, I apologize. I work in the trenches. This is what I see.

This lack of interest in meaningful change in response to AI-generated student work follows an older issue: teachers increasingly disinclined to provide detailed feedback for written work.

To wit, a friend in law school, at the very top of her class, once received a B-minus for work she knew was far better than that. She confronted the professor. He was honest enough to admit that he didn't read student essays. Believe it or not — and it was hard to believe — he would toss student work from the top of his stairs, then provide a grade based on where the work landed. My friend did get her grade changed.

Fair or unfair, it seems that many teachers and institutions are relatively unconcerned about students handing in AI-generated work. Assessing written work is a time sink and an imposition, not a passionate commitment to educating young minds.

My fantasy is that Princeton, my *alma mater*, will roll out the big guns, deploy behind-the-lines operatives, and stop AI work poisoning serious student writing.

If Princeton is looking for a new front to be “in the nation's service,” I can't think of a more worthy one. **■**

KIRTLAND C. PETERSON '82, a management consultant and clinical psychologist in previous lives, now teaches fifth grade on Oahu in Hawaii.

BRETT TOMLINSON; SAMEER A. KHAN '21 / FOTOBUDDY / PRINCETON UNIVERSITY; MASSAU HERALD; ADOBE



# ONLINE EXCLUSIVES

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### E-BIKES Miracle or Menace?

Princeton will ban e-bikes in a zone that includes most of the campus, except for main roadways, starting June 1. Restrictions were put on them back when e-scooters were banned, but a quick dodge through the zooming e-bikes on campus shows the policy has largely been ignored. “The wheels belong on the road,” said Aaliska Sapkota '26, amplifying the view of many students and faculty who walk to class. Read more at [paw.princeton.edu/latest-news/student-life](http://paw.princeton.edu/latest-news/student-life).



### PAWCAST Bob Dylan's Bootlegs

Princeton history professor **Sean Wilentz** has co-produced a new eight-CD box set



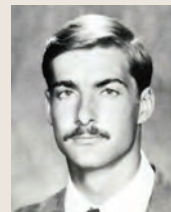
WILENTZ

of material by Bob Dylan: *The Bootleg Series Volume 18: Through the Open Window, 1956-1963*. It contains 165 tracks, many of them never heard before, and 125

pages of liner notes written by Wilentz, who is a scholar of Bob Dylan and his music. On the latest PAWcast he shared his expertise and some tunes with PAW senior writer Mark F. Bernstein '83. Listen at [paw.princeton.edu/pawcasts](http://paw.princeton.edu/pawcasts).

### MEMORIALS PAWCAST Charles Helms '80

PAW Memorials editor Nicholas DeVito sat down with **Doug Eberhart '80**



HELMS '80

to remember the life of **Charles Helms '80**, a lawyer and teacher with deep faith in his family and Catholicism.

“At his funeral last year, his son Nathan said that his father was the type of man you'd be lucky to meet once in your life,” Eberhart said. “And that's who I got for my freshman roommate.” Listen at [paw.princeton.edu/pawcasts](http://paw.princeton.edu/pawcasts).

### ESSAY U.S. and the Middle East



In an essay for PAW, **Taufiq Rahim '04**, who has worked in and observed relations between the U.S. and Middle East since he was a student at the University, explains the long history of Princeton alumni who have had major influences on the region and makes a case against war as a tactic for change. He argues it's time to reimagine the U.S.'s approach and what's possible to help the Middle East thrive. Read more at [paw.princeton.edu/opinion](http://paw.princeton.edu/opinion).



# YOUR ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

## ALUMINARY

# Katherine Boyce '11

## REUNIONS ARTIST

The Princeton campus has felt like home to Katherine Boyce '11 for as long as she can remember. Her parents, both members of the Great Class of '79, returned to the University not long after their graduation to serve as leaders of Princeton Christian Fellowship, a ministry for students on campus.

"I had such an idyllic childhood," Boyce said. She and her three siblings "grew up in walking distance from the University where our parents had met. They were chaplains for the University for many years. And man, we were lucky. We had a great time with the University connection that my parents had relationally and communally."

Reunions were a special time. "It was kind of a family reunion. I love all the hoopla around Reunions."

Now an artist based in Minneapolis, Boyce was invited to create a painting for the cover of the events program for Reunions 2026. She chose a view of campus with meaning from her years as an undergraduate. "I watched this spot a thousand times as a student," she said.

Boyce's landscape painting captures both permanence and change — from a peek at the new Princeton University Art Museum on the right, through the space between Whig and Clio Halls and onward to Nassau Hall. The work, created in oils, also includes banners celebrating the Alumni Association's 200th anniversary and tells the story of a University rooted in history yet continually evolving.

Boyce walked this path often as a student, both as a resident of Dod Hall and as member of Brown Food Cooperative, the independent dining option where members prepare meals together in Brown Hall's kitchen.

Her choice for the landscape was influenced by a visit to the new art museum after it opened last fall. "I was just giddy inside the museum, looking out from the completely new perspective of this really extraordinary building at things on campus I have seen my entire life," she said.

Boyce's interest in painting began at Princeton in studio art classes. While she was a politics major with a focus on international relations, she also pursued a certificate in visual arts. She loved creating in the Lewis Center for the Arts studios at 185 Nassau.

After graduating, Boyce traveled with Princeton in Asia to Singapore, where she taught writing for two years. In 2014, she moved to Minneapolis to work for a communications consultancy. Five years later, she began painting full-time.



Courtesy of Katherine Boyce '11

Boyce says her art focuses on "the spaces we build and inhabit and impact as humans." As an environmentalist and an urbanist, she is equally interested in exploring natural and built environments. In her artist's statement, she wrote, "My paintings blend representational forms with semi-abstractness to evoke a sense of impermanence and memory."

It's an approach that aligns well with the 200th anniversary of the Alumni Association. While her own memories inform the campus landscape she's captured in the cover art, the view has also captivated the imaginations of generations of Tigers, including her parents, two of her grandparents and two of her great-grandparents — Edwin Baldwin '1924, on her mother's side of the family, and Robert Boyce '1898.

When Robert Boyce arrived as a freshman, the newest buildings on campus included Brown Hall (1891), Dod Hall (1890), Whig Hall (1893) and Clio Hall (1893) — joining Nassau Hall (1756) as the landmarks easily spotted from this same vantage point, just as they still are.

More than a century separates her great-grandfather Boyce's Princeton experience from her own, and while many iconic buildings remain, the campus has also changed tremendously, growing and evolving with the times. The Venture Forward campaign has transformed campus in recent years, with the addition of many state-of-the-art buildings and facilities, including the art museum — each part of the ongoing story of a place that so many have called home.

Boyce's painting holds it all at once — memory and change, past and present — in a joyful celebration of a beloved campus view.



# Dear Tigers,

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

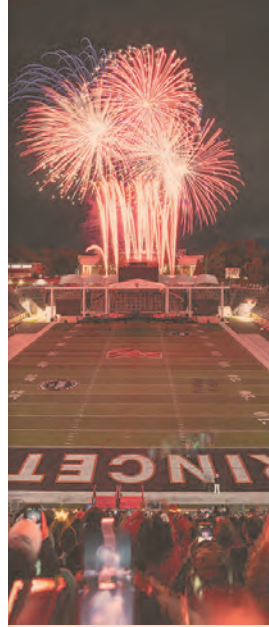
Here are a few things to keep in mind as you plan your trip back to the Best Old Place of All!

- ✓ **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





# YOUR ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



Photos: Steven Freeman; Andrea Kane; Sameer Khan/Fotobuddy

## Dear *Princetonians*,

When we gather together at Reunions later this month, we also mark the transition of the Class of 2026 into the next phase of their lifelong Princeton journey. It's an annual rite that grows and strengthens the alumni community of more than 100,000 Tigers with new energy and ideas.

Recent alumni are invaluable to the community's vitality and direction for many reasons, most notably because they bring first-hand knowledge of the University as it exists today. They become that bridge between current Princeton students and the broader alumni community. Alumni Schools Committee is successful because of its loyal volunteers from every decade, but the fresh perspective that alumni from recent classes bring to their conversations with prospective Princeton students is uniquely beneficial to the Office of Admission and the next generation of Tigers. Similarly, the perspectives of those who serve the University as Young Alumni Trustees, informed by their recent campus experiences, are invaluable to the board.

As alumni from recent classes launch their post-Princeton careers, they also reinvigorate affinity groups and regional clubs around the world. They bring enthusiasm and a willingness to collaborate in ways that extend and deepen alumni programs and connections. They embrace Princeton's traditions but also are willing to reimagine how they might become better. The Princeton Alumni Association that was founded by John Maclean '1816 and James Madison '1771 may be celebrating its 200th anniversary this year, but it continues to evolve and benefit from the creative contributions of its newest members.

Our recent alumni also enhance Princeton's culture of service. The commissioning of Princeton's ROTC students during Commencement week is the most emblematic example, but scores of recent alumni — most of whom benefitted from some degree of financial aid to attend Princeton — volunteer their time, talent and philanthropic generosity to “pay it forward,” to extend the transformative student experience for others and make it even better.

Most importantly this time of year, recent alumni show up for Reunions in large numbers. With memories of campus still fresh in their minds and powerful friendships that were forged in the dorms and quads, these Tigers return to reconnect with each other and a place they consider home. It is a joy to see the campus filled with the people who hold it so dear, and I look forward to welcoming all alumni and their families back for Reunions. ***Go Tigers!***

Jennifer L. Caputo  
*Deputy Vice President, Alumni Engagement*  
*Director, Alumni Council*



Jennifer L. Caputo

Photo: Fotobuddy



# ON THE CAMPUS

NEWS, SPORTS, AND STUDENT LIFE

## SPRING TO LIFE

*After a long winter, students enjoy a warm day in April under a blooming saucer magnolia tree in Scudder Plaza.*



TORI REPP / FOTOBUDDY



## FREE EXPRESSION

# External Pressures Play Growing Role in Campus Views of Speech

BY LIA OPPERMAN '25

**O**N A RAINY MARCH AFTERNOON, a half-filled lecture hall in the basement of East Pyne became an unlikely forum for questions about teaching and something much larger: fear, not just about what can be said in the classroom and on campus, but how it can be perceived in the public eye.

At an American Association of University Professors (AAUP) event on political pressure and faculty governance led by Joan W. Scott, a professor emerita of the School of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study, and Keeanga-Yamahatta Taylor, a Princeton professor of African American studies, the two situated the campus climate as increasingly shaped not only by internal debates over speech, but by growing federal government scrutiny and political intervention.

"The atmosphere of fear and intimidation is very effective," Taylor said. "How do we organize in such a way to overcome that?"

At Princeton and across the country, what once felt like campus-specific debates over free speech have been cast against national politics, with

many students and faculty fearing repercussions or unwanted attention from the Trump administration. Many of the 17 students, faculty, and outside experts interviewed by PAW described a shift from internal policy to external pressure as their primary concern, reshaping how universities think about speech.

Taylor explained that her concerns about speech began during the Biden administration's response to pro-Palestinian protests, which led to a more blunt attack by the Trump administration to "destroy campus life as we know it" by stifling speech and activism at colleges; ending all forms of diversity, equity, and inclusion programming; and a host of other actions.

"What does any faculty do in this political environment where college administrations are kind of hiding behind the Trump administration to carry through a series of draconian attacks on multiple levels of the university?" she asked.

**Princeton, sometimes viewed as an apathetic campus, has seen political engagement ebb and flow. A few recent**

## OUTSIDE THE SPOTLIGHT

*Since the end of the spring 2024 pro-Palestinian encampment, student activism at Princeton has been somewhat subdued.*

moments jump out: the 2024 Gaza Solidarity Encampment, the 2019 Princeton Students for Title IX Reform (PIXR) protests, and the 2015 Black Justice League sit-in at President Christopher Eisgruber 83's Nassau Hall office.

In April 2024, protesters briefly occupied Clio Hall, and five undergraduates and six graduate students, as well as a postdoctoral researcher and a local seminarian, were arrested and charged with criminal trespassing. This set off months of accusations and debates, a disciplinary investigation by the University, and a case in Princeton Municipal Court that was not resolved until July 2025, when all charges were dismissed after students performed volunteer service.

More recent protests and actions have been tied to national movements, including the national No Kings Day of Action and the ICE Out movement. Compared to its peer institutions, Princeton has been relatively quiet and has managed to avoid much federal scrutiny.

While some students and faculty largely on the political left point to disciplinary action following the Clio Hall protests and generally on campus as their main concern, others, largely on the right, describe a quieter anxiety: self-censorship in the classroom.

Joseph Gonzalez '28 said that he has felt the need to censor himself in class.

"When topics are brought up, and people raise their hands, and you hear how the class is going ... I don't want to say lockstep with the group — but if your view of it is completely in the other direction of everybody else, then I tend to avoid it," he said.

In an article for the alumni group Princetonians for Free Speech, he wrote that he specifically felt uncomfortable speaking his mind in class after Donald Trump, his preferred candidate, won the presidency, as he explained that many of his classmates were visibly distressed.

At the same time, he acknowledged

that everyone has a form of self-censorship. He said that while in most classes he's felt free to speak his mind, he still feels like a vocal minority as a center-right conservative on campus.

Politics professor Robert P. George, director of the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions, sees a more positive outlook for free speech at the moment. "I think the atmosphere is freer," he said in an interview with PAW, pointing to his conversations with students and faculty.

George said that while he feels that students are willing to speak up, whether they agree with him or not, polling data shows that students do engage in self-censorship. Princeton's "campus climate" surveys of undergraduates in 2023 and 2024 found that those who self-identified as conservative or extremely conservative were far more likely to disagree with the statement "I feel that I can voice my true opinions on controversial topics without fear of being unfairly judged."

At a talk at the Princeton University Art Museum in November, Eisgruber emphasized the importance of civil discourse in classrooms. "One of the things that we want our discussions to do in every class is to model and create an environment where students are able to speak up, and small signals from faculty members or other discussion leaders can be very important to creating the right kind of environment," he said.

Spaces for debate extend beyond the classroom. Samuel Kligman '26, the former president of the Whig-Clio Society, explained that he hopes Whig-Clio is a facilitator of free expression and civil discourse on campus. In its senate debates, students on both sides of an issue discuss controversial topics ranging from assisted suicide to the role of artificial intelligence.

Kligman said that the rules put in place by the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Students sometimes complicate speech on campus. Student groups cannot co-sponsor events with outside groups and must navigate approval processes that can hold up events.

**Campus publications are also feeling** the impact of current attitudes toward

speech. At *The Daily Princetonian*, former editor-in-chief Miriam Waldvogel '26 described "a two-fold impact." The *Prince* received requests from international students and alumni to take down articles in which they were quoted. Also, international staff members have been hesitant to attach their bylines to certain contentious coverage.

In October, the *Prince* signed onto an amicus brief in support of *The Stanford Daily* in *Stanford Daily Publishing Corporation et al. v. Rubio*, a lawsuit in federal court that challenges the Trump administration's revocation of international student visas for constitutionally protected speech, filed by the Student Press Law Center. The brief, signed by an additional 54 newspapers, including most of the Ivy League student papers, would benefit from a diverse set of media organizations behind it, Waldvogel explained.

"It is [an] exceedingly rare step. But we looked at that, and we said, 'OK, it's an extraordinary moment,'" Waldvogel said.

The concerns of international students are not unwarranted. At Tufts University, Rümeyşa Öztürk, a Turkish Ph.D. student, was detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in March 2025 following her op-ed criticizing university leadership regarding the Israel-Hamas war. She was released after more than a month in detention, and her legal case in federal court is ongoing.

Ila Prabhuram '27, chair of the Undergraduate Student Government Civil Liberties Working Group, said her group also has prioritized the safety of international students, especially those considering protesting on campus. "I think in a sense that people are a bit upset and a bit afraid ... and that's something that extends beyond the University purview to an extent," she said, adding that she believes Princeton has stood its ground against the Trump administration well.

Eisgruber has been outspoken as a defender of free speech and academic freedom. In his recent book, *Terms of Respect*, Eisgruber argues that colleges like Princeton are largely getting free speech on campuses right, while

acknowledging room for improvement to better nurture civil discourse and foster mutual respect.

Outside of the University, advocacy and nonprofit groups continue to scrutinize Princeton's policies on free speech. Organizations such as Princetonians for Free Speech and the national Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE) have criticized the University at specific times for its speech issues.

In the art museum talk following his book's release, Eisgruber criticized how FIRE ranks speech and said that it "too often code[s] controversy as though it were equivalent to censorship."

Sean Stevens, FIRE's chief research adviser, acknowledged that controversies at high-profile schools such as Princeton naturally draw more attention, and pointed to Princeton's actions, not its policies, as defining the climate.

Stevens said one of the most significant things pulling Princeton down is the May 2022 firing of tenured professor Joshua Katz. While the University cited his inappropriate conduct with a female student, FIRE has argued that his criticism of a campus protest group, the Black Justice League, factored into the decision. The penalty will be removed from Princeton's FIRE score in 2027, five years after Katz's dismissal.

Stevens also pointed to more recent incidents, including a spring 2025 speaker event with former Israeli prime minister Naftali Bennett which was interrupted at various points by protesters walking out, a disruption by an individual with no University affiliation, a fire alarm, and yelling between protesters and attendees in the courtyard afterward. At the same time, he said Princeton is taking positive steps, such as adopting the Principles of Free Expression. In FIRE's rankings, Princeton performs relatively well compared to its peer institutions in the Ivy League.

To Prabhuram, Princeton's free speech policies are "not perfect, but they are exceptional." As tension builds beyond campus, the challenge may be less about defining free speech and more about sustaining it under pressure. **P**



MECHANICAL AND AEROSPACE ENGINEERING PH.D. STUDENT HANNAH WISWELL

## GRADUATE SCHOOL

# Research, On the Clock

Graduate students compete for prize money by turning years of study into 3-minute pitches

BY JULIE BONETTE

**A**T THE GRADUATE SCHOOL'S first 3-Minute Thesis showcase in the Frist Multipurpose Room on March 25, mechanical and aerospace engineering Ph.D. student Hannah Wiswell soared to first place with her presentation on bio-inspired design research, such as using birds' feathers as inspiration for creating manmade wing models.

"I not only gain insights about biology but improve the design of aircraft to make flights safer for humans who seek to soar alongside the masters of the skies," she said to the audience of about 200 attendees.

More than 50 Princeton graduate students applied for the competition, which challenges students to present their research in layman's terms in three minutes or less with just one static slide. The worldwide competition, known as 3MT, began in 2008 at the University of

Queensland in Australia, and more than 900 institutions now take part.

Finalist David Shlivko, a physics Ph.D. student, said 3MT is unique because "most of the talks that I'm used to giving are on a very particular part of my research and last about an hour long. So, this is going on six years of research and lasts about three minutes."

As the final judges — Dean of the Graduate School Rodney Priestley, Dean

**"This is one of the worst experiences of my life," Sophie Gee, professor of English, jokingly said as she prepared to pitch her research as an encore to the student presenters. "I'm so impressed by you guys."**

for Research Peter Schiffer, and philosophy professor Sarah-Jane Leslie '07, a former dean of the Graduate School — tallied their scores, three faculty members gave 3MT-style presentations and then took part in a panel.

"This is one of the worst experiences of my life," Sophie Gee, professor of English, jokingly said as she prepared to pitch her research as an encore to the student presenters. "I'm so impressed by you guys."

Wiswell said minutes after her win that she hopes to compete at a regional competition, with the chance to go on to nationals. Wiswell received \$1,500; runner-up Katja Kochvar, an ecology and evolutionary biology Ph.D. student, received \$1,000; and after an audience vote, Hasan Hameed, a doctoral candidate in history, received \$500 as the People's Choice winner. One of Hameed's young daughters ran up on stage to join him as he received his giant check, delighting the audience.

Sonali Majumdar, an assistant dean of professional development at the Graduate School, helped organize the event and told PAW she hadn't anticipated the strong community-building element of 3MT.

"It just generally ended up becoming

a celebration of these students and their incredible work and the community that's beside them on really putting that forward," said Majumdar.

**About 40 students competed** in preliminary rounds from mid-February to early March, and all of them will receive a GradFUTURES research communication certificate. In the weeks leading up to the final showcase, the 10 finalists were given access to coaches — University staff across campus who are part of the Princeton Research Communicators Network. Alma Paola Hernandez Gonzalez, a graduate student in chemistry, said she felt lucky to be practicing her final presentation with a "really helpful" coach.

Earlier this year, before initial applications were due, the Graduate School offered three workshops — on communicating research to general audiences, storytelling structure, and stage presence and oration skills — that were open to all and attended by about 50.

Majumdar, who competed in 3MT herself as a graduate student at the University of Georgia, organized the trainings around each facet of the standard 3MT scoring rubric. "The goal was to help them prepare for different aspects of the 3MT talk and, broadly, also give them skills that would be applicable for broader research communication."

"The workshops really help students realize how much jargon" they use, said finalist Yubin Lin, an electrical and computer engineering graduate student.

Majumdar said she believes public engagement skills are "a personal responsibility [of] academics to really talk about why we are doing what we are doing, what we are finding out — and the lack of doing that has created this environment of misinformation where there's skepticism."

At the competition, Priestley said he believes research isn't done until researchers can convey their complex and original ideas to a broad audience. "We live in a moment when it has never been more important for those of us in academia to share our work," he said. ■

## CLASS CLOSE-UP

# Should We Enhance Our Minds?

Students explore the question in a Center for Human Values course

**WHAT IF WE COULD** enhance our own thoughts? In Bioethics of Cognitive Enhancement, students explore what freedom of thought looks like, how far our minds extend, and whether they can — or should — be regulated.

The philosophy course, taught by Christopher Kochevar, a postdoctoral researcher in bioethics at the University Center for Human Values, examines questions at the intersection of philosophy, neuroscience, and law. Students consider a range of technologies from pharmacological agents, like Adderall and psychedelics, to emerging neurotechnologies, including brain-computer interfaces, to boost cognitive functions in otherwise healthy individuals.

Early in the course, students grapple with defining the terms, including "enhancement," "treatment," and "cognition," and apply those ideas to class debates and group projects.

"It's actually very hard to say what enhancement is," Kochevar said.

Kochevar, who previously worked as an attorney at the Food and Drug Administration, said that the course draws on debates that emerged in the early 2000s, when biotechnology first took off. He also spoke about the varying urgency of different technologies, from taking Adderall to study to the possibility of genetically modifying a human being.

He wants students to think broadly about these questions and terms across disciplines. "You can treat it as just a bioethics class, but I think it's hard to do that without seeing the bigger picture of technology, society, and justice," he said.

Rose Weathers '27, an electrical and computer engineering major, wants to work on cognitive enhancement, particularly with brain-computer interfaces, in the future, and said she appreciated the opportunity to explore new technologies in the course. For



CHRISTOPHER KOICHEVAR

many students, including Weathers, this is their first philosophy class, and according to Kochevar, no philosophy majors are registered.

"An overarching theme that I've learned is kind of how philosophy papers work and how they're written," Weathers said. "A lot of times, the professor does a good job of setting up the readings in dialogue with each other."

That approach was on display in a recent seminar where students discussed whether technology and enhancement are a natural next step in human evolution or a drastic technological overreach. Rather than arriving at a single answer, the students considered each other's perspectives and conversed across different texts and frameworks.

James Thompson '27, a neuroscience major, said he is excited to extend what he learned into his final project. He and Weathers are working together to examine data privacy concerns with brain-computer interfaces, specifically related to existing data collection, such as Google Search optimization, and the potential future implications of accessing data directly from the brain.

As students consider what it means to enhance the mind, and how, the question remains not just whether we can change the way we think, but whether we should. ■ By L.O.



## STUDENT DISPATCH

# Let the Music Play: Student Bands Thrive in the DJ Era

BY JAMES SWINEHART '27



**EAH SHEFFERMAN '27 TAPS HER** drumsticks together in nervous excitement, the percussion filling the empty Tiger Inn basement that will soon be packed wall-to-wall with students clad in gowns and suits for the club's formals. Her band, Spring Street, surrounds her, preparing to play a set of '80s-to-early-2000s rock covers. Rohan Sykora '27 hums into the mic as the first students start to filter in. With a glance back to Shefferman, he signals that it's time.

For as long as Princeton students have known how to play instruments, moments like these have played out across campus. But with the advent of DJs and Spotify playlists, what does the student band scene look like today — and where is it going? The answer lies

in eating club basements and late-night comedy shows.

Shefferman picked up the drums at age 7 after deciding the violin was “lame.” At Princeton, she found her start in live music through the Princeton University Rock Ensemble (PURE), which has become an incubator for independent student rock bands. “PURE fostered a ton of the bands I’ve been in,” she said. “We get there and we’re like, ‘We like to play music together — we should do that in a group we can call our own.’” Shefferman has been a part of so many bands, she can’t even give a number. Some, like Spring Street, have stuck around. Others form for just one night to secure a highly coveted eating club gig.

From TI formals to Cap semis to Cottage Sunday Fundays, live gigs at the clubs remain extremely popular but reserved mostly for special occasions. Bands have to fight for the few spots available.

That is, except for Terrace.

Otto Trueman '27 is the music chair at Terrace and the only eating club officer on The Street whose role is dedicated specifically to music. That’s because Terrace hosts the most live music events

of any club: five nights out per semester featuring ice cold beer on tap, a “double decker” night with a band downstairs and a DJ upstairs, and the twice-yearly Battle of the Bands, known by many as the club’s most electric night of the semester. “The live music stuff is really where I spend the bulk of my time,” Trueman said. He plans entire semesters at once, lining up student bands, coordinating themes, and occasionally booking professional acts. During Reunions, he fields eight to 10 bands.

While Terrace keeps musicians busy, Princeton’s faculty-run jazz department has spawned student bands as well. Leading the charge is Ryder Walsh '26, who plays drums for Funhouse, a 10-person ensemble. The group recently submitted a cover to NPR’s Tiny Desk competition, finishing in the top 100 out of 6,000 applicants. Walsh also plays in the house band for All-Nighter, Princeton’s late-night sketch comedy and talk show, which includes student band performances between sketches.

As student bands withstand the digital age, and maybe even grow, those in the scene seem ambitious and optimistic. Funhouse was gunning to open at Lawnparties, the once-a-semester University-sponsored party featuring a big stage and an even bigger artist headliner. “It’s the crème de la crème,” said Walsh. Sykora, lead vocalist of Spring Street, provided a hopeful vision for Princeton to embody the band parties one may see at larger state schools. “It’d be very fun to get to a point where people look at our social scene and say, ‘We have a really good live music scene.’” At Terrace, Trueman said he hopes anyone interested in entering the scene will see his club’s Battle of the Bands as a starting point.

As for Shefferman, she fondly remembers listening to her dad’s stories from his time at Princeton. As the social chair of Cap, David Shefferman '92 spent much of his time finding the perfect band for a night out. “It seemed like so much fun,” she said. “DJs are fun, but it’s also nice to draw on tradition. It’s worth the investment.” Today’s student bands are continuing to make that case with every gig they perform. ■



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## ACADEMICS

## Defense Secretary Hegseth Axes Military Fellowship at ‘Elite Colleges’

BY HARRISON BLACKMAN '17

**I**N A DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE video posted to X on Feb. 27, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth '03 announced the termination of the Senior Service College Fellowship programs at 22 elite colleges, including Princeton, saying the political bias he perceives in those programs promotes a culture of “wokeness and weakness.”

Though Hegseth’s video statement announced “the complete and immediate cancellation of all Department of War attendance at institutions like Princeton, Columbia, MIT, Brown, Yale, and many others,” suggesting the termination of all undergraduate and graduate military attendance at certain elite schools, a Pentagon memo dated Feb. 27 only targeted the Senior Service College Fellowship at select universities for the upcoming academic year. The same memo said those fellowship hosts could be replaced with alternative institutions, including conservative-leaning Liberty University and state universities such as Michigan and North Carolina.

The one-year Senior Service College Fellowships offer mid-career military personnel an alternative to education at

a military war college. A relatively small program, the cohort typically consists of about 80 fellows per cycle. According to Jacob Shapiro, a U.S. Navy veteran and professor at the School of Public and International Affairs who brought the program to Princeton in 2018, one fellow joins the Princeton University community each academic year. “These are experienced leaders who are committed to mentorship, who we get to have on campus, contributing to the community for 10 months every year,” Shapiro told PAW. “We’ll be very sad not to have them.”

Distinct from the Senior Service College Fellowships, many other military service members attend Princeton as enrolled students, whether as undergraduate students in the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program or as officers pursuing graduate studies. These programs remain unaffected by the Feb. 27 order.

In the video announcement, Hegseth, who majored in politics at Princeton and holds a master of public policy degree from Harvard, was unsparing in his critique of what he perceived as the left-leaning nature of Ivy League

programs, risking service members’ “indoctrination” in leftist viewpoints on campus. “For decades, the Ivy League and similar institutions have gorged themselves on a trust fund of American taxpayer dollars only to become factories of anti-American resentment and military disdain,” Hegseth said. “They’ve taken our best and brightest, the men and women who have pledged their lives to this nation, and subjected them to a curriculum of contempt.”

Shapiro disagrees with Hegseth’s view that elite schools have “indoctrinated” Senior Service College fellows. “In our experience at Princeton, it has been quite the opposite,” Shapiro said. “They help develop a richer understanding among our students and our community of the perspectives and sacrifices made by the uniformed military.”

Peter D. Feaver, a professor of political science at Duke University who served as a White House adviser in the George W. Bush administration, adds that military officers can “put a human face on what are otherwise abstract academic concepts like military intervention, or casualties, or risk.” Such interaction can help foster understanding of the real-world impact of policy decisions. “When you’re sitting next to the guy who might bear that risk with his life, it becomes more real,” Feaver said. Duke is not affected by the cancellation of the program.

**One intent behind the Senior Service College Fellowship, Shapiro argued, is to help military officers build networks with civilian leaders and the military personnel of allied nations. “Building those networks is a long-run investment in our military’s ability to operate and develop relationships in the U.S. and overseas,” Shapiro said. “When we take away those networking opportunities, there’s a real opportunity cost for the future operational effectiveness of our military.” Shapiro said he worked to bring the Senior Service College Fellowship to Princeton in 2018 after noticing fellows during his Ph.D. program at Stanford. “I saw firsthand how much they enriched the community and how much they got out of being at that institution, and felt like we should have that at Princeton,” he said.**

Feaver also suggested that exposing military officers to different perspectives within the campus environment can shape more effective military leaders. “You want to hone the strategic mind of your military leaders by exposing them to the best minds and the best arguments, including arguments that might go against what the military might be inclined to do,” he said. “They can sharpen their thinking, rather than be in an echo chamber where they’re constantly just hearing from people who agree with them.”

One graduate alumnus with a military background, who did not participate in the Senior Service College Fellowship and spoke to PAW on the condition of anonymity for fear of retribution, cited the importance of the fellowship as a chance for officers to connect with civilian perspectives before ascending to the highest levels of military leadership. “It’s really kind of the last opportunity for people to academically, professionally, and relationally develop before they take these large senior roles,” the alumnus said.

Another graduate alumnus with a military background, who also did not participate in the impacted fellowship and spoke to PAW on the condition of anonymity due to his active-duty status, “kind of applauds” Hegseth’s decision, arguing that Princeton’s intellectual atmosphere is “not military-friendly at all” and hostile to ideas coming from real-world, battlefield experience. The alumnus expressed hope that Hegseth’s decision would be an opportunity for Princeton to be “a little more introspective” about the viewpoints the University tolerates on campus.

In his tenure as defense secretary, Hegseth has presided over a campaign attempting to restore a “warrior ethos” against what he has characterized as the incursion of “woke ideology” into the military under previous Democratic presidential administrations. This effort has included the rebranding of the department as “the Department of War,” per President Donald Trump’s 2025 executive order that the department return to the name it held from 1789 to 1947. (Congressional approval is required to make the name change permanent.)



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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

# Polling Shows Shift in Palestinian Attitudes Amid Gaza War

BY LIA OPPERMAN '25

**A**T A MOMENT OF DEEP uncertainty across the Middle East, panelists at a March 31 event at the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA) center in Washington, D.C., released new public opinion polling suggesting that the war in Gaza has reshaped Palestinian political attitudes, trust in leadership, and broader regional dynamics.

The discussion, hosted in partnership with the Arab Barometer, the Center for Political Studies at the University of Michigan, and New Lines Institute, focused on Palestinian survey data collected in 2025 and examined changes to security, competition, and escalating

conflict across the Middle East and North Africa region.

The Arab Barometer has been surveying public opinion since 2006, and the most recent edition of its survey, Wave IX, collected data from the West Bank and Gaza in the immediate aftermath of the October 2025 ceasefire.

Khalil Shikaki, director of the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research and co-founder of the Arab Barometer, highlighted Palestinians' increased trust in Hamas (17% in 2023-24 to 24% in 2025-26) and decreased trust in the Palestinian Authority, or Fatah (30% to 18%), as well as an overall increase in public interest in politics (29% to 39%) from Wave VIII to IX.

While Gazans are angry at Hamas, those in the West Bank are less so, Shikaki said.

SPIA Dean Amaney Jamal, co-founder and co-principal investigator of the Arab Barometer, called the results "unsurprising," referencing what the Palestinians have endured in the past four years and beyond, and the lack of viable alternatives.

"They're currently very underwhelmed by the Palestinian Authority as a representative government, and the fact that the only alternative that they still sort of have some trust and faith in is Hamas does pose a paradox in terms of this issue of internal Palestinian governance moving forward," she said.

The panelists pointed toward this broader crisis of governance and the uncertainty of how a governing body would move forward to represent the Palestinian people.

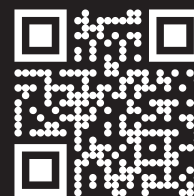
Overall, Palestinians preferred a two-state solution, with 1967 borders (support increased from 51% in Wave VIII to 59% in Wave IX) over other proposed alternatives



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that saw decreasing preferences, including a one-state solution (which dropped from 10% to 6%) or a confederation (from 12% to 7%). Those in the West Bank overwhelmingly opposed the normalization of relations between the Arab states and Israel (94% oppose, 5% support), while those in the Gaza Strip also were largely opposed (81%, 18%).

Support for Arab-Israeli normalization if Israel recognizes Palestine with 1967 borders and East Jerusalem as its capital was higher, with 37% supporting and 61% opposing.

“If you’re a Palestinian, the choice between what you’re experiencing today and having a state is not even close,” said Robert Malley, senior fellow at the Yale Jackson School of Global Affairs and former U.S. special envoy to Iran. Yet panelists acknowledged that political and geographical realities make that possibility unlikely.

Beyond Palestinian politics, the data pointed to a broader regional shift

in attitudes toward global powers. A third or fewer Palestinians expressed a positive view of the United States, while considerably more showed support for China, Russia, and Iran.

Shikaki said that though Iran poses a threat to the region, the fear of Israel is larger.

“If we take Iran’s commitment to the Palestinians or the Israelis during this

conflict, we see that in all cases, basically, Iran is widely seen as siding with the Palestinians,” said Michael Robbins, director and co-principal investigator of the Arab Barometer.

For panelists, the data underscored two key points: Public opinion is shaped by what is happening on the ground, and political perceptions across the region remain in flux. ■

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## ACADEMIC CALENDAR

# Reunions to Move Up One Week Beginning in 2028

**S**TARTING IN 2028, REUNIONS and Commencement will take place a week earlier, following a faculty vote to move up the start of the spring semester. After the cancellation of Wintersession, the Faculty Committee on Classrooms and Schedule unanimously voted to endorse the proposal due to concerns that the five-week winter break could lead to learning loss and negative impacts on mental health. The move also puts Princeton more in line with peer institutions and enables seniors participating in NCAA postseason events to avoid conflicts with finals and attend Commencement activities.

The spring semester will begin six days earlier, on the Tuesday after Jan. 16, which in most years is the day following the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. The

change will take effect beginning in the 2027-28 academic year.

Reunions 2028 will take place May 11-14, two weeks before Memorial Day, the earliest it has been in the last three decades and likely the earliest it has ever been. “We look forward to working with our wonderful alumni volunteers to plan Reunions for 2028 and beyond; they will be a bit earlier, but as amazing as ever,” said Jennifer Caputo, deputy vice president for alumni engagement, via email.

At the full faculty vote in April, Flora Champy, associate professor of French, was the sole opposing vote. She told PAW that faculty will “have just less time to recover from the fall semester, to celebrate the holidays with family, and then to prepare [for] the spring semester. And we are not going to get any research done.” **By J.B.**

## IN MEMORIAM

**David Botstein**, whose pioneering research developed new methods for mapping the human genome, died Feb. 27 at age 83. Through studies of yeast that identified markers of nearby genes, Botstein “cracked open the biggest problem in human genetics,”



biologist Eric Lander '78, the founding director of the Broad Institute, told *The New York Times*. That was in the late 1970s; by 2003, when Botstein began his decade as director of Princeton's Lewis-Sigler Institute for Integrative Genomics, researchers from 20 universities and centers had sequenced more than 90% of the human genome. In a career that bridged academia and biotech, Botstein also held appointments at MIT and Stanford and scientific executive roles

at Genentech and Calico, from which he retired in 2023.

**Christopher Sims**, who won the Nobel Prize in economics for modeling and analyzing the relationship between monetary and fiscal policy, died March 14 at age 83. Sims spent more than two decades at Princeton before transferring to emeritus status in



2021 and “was an absolute superstar” among economists, professor and former vice chairman of the Federal Reserve Board Alan Blinder '67 said in a University obituary. Colleagues described Sims as graceful, kind, and generous with his time. His statistical models informed the work of central bankers and policymakers long before he shared the Nobel with longtime friend Thomas Sargent of New York University in 2011. At the time of the announcement, Sims and Sargent were co-teaching a Princeton graduate seminar on advanced macroeconomics. **■**

FRANK WOJCIECHOWSKI / PRINCETON UNIVERSITY;  
DENISE APPELWHITE / PRINCETON UNIVERSITY



CHAD PALUMBO '26

## MEN'S LACROSSE

# Strong Start Puts Princeton On Track for an NCAA Run

BY DAVID MARCUS '92

**E**ARLY SEASON WINS OVER perennial national powers Maryland, Syracuse, and North Carolina put the Princeton men's lacrosse team in a position to earn a bid to the NCAA Tournament, and as of early April the team was 9-2 and listed anywhere from No. 2 to No. 3 in the three national rankings.

Highly touted before the season started, the Tigers opened with a 13-7 loss at home to Penn State on Feb. 14, after which the coaching staff moved Chad Palumbo '26, a preseason candidate for midfielder of the year, to a starting spot on attack.

"He's a physical force and a skilled player," head coach Matt Madalon said of Palumbo, who is as effective passing the ball as he is going to the goal. Palumbo was the team's leading scorer with 25 goals and 15 assists through the team's first 11 games.

The team rallied on Feb. 21 with a 13-12 win at Maryland, the dominant program in the sport over the last decade and one that had defeated Princeton six straight times since 2022, including twice in the NCAA playoffs. Palumbo, a co-captain



RYAN CRODDICK '26

along with fellow starting attacker Colin Burns '27 and longstick defensive midfielder Cooper Kistler '26, notched two goals and two assists in the win.

Peter Buonanno '28, last year's Ivy League rookie of the year, took Palumbo's spot on the first midfield and chipped in two goals and an assist, while goalie Ryan Croddick '26 secured the victory with a point-blank save in the final seconds.

Croddick was spectacular the next weekend, when Princeton beat Syracuse

11-7 on Feb. 27 and North Carolina 11-9 on March 1. Princeton jumped out to a 6-0 lead on Syracuse and was never seriously challenged by the Orange, who edged the Tigers 19-18 in the NCAA Tournament quarterfinals last year. The game also underscored the emergence of Jack Stahl '27 as an elite defenseman after he held Syracuse attacker Joey Spallina, perhaps the best offensive player in the country, without a point.

Princeton gave up 51 goals in its last three games last year (losses to Cornell and Syracuse sandwiched around a win over Towson University), and the Tigers have adjusted defensively. "This spring, we're a little quicker to support, and we're using more zone as a program than we have in the past," Madalon said.

They've also relied on "outstanding" goaltending by Croddick, according to Madalon, who was a goalie as a player. Through early April, Croddick had saved 58% of the shots he'd seen. "We'll go as far as he takes us," Madalon said.

Croddick made 14 saves against the Orange and 25 against the Tar Heels, including three in a 20-second stretch with about five minutes left in the fourth quarter that preserved a 9-9 tie. On the ensuing possession, midfielder Tucker Wade '27 scored what would prove to be the game-winner. A first-team all-Ivy performer last year, Wade has become a dominant middle this season with 21 goals and six assists in the team's first 11 games.

This is the third year in a row that Madalon has scheduled two challenging nonconference games in three days early in the season to increase the team's chances of receiving an NCAA Tournament bid and to prepare the squad for the Ivy League tournament, which employs the same format. The Tigers' performance against Syracuse and North Carolina suggests they have the talent and depth to do well in either setting.

In a year without a dominant team in Division I, Croddick and the defense, a balanced attack led by top scorer Nate Kabiri '27, and a solid faceoff unit led by Andrew McMeekin '26 give Princeton a chance to reach the national semifinals, which will be held at the University of Virginia over Memorial Day weekend. ■



**STILL ON TOP**

*The women's basketball team celebrates after beating Harvard to win Ivy Madness and advance to the NCAA Tournament. Below, Zeina Zein '27 has won back-to-back national titles in women's squash.*

the Big 12 Conference. "I am proud of them, the way they are connected," Berube said of her team afterward. "I told them in the locker room, I loved coaching this season. I mean I loved all my seasons, but the way they were connected and just loved each other and loved playing together, it was such a joy to coach them."

**In the winter season,** Princeton won six Ivy League team championships, bringing the total to 11 for this academic year, as well as an ECAC championship in women's hockey. Women's squash star Zeina Zein '27 captured a second straight national individual title, and a host of athletes made their mark in NCAA postseason meets.

Zein kicked off the championship run by defending her CSA crown Jan. 27 at Grand Central Terminal in New York, where the final match was played in the glass court also used by the pro squash event contested there. The women's squash team also swept its Ivy matches and the Ivy tournament before losing a 5-4 final to Penn in the national team championship.

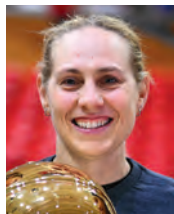
**WINTER SPORTS**

# Parade of Champs Continues

Women's basketball coach departs after Ivy title run, squash star Zeina Zein '27 leads national medalists

BY BRETT TOMLINSON

**F**EW PRINCETON COACHING RUNS can compare to Carla Berube's time leading the women's basketball team. Her Tigers won five Ivy League regular-season titles and four league tournaments in six seasons. They also won first-round NCAA Tournament games twice, in 2022 and 2023, had an overall record of 147-29, and spent most of the 2025-26 season ranked in the AP top 25.



BERUBE

As fans know, sustained success often inspires suitors, and on March 25, Berube was hired by Northwestern, the same Big Ten school that plucked Tigers men's coach Bill Carmody in 2000. Two weeks after Berube's announcement, top assistant Lauren Gosselin was named Princeton's new head coach.

Before Berube's departure, the Princeton women were unshakeable in Ivy Madness wins over Brown and Harvard. Center Fadima Tall '27 was named the

tournament's Most Outstanding Player after scoring 20 points, along with seven rebounds, four steals, and three assists, in the championship game.

Returning to the NCAA Tournament, Princeton opened against Oklahoma State and lost 82-68, exiting for the third year in a row against an opponent from



COURTESY OF PRINCETON ATHLETICS

Men's and women's swimming and diving each won Ivy team titles this year, led by Mitchell Schott '26 and Eleanor Sun '27, the top points winners in their respective championship meets. At the NCAA Championships, Schott placed seventh in the 200-yard butterfly and eighth in the 200-yard freestyle, the highest finishes by a Princeton swimmer since 2012.

In women's hockey, Ivy League Player of the Year Issy Wunder '26 scored a game-winning goal against Brown Feb. 14 that lifted Princeton to its first ECAC regular-season championship. The Tigers lost in the ECAC tournament semifinals but received an at-large bid to the NCAA Tournament, where they fell to Connecticut 4-1 in the opening round. Men's hockey had its best regular season in nearly a decade and reached the ECAC tournament final, losing a heartbreaker to Dartmouth in overtime March 21.

Princeton men's and women's indoor track and field continued their league dominance. Women's track won its second straight Ivy Heps indoor crown. At the NCAA Championships, Alexandra Kelly '26 earned her first national medal, placing third in the long jump, and Georgina Scoot '26 finished sixth in the triple jump. The men won their 11th consecutive Ivy Heps indoor title and sent four individuals and a relay team to the NCAA Championships. Greg Foster '26 (fourth place, long jump) and Joe Licata '26 (sixth place, shot put) were the Tigers' top athletes at the national meet.

The wrestling team had its brightest moments in the postseason, thanks largely to Marc-Anthony McGowan '28, the Ivy individual champion at 125 pounds. In the NCAA meet, McGowan's upset win in the quarterfinals sparked a run to the finals, where he lost to Penn State's Luke Lilledahl and settled for silver.

The women's fencing team also wrapped up the season with NCAA podium finishes. Olympian Hadley Husisian '27 was runner-up in the epee, and Alexandra Lee '27 tied for third in the saber. Princeton finished third in the women's team standings. **P**

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Agrawal, who is co-captain of the men's squash team, will graduate in May with a degree in economics.

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# RESEARCH

ADVANCING THE FRONTIERS OF KNOWLEDGE

## DOTING DADS

*Postdoctoral researcher Forrest Rogers set out to understand why some males are caring while others are neglectful when parenting. Rogers, who works in the labs of Catherine Peña and Ricardo Mallarino, led the research that studied African striped mice in various environments, with and without pups, to map their neural activities. The researchers found that a specific region of the brain — neurons in the medial preoptic area — was more active when the mice interacted with pups, and the mice who spent more time caring for pups had lower levels of the gene Agouti. They also found Agouti levels were a product of environmental conditions: Males that lived alone had lower Agouti levels and were more likely to become nurturing adults. The research was published in February in the journal Nature.*

C. TODD REICHART / PRINCETON UNIVERSITY,  
DEPARTMENT OF MOLECULAR BIOLOGY





ASPEN CENTER FOR PHYSICS

# What Happens When Physicists Get Away From It All

Where Princeton researchers go to find zen and breakthroughs

BY SUSAN RESLEWIC KEATLEY '99

**P**ICTURE A RETREAT CENTER IN Aspen, Colorado. It offers many elements one might encounter at a wellness spa — hiking trails that carve through a lush forest, ample time for relaxation and connection, hypnotic harmonies of a symphony punctuating the peace. But this retreat is different: It is made up entirely of physicists. For more than 60 years, the Aspen Center for Physics has offered physicists a respite from their duties as professors and researchers. The workshops, known for their long duration and lack of scheduling, have forged some of the most significant physics discoveries and collaborations, a number of them with Princeton ties.

Opportunities for physicists to meet abound, ranging from huge annual meetings with thousands of attendees to one physicist traveling to another institution to give a talk. Yet, workshops at the Aspen Center for Physics seize the special moments in science when “after all these incremental steps, boom! There’s a big step,” says Tyrel McQueen ’09, chair of physics and astronomy at Johns Hopkins University. “Aspen brings a set of people together at the right moment

## SERENE SETTING

*Hiking trails and workshops are part of the experience at the Aspen Center for Physics.*

in time to catalyze the ideas that push the community forward.” Ravin Bhatt, professor of electrical and computer engineering at Princeton, adds, “Aspen can respond to things faster than individual universities can — you get the smartest researchers in a room, and they reflect where the field is going.”

How does the Aspen Center for Physics accomplish this? Nature and free time.

“It’s a magical place,” says Mariangela Lisanti, a professor of physics at Princeton. “I get there and suddenly I feel myself thinking clearly again.” A physicist’s daily life is less toiling away at a problem in solitude, and more fragmented and hectic. “You teach undergraduates, mentor graduate students, and go to meetings ... you might have some ideas during the academic year, but then you need time to consolidate them,” says Bhatt. McQueen adds, “Aspen gets you away from everything in daily life that interrupts your ability to think hard.”

Physicists stay at Aspen for two to four weeks. “There might be talks just a few times a week,” says Daniel Arovas ’82,

a professor of physics at the University of California at San Diego. “The real emphasis,” he says, “is getting people to interact organically.” With about 100 physicists on campus at any time, and about 25 in a workshop, chances for casual conversation on heavy topics are as plentiful as electrons in matter.

**In the late 1980s, Bhatt, then working** at Bell Labs, was facing a thorny problem in condensed matter physics. “Dan [Arovas] and I were stuck, and at Aspen I saw Duncan Haldane,” now a Princeton physics professor and Nobel laureate, who at the time was beginning a position at UC San Diego, “and we talked — he saw the problem differently.” Shortly after, Arovas, Bhatt, Haldane, and others published their work in the journal *Physical Review Letters*. “Talking to people at Aspen made the paper possible,” says Bhatt. Shortly after that paper, he and Haldane were offered jobs at Princeton.

“If you look at the acknowledgments in a lot of physics papers, they thank Aspen,” Arovas says. His first time in Aspen, Colorado, after graduation in 1982, was not actually for physics, but for the prestigious Aspen Music Festival and School — he plays the trumpet — which is close enough to the physics center that visitors can hear the music. “One day I wandered over to check out the physics center and was chased away by one of the staff, rightly making sure a nonphysicist wasn’t intruding,” he says with a laugh. Arovas returned for physics in 1988 and has been going every couple of years since then.

Arovas’ first time at the physics workshops coincided with one of those breakthrough moments in science — nearly two years earlier, in late 1986, high-temperature superconductors, now important in many areas including fusion reactors, were discovered and became a major focus area at Aspen in the late 1980s. “There was a six-week-long workshop on it,” says Bhatt, “probably the longest workshop ever because this discovery was so important.” Arovas remembers seeing one of his heroes there, late Princeton physics professor Philip Anderson, who was one of the winners of the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1977. “I



**OUTSTANDING IN THEIR FIELD**  
*Daniel Arovas '82, right, a professor of physics at the University of California San Diego, with Dan Freed, professor of math at Harvard, left, and Raymond Mase, chair of the brass department at Juilliard, during a visit to the Aspen Center for Physics.*


thought it was so wonderful that they tried to get young people involved,” he says. “And even the older people were light and happy, the opposite of stodgy.”

Though Aspen has winter workshops, the summer ones are longer and feature hiking, which McQueen likens to golf for physicists. “Business people play golf and have important discussions that lead to decisions; that happens in Aspen on hikes,” he says. “During the summer of 1988, I learned by experience that Phil Anderson at age 64 was a much better hiker than I was at age 27,” says Arovas.

Fiona Burnell \*09, a physics and astronomy professor at the University of Minnesota, describes the formative friendships she made during Saturday morning hikes during her first trip to Aspen when she was a postdoctoral researcher and stayed in a house with three other women physicists. “The social part of Aspen is so important because then you have a friend, someone you can call and say, ‘I’m thinking about this problem, can we talk about it?’ It’s not necessarily intuitive, but this relaxed comfort level leads you to do some of your best work.” Last summer at Aspen,

Burnell and two others were stuck on a problem in quantum computing. “So, we all went out to dinner and started writing on the napkins,” Burnell says. When the napkin writing got them to the answer, Burnell’s 9-year-old daughter, who had been at the table watching, asked if the physicists would stand up and shout, “Eureka!” Moments later, in the dining room of Jimoto Ramen in downtown Aspen, they did.

In recent years, prices in Aspen for everything from a burger to a rental have skyrocketed, says Arovas, increasing costs for the Aspen Center for Physics, which is already run by physicists who volunteer their time, and for the scientists who rely on grant money to attend. In addition, adds Burnell, the uncertainty in scientific funding has added a new dimension of concern, since the program relies on federal grants. “What if Aspen and other centers like it lose federal funding and close? Aspen has led to so much cross-pollination of ideas and productive science.”

Matteo Ippoliti \*19, a professor at the University of Texas at Austin, attended his first Aspen workshop as a postdoc, after graduate studies in Bhatt’s lab. “I would read these papers by scientists, and now I’m at the chalkboard with them, at dinner with them,” he says. “The whole idea of Aspen is actually a very Princeton thing: You gather smart and creative people together and let them hang out, and see what happens.” 



## HISTORY

# Struggling With Migration, Separation, and Trauma

BY JULIA M. KLEIN

**I**N 1963, IN THE WAKE OF THE CUBAN Revolution, Ada Ferrer's mother brought her infant daughter to the United States and reluctantly left Ada's 9-year-old half-brother, Poly, with relatives in Cuba. Poly's father had refused to let him leave the island. But the separation, never meant to be permanent, would warp their family's life for decades.

"I grew up knowing that I was taken, and my brother was left behind," says Ferrer, a history professor at Princeton. When, in his 20s, Poly finally arrived in Florida with the 1980 Mariel boatlift, a government-sanctioned mass emigration from Cuba, his emotional wounds were still raw. "He said he was here to ruin my mother's life, the way that she had ruined his by leaving," Ferrer says. "And I saw all his struggles and all his hardship, and the toll that they took on him, but also the toll they took on my mother and the family."

Poly's story of migration and trauma, told in part through his letters, is at the core of Ferrer's new book, *Keeper of My Kin: Memoir of an Immigrant Daughter* (Scribner), published in May. It also has



shaped Ferrer's study of Cuba's turbulent past and the country's shifting relationship with the United States. Her previous book, *Cuba: An American History*, won the 2022 Pulitzer Prize for History.

"My working on Cuba was about understanding the family, understanding myself," she says. "I know that at the very heart of our family is this original sin." She knew, too, that she would write about it, and she urged her parents to throw nothing out. They bequeathed her an invaluable family archive, which she supplemented with more traditional archival research in Cuba and the United States.

The deaths of most of the story's

## FAMILY FINDS

*Princeton history professor Ada Ferrer, below, was brought to America from Cuba as an infant by her mother. Her mother, far right, and her sisters in an undated photo.*

principals permitted Ferrer a degree of candor. "I would have been scared to write it while my brother was still alive," she says. Her senior status as a historian was another prerequisite. "You feel like you need to prove yourself as a scholar at first," she says. "It's interesting that more historians and scholars are starting to do this kind of work now."

Aided by the genealogist Lourdes del Pino, who investigated the ancestry of Pope Leo XIV, Ferrer traces her maternal lineage to a kidnapped and enslaved African ancestor, Encarnación García. In Cuba, she completes another piece of her family puzzle by meeting a paternal half-brother, Juan José. In a parallel to Poly's story, he, too, was abandoned by a parent: Ada's father declined to marry the boy's mother and had minimal contact with his son for decades.

But there the two narrative arcs diverged. Poly was an elementary school dropout, struggled with his mental health and violent impulses, and spent time in prison. Meanwhile, Juan José thrived. He became a professor of Spanish language and literature, married and had a family, and led a seemingly happy life. He and his father eventually reconnected, mostly by letters, and developed a warm, loving relationship.

By contrast, Poly was slow to forgive his mother, even though she had never wanted to leave him. Over time, they began talking regularly. "She was feeling much better about him at the end and vice versa," Ferrer says, "but there was still so much pain there."

**In 2021, Ferrer, then a professor at New York University, developed a "road map" for the memoir in a *New Yorker* essay, "My Brother's Keeper." She remembers telling her editor that the story "has no monsters or saints."**

The memoir serves, above all, as a "love letter" to Ferrer's family, as well as to the Cuban people more generally. "It



POLY

is a plea for forgiveness from the people hurt by our leaving,” she writes, “a clamoring to the wind that we were here, that we still are, that we always will be.”

The book also arrives at a time when immigration, in all its complexity, is prominent in the national conversation. “There’s such a connection between older immigration stories and present immigration stories. I want to humanize the question more,” Ferrer says. “These are real lives and real people and real relationships and families that right now are vulnerable in a way that feels unprecedented to me.”

Her personal history is one reason, Ferrer says, that she approaches her craft the way she does. “My idea is always to write what I call ‘peopled histories’ that are not about abstract categories. They’re about real people acting in ways that don’t always make sense” and aren’t predictable merely by their class identity, Ferrer says.

“I want people to think about history in a way that feels more intimate. We live our lives embedded in history,” she says. “I’m writing for all these people who are now gone. I didn’t want to leave my parents behind, even though I was dying to leave them behind. I didn’t want to remain in that world, but there was a part of me that always wanted to bring them with me, which is also part of doing what I do.

“In some sense,” she adds, “I write to make amends, meaning I didn’t forget.” **P**

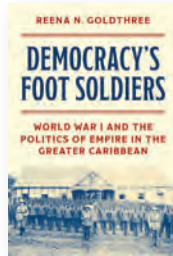
COURTESY OF ADA FERRER

## FACULTY BOOKS

### DEMOCRACY’S FOOT SOLDIERS

Reena N. Goldthree, *professor of African American studies*

This is the lesser-known story of the tens of thousands of Caribbean men who volunteered as soldiers for the



British Empire during World War I. In *Democracy’s Foot Soldiers* (Princeton University Press), Goldthree highlights the British West Indies Regiment. She tells of the soldiers’ journeys across Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, exploring their military services as well as their struggles against racial discrimination. Drawing on overlooked archives from the Caribbean, Britain, and the United States, Goldthree reveals how military mobilization inspired and fueled new demands for social and political reform back on home soil.

### THE FLOAT TEST

Lynn Steger Strong, *lecturer in creative writing*

*The Float Test* (Mariner Books) follows four semi-estranged siblings reunited under unfortunate circumstances —

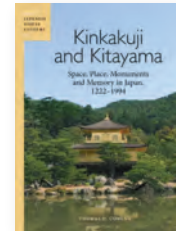


the death of their mother. Jenn, Fred, Jude, and George are each dealing with their own struggles as they try to come together in the sweltering Florida heat. Secrets, love, and betrayal all play a role as this story unfolds and ultimately paints a picture of how complicated a family can truly be. The novel reflects on the power of family ties for better and for worse.

### KINKAKUJI AND KITAYAMA

Thomas D. Conlan, *professor of East Asian studies and history*

*Kinkakuji and Kitayama* (Brill) traces the extraordinary history of Kinkakuji, a Zen Buddhist temple and major



tourist attraction in Kyoto, Japan. First a symbol of Ashikaga Yoshimitsu’s power before being declared a national treasure of Japan and then burning down and finally being rebuilt in 1950, Kinkakuji is a case study for looking at how monuments change in meaning over time. Conlan, who specializes in medieval Japanese history, chronicles this story, concluding that Kinkakuji’s reconstruction had a profound influence on UNESCO’s definition of what makes a monument “original.”

### NOVEL ECOLOGIES

Allison Carruth, *professor of American studies and the High Meadows Environmental Institute*

*Novel Ecologies* (University of Chicago Press) explores the closing gap between ecology and engineering over the past



three decades. Carruth, who is director of Princeton’s Program in Environmental Studies, coins a new environmental paradigm called “nature remade,” which argues that ecosystems, species, and even planets can be engineered. Through case studies exploring synthetic wildlife, the digital cloud, and space colonization, Carruth reveals how present-day environmentalism has fused nostalgia for wild nature with futuristic technological ambition. Ultimately, *Novel Ecologies* is a challenge to this framework, focusing on writers and artists who dream of a better environment and community-centric future without trying to engineer it piece by piece. **P**

BEHIND THE RESEARCH: RAFAELA DANCYGIER

# Researching Responses To Hate Crimes and Bias in This Polarized Age

BY HOPE PERRY '24



**W**HEN RAFAELA DANCYGIER WAS A CHILD IN GERMANY, she always wanted to immigrate to the United States. She finally did when she was 18 to attend Brown University. Her path to researching political rhetoric around immigration, she says, wasn't inspired by any particular life experience or event, despite the fact that she herself is an immigrant.

She went on to earn her Ph.D. in political science at Yale, winning an award for her dissertation on why native-born residents and governments clash with immigrants in some places but not others.

That dissertation turned into her first book, *Immigration and Conflict in Europe*.

Dancygier has served as the IBM Chair of International Studies since 2023 and is a professor of politics and public and international affairs. In July 2021, she became the director of the Mamdouha S. Bobst Center for Peace and Justice, a University-affiliated think tank.

## Quick Facts

### TITLE

*Chair in international studies and a professor of politics and public and international affairs*

### TIME AT PRINCETON

19 years

### RECENT CLASS

*Conducting Independent Research in Political Science*

## DANCYGIER'S RESEARCH

# A SAMPLING

### PUBLIC SERVICES AND IMMIGRATION BACKLASH

Although it is a popular assumption that immigration leads to conflict with natives, Dancygier's research finds that that isn't necessarily the case. Conflict that does arise usually surrounds the use of public services and the perception that immigrants are crowding out natives. But much of that conflict actually comes from migration within a country. When areas depopulate as people move into cities, the services available in rural areas become less robust. In areas like this, even when there may not be many immigrants, far-right parties run on the idea that left-wing parties have abandoned the people who

remain. That makes backlash to immigration an issue even in areas where there aren't many immigrants.

### ATTITUDES TOWARD HATE CRIMES

The way that hate crimes are framed in the news media has an impact on how the public perceives them, according to an analysis of media reports and representative surveys. The same attack on a Jewish person could be framed in the context of the war in Gaza or as an attack against a person practicing their faith, Dancygier explains. The study Dancygier worked on in 2025 also examined attitudes toward anti-Muslim and anti-Hindu hate crimes. It is not necessarily that



people are becoming more supportive of hate crimes, her team found. When politics are involved, people are less likely to condemn hate crimes than when they are perceived as attacks on religious practice.

### CONDEMNING EXTREMISM

Political extremism has been rising in the United States and Europe for the past 30 years, Dancygier says. In a study of rhetoric

in Germany, Dancygier and her collaborators found that the state downplays violent extremism — on both sides. "It's a very partisan affair," she says. When the right is in power, they downplay right-wing extremism, and the same is true for the left. Although the issue is often framed in some European contexts and in the United States as an issue on the right, Dancygier argues that it goes both ways. **P**

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



**Willem de Kooning:**  
The Breakthrough Years,  
1945–50

Through  
July 26, 2026

**Photography as a Way of Life:**  
Minor White, Aaron Siskind,  
and Harry Callahan

Through  
September 7, 2026





# The Attentionauts

D. Graham Burnett '93, Alyssa Loh '12, and Peter Schmidt '20  
are leading a movement to resist 'attention fracking'

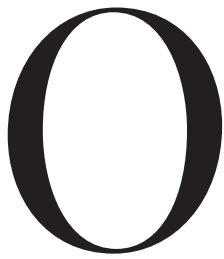
BY HARRISON BLACKMAN '17

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN EMERSON

**FREEDOM FROM TECH**

*From left, Peter Schmidt '20,  
D. Graham Burnett '93, and  
Alyssa Loh '12 would rather you  
pay attention to this print  
magazine than your phone.*





**O N A SATURDAY AFTERNOON IN THE** bohemian neighborhood of Silver Lake, Los Angeles, I convened a focus group of California-based creatives for an experiment in attention. In a grassy park bordering the neighborhood's eponymous reservoir, we sat in a circle and read an excerpt of Antoine de Saint-

Exupéry's classic children's novel *The Little Prince*. The passage considered a scene in which the interstellar-traveling boy prince encounters a talking fox, who encourages the royal to observe and cherish a particular rose among a field of flowers. After we finished reading, each participant chose an object in the park to focus on — their very own "rose," to which they would pay attention for four minutes. One participant observed a flower, another an abandoned basketball. I tracked the pacing of a wandering Labrador retriever.

"How often do I just sit in the park and just listen and look at the humanity of it?" reflects Anya Jaremko-Greenwold, an editor at *The Week* who chose a nearby ironwood tree as her rose in the exercise. "If you're a writer or creative type, you get a lot of ideas and inspiration from just sitting with your thoughts and not being distracted by your devices."

The unconventional lesson plan was a product of the Strother School of Radical Attention (SoRA), a Brooklyn-based organization devoted to reclaiming society's experience of human attention, which in the past 20 years, the leaders argue, has been completely hijacked by the monied interests of big tech and social media. They call the architects of social media apps such as TikTok and Instagram "attention frackers," weaponizing their algorithms to entice attention for the purpose of extracting an immense stream of advertising revenue. According to SoRA's rhetoric — echoing the positions of tech ethicist Tristan Harris and social psychologist Jonathan Haidt — the digital-based attention economy has inflicted a substantial human cost. While tech companies such as Apple, Meta, and Alphabet (Google) have become among the most profitable in the world, their success has simultaneously left a long shadow of teen depression and suicides.

For three weeks, I had embedded myself within SoRA's Zoom workshops, two-hour-long seminars that explored how participants might experience life liberated from the addictive pull of the smartphone and build attention "sanctuaries" for other like-minded thinkers. Much like a university-level course, the workshops included reading packets of scholarly writings,

office hours, and the promise of open-ended inquiry. Unlike a college class, enrollment only cost \$99.

The school itself is just one pillar of a larger project orchestrated by the Friends of Attention, a group that is in turn supported by the Institute for Sustained Attention, a nonprofit founded in 2015 by Princeton history professor D. Graham Burnett '93. The Friends of Attention have a podcast (*Attention Lab*), a newsletter ("The Empty Cup," named after a quote from psychologist and pioneering attention theorist William James), and as of January, a Penguin Random House-published polemic (*Attensity! A Manifesto of the Attention Liberation Movement*) written as a collective among various contributors from the Friends of Attention group, and edited by Burnett, his partner, filmmaker Alyssa Loh '12, and SoRA director Peter Schmidt '20.

The reason for all these efforts, the self-described

"attentionauts" and "attentionistas" contend in their manifesto, is that "something is seriously wrong," and if activists don't organize against tech's exploitative grip on the human mind soon, then future resistance might be futile.

**IN 1989, AHEAD OF BURNETT'S FIRST SEMESTER**

as a Princeton undergrad, he was recovering from a bout with viral meningitis, and his father, David G. Burnett '66, ended up choosing his slate of courses, including one with history professor Mike Mahoney \*67 on the origins of modern science. "I was first attracted by the question of how a European worldview once so dominated by theology was largely displaced," the younger Burnett told PAW in 2001, going on to reflect on the tenuous beginnings of modern science: "How did this mish-mash of mathematics, epistemological



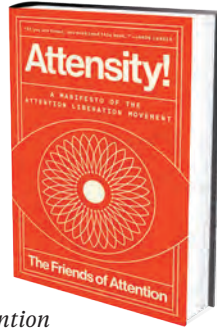
D. GRAHAM BURNETT '93

musings, and parlor tricks become such a powerful way of explaining reality?"

Burnett's pursuit of the history of science, eventually as a professor of the subject, found him engaged with unpacking revolutions in thought that completely transformed existing sets of beliefs — a process famously described by Princeton historian Thomas Kuhn 1930 as the "paradigm shift." Burnett's early publications included studies of Victorian-era imperialism via South American cartography (*Masters of All They Surveyed*), the history of whaling (*The Sounding of the Whale*), and a bestselling account of serving as a jury foreman in a lurid New York City murder case (*A Trial by Jury*).

Burnett's attentional interests began to take shape in 2004, when he fell in with the Order of the Third Bird, an underground artist collective (also known as the Birds) devoted to earnestly engaging with artworks.

*“The attention frackers monopolized the once-sacrosanct business of attention formation. They have done it by dominating, with oodles of money and unimaginable computing power, a deck-of-cards-sized patch of space approximately eight inches from your face.”*



FROM *Attensity! A Manifesto of the Attention Liberation Movement*

The order’s name derives from an apocryphal text about an ancient Greek painter named Zeuxis who produced a portrait of a boy carrying grapes so realistic that three birds had radically different experiences of the work. Fearful of the lifelike portrait, the first bird flew off; the second bird, thinking the cornucopia real, pecked at the images of fruit; but the third bird — the hero of the parable — stood still and took in the painting with astute attention.

The Birds, then, view artworks as “requests for attention,” and organize secretive flash mobs called “actions” to observe such works. When the Warhol Foundation invited the Birds to participate in a Philadelphia event in 2011, a schism ensued. Some of the Birds, Burnett says, were reluctant to solicit publicity, while others, including Burnett, welcomed the invitation. This resulted in a public-facing splinter group, including Burnett and Princeton English professor Jeff Dolven, called the Esthetical Society for Transcendental & Applied Realization (now incorporating the Society for Esthetic Realizers) or ESTAR(SER), the acronym a play on the Spanish phrase “to be.”

In effect, ESTAR(SER) purported to “study” the activities of the Birds, culminating in a 2021 anthology of pseudo-historical journal articles dubbed *In Search of the Third Bird*. Part Jorge Luis Borges-styled arcane history, part parody of humanistic academic writing, a key emphasis of the book’s sprawling drive was the principle of “attending” deeply to esoteric interests. “As we started doing that,” Burnett tells PAW, “I started seeing the history of attention as a lens with which to open up a whole bunch of very interesting questions with respect to the relationship between the history of esthetics and the history of science.”

In 2018, a gathering of ESTAR(SER) and Birds members at the São Paulo Art Biennial, a long-running art festival in Brazil, thrust the sometimes-intersecting movements into the political arena. “This intense conversation happens in the wake of the [Jair] Bolsonaro election, where people are like the esthetics of attention and attentional practices in relation to esthetic

objects is all well and good, but [now] there’s an urgent political catastrophe,” Burnett recalls. “That was when a bunch of us Birds were like, we really need to pivot.”

At the time, Loh was pursuing a dual graduate degree in business and film at New York University, where many of her classes were talking about attention by any other name, using buzzwords such as eyeballs and engagement. “There was something unsettling about seeing the incredible power asymmetry between these corporations that had these rigorous, robust, and intentional ways of thinking, talking, tracking, [and] valuing attention,” Loh says, all while few people outside that business context could articulate the concept. “It sets us up for the situation where our attention is being stolen from us before most of us even know what’s happening.”

In 2019, a group of Birds, now part of the newly founded “Friends of Attention,” met at the Mildred’s Lane artist residency in Narrowsburg, New York, where they began drafting *Twelve Theses on Attention*, published in 2022 by Princeton University Press and adapted as a short film anthology that Loh co-curated.

In just under 650 words, the theses presented a foundational framework for all the attention-related activities that followed, arguing that “true attention is fundamentally *endangered*” by market forces and that “escape from our attentional nightmare will not unfold in a singular event.” Rather, the theses called for the creation of “sanctuaries” and a shared “ethics of attention” that allowed for sharing sensory experiences, described as a means of “reconciling a world that is otherwise broken.”

The next phase of the movement unfurled through a collaboration between Burnett and his former student Schmidt, who had taken Burnett’s seminar on food history in the spring of 2020.

Schmidt had kept in touch with Burnett after college, and after quitting his job as a researcher for a Brazilian think tank in 2022 to devote more time to writing a novel, Schmidt worked part time for the Friends of Attention to develop “attention labs,” traveling workshops inspired by the promise of the 12 theses. By 2023, Schmidt says, they realized the project needed to be more “legible,” as getting participants on board for an attention lab required “four levels of explanation.”

Thus, the School for Radical Attention was born, and Schmidt became its full-time program director. Named for Matthew Strother, a Friend of Attention who died in 2023, the school is supported by the 501(c)3 nonprofit Institute for Sustained Attention, which draws its revenue from book sales and curriculum fees. Since then, the SoRA team opened up a so-called sanctuary space in Brooklyn, developed curricula including studies (such as *The Little Prince* activity I replicated in Los Angeles), and finally published the book *Attensity*, the sales of which support the nonprofit and, the attentionauts hope, will spark a paradigm shift against the predatory technologies that exploit human attention.

**IN 2001, BUSINESS SCHOOL PROFESSORS THOMAS H. Davenport and John C. Beck popularized the concept of the “attention economy” in a book of the same name — the idea that human attention was a finite resource to be captured and activated so as to spark consumer spending.**

But the origins of this capitalist paradigm run deeper, the Friends of Attention argued in *Attensity*. All the way back in Roman times, Saint Augustine asserted that attention included contemplation aimed at achieving divine grace, but by the time of World War II, attention had attained a much narrower definition. That was when psychologists conducted the first attention studies to determine how long humans could fixate on a radar screen.

As Burnett, Loh, and Schmidt noted, this was a limited view of the vast spectrum of what attention could entail, one that situated the majority of related research on “the stimulus-and-response capacities of human subjects sitting in front of machines.” According to the authors, this led to a project of quantifiable attention research that paved the way for the monetization of that attention in the digital and social media worlds that emerged in the 21st century. “The attention frackers monopolized the once-sacrosanct business of attention formation,” the *Attensity* authors wrote. “They have done it by dominating, with oodles of money and unimaginable computing power, a deck-of-cards-sized patch of space approximately eight inches from your face.”

In the past decade, various experts have hit the alarm button on the downstream effects of this attention-based economy. In the 2020 documentary *The Social Dilemma*, former Google ethicist Tristan Harris argued that algorithmic technologies had dangerously ensnared and addicted teens, puppeteering and reprogramming their social behavior so that it was almost exclusively oriented around their phones. In his 2024 book *The Anxious Generation*, social psychologist Jonathan Haidt elaborated that social media companies had succeeded at capturing attention because “the creators of these apps use every trick in the psychologists’ tool kit to hook users as deeply as slot machines hook gamblers.”

Much like a gambler’s propensity to continuously pull the lever of a slot machine due to the (unlikely and random) chance of a “jackpot,” a social media user returns to the app because of the expectation of a dopamine rush from a “like” or positive direct message. As a result, users will find themselves compelled to refresh the app until they attain the desired rush. And with a continuous feed that never truly ends, Haidt added, users can be sucked into this cycle, scrolling for hours. “Heroin would win, too, if General Mills were permitted to add it to our breakfast cereal,” the Friends rejoined in *Attensity*.

The result of this addiction — and the exposure of teen girls to unrealistic beauty standards from edited photos — has been devastating, Haidt argued, noting that from 2010 to 2020, the

rate of self-harm tripled for young adolescent girls in the U.S.

In *Attensity*, the Friends of Attention assert that it’s not a user’s fault for falling prey to an addictive app’s charms, but a product of the uneven balance of power between the app designers and the user. “When your hand reaches, subconsciously, reflexively, for your phone (first thing in the morning, in the middle of a conversation, in the middle of a thought), or when you get stuck in an infinite scroll for an hour when you meant for a minute, that is not because you lack the personal willpower to escape,” the authors wrote. “Rather, it is because trillions of dollars of military-grade research and technology, and thousands of the most highly trained and paid engineers in the world, are aligned behind overpowering your intention.”

Gloria Mark, a psychologist at the University of California, Irvine, who specializes in attention studies, however, questions

the argument that humans have no free will in the face of tech companies seeking to control their behavior. “Some people do have a lot of trouble staying away from social media,” she says. “And others can come and go as they like, or don’t use it at all.”

Kristin Lawler is a sociology professor at the University of Mount Saint Vincent who teaches attention workshops both online and in-person in Brooklyn for the Strother School for Radical Attention. She acknowledges the “possibility of liberation,” but “it doesn’t come from some idea of the individual freely choosing to put this stuff down,” she says, arguing that much of the functions essential to daily life — from banking to car repair — are now facilitated by digital platforms. “We didn’t choose any of this, and it’s not within our individual power to choose to get rid of it,” she says. “Liberatory

social movements come from people collectively identifying a problem and organizing.”

That principle of collective resistance, Burnett and his co-authors argue, might lead to an “attention movement.” Though an attention movement might sound absurd to the uninitiated, the *Attensity* authors argue that many such cultural transformations have occurred before, not so different from the paradigm shifts inherent to scientific revolutions. In fact, the term *attensity* — referring to a group of 19th-century researchers who sought to understand human cognition — was first coined by English psychologist Edward Titchener, who also came up with a more familiar concept: empathy.

If the idea of understanding the emotions and perspective of others remained undefined before Titchener, neither did the environmental movement before the 1970s, the *Attensity* authors argue. Though people certainly cared about



natural beauty and conservation, they lacked the vocabulary to articulate that interest. “It took a series of harrowing environmental disasters — and the visionary work of thought leaders like Rachel Carson,” the Friends wrote, “to reveal the web of life that makes the environment a recognizably *collective*, and therefore political, good.”

To generate its own kind of transformation, Burnett explains *Attensity* was modeled on previously successful calls for collective action, such as the 1962 Port Huron Statement that built solidarity between the Students for a Democratic Society and the United Auto Workers in their shared pursuit of civil rights and social reform.

*Attensity* also features a compelling structure for the digital age. The manifesto is reprinted between every chapter, with a new line highlighted, prompting an expansion of the framework behind the line through a short essay. Thus, the experience of reading *Attensity*, Schmidt says, was designed to evoke the experience of clicking on a hyperlink, “projecting the digital world back into the past of print media.”

“I feel our way of doing it with this kind of explicit movement commitment and drawing on some of the older languages of solidarity and collective action has a special traction right now,” Burnett adds. They did have traction on Jan. 20, when the *Attensity* book launch at Judson Memorial Church in Greenwich Village sold out, leaving attendees lined up around the block. Since the launch, the Strother School’s online workshops have also seen completely booked enrollments, Schmidt says.

Even before the launch, Burnett and Schmidt say prospective attentionaunts would email them out of the blue or even appear on the school’s Brooklyn doorstep. Realizing they had to meet a potential surge of demand following the book’s launch, the Friends of Attention have prepared for this moment by creating a tool kit designed to help activists assemble their own attention study groups wherever they might be located.

Meanwhile, the Strother workshops focus on brainstorming ways for would-be activists to organize in their communities, and many of the registrants I met were already agitating for no-phone policies in local schools. Nick Plante, one of the Strother instructors, values the school’s work because it offers a communal “escape latch” from the nightmare of social media addiction, where other tech-blocking strategies might only offer temporary relief. For example, he says, many people he’s worked with have experimented with phone-app blocking devices like Brick, systems that add friction between the user and their social media addiction. However, Plante notes that

users can easily override such systems, often undermining their intentions. “I really like how SoRA brings you out of that muddied water by offering the idea of alternative forms of attention that you can practice,” Plante says. “Now you’re starting to build that alternative world.”

**IF THE AIM OF THE ATTENTION CLASSES I ATTENDED** for this article was for each participant to start their own attention group, then I supposed I had to organize one myself. It was important for me to test, albeit unscientifically, if the somewhat improv-styled exercises that SoRA had designed (like following a partner across a park and imitating their gait before switching roles) would work outside of the confines of open-minded Brooklyn.

Of course, I pursued this experiment among fellow writers in Silver Lake, arguably the nearest approximation of Williamsburg this side of the Mississippi, so it might not be a surprise that my participants expressed enthusiasm for the process. “What I enjoyed the most was just our initial conversation where it was like, ‘Wow, we’re all struggling with this thing,’” Mary Dahm, a Los Angeles-based writer says. “Like not one person here said, ‘Oh, I have no problems with attention.’”

Jason Rogers, a journalist and Olympic medalist in fencing, characterized the attention activities as “old sauce, new bottle,” explaining that the exercises didn’t seem so different from new-age-styled meditation. “It doesn’t feel revolutionary in its approach, but that doesn’t make it unhelpful — it is helpful,” Rogers says. “Whatever calls you to fight back against your attention being hijacked.”

If that’s the extent of the result, Burnett might be satisfied. “It’s been

utterly transformative in my life to come to believe so deeply in something so specific and critically diagnostic with implications for what needs to happen,” Burnett says, qualifying that despite his zeal for the attention movement, “the book may not be bought, the book may not be read, the movement may fail.”

In *A Trial by Jury*, he reflected on his role as an historian. “The primary aim of sustained thinking and talking had always been, in a way, *more thinking and talking*,” Burnett wrote in 2001. While scientists and mathematicians might literally solve problems, he continued, he had dedicated his life to serving as a custodian of “unanswerable questions,” like how people should choose to live their lives. “Such questions cannot be answered,” he wrote, “but they are not stupid.” ■

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HARRISON BLACKMAN '17 is a journalist and writer based in Los Angeles.



PETER SCHMIDT '20

**TROUBLED TIMES**

*Smoke rises after an Israeli airstrike  
in early April hit a building in  
Beirut, several miles from  
Lebanese American University.*





# LIFE DURING WARTIME

Philip Stoltzfus '79 and  
Lebanese American University  
try to thrive amid another  
Middle East crisis

BY MARK F. BERNSTEIN '83

# The roar of the sea and the cry of gulls along the Beirut waterfront were punctuated by the familiar sound of explosions.

Starting on March 2, Israeli rockets hit the city almost daily, aimed at strongholds manned by Hezbollah, the Lebanese political party and paramilitary group that is one of Iran's chief allies. Hezbollah had already fired rockets into Israel. Israel retaliated with airstrikes and troops surging across the border. And Lebanon was once again caught in the crossfire of a broader regional war.

Thousands of miles away in the United States, Philip Stoltzfus '79, a longtime board member of Beirut's Lebanese American University (LAU), and its new president, Chaouki Abdallah, tried to figure out what to do.

Although Israeli attacks on Beirut were concentrated on neighborhoods around the airport where Hezbollah is headquartered, a few rockets landed in parts of the central city, less than half a mile from the LAU campus. Students sheltered in their apartments, though many were frantically trying to reach relatives closer to the line of fire. According to multiple news media outlets, by the beginning of April, more than 2,000 people in Lebanon had been killed and hundreds of thousands displaced.

Stoltzfus, who lives in London where he owns a consulting firm, was in the U.S. on business when the fighting began. For more than 22 years, he has helped guide LAU through rough times. He is also the man who recruited Abdallah, a Lebanese engineer who spent nearly four decades in teaching and administrative roles in the U.S., to take the LAU presidency. It was Stoltzfus who filled his imagination with the great things he could accomplish back home. Now 18 months into the job, Abdallah was also in the U.S. as part of a preplanned, monthlong swing abroad, meeting alumni, raising money, and overseeing LAU's reaccreditation by the New England Commission of Higher Education. As its name suggests, LAU is an American university, chartered by the state of New York.

The two spoke daily with LAU administrators back home, helping faculty, staff, and the families of students who had been displaced. Stoltzfus also worked contacts in the U.S. government to make sure the Israelis had LAU's coordinates, so they would not target it by accident. Although he stepped down as board chair in 2024, Stoltzfus' institutional memory again made him indispensable. "Unfortunately, I've got a bit of experience at this now," he says. It was Stoltzfus' idea, in fact, to dub the ad-hoc emergency team the "situation management group" rather than the "crisis management group." He is fed up with crises.

Within hours after the first missiles struck Beirut, LAU posted a notice on its website: Classes would be suspended for the following day. Exams were cancelled for the rest of the week. Further instructions would follow as the scale of the threat became clearer.

Since ancient times, the place now known as Lebanon has

been a crossroads for education, culture, and trade. Its makeup is unique. Estimates suggest that of its 5.3 million people, roughly two-thirds are Muslim, both Sunni and Shia; about one-third are Christians, divided among a dozen denominations; and around 7% are Druze. Part of the Ottoman Empire before gaining independence, Lebanon has long had the unhappy fate of being a small country pushed around by giants, wracked by civil war, and victimized by its own impotent government. The strong do what they can, Thucydides wrote from across the Mediterranean 2,500 years ago, and the weak suffer what they must.

Against this backdrop, it qualifies as a surprise that LAU has built not one, but two successful campuses, its flagship in Beirut and a smaller campus in Byblos, 35 miles to the north. Between them, the university educates 8,250 undergraduates, 1,215 graduate students, and 300 professional students, nearly 90% of whom are Lebanese citizens. LAU offers 34 undergraduate majors and operates two teaching hospitals and seven professional schools. Its urban campus is lined with palm trees, its architecture a mix of 19th century sandstone and modern glass buildings. Tuition runs between \$9,000 and \$11,300 per semester.

The Beirut campus is in the wealthy Ras Beirut neighborhood along the Mediterranean, which holds many of the city's nicest museums, stores, and restaurants. It is the area that once earned Beirut the nickname the "Paris of the Middle East." Get Stoltzfus going on the topic and he insists that he has never felt at risk there. Indeed, wars excluded, by some measures the violent crime rate in Beirut is lower than in New York or London.

"There are areas in Beirut where you feel like you're in the south of France," says Princeton professor Bernard Haykel, who grew up there. "And there are areas where you feel like you're in Tehran."

Critically, in a country that has been ravaged by religious strife, LAU is nonsectarian and, as much as possible, non-political. Students are forbidden from political or religious sloganeering, chanting, or cheering. LAU must also abide by American sanctions laws, which prohibit any association with Hezbollah, deemed by the U.S. government to be a terrorist organization.

Stoltzfus insists that the university plays a critical role in Lebanese society, one that is more important now than ever. "Philip is a superb booster," says Joshua Landis '97, co-director of the Center for Middle East Studies at the University of Oklahoma. "In his heart he loves LAU because it has an extraordinary history and has done incredible things for Lebanon."

In the months before the current fighting began, Stoltzfus was able to peer into the future and hope that things had finally changed for the better. With its funding source in Iran exhausted and its smuggling route through Syria cut off, Hezbollah might be forced to disarm, enabling the Lebanese military to reestablish control



over its entire territory. For the first time in more than half a century, the country might enjoy a sustained period of stability.

But at the beginning of March, as Stoltzfus and Abdallah watched the war unfold on the internet, both men worried that they were seeing their hopes disappear. While back in Beirut, students hunkered down, kept one eye on the sky, and waited for the shelling to stop.

**L**ANDIS REFERS TO LAU AND ITS SISTER UNIVERSITY, American University of Beirut (AUB), as “jewels in the Lebanese crown.” Between them, they have produced four Lebanese prime ministers and one Lebanese president. “These two universities established a model of excellence that all subsequent universities in the Middle East sought to emulate,” Landis argues. “They also helped convince Middle Easterners that American education is the best in the world.” Both schools have deep Princeton connections.

AUB, the older of the two, was founded in 1866 by an American missionary, Daniel Bliss, with support from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, chaired by William Earl Dodge Sr. Over the generations, Dodges and Bliss intermarried, made a fortune in mining, and sent many of their children to Princeton, though they remained dedicated to educating Lebanese youth. During the past century, four Princetonians have served as president of AUB, sometimes at the cost of their lives. David Dodge ’45 \*49, acting president from 1981 to ’82 and full president from 1996 to ’97, was kidnapped by Shiite militants during the Lebanese Civil War (1975-90) and spent a year in

**LEADERSHIP TEAM**  
*University president  
Chaouki Abdallah, left, and  
Philip Stoltzfus ’79 on the steps  
of Sage Hall at Lebanese  
American University before the  
latest round of fighting.*



*“In [Stoltzfus’] heart he loves LAU because it has an extraordinary history and has done incredible things for Lebanon.”*

JOSHUA LANDIS \*97, co-director of the Center for Middle East Studies at the University of Oklahoma

captivity. Malcolm Kerr ’53, who succeeded Dodge in 1982, was assassinated two years later by a group allied with Hezbollah.

Six decades younger than AUB, LAU might be regarded as Princeton to AUB’s Harvard, but the better analogy would be to Radcliffe. When AUB began accepting women into its medical programs after World War I, a two-year institution known as the American Junior College for Women (AJCW) was created to prepare them for admission. In 1938, the school hired William Stoltzfus, Phillip Stoltzfus’ grandfather, as its second president. An Ohio Mennonite who had gone to Lebanon as a Red Cross volunteer, Stoltzfus served as president of the AJCW from 1937 until 1958, transforming it into a four-year college and changing its name to Beirut College for Women. That school began admitting men in 1975 and changed its name again, to Lebanese American University, in 1994.

Stoltzfus’ father, William Stoltzfus Jr. ’46, was educated in Lebanon, Syria, and the U.S. before entering Princeton. After graduating, he joined the U.S. Foreign Service and spent his career in embassies across the Middle East. Philip Stoltzfus was born during his father’s posting in Saudi Arabia and grew up in Yemen, Ethiopia, Oman, and Kuwait. (From 1972 to ’74, William Stoltzfus served concurrently as the U.S. ambassador to Bahrain, Qatar, and the UAE.)

At Princeton, Stoltzfus majored in religion. Unsure what he wanted to do with his life, at David Dodge’s suggestion he spent a year teaching high school in Beirut. He then joined a training program with a Chicago bank, which sent him to London in 1984. He has lived there ever since. Stoltzfus founded the investment management firm Thayer Brook Partners in 2005.

After leaving Lebanon during its Civil War, Stoltzfus did not return for more than 20 years. “I just felt that there was this overwhelming hostility to the part of the world I grew up in.” Wanting to support his family’s legacy at LAU, though, he made a small online donation to the school’s annual fund in 2002, at the opening of the American war on terror. Within an hour of hitting the send button, Stoltzfus says, someone in the development office recognized his family name and asked if he would meet in London. Stoltzfus was asked to join LAU’s board of international advisers and became a trustee in 2006. He has served two terms on the board, chairing it from 2016 to 2018 and again from 2020 to 2024, and remains chair of the board’s planning and finance committees.

**B**Y THE MIDDLE OF MARCH, STOLTZFUS AND Abdallah were still in the United States, monitoring a dangerous but seemingly stable situation back in Beirut.

On March 19, a new notice went up on the LAU website. “We hope you and your loved ones continue to remain safe during these challenging times,” it began. Lecture-based classes would continue online, but labs and clinical classes could again meet in person where possible.

Bad as it is, the current fighting is not the worst LAU has experienced. At the outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War, enrollment plummeted from 1,100 in the spring of 1975 to just 150 by the spring of 1976. During the 1982 Israeli invasion, the university was forced to cancel its entire summer session. In 1987, four LAU faculty members were kidnapped from campus; one remained in captivity for four years.

Nor is this Stoltzfus’ first crisis since joining the board. In 2006, Israel again bombed Lebanese targets after Hezbollah attacked Israeli soldiers on the border. Stoltzfus, who was visiting Beirut with his aging father, got out on the last flight before the airport was shelled.

In 2019, the Lebanese financial sector collapsed. Inflation surged, eventually peaking at over 200%, as faculty and staff struggled to survive on a currency that was essentially worthless. The crisis threatened to drag LAU down as it did many other Lebanese institutions, but Stoltzfus and the trustees dug deeply into the endowment to cover operating costs. They converted tuition into dollars while greatly expanding financial aid to retain students. Simultaneously, they converted faculty salaries into dollars to reduce attrition. Stoltzfus says LAU’s finances are again stable and that enrollment exceeds prepanic levels.

In 2023, Stoltzfus chaired the search committee charged with finding LAU’s next president. He was intrigued by Abdallah, who had been president of the University of New Mexico before moving to Georgia Tech as executive vice president for research. At a time when few academics would consider a job in Beirut, Stoltzfus set out to land him.

Abdallah, who was raised in the northern part of the country,

*“The thing that those who have not been involved in conflict areas don’t understand is that people still have to go about their daily lives. One of the most important things is that, where possible, the conflict doesn’t interrupt core things you’re trying to achieve.”*

PHILIP STOLTZFUS ’79

followed the path of many young Lebanese students by getting his higher education, including a Ph.D., in the United States. When Stoltzfus approached him, he agreed to meet, but only as a courtesy. While Abdallah thought he might return to Lebanon someday, he had a good, safe job in the U.S. and little desire to leave it.

Refusing to take no for an answer, Stoltzfus encouraged other trustees and prominent LAU alumni to apply pressure. He also appealed to Abdallah’s national pride. “With all due respect for what you’re doing at Georgia Tech,” he said, “these Lebanese universities matter in a way that no other universities do. This is your opportunity to serve.” With encouragement from his American-born wife, Abdallah finally accepted the challenge.

“I decided that maybe there was one more mission in me,” he says.

In the weeks before Abdallah was scheduled to take over, Stoltzfus took an active role in managing the university. They proved to be unexpectedly difficult weeks. In late July 2024, Israeli troops massed on the border after Hezbollah launched attacks in support of Hamas’ assault on Israel on Oct. 7, 2023. Although he and Abdallah had a handshake agreement, Stoltzfus says he was aware that Abdallah had not yet signed the official acceptance papers and worried that he might reconsider.

“I’ve got to get him to sign before the Israelis come into the country,” he recalls thinking. “Because who the hell is going to leave his family and come to Lebanon in the middle of a war?”

Abdallah did sign, but just before he arrived, Israel launched a massive attack on Hezbollah targets across Lebanon. Although the LAU campus was not hit, nearly half the students and 40% of the faculty were displaced. One student was killed when he returned to his home in another part of the city to retrieve clothes and was caught in a crossfire trying to get back.

Stoltzfus labored to hold things together. LAU shut down for a week while the situation management group revised the academic calendar and sought accommodations for those who had lost their homes. Although faculty could be housed temporarily on campus, students’ families could not be. Dormitory space is limited and the Lebanese concept of family is expansive, often including aunts, uncles, and cousins. Sometimes, too, prudence is the better part of empathy; without carefully vetting who it took in, LAU might inadvertently put a target on its own back. Instead, the university provided emergency stipends and helped families find housing in safer areas. It is doing the same now.

**W**HILE CLASSES CONTINUED ONLINE, in mid-March six students from LAU’s Beirut and Byblos campuses traveled with a faculty member to the Harvard World Model U.N. conference in Lima, Peru. Getting out of the country was harrowing. An Israeli rocket blew up the road to the airport on their way there and another struck next door as they were awaiting their flight.

In the Model U.N. exercise, LAU’s students represented Mexico, serving on a committee addressing non-self-governing territories. Though they had been training for the competition for months, their attention was distracted.

“It was so hard to leave our families, the people that we know





and love in Lebanon,” says Juneid Shayya, a junior double-majoring in business and information technology management. “Each minute there, though we were fighting to win [the competition], our hearts were here.” Another LAU student, Roy Abi Raad, was trying to keep tabs on his father, who serves in the Lebanese army.

Despite these challenges, both Raad and Shayya won awards for their performances. They expressed pride in themselves and gratitude to the university that was willing to send them to an academic conference amid rocket attacks. “The thing that initially attracted me to [LAU] is the culture, how professors interact with students,” Shayya says. “It is like a family.”

On March 20, after 10 days in Peru, the LAU students left theoretical politics behind and returned to face real world politics at home. “We got used to being normal,” Raad says, “and then going back to Lebanon, there were mixed feelings.” Both are finishing the semester online.

**B**Y THE THIRD WEEK OF MARCH, LAU WAS STILL holding a few labs and clinics in person. But after Iran threatened to attack U.S.-affiliated educational institutions across the Middle East in retaliation for American attacks on two Iranian universities, it announced that both the Beirut and Byblos campuses would return to fully online instruction. That policy continued into mid-April.

“Obviously, it’s not an ideal situation for learning,” admits Abdallah, who flew back to Beirut on April 6. “Beyond the physical danger, the students are not in the best mental state.” To deal with that, the university health department is offering extra counseling sessions. Its website also posts links to two webinars, “In Response to Recent Unrest” and “Surviving and Thriving in War Time.”

For generations, Lebanon’s chief export has been educated young people, who take their talents abroad in search of better lives. “Unfortunately, that has been the case for forever,” says John Waterbury ’61, a former president of AUB. Raad,

#### STUDENT LIFE

*Students enjoy a quiet day on LAU’s main campus, which was closed in early April amid escalating violence between Israel and Hezbollah.*

the Model U.N. student, says he hopes to pursue a master’s degree in political science after he graduates this spring but acknowledges that he will have to leave Lebanon to do it.

Stoltzfus wants to end that exodus while also hoping to see LAU become a global university. In 2013, LAU opened a small branch campus in Manhattan, near the United Nations, which has now been authorized to award degrees. It offers a mix of in-person and online programs in business, computer science, and applied artificial intelligence. Stoltzfus hopes that LAU will open another branch campus in Europe by 2028. Not only does globalization spread the LAU brand, it promises an influx of much-needed foreign cash.

In a way that many might find hard to comprehend, LAU muddles along. “The thing that those who have not been involved in conflict areas don’t understand,” Stoltzfus says, “is that people still have to go about their daily lives. One of the most important things is that, where possible, the conflict doesn’t interrupt core things you’re trying to achieve.” What other choice do they have?

America has thousands of colleges and universities. “If one or two of those institutions disappeared, it would be sad for the alumni, sad for the faculty,” Stoltzfus observes, “but life would go on.” Lebanon, though, is different. “LAU and AUB, these are trusted institutions in a country that has lost all faith in its institutions.”

Because of the war, Lebanese parliamentary elections, which had been scheduled for May 10 of this year, have been postponed until 2028. What the world will look like then is anyone’s guess. “I’m not a good prognosticator on the future of the Middle East,” Stoltzfus says, “and I’m looking forward to meeting someone who is.”

His hopes for LAU are undiminished, though his hopes for Lebanon have been tempered. Those he explains in simple, practical terms.

“I think it is critically important that Lebanon have a monopoly on the vectors of state power, including military power, throughout the country,” he says. “It would be good if the boundaries of the state were respected by its neighbors. It would be really good if everyone adhered to the Geneva Convention in terms of how they address civilian populations.”

As tall an order as that might seem, Stoltzfus is willing to start small. “If we can just keep from getting into wars,” he says, “this whole country can go absolutely vertical. Because of these universities, the depth of talent here is so great.”

According to the 2025 *Times Higher Education* global rankings, LAU placed in the No. 251-300 tier, making it the fifth-highest-ranking university in the Arab world. Stoltzfus takes great pride that an institution that began as a little women’s college in a poor and unstable country is now considered among the world’s leading universities.

In that, he also sees a metaphor. “As individuals,” he says, “you look around and the world now just sucks, right? You think, I’m powerless against these big beasts that are destroying things. But that is not, in fact, correct. As an individual, you have enormous agency. I think destructive things tend to burn themselves out over time. Good things tend to be more sustainable.” **P**

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

# TAKE THE 2026 ALUMNI SURVEY

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The survey is administered by  
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# PRINCETONIANS

ALUMNI STORIES AND PERSPECTIVES

Ben Denzer, 20



## THINK BIG

*To complete his master of fine arts degree at the Rhode Island School of Design, Ben Denzer '15 had to make a thesis book. "What if my thesis was bigger than the library?" he recalls thinking. He did just that: Pictured here is his thesis, a 125-foot by 100-foot book with multiple pages. See page 48 to read more about Denzer's art and and visit [paw.princeton.edu](http://paw.princeton.edu) to watch a video of him turning the pages.*

COURTESY OF BEN DENZER '15



**CREATIVE CURIOSITY**  
*Ben Denzer '15's design work has appeared in The New York Times magazine and The New Yorker, and he's collaborated with the brand Hermès.*

**BEN DENZER '15**

# Making Art with 'Pieces of Tape and Luck'

BY CECILE MCWILLIAMS '26

**I**N MAY OF 2023, BEN DENZER '15 and several friends transported more than 800 pounds of overwintering plastic to a field on Tillinghast Place, a beach side property of the Rhode Island School of Design. They unfolded the plastic strips and fastened them together with duct tape. A drone recorded as Denzer and his friends tugged open the cover of the 125-foot by 100-foot book, which Denzer created to complete his master of fine arts degree. He had worked months for that moment, tracing, painting, rolling, and unrolling plastic, often on his hands and knees.

This was one of the many times Denzer, a New York-based artist, designer, publisher, and teacher, has prodded assumptions about what makes a book, a book; what makes art, art; and what makes a thing worth doing. Sheets of foam, files of paper bags, and rolls of tape adorn his walk-in closet, also known as his studio. Whether designing book covers or building Birkin bags out of vegetables, Denzer takes a hands-on approach.

"Most of the things I do are just kind of held together by pieces of tape and luck," he tells PAW. "You kinda capture it before it falls apart."

Growing up in a suburb of Kansas City, Denzer spent much of his free time making sculptures out of tubes of masking tape. A tape-tube creation from 2003 — when Denzer was 10 — is a seascape featuring a squid with tiny suckers, fish with curved fins, and shells piled on the seafloor. For his Halloween costume in seventh grade, he built a Star Wars stormtrooper helmet out of tape and paint. Denzer's parents, neither of whom are artists, encouraged his creativity.

This support continued at Princeton, where Denzer majored in architecture and pursued a certificate in visual arts. As he experimented with woodworking, sculpture, typesetting, and other media, his flexibility stood out. "He's interested in the situation at hand," says visual arts professor David Reinfurt, who advised Denzer for two years, "not, like, the ideal situation." Denzer engaged in

design outside the classroom, joining the Beekeeping Club and remaking its logo. His design, a bee with the Princeton crest as its abdomen, stuck.

Soon after graduating, Denzer took a job as a junior designer at Penguin Random House before earning his MFA in graphic design. Now, he teaches full time at Parsons School of Design. For his class, Physical Design, he asks students to bring in a range of materials, from crayons to mustard, and form words with them. The exercise can get sticky, slimy, and wet. That mess is part of the charm. Through working physically, students must think carefully about formal choices — choices which, today, algorithms often automate.

"It's not like the class is anti-computer," Denzer says. "You can get stuff by coming outside the computer, and going back in, and going out, and going back in."

In his own work, Denzer highlights the value of working with his hands. For the first issue of his new series *Process Pamphlets*, set to come out in early April, he documents the steps that went into creating and publishing an image for *The New York Times* sports section of football players atop a stopwatch, the minute and hour hands marking a line of scrimmage. Through pictures and text, Denzer reveals the tools he used — paper, glue, scissors, and Photoshop among them.

Denzer's designs, however professional, involve messy experiments. The video documenting Denzer's monumental thesis captures some of this chaos. As the book billows, small gaps form between the plastic panels. An "H" zigs and zags. To Denzer, such a quirk only enriched the final presentation. "It kinda makes it better," he says. "It shows that it's, you know, real." **P**

TIGER TRAVELS

# Rediscovering My Jamaican Roots Through Art

BY SOPHIA STEELE '23

**G**ROWING UP, I OFTEN FELT disconnected from my Caribbean heritage. My paternal grandfather, George Steele, was born and raised in Kingston, Jamaica, before he immigrated to the United States to serve in the military during the Korean War. He died when I was in elementary school, taking with him stories I wish I had asked more about.

As I got older, that loss began to linger more deeply. I realized how much of my understanding of Jamaica was pieced together from secondhand memories, and I wanted something more tangible — a way to experience the culture for myself and reconnect with a part of my identity that felt just out of reach. That desire is what led me to begin searching for exchange programs in Jamaica.

That's when I came across the Adisa Ancestry Artists Residency, a new creative fellowship founded by Opal Palmer Adisa — an acclaimed novelist, poet, playwright, and professor at the University of the West Indies, Mona — along with her daughter, actress and singer Shola Adisa-Farrar.

Nestled in Linstead, Jamaica, the residency offers artists space to create, engage with the community, and explore their Caribbean heritage — a mission that felt like the answer to a question I'd carried for years.

A week before my departure in January, my grandmother, Sallie Mae, died at 90, and I postponed my flight by a week to help plan her funeral. While sorting through old photographs, my siblings and I found pictures of my grandparents and father in Jamaica, smiling in a lush garden beside a river. By the time I boarded the plane, the trip felt less like a creative excursion and more like a generational tribute.

**Life at the residency quickly settled** into a rhythm. Roosters crowed at dawn, and the days were filled with reading, writing, and conversation. In the evenings, neighbors brought fresh

## PROUD PERSEVERANCE

*Sophia Steele '23 visits students at the Chester Castle Primary School in Hanover, a school supported by the residency.*

coconuts, and we shared stories on the veranda. Their quiet generosity made the countryside feel like an inherited home.

Adisa invited me to sit in on her graduate seminar, Women, Poetry, Gender, and Society, which offered an expansive intellectual framework for understanding Caribbean literature and feminist thought. Our class discussions were complemented by live artistic performances, including a staging of *Look What Fell Out De Mango Tree*, a new autobiographical play examining Jamaican girlhood and motherhood.

One of the most meaningful moments came during a visit to Chester Castle Primary School in Hanover, a school supported by the residency. The students were returning for the first time in four months since Hurricane Melissa hit the island in October, and despite the damage, their joy in the classroom shone through as we read them stories and gave them new school supplies.

What made it especially meaningful was witnessing the deep sense of care within the school — the teachers, principal, and students supported one another in ways that extended beyond academics. The school felt like a cornerstone of the broader community, reflecting a shared commitment to rebuilding and to the children's future.

Many enduring moments came from quiet observation. I visited historic landmarks such as Devon House, the former home of Jamaica's first Black millionaire, George Stiebel, and Milk River Spa in Clarendon, the parish where Harlem Renaissance novelist and poet Claude McKay was born.

These experiences now shape my Ph.D. research at Cornell, where I am studying Caribbean art, literature, and culture. This residency taught me that reconnecting with one's heritage extends beyond geography — it is about relationships to history, to art, and to the people who welcome you home. ■



COURTESY OF SOPHIA STEELE '23



READ an extended version of this story at [paw.princeton.edu/tiger-travels](http://paw.princeton.edu/tiger-travels)



HELEN CULVER SMITH '03

# The Art of the Auction

BY MARK F. BERNSTEIN '83

**B**IDDING ON THE TINY MOUSE sculpture, just one-and-a-quarter inches long, started hot and got hotter. Exquisitely carved out of sapphire with diamond encrusted eyes, ears, and tail, the piece was made in the St. Petersburg, Russia, workshop of jeweler Gustav Fabergé around the turn of the 20th century. Experts, including Helen Culver Smith '03 of Sotheby's, believe it is the only piece of carved sapphire Fabergé ever made. Accordingly, the auction house had estimated that the mouse would command between \$50,000 and \$70,000, but prebids were already at \$170,000 before bidding went live Dec. 18.

About 25 bidders or their representatives crammed into the auction room at

Sotheby's New York headquarters on the Upper East Side that morning. In a corner, Smith tried to keep up. Although her title is head of Sotheby's decorative arts division as well as its Fabergé and Russian works of art division, Smith's job during the auction was to track the bidding on each of the 187 items for sale, which ranged from jewelry to furniture to items of clothing. Smith juggled cell phones as she fielded offers from potential buyers around the world, competing with others in the room and online. After several frenzied minutes in which the bidding went up more than a dozen times, the tiny Fabergé mouse finally went for \$355,600 to an unnamed online buyer.

By day's end, the auction of items

from the estate of singer Bing Crosby and his wife, Kathryn, brought in a total of \$6.7 million. Two-thirds of those items sold for more than Sotheby's presale estimates, evidence of a robust market in the decorative arts. Collectors certainly had a lot to choose from, as the Crosbys were themselves serious collectors. The grand piano Crosby played in the movie *High Society* fetched \$95,250. Diamond and silver jewelry belonging to Russian empress Catherine the Great sold for more than \$400,000. A collection of Crosby's gold records brought in \$6,985. In addition, the auction included paintings by Renoir, Corot, and western artist Charles Russell; oak paneling from the San Simeon, California, estate of William Randolph Hearst; and nearly 50 other Fabergé items, ranging from sculptures to picture frames.

Smith worked on the sale for more than a year. Following Kathryn Crosby's death in 2024 (Bing, 30 years her senior, died in 1977), the family sought to have the estate appraised. Smith and members of her team visited the Crosby home in northern California to assess what was there, gauge its likely auction value, and convince the family that Sotheby's, rather than a rival auction house, should handle everything. Smith was called in because of the large number of Fabergé pieces in the Crosby collection but ended up overseeing the entire auction.

Her responsibilities included appraising each item, researching its provenance, taking photographs, writing descriptions for the catalog, and helping to boost interest with Instagram posts and online videos. Everything was put on public display for two weeks before the auction date, during which period Sotheby's also solicited prebids. Smith guessed correctly that the crooner of "White Christmas," as well as dozens of other hits, still had a big enough name to command public interest, especially right before the holidays.

**After majoring in art history at Princeton**, where she also captained the women's squash team, Smith taught high school art history briefly before earning a master's degree from the Courtauld Institute of Art, which is



### PRIZED POSSESSIONS

*Helen Culver Smith '03, photographed in front of a mahogany and marquetry grand piano the singer Bing Crosby played in the movie *High Society*. Other rare items Smith has worked with from Crosby's collection include a Fabergé jeweled aventurine quartz model of a lion (on piano), and a Fabergé jeweled sapphire mouse, left.*

affiliated with the University of London. Smith remained in the U.K. and spent a decade at Christie's auction house, first specializing in portrait miniatures and gold boxes, which led her to Fabergé. She has been at Sotheby's London office since 2018.

Best known for exquisitely decorated Easter eggs designed for the Russian czars, the house of Fabergé also made jewelry, sculptures, and even utilitarian items such as cigar cutters, letter openers, and glue pots. Although Smith herself has never handled any of the 61 Fabergé eggs still known to exist, they have a Princeton connection. Publisher Malcolm Forbes '41 once possessed the world's largest collection, owning more than even the Russian government. When Forbes purchased his 11th Fabergé egg in 1985, a *New York Times* headline crowed, "Forbes 11, Kremlin 10." Forbes' collection was sold to a Russian oligarch in 2004 following his death.

Fabergé works remain popular and, in the art world, all but recession-proof, owing to their materials, craftsmanship, and imagination. "Rather than just making functional things, there are also real toys, like miniature furniture or miniature animals," Smith explains. "Something you would see in French [decorative art] done with gold with navy



blue enamel, Fabergé does in bright orange. There's a uniqueness to it."

Smith now handles all Russian works for Sotheby's, including ceramics, silver, bronzes, and objects of vertu (finely crafted miniatures such as Fabergé), as well as a subspecialty of artwork from the former Soviet Union. Sotheby's usually stages two sales of Russian and Fabergé works annually, one in Geneva and one in London. But Smith also consults any time a private auction contains a piece in her area of expertise.

In the end, Smith says, the Crosby sale was "white glove," which is auction-speak meaning that everything sold.

Had items been left over, failing to achieve the minimum bid Sotheby's had set, Smith would have offered them back to the family or repackaged them to be sold at a later date. Instead, her final job was to arrange for payment and shipping.

The range of work she is called to do, not only sourcing items but also valuing them and, as with the Crosby estate, getting them to market, is what keeps her job interesting.

"I have to do all of it," Smith says. "That's why I sometimes feel like a hamster on a wheel. Or, you know, a Fabergé mouse on a wheel." **P**



JENNIFER ARWADE '00

INSPIRING PRINCETONIANS: JENNIFER ARWADE '00

## Hooked on Helping Chicagoland Groups

BY ALISON BOWEN

**JENNIFER ARWADE '00 HAS BEEN SITTING AT KITCHEN** tables around Chicago for decades, listening to residents' concerns and helping them through her work as co-executive director of Communities United, an organization she's been with since 2001. She first went to Chicago years ago, while interning at a different nonprofit, where she caught the bug for community organizing.

"When I came to Chicago and community organizing, it was the first time I really had this feeling that you could really create change, and that you could work with other community members who are traditionally left out of power structures, to actually have power together," she says.

Two decades later, Arwade is creating an impact all over Chicagoland.

Her work at Communities United ranges from supporting immigrants to struggling teens. For example, the organization compiled resources with critical Know Your Rights information for immigrants along with a list of legal resources. Its organizers routinely travel to the state capital, Springfield, to advocate for ending fines, tickets, and law enforcement penalties given to truant students. Communities United also creates national reports that highlight various topics, like alternatives to policing, and

suggests solutions, like training professionals who can work alongside police to create violence intervention proposals.

Recently, Communities United was one of five global recipients of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's Racial Equity 2030 award. This provides a \$10 million grant over eight years to scale an innovative strategy for youth leadership and mental health support the group created in partnership with the Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago.

All of Communities United's initiatives come from constant conversations with community members.

"The first time I knocked on a door and somebody invited me inside to have coffee at their kitchen table to talk to me about what was going on and what their dreams were, that was really when I was hooked," she says.

**From an early age, Arwade noticed injustices and wanted to change them.** "I just remember as a child always questioning why things were the way they were," she says.

A New York City native, Arwade says she saw her immigrant father, who was a taxi driver and fruit vendor, get harassed by police. She lived in a rent-controlled apartment on the Upper East Side and attended a private school on the Upper West Side. These vastly different experiences called attention to "the disparities in education and access to resources faced by many," she says.

"That is part of what motivated me during my years at Princeton to study politics and public policy," she says, "as I was searching for ways to make a difference."

At Princeton, that dream began to take shape. She heard about Princeton Project 55's Public Interest Program, which matches recent graduates with social impact organizations for a year-long fellowship, and met John Fish '55, who ran the program at the time.

"He showed such an interest in all of us who were part of the program and was really invested in opening opportunities for us to identify ways we could contribute to society through nonprofit work after graduation," she says. "To have someone who takes such a genuine interest in supporting your growth and development is just a game changer."

She also cites studying abroad at the University of Cape Town in South Africa her junior year for giving her a global perspective.

After graduation, Arwade received a fellowship in Chicago, through Project 55, where she had the opportunity to work in community organizing. All these years later, community service remains at the heart of the work she does, and she hopes to pass on that same passion.

"When we can see a young person at age 15 realizing their power and helping to change laws and systems to better serve youth and families, and that they can see, 'Wow, I was part of creating that change,' there's no better feeling than that," she says. ■

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



# ANNUAL 1746 SOCIETY REUNIONS BREAKFAST SEMINAR

Saturday, May 23

Princeton University Art Museum  
8-10 a.m.

## FEATURED SPEAKER:

James Steward

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

**Please join us** for the annual 1746 Society Reunions Breakfast seminar, with an address by James Steward, the Nancy A. Nasher-David J. Haemisegger, Class of 1976, Director of the Princeton University Art Museum. The event will be held in the art museum. All 1746 Society members are welcome to register, as are those who are considering making a planned gift to Princeton.

The 1746 Society gratefully acknowledges alumni and friends whose estate and life income gifts support Princeton's future. All members and select Reunions classes will receive an emailed invitation with a registration link.

Not yet a 1746 Society member? There are many ways to support Princeton and join the 1746 Society with an estate gift, beneficiary designation or life income gift. Please call 609.258.6318 to learn how.



Photo: Joseph Hu

James Steward

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

## TO LEARN MORE:

Phone: **609.258.6318** | Email: **1746soc@princeton.edu**

Web: **alumni.princeton.edu/1746society**



1746 SOCIETY PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

# CLASS NOTES

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Online Class Notes are password protected. To access, alumni must use their TigerNet ID and password. [Click here to log in: http://paw.princeton.edu/class-notes](http://paw.princeton.edu/class-notes)

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# MEMORIALS



## LISTEN TO OUR 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 1954

#### SIDNEY L. EATON JR. '54

Sid died Sept. 16, 2025.

At Noble and Greenough School, his activities included baseball, dramatics, and glee club. At Princeton, he majored in English and the Special Program in the Humanities, joined Tower club, where he served as secretary, participated in the Advisee Project, and was head manager of varsity baseball.



He enjoyed a long career as an English teacher in private middle and high schools, first at the Cate School near Santa Barbara, Calif., then at Charles Wright Academy in Tacoma, Wash., where he met and married Margaret "Meg" Patten from Portland, Ore., in 1964. In 1971, he started at Catlin Gabel School in Portland, from which he retired in 2001. Throughout these years, he took on additional administrative, coaching, and admissions roles. He served as chief reader of the College Board's English composition test for four years.

In retirement, Sid enjoyed stateside travel, tutoring, serving as a gofer in political campaigns, and as a listener in a second-grade class. In his closing years, he moved to Bend, Ore., to be near his sons Stuart and Bruce. He died with Bruce at his side while visiting the treasured scenes of his childhood in Maine.

Sid is survived by sons Stuart and Bruce and grandsons Miles, Nate, and Flynn. He was predeceased by his wife, Meg, in 2022.

#### JEREMIAH FORD '54 \*59

Jerry died Oct. 1, 2025.

He was active in football, tennis, and dramatics at St. George's School in Newport, R.I. At Princeton, Jerry majored in architecture, joined Colonial Club, was a cheerleader, and sang (a lifelong activity) with the freshman Glee Club and the Nassoons.



While serving in the Marines in Japan he studied Japanese culture and architecture and then earned his MFA from the Princeton Graduate School of Architecture. During his ensuing apprenticeships he contributed to

the development of the World Trade Center in New York.

Jerry was founding partner of three architectural firms, culminating in Ford3 Architects. His projects included more than 300 residential projects as well as preservation work, churches, libraries, schools, colleges, and commercial work. He was particularly proud of his role as partner in charge of the "Joint Venture Architects" in its restoration and renovation work of the legislative portions of the New Jersey State House and the State House Annex.

He served on the boards of numerous community and university organizations. Jerry served a term as president of the Class of 1954, whose classmates remember him fondly for his Japanese-inspired class logo and costumes for every major reunion.

Jerry is survived by his daughter, Katherine; three stepchildren; five step-grandchildren; two nephews; and a niece. He was predeceased by his wife, Elizabeth Stewardson Ford; former wife, Judith S. Ford; daughters Amanda Ford and Amy Ford; and sister Sally Ann Knapp.

### THE CLASS OF 1955

#### STEPHEN McNAMARA '55

Steve was an adventurous soul who died Nov. 24, 2025, in Mill Valley, Calif. His grandfather



was Robert C. McNamara 1903, and his father, Robert C. McNamara Jr. 1929. Steve was the secretary of his class since 2021. His family's scholarship fund, the R.C. McNamara 1903 Scholarship, assisted more than 450 students through Princeton.

Steve attended University High School in Urbana, Ill., and at Princeton joined Cap and Gown, majored in history, and was publicity manager of the Triangle Club.

Steve leaned firmly toward adventure: In high school he hitch-hiked through a blizzard from New York City to Chicago. In college he climbed El Popocatepetl with no training or equipment, created a House Parties Weekend bike race from Vassar to Princeton, befriended one of the world's greatest race car drivers, Stirling Moss, hung out with Bruce McLaren, and was once banned from Cuba because he reported on

too many dead spectators at the 1956 Grand Prix of Havana. He started a computer software company, Sunlight Software, and a newspaper printing company, Marin Sun Printing.

Steve started a lifetime career in journalism with no experience, taught the subject at San Francisco State University, created two newspapers: the *Pacific Sun* serving notable San Francisco suburbs and led the revival of the prize-winning *San Quentin News* inside California's oldest state prison.

But Steve's greatest success came on Sept. 22, 1976, when he encountered Kay Copeland, who enabled their married life for half a century and supported adventurous lives for their family. He is survived by Kay and the children: Lise, Natalie, Kevin, Chris '01, Morgan '03, and Marisa Rodriguez Peake; and eight grandchildren. Each have their unique life endeavors, and they are all richer for not traipsing down a straight and narrow path. Steve recommends it.

#### JOSEPH T. KNOX '56

Joe died Nov. 5, 2025.

He came to Princeton from West End High School in Nashville, Tenn., where he was a cheerleader, an actor, and a dedicated newspaper deliverer. Joe joined Tiger Inn, majored in French, and acted in multiple



Triangle Club shows. Two years in naval intelligence at the Pentagon followed his NROTC commissioning before he moved to Richmond, Va., to teach at St. Christopher's School where, over 42 years, he became legendary for starting a foreign languages department and teaching French, Russian, and art history, combined with memorable chapel talks. He especially enjoyed organizing foreign trips and exchange opportunities for his students. Our class especially benefited from Joe's leadership of our mini-reunion in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Joe earned an M.A. in English from Vanderbilt and an M.A. in French from Richmond. He was the recipient of a Klingenstein Fellowship from Columbia. In 1982, the French government awarded him the title of Chevalier of its Palmes Academiques for his contribution to an appreciation of French culture.

Joe was predeceased by his first wife, Ella-Prince Trimmer. He is survived by his wife, Jane Joel Knox; daughters Eliza Knox Buxton (Bill) and Daisy Megowan Knox; and grandchildren Joseph Towler Burton and Lucy Wilson Burton.

#### ELLIOT N. PINSON '56

Elliot died June 9, 2025, after a distinguished career at Bell Laboratories.

He came to Princeton from Forest Hills



High School, where he was captain of the varsity baseball team and treasurer of the honor society. At Princeton, Elliot held the Whiton Prize Scholarship, joined Court Club, majored in electrical engineering, and served as vice chairman of the Institute of Radio Engineers. Before his senior year, he worked for the Atomic Energy Commission at Sandia Corp. in Albuquerque, N.M.

After graduation, Elliot and Stephanie Lichtblau were married before moving to Cambridge, where Elliot earned an S.M. at MIT followed by a move to Pasadena for a Ph.D., from Caltech. Return to New Jersey followed with his work at Bell Telephone Laboratories Research Department on acoustics and speech including a classic text, *The Speech Chain: The Physics and Biology of Spoken Language*.

In New Jersey, Elliot enjoyed playing tennis and bridge with his wife, as well as New York's theater, music, museums, and dining. Together they raised their daughters Jaymie Pinson Berger and Debra Pinson Boyman '79. His wife predeceased him, but he is survived by his two daughters; sons-in-law Christopher Boyman '80 and Doug Berger; grandchildren Michael, James, Laura, Nick, and Kathryn; and great-grandson Teddy.

**ROBERT P. TEULINGS '56 \*66**

Bob died Jan. 1, 2025, in Raleigh, N.C.



He came to Princeton from Montclair (N.J.) High School with a scholarship from the Montclair Princeton Alumni Association. He joined Dial Lodge, played IAA volleyball, majored in chemical

engineering, and received a varsity letter for his work as manager of the Tiger baseball team. After graduation, Bob remained at Princeton, earning a Ph.D. in chemical engineering. While a graduate student, he met Elizabeth Powell and they got married in the University Chapel in 1959.

Armed with his doctorate, the couple moved to North Carolina, where Bob worked in research on synthetic textile fibers for the Chemstrand Co.

He later moved to the North Carolina Department of Natural Resources and Community Development as a resources manager, where he led the effort to acquire and preserve prime land for the state parks system. Always interested in wildlife and especially birds, Bob found this work very satisfying. The University of North Carolina Press published his co-authored book *Birds of the Carolinas*, in multiple editions and described as "the well-loved standard reference for birdwatchers and nature lovers in North Carolina and South Carolina."

In later years, he lived in Cary, N.C., where he is survived by his wife, Catherine Inge Teulings.

**PETER O. WILLAUER '56**

Peter died Nov. 6, 2025, at his home in Falmouth, Mass.



He followed his father, A. Osborne Willauer 1929, to Princeton from the Noble and Greenough School in Dedham, Mass. He joined Colonial, where he served as president. Peter majored in the Woodrow Wilson School and was stroke on the varsity crew team. Following his NROTC commissioning, he became a sailing instructor at the U.S. Naval Academy. Peter went on to earn an M.A. from Harvard and to teach mathematics at Groton School while continuing his sailing life as crew on several ocean races.

Peter was a dedicated and challenging educator: In 1963, he founded the Hurricane Island Outward Bound School in Penobscot Bay, Maine, and a similar school in Baltimore; in 1994, he established the Willauer School on Thompson Island in Boston; and in 2009, with his wife, Carol, he became the founding trustee of the Hurricane Island Center for Science and Leadership. In retirement, Peter and Carol sailed extensively throughout the world aboard his J42 sloop, *Eight Bells*.

Peter was predeceased by his first wife, Elizabeth Chittenden. He is survived by his second wife, Carol; sons Charles (Gale), David (Cathleen), and P. Langley (Dana Rae); eight grandchildren; and three great grandchildren.

**THE CLASS OF 1957**

**JOHN M. MATSEN '57**

John died June 9, 2025, at Morristown Medical Center near his home at the



Fellowship Village retirement community in Basking Ridge, N.J.

A native of Wisconsin, John graduated from Exeter Academy. At Princeton, he majored in chemical engineering and was a member of Prospect Club. He won his numerals as manager of the Princeton baseball team and was also an IAA dorm manager, a member of Whig-Clio, and a clarinetist in the Triangle Club orchestra and the University Band, winning the Osborne Cup in 1957 for service to the band. His senior year roommate was Joel Davis.

John earned an M.A. and a Ph.D. at Columbia and was an instructor in the chemical engineering department. After he received his doctorate, he became a researcher at Esso (now Exxon), becoming an expert in fluidization. He published many

scientific papers and held many patents. In 1971, he married Sandra Schwartz, a graduate of the University of Washington.

John was an active member of the Rolls Royce and Bentley Car Club, an officer in the Hunterdon County, N.J., Historical Society, and he served on various Township of Clinton government boards, including a stint as acting mayor. He and Sandy also spent many hours sailing out of the Perth Amboy Yacht Club.

John is survived by his wife of 54 years, Sandy, and brothers David and James and their families.

**DAVID L. WILLIAMS '57**

Dave, another of our noted professors, died May 28, 2025.



The son of David Williams 1926 and brother of Morton Williams '54, (both of whom are deceased), he came to Princeton from Hackley School in Tarrytown, N.Y.

He was a numeral and letter winner on the lightweight crew and rowed on the boat that received international publicity when it sank in the Potomac River in 1954. Dave majored in history, joined Charter Club, and sang in the Glee Club. Senior year he roomed with John McCarroll and fellow crew members Tony Fletcher and Lou Strayer.

After graduation Dave served for three years in the Army and then studied political science at Columbia University, where he received his Ph.D. in 1968. During this period, he married Karen Averill and they had one child, Elisabeth Averill. He then embarked on a long career as a political science professor at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio, serving 10 years as department chairman. He retired in 2000 and then continued his interest in history and politics as an avid reader, and doing charitable work.

Dave is survived by his wife, Karen; daughter, Elisabeth; and one grandson.

**THE CLASS OF 1958**

**MICHAEL N. AMBLER '58**

Mike died Sept. 6, 2025, of complications following a fall. He was 89.



He came to Princeton from Phillips Exeter Academy, where he played squash, rowed crew, and was in the glee club. At Princeton, he rowed freshman lightweight crew. He majored in history and was a member of Tower Club.

After graduation, he went to Columbia Law School, served in the Army for a year and then worked for Sullivan & Cromwell, later leaving to join the tax law department at Mobil Corp., rising to be general tax counselor. He concluded his career at Texaco, where he served as

general tax counsel.

Mike was a member of the Union Club in New York, and the Quogue Beach Club and Quogue Field Club in Quogue, as well as the Thursday Evening Club and the Pilgrims. He also served as board chairman of the College of New Rochelle, from which he received an honorary doctorate.

Mike married Marsha Dancy in 1961, and they had two sons, Michael and Christian. They, as well as two daughters-in-law, five grandchildren and a great-granddaughter, all survive him. The class extends its deepest sympathy to them.

#### DOUGLAS L. AYER '58

Doug died May 15, 2025, in Greenwich, Conn. He was 89.



He came to Princeton from Phillips Andover Academy, where he was on the track, squash, and soccer teams and was on the school paper. At Princeton, Doug majored in aeronautical engineering and was a member of Tiger Inn. He rowed and played squash as a freshman and threw the javelin for the varsity track team.

After graduation, Doug flight tested the new DC-8 for 2 ½ years for Douglas Aircraft Co., then returned to Harvard Business School and earned an MBA in 1962. After three months abroad, he worked for McKinsey in New York and London. He had met and married Carolyn Heinlein while she was still at Wellesley. They have three children and several grandchildren.

His outlook on life is well expressed in our 50th-reunion yearbook.

Doug is survived by his wife, children and grandchildren. The class extends its deepest sympathy to them all.

#### W. LANDON DENNISON JR. '58

Lanny died Oct. 10, 2025, in Hinesburg, Vt. He was 89.



He came to Princeton from Deerfield Academy, where he ran track, played lacrosse, and sang in the glee club. At Princeton, Lanny was a member of Tower Club and on the varsity track and cross-country teams. He majored in biology.

After graduation, Lanny went to medical school and then went to the School of Submarine Medicine and to deep sea diving school. In 1960, he married Elizabeth Holland and then went to sea for a year on a Polaris submarine. While at sea, his first child was born.

In 1967, he left the Navy and started a residency in dermatology at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Clinic. The young doctor opened his dermatology practice, now Four Seasons

Dermatology, and never turned away a patient, taking payment in eggs, crocheted afghans, and even feed for his daughter's horse. After his residency, they moved to an old farmhouse that they restored during the next 55 years to its original 1789 condition.

Lanny is survived by his wife; four children; nine grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. The class extends its deepest sympathy to them all.

#### JAMES W. HAUGH '58

Jim died Jan. 27, 2026, in Hinsdale, Ill. He was 89.



He came to Princeton from New Trier High School, where he was active in golf and the editor of the school newspaper. At Princeton, Jim majored in economics and was a member of Quadrangle Club, where he participated in IAA sports. He was a member of the Undergraduate Council, a Keyceptor, and sang in the freshman and varsity Glee Clubs.

After graduation, Jim married Jane McFeatters in 1967. He went to the University of Michigan Law School and completed postgraduate work at the University of Chicago's economics program. Jim also served as an Army intelligence officer in the early 1960s.

Jim spent much of his career as a partner at KPMG, where he became a nationally respected authority in bank taxation and helped build the firm's bank tax practice into a leading national model.

He was a fiercely loyal sports fan, especially for the White Sox, Bulls, and Princeton Tigers. He was also a passionate golfer and especially cherished Saturday-morning doubles tennis, which he played almost every week for more than 30 years.

Jim is survived by Jane, their four children, and 12 grandchildren. The class extends its deepest sympathy to them all.

#### WILLIAM T. HOLCOMB JR. '58

Bill died Oct. 13, 2025, in Chicago, Ill. He was 89.



He came to Princeton from Carson (Nev.) High School, where he participated in football, the band, and student government. At Princeton, Bill was in the politics department and a member of Key and Seal Club. He held the Arthur Vandermuhr Scholarship.

After graduation, he spent six months in the Army and then entered University of Michigan Law School. Then he joined a law firm in New York City, got married and in 1967 moved to Scottsdale, Ariz., for a short while and then back to New York City. After a while, he was divorced, and in the mid-'70s moved to Chicago to work for Montgomery Ward. There he met and married Barbara Levine and they

opened a law practice together.

Bill is survived by Barbara. The class extends its deepest sympathy to her.

#### TRAVIS B. JACOBS '58

Trav died Sept. 16, 2025, in Bridgport, Vt. He was 89.



He came to Princeton from Deerfield Academy, where he played soccer and tennis and participated in debating. At Princeton, he was a member of Charter Club, the Bridge Club, the Republican Club, and the Pre-Law Society. He majored in history.

After graduation, he earned a Ph.D. from Columbia, taught part-time in New York City, and joined the history department at Middlebury College, where he became chairman in the mid-1970s. He published a book, *Eisenhower at Columbia*, about his career between World War II and the White House.

Trav married Nellie in 1966, and they had two sons, Beal and Holmes. (They run the Two Brothers Tavern in Middlebury.)

Travis is survived by his wife and sons and their families. The class extends its deepest sympathy to them all.

#### THE CLASS OF 1959

##### DAVID F. CROSS '59

Born and raised in Chicago, Dave died Sept. 21, 2025.



He attended South Shore High School and Shimer College en route to Princeton, where he held a Robert Stuart Eagle Scout scholarship. At Princeton, he ate at Court Club and roomed with Hal Heckman, Bob Jennings, and Bill Widenor. Majoring in biology, he graduated *magna cum laude*, then attended Yale Medical School, where he graduated *cum laude*. Subsequent training was at Yale-New Haven Medical Center, where he met his wife-to-be, Cheryl Wiberg.

More training followed at Scripps Clinic in La Jolla, Calif., and the National Heart Hospital in London, England. Following service as a lieutenant commander in the Navy Medical Corps from 1967 to 1969, he entered private practice in internal medicine in Rutland, Vt., practicing there for 30 years, serving as president of the medical staff at Rutland Regional Medical Center, and as a clinical instructor in medicine at the University of Vermont. After 33 years in Vermont the Cross family relocated to Virginia.

David's interests beyond medicine were his family, classical music, skiing, sailing, pampering his New Dawn roses, and serving as "under-gardener" to Cheryl. He loved history and was a longtime Civil War buff, publishing a history of the Vermont Brigade's disastrous engagement on June 23, 1864: *A Melancholy Affair at the Weldon Railroad*.

Dave is survived by his wife, Cheryl; four children; and eight grandchildren.

#### **CARL S. RAPP '59**

Skip died Jan. 28, 2025, in Boulder, Colo., his home for much of his adult life.

Born in Schenectady, N.Y., he attended Nott



Terrace High School, where he served on the student council and was a star on the track team. At Princeton, he continued his track prowess, running on the cross-country team while also playing freshman lacrosse and chairing the Orange Key Guide Service. He majored in politics, ate at Elm Club, roomed with Bob Mandell, and filled out his course load by participating in Navy ROTC.

Upon graduation he elected the Navy's Marine Corps option and trained as a fighter pilot. Released from active duty in 1963, Skip earned an MBA at Stanford, worked for TWA for two years, then moved west in search of powdery slopes with his first wife, Glenda Barr, whom he wed in 1967. After several years working in the ski industry for such companies as Sport Obermeyer, in 1993 Skip founded his own ski-wear company, Hard Corps Sports. An avid athlete, Skip combined skiing with his love of cycling, riding with the Gut Grinders all over Europe and the southwest United States for more than 40 years.

Skip is survived by his second wife, Mari Madeira; his daughter, Alexandra; his son, Adam; his stepson, Ashton Fitchtl; and his sister, Judi Jellinek.

#### **WILLIAM C. SCOTT '59 '64**

Bill, a renaissance man who learned six languages, hiked, skied, ice skated, played



golf, squash, and tennis, gourmet cooked, painted oils and watercolors, and played piano, died Oct. 13, 2025, in Hanover, N.H. He spent his entire career teaching classics, first at the preparatory school level, then at Dartmouth College.

Raised in Winnetka, Ill., Bill attended New Trier High School, where he was elected to the National Honor Society. A Phi Beta Kappa at Princeton, he majored in classics, played interclub squash and tennis, joined the Classics and Outing clubs, dined at Court Club, and roomed with Dan Keller and Roger Paulman. Following graduation, he taught at St. Paul's and Andover before returning to Princeton for his M.A. in 1962, and his Ph.D. and marriage to Mary Lyons Baldwin in 1964.

In 1966, he joined the Dartmouth classics department. He received numerous accolades for his teaching, culminating in his appointment as Humanities Distinguished Research Professor in 1988. He chaired the task force charged with the renovation and expansion of the Dartmouth library to ensure

its relevance in a digital world. He authored six books and, after his retirement from Dartmouth in 2004, continued teaching in the Osher Lifelong Learning program.

Bill is survived by his wife, Mary Lyons; daughters Alice and Ellen; son Charles; and six grandchildren.

#### **THE CLASS OF 1960**

##### **JOHN C. BALLIN '60**

Word has recently come to the class that John died Oct. 11, 2021.



A son of the Class of 1910, he came to Princeton from Darien (Conn.) High School as a member in the Class of 1956. He played freshman football and freshman and varsity track. He joined Cottage Club but left in June 1954 to serve in the Army. He returned as a member of our class. John majored in English and wrote his thesis on George Bernard Shaw. He married and lived off campus his senior year.

John fell out of contact with the class after graduation and we know nothing of his post-graduate years except that he moved several places in the Northeast before settling in Raleigh, N.C., in retirement. At the time of his death, he was survived by his wife of almost 50 years, Jane; two daughters; and two grandsons, to whom we offer our belated condolences.

##### **JOEL DAVIDOW '60**

Joel died Oct. 16, 2025. We lost a well-remembered undergraduate scholar who



always acknowledged his debt to his inspiring teachers at the Woodrow Wilson School and the collegial atmosphere there. He modeled his professional life on those examples. Joel proudly led the debate team and received four of the University's most prestigious graduating awards. He frequently spoke of his affection for Princeton despite having been part of the infamous 1958 dirty bicker and was active in class alumni activities.

Joel earned a law degree at Columbia in 1963. He was an instructor, graduate student, and editor of the *Law Review Notes* at Stanford in 1964 before beginning a five-year stint in Washington, D.C.: two years at the Federal Trade Commission, and three with the Department of Justice Antitrust Division.

He went on to specialize in antitrust and monopoly law with a succession of law firms in Chicago and New York. He continued teaching, writing, and contributing to U.S. and international regulatory initiatives in the field. He developed regulatory structures for the U.N. and advised more than 20 developing nations' economies, including Russia in the 1990s.

Joel married three times. He remained close to his four daughters, two from each of the first two marriages. He is survived by his third wife, Gwenn Rosenthal; his daughters; and five grandchildren.

##### **RICHARD B. LYMAN '60**

Rick prepared for Princeton at Pembroke Country Day School. At Princeton,



he majored in biology, joined Charter Club, and was active in Orange Key, Chapel Choir, the Inter Club Council, St. Paul's Society, the Outing Club, and the Pre-Med Society.

After graduation, Rick moved to Albany Medical College in New York, where he worked in medical research for several years then earned a medical degree in 1970. In our 1970 reunion yearbook he expressed an intention to go into some surgical specialty and to include in his future a seacoast farm, a place to raise children and old English sheepdogs.

We lost contact with Rick after that, but believe he largely accomplished those goals: He seems to have moved to the Seattle-Tacoma area on Puget Sound, Wash., practiced medicine there and settled into the historical coastal town of Steilacoom on the banks of the sound with plenty of room for children and dogs.

Rick died March 20, 2024. He married twice. We were unable to learn any other particulars of his family or his professional and retirement pursuits.

#### **THE CLASS OF 1961**

##### **JOHN F. McLAUGHLIN '61**

John died Nov. 25, 2025, while celebrating his 64th wedding anniversary with his beloved wife, at home in Arlington, Va.



Born in Philadelphia, he graduated from Passaic Valley High School in Little Falls, N.J. At Princeton, "The Redman" was VP and co-social chair of Court Club and a member of The Aquinas Foundation and Whig-Clio. He roomed with Nick Gotten and graduated with a history degree.

After Princeton, John chose civil service, starting at the R&D budget office of the then two-year old Federal Aviation Administration in Washington, D.C. Moving to the U.S. Postal Service at postal headquarters included leading efforts that brought passport application processing to post offices nationwide.

After 12 years and serving eight postmasters general, John left for the Program on Information Resources Policy at Harvard University. At PIRP he wrote "Mapping the Information Business," a

tool for viewing the whole information industry and the companies in it, which was translated into more than 20 languages. During this time, John was elected a selectman in Lexington, Mass. In 1995, John retired and moved to Arlington.

John is survived by his wife, Patty; their children, Moira, John, and Kevin; six grandchildren; and two great grandchildren.

#### ALBERT PIKE III '61

Al died July 24, 2025, in Potomac, Md., his home of many years.



The son and grandson of Princetonians, he was born in Montclair, N.J., and came to Princeton from Morristown (now Morristown-Beard) School. At Princeton,

he majored in mathematics, rowed lightweights, and took his meals at Terrace. He withdrew from Princeton in January 1960 and completed his B.S. at Columbia in mathematics.

Following Columbia, he entered the consulting actuarial field as a pension plan consultant and enrolled actuary, later becoming a fellow in the Conference of Consulting Actuaries. After 35 years he retired as the Washington, D.C., practice leader for Mercer Consulting, a division of Marsh & McLennan, then working part-time as a self-employed solo practitioner in actuarial consulting. He was an elder of the local Presbyterian Church for many years and was an avid bridge player. He and Audrey had a summer home in Rehobeth Beach, Del.

Al is survived by his wife of 62 years, Audrey; sons Gregory and Douglas; daughter Victoria; and their families, which include five grandchildren.

#### PHILIP H. PRITCHARD '61

Phil died Feb. 17, 2025, in Asheville, N.C. He lived a life shaped by service, stewardship, and hospitality.



A Princeton biology graduate and former naval officer, he dedicated his career to caring for people, places, and the natural world.

In 1972, Phil married Elizabeth "Liz" O'Shea, his partner in decades of shared purpose across the U.S. and Caribbean before they settled in Asheville in 1999. Their life together centered on education, community, and hospitality, and Phil remained deeply devoted to Liz following her passing in 2020.

Phil managed Bolongo Bay Beach Resort in St. Thomas, where his warmth and high standards created a welcoming home for travelers from around the world. Later, in New York's Finger Lakes region, he served as vineyard manager at Heron Hill Winery, taking pride in tending vines and celebrating

local wines and people.

His love of conservation led him to The Nature Conservancy and ultimately to The American Chestnut Foundation, where he became director of development and special projects. In Asheville, he championed science-driven efforts to restore the American chestnut tree and helped connect the foundation's mission to national leaders, including work at the Carter Center supported by former President Jimmy Carter.

Phil is remembered as a steadfast, generous presence devoted to conservation, community, and service. He is survived by two nephews, Jim and Mark Merrill.

#### WILLIAM W. WHITE '61

Bill died Oct. 30, 2025, at Calvary Hospital in the Bronx, N.Y.



Born in Willoughby, Ohio, he came to us from Bronxville High School. At Princeton, he majored in mathematics, was in the Savoyards, and took his meals at Terrace. He played tuba in the marching and concert bands and was awarded the Arthur H. Osborne Trophy for dedicated service to the marching band. He roomed with Don Emmerson, Ed Diener, John Paul, Paul Wathen, Rick Skillman '63, and Tom Conrad '63.

In 1966, Bill received his Ph.D. in operations research at UC Berkeley and then began a long career with IBM, largely in the research division, retiring in 2004. He then spent 10 years with the AARP Tax Aide volunteer program in Westchester County, N.Y. He and Theda traveled internationally often and pursued their interest in the opera and classical music.

He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Theda, whom he met at Berkeley; son Matthew and daughter Maja and their families, which includes two grandsons; his sister Marsha; and brother Jim '63.

#### THE CLASS OF 1962

##### STUART L. HARRIS '62

Stu died of pancreatic cancer Oct. 3, 2025, in Tirana, Albania, his home for less than a year.



Attending Nether Providence High School in Rose Valley, Pa., he was schoolbook editor and participated in swimming and football. At Princeton, he majored in electrical engineering, ate at Dial Lodge, lettered in lightweight crew, and was managing editor of the *Bric-a-Brac*.

Stu earned a master's in electrical engineering from the University of Pennsylvania in 1963 and worked for Westinghouse Electric for four years before earning an MBA at Stanford. For the next 30

years he worked in technology marketing in Silicon Valley for such firms as Advanced Micro Devices and Fairchild Semiconductor.

As he explains in our 50th-reunion yearbook, he turned away from this life in 2002, becoming an itinerant scholar-cryptographer, traveling widely in Europe and the UK, deciphering inscriptions on tombstones, monuments, statues, and other artifacts. In a series of self-published Amazon books, he argues for the existence of "Old European," a long extinct language whose markings, unrecognized until now, disclose "a great corpus of written history."

Stuart is survived by his wife, Sandra; sons Mark and Kenny; granddaughter Olivia; and siblings Shep, Bruce, Polly, and Barbara.

#### DOUGLAS C. JAMES '62

Doug died Nov. 22, 2025, of complications from pneumonia in Hyde Park, N.Y. He came



to Princeton from Lake Forest Academy with a set of drums and three cars (only one permit). His father, Charles 1927, and brother Charles V. '53 preceded him at Princeton.

Doug played freshman soccer, majored in English, dined at Colonial, and played drums in jazz ensembles, even playing for '62's 50th reunion. He served as an officer in both the Army and the Naval Reserves. After a year in law school, he went into public relations in Milwaukee and New York City before starting his own firm.

Doug moved to Woodstock, N.Y., in 1971 after visiting a musical friend, John Simon '63. He was entrenched in Woodstock's musical society, including Levon Helm, Jack DeJohnette, and Charles Mingus. He had a recording studio on his rustic but beautiful property. He also supported/led The Woodstock Guild, which required organizational and PR skills. Coincidentally, his grandfathers co-founded the fine arts museums in Milwaukee and Minneapolis.

Doug had a 40-year relationship with Kathleen Kenyon. He was the caregiver for Kathleen, who predeceased him in 2023, and her identical twin sister, Colleen, as their health declined.

#### THE CLASS OF 1963

##### CHARLES R. SLIVINSKY '63

Charles died July 28, 2025, in Surprise, Ariz., after a two-year battle with esophageal cancer.



Born and raised in Saint Clair, Pa., he was president of his local high school class and the student council as well as class salutatorian. He also played varsity football and basketball. At Princeton, he majored in electrical engineering, was a research assistant in that department, a waiter in Commons,

manager of the faculty cafeteria, and played intramural basketball.

Immediately upon graduation, Charles married his high school sweetheart and the couple moved to Tucson, where Charles completed both his master's degree and Ph.D. at the University of Arizona.

In 1968, he began a long and impactful academic career at the University of Missouri in Columbia, where he served as a professor and then chairman in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. His passion for research and innovation led him to spend three sabbatical years in industry, working at Boeing in Santa Clara, Calif.; Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio; and Bonneville Power Administration in Portland, Ore.

Charles retired as professor emeritus in 2000. He and his wife moved to Surprise to be near family, and Charles was an adjunct professor at Arizona State University in Tempe for three years.

In full retirement, Charles' lifelong love of learning only deepened. He explored new fields — chemistry, geology, astronomy, physics, and musical theory — and learned to play classical guitar.

Charles is survived by his wife of 62 years, Mary; daughters Julie and Tina; and four grandchildren.

#### THE CLASS OF 1964

##### PAUL H. PETTIT JR. '64

Paul died June 16, 2025, in Carmel, Ind.

He graduated from Ocean City (N.J.)



High School, where he was involved with the band, orchestra, and glee club while also playing football, basketball, and captaining the swim team. Summer

days were filled with his love of the ocean, lifeguarding at "his beach" from Ocean City's 15th Street stand.

Paul entered Princeton in 1959, majoring in chemistry, joining Dial Lodge, and swimming for Princeton for two years. After graduation, Paul spent a year at Duke before the National Science Foundation awarded him a fellowship enabling him to earn a Ph.D. from Lehigh, his dissertation being titled "Electronic structure and electronic spectra of group VI-b metal carbonyl complexes."

During his career, Paul spent a decade with E.I. DuPont before joining Akzo Coatings and then PPG Industries in Strongsville, Ohio. With each, he held positions relating to research on and development of industrial powder and liquid coatings. He retired in 2001 as global technical manager for PPG Industries having been awarded multiple patents. He then spent 20 years as a consultant to industry on new products and problem solving.

Paul loved golf, sailing, and playing guitar

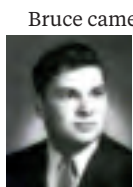
— and was also known for his humorous, yet sarcastic, New Jersey wit.

To his wife, Susan; children Michelle, Brian, and Nick; and four grandchildren the class offers its condolences.

#### THE CLASS OF 1966

##### BRUCE FURIE '66

Bruce died Nov. 22, 2025, after a long illness.



Bruce came to Princeton from Milburn (N.J.) High School, where he played football, was in the concert band, and edited the school newspaper. At Princeton, he majored in biochemistry, belonged to Dial Lodge, played in the concert band, and was president of the Yacht Club. In his senior year, he married Barbara Cantor '65.

Following graduation, Bruce and Barbara enrolled at the University of Pennsylvania, where he earned his medical degree and she completed her doctorate in chemistry.

Bruce specialized in hematology and oncology. Following a residency at Penn, he was a postdoctoral fellow at the NIH. In collaboration with Barbara, he established a joint laboratory at New England Medical Center and Tufts University Medical School. He later moved to Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center as director of the Cancer Center.

He was recognized internationally as a leader in research, having published hundreds of articles in leading medical journals and served on the editorial boards of prominent medical publications. The International Society on Thrombosis and Hemostasis hailed his "lifetime of service."

Classmates benefited first-hand from his knowledge and counsel, both informally and through the healthy aging initiative, in which he played a leading role.

Bruce is survived by Barbara and sons Eric '95 and Gregg '97, to whom the class extends its condolences.

#### JOEL R. PRIMACK '66

Joel died Nov. 15, 2025, ending an eight-year struggle with pancreatic cancer.



Joel came to Princeton from Gardena (Calif.) High School. He majored in physics, belonged to the Woodrow Wilson Society, and was class valedictorian. His valedictory

address "Science Cannot Give Us Values," warning of the misuse of science, earned praise from Robert Oppenheimer, who was present to receive an honorary degree.

After Princeton, Joel earned his doctorate at Stanford and was a junior member of Harvard's Society of Fellows before joining the faculty of the University of California, Santa Cruz. His UCSC home page described his focus as "the formation and evolution of galaxies and the nature of the dark matter that makes up most

of the matter in the universe."

He wrote several influential books, including *The View from the Center of the Universe* and *The New Universe and the Human Future*, written with his wife, Nancy Abrams.

He won numerous awards, including the American Academy of Science's Abelson Prize, recognizing his achievements in public service, advancing science in the public interest, and communicating the achievements of science to the public.

He spoke at Reunions and class gatherings, including his 2021 Tiger Talk, "Adventures in Science and Politics." In 2019, the class honored him with the Locomotive Award.

Joel is survived by Nancy, daughter Samara Bay '02, and grandson Wilder. The class extends its condolences.

#### THE CLASS OF 1967

##### STEPHEN A. CRANE '67

Steve died Aug. 31, 2025, due to a swimming accident near his summer home on Fire



Island.

He graduated from Valley Stream High School on Long Island. At Princeton, Steve majored in Romance languages, was bicker

chairman of Dial Lodge, belonged to the Young Republican Club and Whig-Clio, and played intramural sports for Dial. He roomed at 1937 Hall senior year.

Steve earned an MBA in finance from Harvard in 1971 and began a brief career in investment banking before switching to the property and casualty insurance business. He was chief financial officer with Orion Capital Corp., then CFO of Corroon and Black Corp., president and CEO of Willis Re and G.L. Hodson and Son, CEO of Gryphon Holdings, and finally CEO of the AlphaStar Insurance Group. After 37 years of corporate leadership Steve semi-retired serving as a corporate director of the boards of Hummingbird, WNC Holding Corp., EMC Insurance Group, and First Security Benefit Life Insurance and Annuity Co. of New York.

Steve served for 30 years on the board, 10 as president, of his Park Avenue co-op. He was a patron of the Metropolitan Opera, and longtime member of the New York Athletic Club and The University Club, where even last year he won three club billiards championship tournaments, maintaining a passion begun as Dial Lodge billiard champ.

In 1984, Steve married Susan Edith Alderton, a British expatriate finance professional in New York City. Steve and Susan had two daughters, Emily and Annabelle. The class extends its deepest sympathy to them.

#### THE CLASS OF 1968

##### MARTIN G. BAUER '68

Marty died Dec. 22, 2025, at home after a brave battle with complications from



prostate cancer.

He came to us from Grants Pass (Ore.) High School, where he was a standout in football, basketball, and track, and was active in student government. At Princeton, he played junior varsity football and lettered in track/javelin. He worked in Commons and senior year was one of the several executive managers of the Commons organization. He was a politics major and a member of Tiger Inn. He lived senior year in Blair Tower with Billings, Budney, Hollander, Klimek, Larrimer, Lombardi, Schoene, and Wayne.

After graduation, Marty briefly stayed at Princeton as an admissions counselor. Upon returning to Grants Pass, he joined and eventually became sole owner of a successful real estate and timberland development company. Marty was a perennial leader of our class Annual Giving efforts in the Northwest region. He hosted a well-attended mini-reunion that included an adventurous and hilarious pontoon boat flotilla on his beloved Rogue River. Marty was active in the Grants Pass community he loved, a long-standing member of the Rotary Club, and a Southern Oregon spokesman in Washington, D.C., on environmental and conservation issues.

Marty was a proud westerner. He was an accomplished horseman, boater, outdoorsman, and storyteller. A favorite event was attending the annual Cowboy Culture and Poetry Festival. His life and character were truly the embodiment of the Code of the West.

Marty is survived by his wife, Kim; son Justin and wife Kelsey; daughter Marissa; and stepdaughter Chelsea Kahler and husband Adam. The class offers our deepest sympathy.

### THE CLASS OF 1971

#### RANDE BROWN '71

After an eclectic lifetime of bringing East and West closer together through



writing, translating, and psychotherapy, Rande died from esophageal cancer in New York City Oct. 13, 2025.

She joined our class in 1969, majored in East Asian Studies, and roomed with Tina Sung. In the '70s, more compelled by Buddhist practice than theory, she worked at a unique institution in Tokyo that was performing research into the nature of the mind/body relationship. While there, she published her first major translation on consciousness, maintained a rigorous meditation practice, and began to explore her own history with respect to karma and reincarnation.

Rande moved back to New York City in 1981 and started East West Communications, a company that produced scores of cultural

events in the performing and visual arts, highlighting interactions between the two hemispheres. She then co-founded *Tricycle*, America's leading Buddhist magazine, developing programs aimed at transmitting Buddhist ideas and the techniques of meditation and mindfulness to the general population. She continued to translate and to write on contemporary Buddhist thought and Japanese culture. In 2002, she co-authored *The New York Times* bestseller *Geisha, A Life*. Later she completed a Buddhist Chaplaincy Training Program, earned a MSW from New York University, and became a licensed psychotherapist, focusing on the intersection of Buddhism, spirituality, and psychology.

Rande's last book, *Live, Die, Repeat*, will be published in June 2026.

The class extends its condolences to her family, friends and admirers.

#### KENNETH GLAZIER '71

After living with Parkinson's and Lewy body dementia for several years, Ken died Oct. 16, 2025.



He grew up internationally, last attending the American School in Japan before Princeton. Ken majored in chemical engineering,

belonged to Stevenson, and roomed with Bushong and West senior year in 1903 Hall. Ken fondly remembered performing at Lincoln Center with the Princeton concert band, entering famed Ivy football stadiums with the marching band, and preparing Princeton's successful application for a Tau Beta Pi honorary engineering chapter.

Because of a low draft number, he accepted a commission in the Navy, where he dutifully but uncomfortably ordered on-shore bombardment that caused fatalities during Vietnam. Ken earned a law degree and MBA from Harvard in 1979 and began a career in the energy business. He worked mostly in oil and gas (noting the need for cleaner energy) and later switched to wind energy.

Ken enjoyed volunteering for Habitat for Humanity and serving as scoutmaster and choir member at his church. His sister remembers: "He was a very proud, independent, and private person" and "proud of being a Navy veteran." He retired in 2016 to the Houston suburbs. With a progressive neurological impairment, he moved to a facility in Johnstown, Pa., where his sister Ginny Babal provided support in his last years, decorating his room with Princeton band and other memorabilia. The class extends its condolences to Ken's family.

#### STEVEN GREENE '71

Steve died Jan. 9, 2025.

He came to Princeton from Principia Upper School in St. Louis, where he excelled in golf and other athletics. At Princeton, he belonged



to Tower Club and roomed with Moffat and Baine, who remember his serious and playful sides. He expressed himself musically through two years in the Band and

three years in Glee Club. Steve took up fencing (sabre) and was selected captain of the team senior year. He was the star quarterback on the glee club touch football team. He was also president of the Christian Science Organization and of the Pre-Law Society.

After graduation, he returned to Principia and spent the rest of his personal and professional life in St. Louis. He started as a residential adviser and director of admissions and moved on to classroom instruction and administration after earning his master's degree in teaching at Webster University. Steve especially enjoyed teaching high school Western civilization/world history. He coached football, basketball, and golf, individually qualified for a state golf tournament and was a club champion.

He married Veronica, a woman from Mexico, in 1993 and had two children, Sara and Joshua. He retired from Principia in 2012. In December 2022, Steve and Veronica moved to Tequisquiapan, Mexico. He greatly enjoyed walking to the markets and town square, immersing himself in the Mexican culture, and lived a very simple and beautiful way of living for his remaining two years. The class extends its condolences to his family.

#### CHARLES MARBOE '71

Chuck died Aug. 4, 2025.

He came to Princeton from State



College, Pa., majored in the biology department's Science in Human Affairs program, spent time with Tourtellot, Culbertson,

Hunter, Johanson, Dakan, and Claxton in Edwards and Terrace, where he was a standout IAA basketball player. Classmates remembered him for his wit and genuineness.

Chuck found his life partner in petite Bonnie Hewson '73, towering over her at 6 feet 5 inches. They married in 1973 and had two children, Kari and Elinor. Chuck graduated from Penn State Medical School in 1976 and began his lifelong association with Columbia University's medical school, first as a resident and then as an outstanding faculty member in pathology. He directed Columbia's pathology residency program for 25 years before retiring in 2021. He was an internationally recognized authority in heart transplant pathology, which helped shape transplant care worldwide. Columbia established the endowed Dr. Charles Marboe Lecture in his honor in 2021. He was known for his scholarly excellence, humility,

warmth, and generosity. Bonnie, a trained attorney, was with him every step of an adventuresome life “entertaining and fun with a lot of medical practice in pathology and much more exposure to the wide world.” They sailed in Europe and the Caribbean, visited the Pacific, and had a special affinity for Africa, traveling and living for many years in Ethiopia and Kenya. Chuck also shaping a pathology curriculum in Rwanda.

The class extends its condolences to Bonnie, Elinor, grandson Noah, and his large, devoted extended family.

### THE CLASS OF 1978

#### KEITH BAITY '78

Keith died March 25, 2025, in Bedford, N.H., of a heart attack.

He came to us from Deerfield Academy. At Princeton, he was a superb golfer and passionate squash player who was named to the All-Ivy golf team as a freshman, finishing seventh in the league in 1975. That was the first year of a separate Ivy conference, and his strong showing was a proud moment for him and for the team. Keith majored in history and was a member of Cottage. Friends remember him as focused and analytical, whether the project at hand was a problem set or how to gain the advantage over an opponent on the squash court.

After earning a Columbia MBA, he began his career as a risk arbitrageur at Bear Stearns, then launched into international financial consulting for the balance of his professional life. Keith lived and worked in Brazil, Saudi Arabia, and Paris — with other deals noted in Panama and Cuba. He specialized in complex developments, primarily in the hotel and resort markets. When he retired, Keith returned to the U.S. and settled in New Hampshire to be near family.

We join with all who loved and admired Keith in grieving a life over too soon.

### GRADUATE ALUMNI

#### WORTH E. VAUGHAN \*60

Worth died Jan. 3, 2026, of cancer in Madison, Wis., at the age of 89.

Born in New York, Feb. 1, 1939, he graduated from Oberlin with a degree in chemistry in 1957 and earned a Ph.D. in chemistry from Princeton in 1960.

After Princeton, he joined the faculty at the Department of Chemistry at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he dedicated 40 years to teaching, mentorship, and research. Worth specialized in physical chemistry, with a particular focus on dielectric properties and molecular behavior. His research resulted in 60 published papers and several patents.

Worth was renowned in the world of competitive bridge and was the first player in the Madison area to achieve life master

status. His skill culminated in achieving platinum life master status, and he crossed the significant milestone of 15,000 masterpoints early in 2025.

Worth is survived by his wife, Diane; their son; and three of Diane's children from a previous marriage.

#### WILLIAM EUGENE CLABURN \*68

On Dec. 18, 2025, Gene died in West Windsor, N.J., at the age of 90.

Gene was born in West Texas, Aug. 14, 1935. After graduating from Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas, in 1956, he attended Harvard Divinity School and became a minister for the United Church of Christ, leading a congregation in Jersey City. In 1968, Gene earned a Ph.D. in Oriental languages and literature from Princeton, after which he taught at Penn State.

Gene moved to New Jersey to work for the New Jersey Department of Human Services, where he computerized health-care records for Medicaid beneficiaries. The computer data protocol he designed surpassed federal government audit standards, even many decades later.

A master of codes and languages, besides designing computer protocols, Gene enjoyed reading the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in Greek, as well as works in German and French.

Gene was predeceased by his wife of 64 years, June. He is survived by son Jeffrey and grandchildren Maximus, James, and Indigo.

#### JAMES T. CONTE \*77

Jim died in New York City, Nov. 17, 2025.

He was born in Chicago, June 3, 1946, graduated from Kalamazoo College in 1968, majoring in political science. In 1977, he earned a Ph.D. in East Asian Studies at Princeton.

For more than a decade Jim lived in Tokyo, during which time he was president of Kraft Inc. and Campbell, Japan. In 1989, he returned to the U.S. to accept the position of vice president for international marketing at Northwestern Airlines. He ended his career in the fashion business, working for Tumi, Ajaline, Vera Bradley, Konstanstino, Gianfranco Lotti, and several German and Australian department stores.

Jim served on the board of trustees of Kalamazoo College and was active in political and social causes.

Jim resided in New York and San Francisco with his spouse, Dzan Liu Lao, who survives him.

#### STEVEN L. ENGLUND \*81

Steven died of cancer in Bend, Ore., Sept. 20, 2025.

Born Feb. 2, 1945, in Waupaca, Wis., he graduated from Colgate in 1967 and earned his Ph.D. in history from Princeton in 1981. Between his undergraduate and graduate

degrees, Steven studied at the University of Dijon and Cambridge University.

He was a correspondent for *Time* magazine and was an editor of Jimmy Carter's *National Agenda for the Eighties*. Steven taught American history at the American University of Paris, was on the faculty of l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, and lectured on the French Revolution at L'Université de Paris VIII/Saint Denis.

Steven's books included *Manslaughter* and *Grace of Monaco*. With Larry Ceplair he co-authored *The Inquisition in Hollywood*. Steven's book *Napoleon, A Political Life* won the Napoleon Prize for biography in 2004. With Vincent Curcio, he wrote *Charlie's Prep* for John Sexton, then president of NYU. The French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) is publishing Steven's *The Birth of Antisemitism, in Germany, Austria-Hungary, and France, 1879-1918*, to be published in English by Yale University Press. CNRS will also publish *Nation-Talk: The Political Use of the Idea of Nation in French History*.

Steven's partner of 43 years, Vincent Curcio, survives him.

#### SHARON ELIZABETH BOYD \*12

Sharon died of cancer in Washington, D.C., Nov. 1, 2025, not long after her 40th birthday.

She was born Oct. 11, 1985, in Athens, Ohio. Prior to earning her MPA at Princeton's School of Public and International Affairs in 2012, Sharon graduated from Brandeis with a BA in economics in 2008 and served as a staff economist at the White House Council of Economic Advisers, working on health and labor policy under President Obama. At SPIA she specialized in domestic politics and health policy. Sharon worked with professor Heather Howard on implementation of the Affordable Care Act and traveled to Kolkata, India, to study health policy interventions.

Having been awarded a Presidential Management Fellowship, Sharon served at the Centers for Disease Control as the Washington policy lead and congressional liaison. At the CDC she led the Washington team responding to the 2014-2015 Ebola outbreak and was deployed to Liberia twice. In recognition of her contributions, Sharon received the CDC Distinguished Service in Public Health Policy Award.

Her last professional position was chief of staff for the George Washington University School of Medicine & Health Sciences.

Sharon is survived by her husband, Joseph Price; son Quentin; her parents, Sara and Roy; and her sister, Karla.

*Graduate memorials are prepared by the APGA.*

*Undergraduate memorials appear for Jeremiah Ford '54 \*59, Robert P. Teulings '56 \*66, and William C. Scott '59 \*64.*

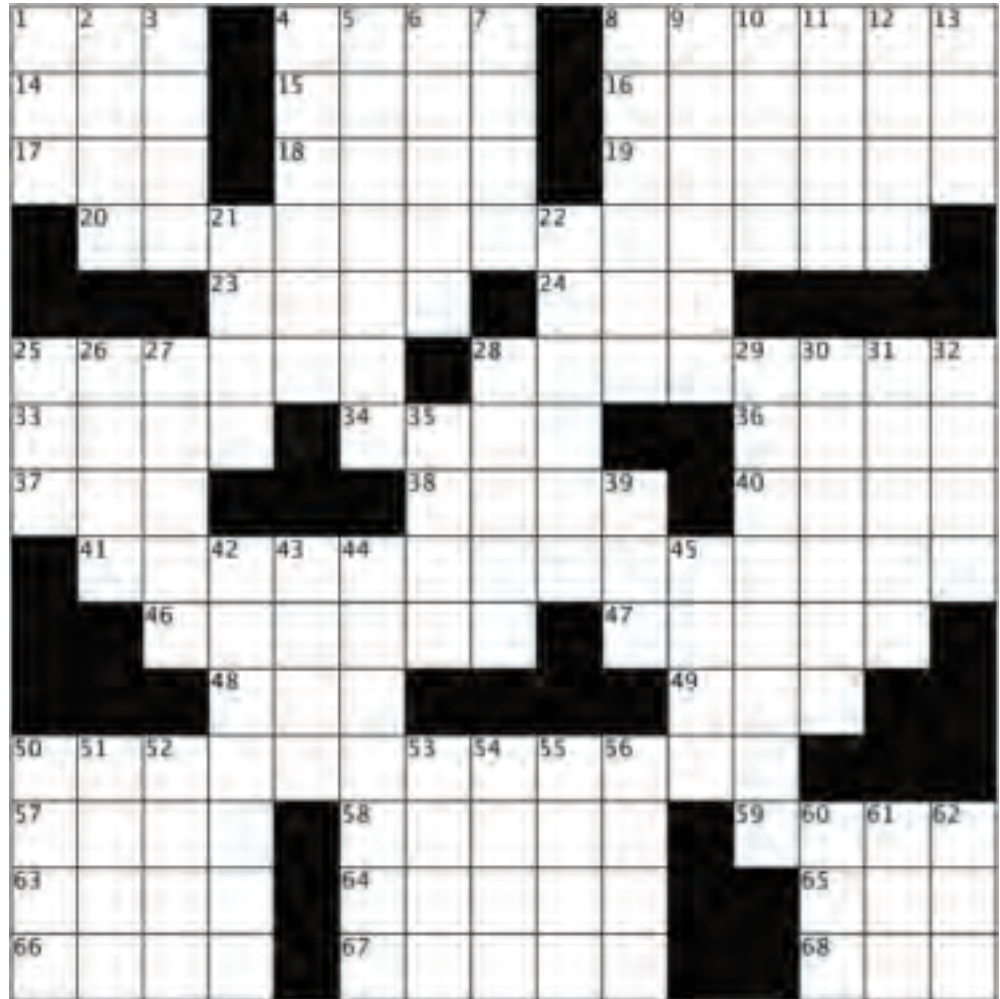


BY STELLA (DAILY) ZAWISTOWSKI '00

# At the Commencement

## ACROSS

1. Enjoy Vail or Aspen
4. Aftermath of fingerpainting
8. "You're killing me, \_\_\_!"
14. Department of Ecology \_\_\_ Evolutionary Biology
15. Paratha flour
16. Gets into a pickup truck, perhaps
17. Forest female
18. Fluffy carpet style
19. Hangout for Princeton's Bee Team
20. Interfaith tradition during Princeton's Commencement Week
23. Angry driver's sound
24. Underwhelming, in modern slang
25. Latke's main ingredient
28. Commencement Week tradition with academic and athletic awards
33. Powerful Unix user
34. *Space Jam* bunny
36. Software contract: Abbr.
37. Choose a major, say
38. Orange Key offering
40. Quality of an electron
41. Musical tradition with members of the graduating class
46. *Blue Marilyn* subject
47. Home state of four members of the Class of '29
48. Auction action
49. '90s collectible
50. Princetonian who gives a Commencement address in Latin
57. Spiky succulent
58. Teeny amounts
59. Bit of data, for short
63. Piece of Commencement attire
64. "I didn't do it!"
65. *Stardew Valley* resource
66. Mediocre
67. Algebra calculation
68. Education-focused group, for short



## DOWN

1. Feeling dejected
2. \_\_\_ Creek (bourbon brand)
3. Flash in the mind
4. Role played by Emily Henkelman '04 and Sam Ruona '26, among others
5. Corn-based fuel
6. Corn stem
7. Joyce Carol Oates' *Bellefleur*, for example
8. Islamic religious law
9. Vespa products
10. Home of Faleolo International Airport
11. Exam taken by many politics majors: Abbr.
12. Entice
13. Espionage expert
21. TigerSide \_\_\_ (part of a virtual conversation series offered by Princeton)
22. One of two in Mötley Crüe
25. Word before "tip" or "tem"
26. "My b!"
27. Clan's sacred emblem
28. Intimate
29. Study group's meetings
30. Playing for a fool
31. Flared dress style
32. Yin's counterpart
35. Other, in Spanish
39. Sleep-lab abbreviation
42. Not good, across the border
43. Competitively alive
44. Confers holy orders on
45. 25-Across, in Latin cuisine
50. Loses tension
51. 25-Across, in Indian cuisine
52. Weather report numbers
53. *Fear Inoculum* band
54. \_\_\_ von Bismarck
55. Highway access point

56. "Duly noted"
60. Princeton's place in 2026 *U.S. News* college rankings
61. Specialty of Professor Chika Okeke-Agulu
62. Hot breakfast drink

### STUMPED?

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



# CLASSIFIED



## For Rent

### EUROPE

**Paris, Tuileries Gardens:** Beautifully-appointed, spacious, 1BR, suitable for two, 6th floor, elevator, concierge. [karin.demorest@gmail.com](mailto:karin.demorest@gmail.com), w\*49.

**PARIS, ILE SAINT-LOUIS:** Elegant, "spacious top floor skylighted apartment, gorgeous view overlooking Seine, 2 bedrooms sleep 4, 2 baths, elevator, well-appointed, full kitchen, Wi-Fi. (678) 232-8444 or [triff@mindspring.com](mailto:triff@mindspring.com).

**Paris 7th.** Fifth floor, quiet, studio sleeps 2 adults plus 1 child. Balcony. View Eiffel Tower. [www.parisgrenelle.com](http://www.parisgrenelle.com). (207) 752-0285

**Paris Pantheon,** '66 rents two room 3rd flr walkup, 350 sq ft, quiet street, \$915/wk. [tmpapach@yahoo.com](mailto:tmpapach@yahoo.com)

**Summer in Provence:** charming farmhouse, four bedrooms, swimming pool & olive groves, near St Remy, Avignon, Arles. WiFi & A/C. [www.masdechausse.com](http://www.masdechausse.com) and [fleur\\_macdonald@hotmail.com](mailto:fleur_macdonald@hotmail.com)

**Southern France - Saint-Cirq-Lapopie,** voted 'most beautiful village' in France. Enchanting 5-bedroom home in stunning, lively, medieval, artists' village - restaurants, farmer's markets, vineyards, museums, bicycling, hiking, swimming. More info: [maisonsouthernfrance.com](http://maisonsouthernfrance.com) (484-357-6458).

**Italy/Todi:** Luxurious 8BR, 7.5BA villa, amazing views, infinity pool, olives, lavender, grapes, vegetable garden, housekeeper included, cook available, A/C, Wi-Fi. Discount for Princetonians. Photos/prices/availability: [www.luxuryvillatodi.com](http://www.luxuryvillatodi.com), p'11.

### UNITED STATES, NORTHEAST

**Wellfleet:** 4 bedroom beachfront cottage with spectacular views overlooking Cape Cod National Seashore. 610-745-5873 or [Warren.Thaler@icloud.com](mailto:Warren.Thaler@icloud.com) '84

**NYC -** Luxury locale, sunny 1BR suite. Doorman building, block from Central Park. Weekly or monthly. [pachisolm@aol.com](mailto:pachisolm@aol.com) '85



**Pittsburgh PA:** For eco-conscious living with friendly neighbors, large two-bedroom house is available this summer in new 35-unit multi-generational cohousing community on beautiful wooded site. Contact Stefani Danes '73 at 412-441-2948 or [RachelCarsonEcoVillage.org](mailto:RachelCarsonEcoVillage.org).

**Drakes Island, Maine:** Rare beachfront property. 6BR house, sleeps 12. Available May 30 - Jun 6 and July 4 - 11. [vrbo.com/4482624](http://vrbo.com/4482624). Contact [229IBR@gmail.com](mailto:229IBR@gmail.com).

### UNITED STATES, WEST

**Kolea -** 2 and 3 bedroom beachfront vacation rentals at Waikoloa Beach Resort on the Big Island of Hawaii. <https://www.waikoloavacationrentals.com/kolea-rentals/>

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### UNITED STATES, SOUTHEAST



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THEODORE GEORGE LANNING (1907-1971)

## He Built a Secret Empire Ghostwriting for Students

BY ELYSE GRAHAM '07

**D**URING THE 1930S AND '40S, every so often the students at Princeton would receive a circular that read, across the top, "EVERY MAN TODAY HAS A GHOST." The circular came from one "G.H. Smith," a ghostwriter who offered his services to the gentlemen of the college in composing their class essays and senior theses.

G.H. Smith was a pseudonym. In a 1939 profile, *The American Mercury* called him "the king of college ghost writers." The magazine reported, "Smith has put his business on such a mass-production basis that his far-from-ghostly earnings come to \$10,000 a year. This year, his clientele included over 600 men and women in colleges and universities throughout the country."

Predictably, he was the bane of administrators at those same colleges. Smith College sent him a letter entreating him, "as a gentleman," to stop catering to its students; he didn't. Swarthmore asked the City of New York, where his mailing address was, to shut

down his business; the city could only force him to register it, so he registered it as a typing agency. (He employed 12 typists and writing assistants.) Princeton launched an investigation into him, but it couldn't stop him from "ghosting" for Princeton students — like one who wrote, after receiving his advertisement, "Dear Mr. Smith: Would you submit by return mail the price of a 6,000 word paper? The subject is The Supernatural Elements in *Beowulf*."

Smith's real name was Theodore George Lanning. Born in Michigan, Lanning received his B.A. in 1930 at San Diego Teachers College, then an M.A. in 1931 at the University of Michigan. He began a Ph.D. in English literature at Yale but dropped out after two years. In his transcripts from Yale, his professors expressed frustration that he was spending all his time scheming and side-hustling instead of studying. "Too busy at making a living," one of them wrote. Another wrote, "Should be dissuaded from continuing graduate work."

No matter; as a ghostwriter, he wrote 10 dissertations by the time of his 1939 interview, as well as 60 master's theses. He made it a point of pride never to recycle papers, as other essay mills might, *The Mercury* said: "He could easily rehash some paper done years before, but that isn't his idea of ghosting cricket. Each assignment brings a different problem."

In 1938, a reporter for *The Daily Princetonian* tracked him down; by then, he was a campus celebrity. He told the student who visited him, who disclosed only his last name, that he had written four Princeton senior theses the previous year. The student compared him to Uriah Heep, a cunning clerk from the rogues' gallery of Charles Dickens: "His study contains himself, a typewriter, several stacks of paper, a small library and a canary, half-choked and listless in the smoke-filled atmosphere. Reminiscent of Uriah Heep, Mr. Lanning bends over his typewriter for hours at a stretch, burning cigarettes with a nervous fury."

Smith was so well-known on campus that the *Prince* ran, in 1939, a satirical article claiming he wrote for *everyone* on campus, deans included: "G.H. Smith, New York's ghost writer, was revealed as the man behind Dean Root's numerous books. ... Concern was expressed along Nassau Street that other noted Princeton writers might become implicated in the affair. Names mentioned were Thomas Mann, Alpheus T. Mason [\*1923], political theorist, and maybe even Archibald MacLeish."

Eventually, Lanning hung up his ghostly hat. He moved to San Diego and opened a bookstore, which he ran for 25 years. (He told *The Mercury* that he was "the best-read man in the country.") He said he planned to write his own books someday — including a memoir of his adventures as a ghostwriter — but he never did. A man of a thousand voices, he prided himself on being able to mimic any style: a freshman's paper or a senior's, the work of a Princetonian or a Smith woman — even the kinds of papers specific professors liked to read. But in the end, perhaps the only voice he never learned to write in was his own. **P**

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