

UConn

MAGAZINE

FALL 2023



Introducing
XV

In This Issue:

THE INCOMPARABLE
LIFE OF TRISHA BAILEY



THE EXTREME PUPPETRY
OF ROB SAUNDERS



SUE BIRD SHARES HER
MOST DEFINING MOMENTS

SNAP!

8.28.23

First day of fall semester: The Gant Science Complex, aka the Math-Science Building, looks — for now — much the same on the outside, but the first two phases of a three-part renovation have transformed the interior.





13



18



26



32

FEATURES

13 **BABY'S FIRSTS**

Team Jonathan was there for every one of XV's UConn firsts and, lucky for us, shared the baths, cuddles, board meetings, football games, and XIV big-brother mentoring that are making a husky puppy a Husky mascot.

18 **THE MOMENTS THAT MADE SUE BIRD**

Having retired from basketball after springboarding from UConn to the WNBA's Seattle Storm 20 years ago, Sue Bird reflects on some of the most fateful moments in her decades of trailblazing. Think you've heard them all? Think again!

26 **ROB SAUNDERS, UNMASKED**

Where can a puppet arts degree from UConn take you? How about creating Disney animatronics, Wolverine movie mechanics, Masked Singer costumes, and Team America puppetry.

32 **BILLION DOLLAR BAILEY**

"I've always known my story, it's not normal. It's deeply disturbing," says alum Trisha Bailey, who also knows she needs to share that story.

SECTIONS

1

UConn NOW

What it means to be the United States Treasurer and the Chief of the Mohegan Tribe, why Kendrick Lamar's "DAMN." is essential rap, how monkeyflowers lost their yellow, who may have the greatest career in the world, and more.

37

UConn NATION

Our alums reveal the secrets to dealing with a jerky boss, securing a nation's memories, finding purpose in tragedy, being a bad girl, running a vineyard, and embracing kindness. Plus Class Notes, Tom's Trivia, and more.



UConn Magazine
VOL. 24 NO. 3

UConn Magazine is produced three times a year (Spring, Summer, and Fall) by University Communications, University of Connecticut.

Editor Lisa Stiepock

Art Director Christa Yung

Associate Editor Julie (Stagis) Bartucca '10 (BUS, CLAS), '19 MBA

Photographer Peter Morenus

Class Notes Grace Merritt

Copy Editors Sheila Foran '83 (BGS), '96 Ph.D., Gregory Lauzon, Elizabeth Omara-Otunnu

Student Workers Valeria Diaz '25 (CLAS), Baker Charbonnet '26 (SFA)

Web Designer Yesenia Carrero

University Communications

VP for Communications

Tysen Kendig

Associate VP for Communications

Michael Kirk

Executive Director of Creative Strategy and Brand Management

Tracy Anderson '09 MA

Letters to the editor:

lisa.stiepock@uconn.edu

Address changes or cancellations:

biographicalupdaterequests@foundation.uconn.edu

[@foundation.uconn.edu](https://twitter.com/foundation.uconn.edu)

Additional Photo / Illustration:

Cover Sydney Herdle

Snap! Peter Morenus

Table of Contents Sydney Herdle, Daniel Boczarski/Getty Images for Crown Royal, Peter Morenus (2), Science Magazine

From the Editor Andy Jacobsohn/AFP via Getty Images

The University of Connecticut complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding non-discrimination, equal opportunity and affirmative action and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, sex, age or other legally protected characteristics in all programs and activities and supports all state and federal laws that promote equal opportunity and prohibit discrimination, including the provision of reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. To request an accommodation or for questions related to the University's non-discrimination policies, please contact: Title IX Coordinator, Office of Institutional Equity, 241 Glenbrook Rd., Unit 4175, Storrs, CT 06269; Phone: (860) 486-2943; equity@uconn.edu (non-discrimination policies); ADA Case Manager, Department of Human Resources; 9 Walters Ave., Unit 5075; Storrs, CT 06269; Phone: (860) 486-3034; hr@uconn.edu (accommodation requests).

FROM THE EDITOR



Secretary of the Treasury Janet Yellen, left, and U.S. Treasurer Lynn Malerba

ON THE MONEY

Early versions of the photo above ran on news sites around the world last December, after the U.S. Treasurer and Secretary of the Treasury traveled to the Bureau of Engraving and Printing in Fort Worth, Texas, to show off their signatures on freshly printed \$1 and \$5 bills.

"Two women on the currency for the first time is truly momentous," said Lynn Malerba '08 MPA at the time. It was another first among many for the first female chief in modern history of the Mohegan Tribe and first Native American to serve as U.S. Treasurer. When we spoke with Malerba this summer, she was still feeling the import of that moment she'd shared with Janet Yellen, and also wanted to share an anecdote with us.

It was, says Malerba, "amazing. Being with Secretary Yellen in that moment was very special. For two women and the first Indigenous person to be on the currency was really exciting. I mean, number one, she's just phenomenal, right? She brings her humanity and her humility to work with her each and every day. So I really admire her."

Malerba, of course, also inspires admiration among women and young girls, including her own granddaughter, whose kindergarten class was treated to a Native American history Zoom talk by the Treasurer not long after her appointment. "So she was this little celebrity in Milton, Mass.," says Malerba.

Having watched her grandmother again making history as she signed the currency with Yellen, the 6-year-old took her teacher and school to task in March.

"She was highly insulted that they weren't studying me for Women's History Month," says Malerba. "Rightly so," she jokes, then can't help but add, "How cute is that — right?"

For our conversation between Malerba and Sage Phillips '22 (CLAS), '24 MA, see page 6.

Lisa Stiepock



FEEDBACK

We want to hear from you! Please share thoughts, insights, discrepancies, recollections, photos — and how's your Tom's Trivia win-loss percentage coming? Post to our website at magazine.uconn.edu, email the editor at lisa.stiepock@uconn.edu, or send by regular mail to UConn Magazine Letters, 34 N. Eagleville Rd., Storrs, CT 06269-3144.

Here's a sampling of comments on our last issue, edited for clarity and length. Find more at magazine.uconn.edu.

Basketball Capital of the World

➔ I just read Tom Breen's article on Connecticut being the basketball capital of the world and wanted him to know how much I loved the story. We are Bristol, Connecticut, transplants out here in Henderson, Nevada, and we are diehard UConn Husky basketball fans. We share our passion and follow the men and women with another family of Connecticut transplants here, the Giuntas. We wear our T-shirts around town and to [WNBA Las Vegas] Aces games and fly our banners. A few years back Jan Giunta had someone knock on her door after she hung her banner out, and it was Sue Bird's stepmother, who lives on the same street — I guess that's six degrees of separation!

Judy Plourde
Henderson, Nevada, via email

➔ I really enjoyed the article on UConn basketball success. It brought back great memories of UConn's first trip to the NCAA Elite Eight in 1964. Dom Perno stole the ball from Bill Bradley in the final seconds to assure UConn's quarterfinal victory over Princeton. I was honored to be the Connecticut Daily Campus sports editor in 1964, with excellent support from Ira Loss, Louie Matsikas, Charlie Lipson, and Bill Rhein.

Guy Caruso '64 (BUS), '66 MA
Annandale, Virginia, via email

➔ Excellent article. Some will think that there are some academic pro-

grams which should have similar excitement, but that is not how the world is. I remember some critiquing the Hartford parade for the 1995 women's team, but then-UConn President Harry Hartley said that when there is a parade for the Physics (I think) Department he would join that one also. A happy occasion.

Edward Marth, former exec. dir. AAUP
St. Charles, Illinois, via our website

➔ Well written article without "Brago," but fact filled. It is always exciting to watch successes build and see Connecticut folks gather around a sport and a university that is successful in sports and academically ranked. It is only sad that the gals had such injuries all year. Surely, both teams would have been champions again.

Allan Anderson '62 (PHARM)
Cardiff by the Sea, California,
via our website



➔ My goodness. This, friends, is how you design a magazine cover. @CASEAdvance, save yourself the trouble and just give @UConn the gold now. #UConnMagazine @tomdurso via X



➔ Art director Christa Yung ran into Kieran Curley '86 (CLAS) in his UConn Magazine DNA T-shirt in Greenwich this summer.

For this T and more, go to s.uconn.edu/5covers



➔ Nicole Ortique '21 MSW, "Which Cover Did You Get?," UConn Alumni Facebook post.

This type of article is fascinating as it illustrates the real-life case histories of physicians' residencies! Most people do not understand what residents go through to continue their medical training, which puts them in pressure situations where quick decision making is critical to saving a person's life.

M.J. Scanlon '77 MS, via our website, regarding "First-Years"

➔ I am writing to say thank you for the magazine. I love when it shows up in my mailbox. It's fun! And a joy to see the ways that UConn's people beautifully show up in the world. I've been thinking about my alma mater and came up with this list:

1. You get out of your education what you put into it.
2. Your education is about far more than courses and textbooks.
3. There are amazing people and friends to be met everywhere.
4. Choose something you love to learn about — otherwise 8 a.m. classes are really hard.
5. As your life plays out, your major will show up in ways you could never have imagined. Soooo cool.
6. Meal trays are a tad small for sledding at the hill near the Wilbur Cross building. But they work in a pinch!

Thank you again for putting such a joyful reflection of UConn into the world.

Kay Lock Kolp '93 (CLAS)
Bellingham, Massachusetts,
via email

Art of the Label

➔ As a trademark attorney, I found this bit of labeling history illuminating.

Nancy Kennedy '04 JD
Hartford, Connecticut, via our website

➔ I think of you every time I see one of these!

Caroline Taylor
Oakland, California, via our website

Aaron Carr Is Holding Landlords Accountable

➔ Good to see an up-and-coming young person willing to pursue a career in the arena of economic justice. My brief research confirms that Aaron Carr is indeed the man your story paints him to be. It is clear that the Housing Rights Initiative has had a powerful impact on landlord-tenant relations by shining a bright light on abusive and predatory landlords, and forcing City Hall to hold them accountable.

Dennis McDermott
Mount Vernon, New York, via Facebook

Voices Rising

➔ While I appreciated the piece on the "Voices of Freedom," I would like to correct the origins of the choir. The bus reference was not from a civil rights protest. Here is my recollection:

In 1969, every Friday buses would line up at the old Storrs Center going to many cities. I boarded a bus going to Waterbury and Danbury and sat with

[choir founder] Lorraine [Williams] who was from Danbury. As freshmen, we talked about UConn and how we as black students should not get away from our home training, which included the church experience. Lorraine spoke of wanting to begin a choir to, in some way, make black students proud and feel included on campus.

My advice was for her to get the word out and see if others shared her vision, and she did. Through her personality, and love for music she enlisted a core cadre that grew — the rest is history.

I did not sing or participate in the choir, but helped bring the little known at the time R&B group, Kool and the Gang, to the old Hawley Armory and raised funds for robes for every member of the choir. I was very proud when my son Jonathan Beamon '94 (CLAS) joined the choir and sang a solo in 1993, and my daughter Janeen a few years later also joined prior to her transfer (she graduated from Eastern).

Reggie Beamon '73 (CLAS), former state representative and chair of the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus Waterbury, Connecticut, via email

He Sells

➔ I am a marine ecologist and have worked most of my career on the impacts of environmental contaminants, but mostly on climate change over the past 25 years. While I love shells for their beauty and was amazed with Dave DeLucia's collection of 7,000 shells, I wish you had included some mention in your article that either collecting live shells or buying beautiful shells from curio shops is quickly depleting those natural populations, especially from tropical environments, which often have the most beautiful shells on earth.

Tom Suchanek '69 (CLAS)
Carmichael, California, via email



Kicks (Joe La Puma)

JLP 🏆🏆🏆
@krisbear778 via Instagram



CHECKING IN WITH

THE U.S. TREASURER

This August, human rights graduate student Sage Phillips '22 (CLAS), '24 MA spoke with Lynn Malerba '08 MPA. A member of the Penobscot Nation and founder of the Native American and Indigenous Students Association at UConn, Phillips was in Old Town, Maine, on a fellowship with the Wabanaki Alliance. Malerba, chief of the Mohegan Tribe, was in Washington, D.C., 11 months into her appointment as United States Treasurer.

Phillips: It's an honor to speak with you. You are an inspiration for Indigenous women and girls across the country, so I want to ask — who inspires you?

Malerba: That's a big question. I would say that all of the generations that came before me inspire me, because they held on no matter what, right? Against all odds, despite very little resources, they were able to pass on our culture, make sure our government stayed intact, and then get us through the federal re-recognition process. My mom was part of those generations. Her grandfather was part of those generations; he was the chief from the 1930s to the 1950s. When I think about my role, I feel I'm keeping faith with them. They inspire me, but my children and my grandchildren inspire me as well, because isn't that why we do the work that we do? It's to make sure that our tribal community stays intact and the next generations can live a good life, too, and stay connected to their tribal roots.

Phillips: To have somebody like you entering a space that wasn't necessarily built for people like us and be that role model for all of us, especially your people back home, is just amazing. How does being a lifetime chief of the Mohegan tribe affect your day-to-day work as the United States Treasurer and vice versa?

Malerba: It's such a privilege to be in

this position. And as I tell Indian Country whenever I'm with them, I said yes for all of us. I didn't think I'd be working quite this hard at age 70. I was quite happy just living my life, being chief and kind of being queen a little bit. But this was an opportunity to educate an entire agency on what it means to engage deeply with Indian Country, how to consult with tribes, and to consider policy and guidance that would then impact tribes. There has to be a line between anything business related versus culturally related to the tribe, because you can only have one master and that is Treasury. So what I'm doing in the chief space right now is not the advocacy, but all the cultural and traditional and ceremonial things, like weddings and naming ceremonies.

Phillips: I'd love to know why you chose to get an MPA, why you chose UConn, and what it was like being Indigenous at UConn.

Malerba: My first career was nursing, and I always should have had a master's in the director roles I had at the hospital. I just never got around to it — raising your kids puts a little crimp in your educational plans unless you are really a superwoman. We've all been told you can have everything, you can have it all. Well, I think we *can* have it all — sequentially. I didn't get my master's until I was in my 50s, after my kids were in school and they were good, right? I was the health and human services director for the tribe working on policy. I was engaging with Indian health services, starting to do all of that advocacy work at the national level. Getting a master's in public administration helped me understand that role better and be more effective in that role. But I was a hit-and-run student because I was working. I've always been working full time and

going to school. That's been my trajectory all of my life. So in terms of being a part of the Indigenous community at UConn, I didn't have that opportunity. But I do know that people are engaged with Indigenous studies at UConn now and I'm proud of the work that you and the faculty are doing there, because I think there is a really nice social justice focus to the work that's happening right now. I intend to stay engaged with UConn around those topics because I think they're really important.

Phillips: Thank you, that means a lot! If you're ever around, we would love to welcome you and show you all the things we've been working on.

Malerba: I would love to come visit. Maybe this fall!

Phillips: You have so much going on. What is your favorite part of the day?

Malerba: My favorite part of the day is helping people understand the work that we're doing on a personal level. One of the things we've worked hard at is engaging with the offices that deal with policy and guidance issues within Treasury and bringing them with us to Indian Country so they can see how their policy impacts the communities we're serving. The other piece I find really fascinating is that I'm engaged with the Bureau of Engraving and Printing and the Mint. They're manufacturing facilities, they work 24/7, and it's amazing. I'm on a counterfeiting deterrence committee that's just fascinating. If you take a dollar bill and try to print it on a copier, it won't print because of all the security features. Try it! And we print 8 billion pieces of currency a year. We are visiting the Osage Nation this fall to launch the Maria Tallchief quarter. There are really good things happening at Treasury, and I know that the work we do will last and will inform all the work that happens at Treasury on behalf of our Native Nations.

Malerba's tribal name Mutáwi Mutáhash means "Many Hearts," recognizing both her career as a cardiac nurse and how, as chief, she holds the heart of each Mohegan Tribe member.

ALBUMS

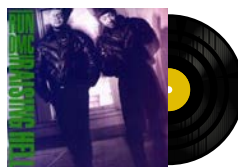
3 BOOKS



Happy Birthday, Hip-Hop

In honor of a half-century of hip-hop, Jeffrey Ogbar puts a spin on “3 Books.” UConn history professor, director of the Center for the Study of Popular Music, and author of the award-winning “Hip-Hop Revolution: The Culture and Politics of Rap” (2007, University Press of Kansas), Ogbar just entered his 25th year of teaching his popular course, “Hip-Hop, Politics, and Youth Culture in America.” To celebrate the 50th anniversary of a Bronx party where DJ Kool Herc mixed two records using his “Merry-Go-Round” technique and gave birth to the genre, Ogbar sounds off on one classic, one personal favorite, and one essential hip-hop album.

Classic:



“Raising Hell”
by Run-D.M.C.
(1986)

Run-D.M.C. is the first rap group to be played prominently on MTV, the first to go platinum, the first to appear on the cover of Rolling Stone, the second to be inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. “Raising Hell” comes out in a period where hip-hop is penetrating the mainstream. There’s no dedicated hip-hop magazine, TV shows, or Grammy category at the time, yet the album goes platinum and Run-D.M.C. is able to sell out arenas. The audience sort of elbows its way into the mainstream, and does so on its own terms—classic hip-hop bravado. It’s braggadocious, fun, festive, party music.

I grew up in LA. In 1986, Run-D.M.C. had performed at Long Beach, and rival gangs had caused a ruckus. After that, no one would provide insurance for them to play in the area. In 1987, during my senior year of high school, I went to see the Beastie Boys at the Hollywood Palladium. Everyone was having a good time, the concert was hot, and the Beastie Boys introduced special guests. The lights went down and you heard D.M.C. yell, “My A-didas!” I distinctly remember the joy; hugging my boys. That was the highlight of my teenage years, seeing Run-D.M.C. at this small venue.

Personal Favorite:



“It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back”
by Public Enemy (1988)

Even if you look at other genres of music, I don’t think that you find any album of any generation that’s such an explicit, clear articulation of politics centered on the uplift of Black people and dealing with the historical moment. Looking at mass incarceration, looking at policing, the illegal drug trade, the effects of racism and the legacy of government repression—looking at all these different forces, there’s nothing as rich, as substantive, as this album. It comes out at a moment when academics in the ivory tower, policymakers, and activists were alarmed at many of these issues within the Black community—the rise of the crack cocaine trade, increasing homicide rates, rising unemployment and poverty rates, the use of the term “endangered species” to refer to Black males.

I love Whitney Houston, New Edition, Anita Baker, other artists of the 1980s—but they didn’t talk about these issues. Public Enemy came out and dealt with it in powerful ways. It was a seismic shift in the possibilities of hip-hop. It’s also a sublime album in terms of beats, production, and rhyming scheme. This album increased the beats per minute in hip-hop, made it much more frenetic.

Essential:



“DAMN.”
by Kendrick Lamar (2017)

Like Run-D.M.C. or Public Enemy, Kendrick was able to capture the attention of most people who listen to rap music—and those who don’t. It’s not only critically acclaimed and commercially successful, but also Pulitzer Prize-winning, making him the first artist to do so that wasn’t European classical or jazz.

That’s rarified space. These are personal songs about his life, his father, his family; “DUCKWORTH.” is a fantastic song that deals with faith. “PRIDE.,” “HUMBLE.,” “LUST.,” “LOVE.,” “FEAR.,” “GOD.”—these are songs that talk about the human condition in such sophisticated ways.

What you have with Kendrick is the combination of a wide range of topics, complex lyrical delivery, and on top of that wonderful production. It’s an essential album for people who are not familiar with hip-hop. “DAMN.” is an album that will continue to satisfy you long after you hear it the first time. You can listen to it for years and find something new every time.



THIS JUST IN

Monkeyflowers are famous for growing in harsh soils where other plants can’t. They are also famously diverse in shape and color. And monkeyflowers provide a textbook example of how a single-gene change can make a new species. In a recent issue of the journal *Science*, UConn botanists explained what happened genetically 5 million years ago that caused monkeyflowers to jettison yellow pigment—which was later recovered by a descendant species, leading to production of red flowers that attracted hummingbirds instead of bees for pollination, isolating the red flowers genetically and creating a new species. Read more at s.uconn.edu/monkeyflowers.

TOP 10

THE GREATEST CAREER IN THE WORLD

In the decade after earning his education degree at UConn, Cob Carlson '76 (ED) taught fifth grade and earned a master's in education in Hartford, managed a Whole Foods store in North Carolina, and worked for the YMCA in Greenwich, Connecticut.

While doing marketing and public relations at the Y, Carlson realized it wasn't where he was meant to be — he kept coming back to how much he enjoyed his "American Cinema" course at UConn taught by dramatic arts professor Michael T. Gregoric.

"He talked about this concept called the cinematic correlative; that a film needs a lot of people to get made. He was not a proponent of the auteur theory, where it's the director's film," Carlson recalls.

At the time, Carlson regularly visited an arthouse theater in nearby Norwalk, The SoNo Cinema, with a friend who was a filmmaking graduate student. As they discussed the films, his friend told him she thought he had "a good eye," adding "you'd make a good editor."

"That really got my juices flowing about film and I just decided to go for it," says Carlson. He completed an accelerated filmmaking program at New York University, where he then taught for three years and discovered editing is the part of filmmaking that he likes most.

In the early 1990s Carlson moved to Boston, a center for documentary filmmaking. "The editor is like a hired gun," he says. "Producers and directors would hire me to do the hands-on work of assembling the film."

For more than 30 years, Carlson has edited — and sometimes produced and directed — feature films and documentaries on topics ranging from post-traumatic stress disorder to war orphans to Robert F. Kennedy.

Carlson looks back on his top 10.



Carlson says his work on Laurel Chiten's award-winning documentary "Twitch and Shout," about Tourette's syndrome, garnered him wide recognition and led to more directors recruiting him for assignments.

COB CARLSON'S FAVORITE FILM PROJECTS



1 Radio, radio: "The Greatest Radio Station in the World" 2022

Taking its name from a 2021 New Yorker piece about WPKN-FM, Carlson's latest cele-

brates the quirky, listener-supported radio station initially led by the late Jeffrey Tellis '63 (BUS) when it was the student-operated station at the University of Bridgeport. Created with the help of some of his Eastern Connecticut State University film students, Carlson directed and produced the doc, highlighting the host-driven format of WPKN, the

passion of its staff and listeners to keep such radio on the air, and the challenges faced by the station as it became an independent entity.



2 More than a good walk: "Donald Ross: Discovering the Legend" 2015
Carlson discov-

ered that one of his frequented golfing spots, the George Wright Golf Course outside Boston, was designed by Donald Ross, the legendary golf architect who designed 400 courses in the United States. Golf Digest calls the doc an "admirable portrayal of the master course architect. With interviews from everyone imaginable who has something wise to say about the designer of Pinehurst No. 2, the film makes for inspirational viewing before you play a Ross course."

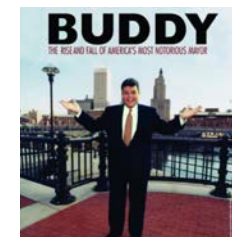


3 A finger in the food pie: "Farmageddon" 2011

Having been involved with food and food politics for many years, composting in his backyard and tending a community garden while teaching in Hartford, Carlson eagerly accepted an offer from first-time filmmaker Kristin Canty to edit this buzzed-about examination of local farmers' struggles against government regulations.

4 Off the road: "One Fast Move or I'm Gone: Kerouac's Big Sur" 2007

This documentary about a troubled period in the Beat writer's life following the literary success of "On the Road" blends readings from the Jack Kerouac novel "Big Sur" with commentary from Kerouac-influenced writers and artists including Patti Smith and Tom Waits.



5 Good guy or bad guy: "Buddy" 2005

"He was quite a character, just a complex guy, which is why it made a good film," says Carlson of Buddy Cianci, the long-serving mayor of Providence, Rhode Island, who had to resign twice after felony convictions. New York Magazine called the retrospective "a fascinating study of American local politics and a surprising tale of a man who, in the words of one commentator, 'has a city as his mistress.'"



6 Hangin' with Willie & Friends: "Farm Aid" 2003

After moving to Boston, Carlson reunited with a friend whose wife is the executive director of Farm Aid, the organization co-founded by Willie Nelson that since 1985 has raised more than \$70 million to support family-centered farms. He began volunteering for Farm Aid and filmed musicians discussing the importance of supporting a family-farm system of agriculture for this PBS program.



7 He was a friend of mine: "Robert F. Kennedy: A Memoir" 1998

A Discovery Channel documentary on the life of Bobby Kennedy marking the 30th anniversary of his assassination during a presidential campaign trip to Los Angeles. From The New York Times: "Memory may have softened reality and added a glow, but the

television audience can still learn much from the likes of Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., Rep. John Lewis, and Richard Goodwin about the hopes he aroused and the causes in which he enlisted."



8 Civil political talk: "The Long and Short of It" 1997

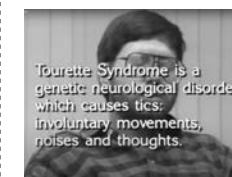
Robert Reich, former secretary of labor in the Clinton administration, and Republican Sen. Alan Simpson of Wyoming debated issues of the day for this weekly WGBH series. "It was a different time, where Republicans and Democrats could talk with one another in a friendly way and shake hands across the aisle and do things civilly," Carlson says. "Bob Reich is just an incredibly warm, funny, and down-to-earth human being. A joy to hang with the guy."



9 Family history: "An Irish American Story" 1996

His most personal project, Carlson pro-

duced this 30-minute film that traced the journey of his grandmother, at the age of 16, from the farm she lived on in Kildysart, a historic fishing village in County Clare, Ireland, to Bridgeport, Connecticut.



10 Uncontrolled reaction: "Twitch and Shout" 1993

Critically lauded and honored at multiple film festivals, it's a study of life with Tourette's syndrome, the neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by muscle-motion tics and vocal tics that can include coprolalia, the involuntary swearing and uttering of obscene remarks. The film was screened at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, where the audience included people with Tourette's. "Some people would see themselves on screen and react vocally. It was a lively screening, to say the least," Carlson says.

—KENNETH BEST

UConn Talks

On mistaking the sound of bullfrogs in Windham, Connecticut, for an enemy invasion in 1754:

“Apparently, it was pretty embarrassing for the colonists back then.”

Susan Herrick, herpetology professor, “PBS Newshour,” Aug. 3, 2023

On her forecast model for predicting potential ocean heat waves:

“No one wants to pull up a crab trap full of dead crabs.”

Samantha Siedlecki, marine sciences professor, Science, Aug. 23, 2023

On the dangers of heatstroke:

“Climate change has taken this into the everyday world for the everyday American citizen. You don’t have to be a laborer working for twelve hours, you don’t have to be a soldier in training. This is making it affect so many people even just during daily living.”

Douglas Casa '97 Ph.D., kinesiology professor and director of UConn’s Korey Stringer Institute, The New Yorker, Aug. 28, 2023

On what people don’t know about him:

“I’m a theater buff. I’m on the O’Neill Theater board, on the Bushnell board. I love theater. I could go to theater almost every day.”

Jim Calhoun, former UConn MBB coach, News 8, Sept. 15, 2023

On wildfires in Canada killing crops in the U.S.:

“All the native pollinators – they don’t go out when there is smoke ... Pollination didn’t happen, and the blossom dropped.”

Shuresh Ghimire, UConn Extension horticulture educator, CT Mirror, Aug. 3, 2023

On the speed and efficiency with which AI discovers drugs like halicin:

“Not only can halicin kill many species of antibiotic-resistant bacteria, it is also structurally distinct from prior antibiotics. This discovery is groundbreaking because antibiotic-resistant superbugs are a major public health issue that traditional methods have largely failed to address.”

Bowen Lou, business professor, Vox, Aug. 25, 2023

UConn on Wiki

Mary Estella Sprague (1870–1940) was the first woman to serve as the dean of an academic department at UConn. She oversaw the Division of Home Economics from 1920 to 1926.

Educated at Bridgewater State Normal School and Simmons College in Massachusetts, Sprague taught in public schools for more than 20 years before becoming house director and teacher of home economics at Caroline Rest, a home for new mothers in upstate New York. In 1914, Sprague became the first woman to work for the UConn Extension Service. Hired as the assistant organizer for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Connecticut, she became professor of home economics and dean of women in 1917 and the first dean of the Division of Home Economics in 1920. Under her leadership, women composed nearly 26% of UConn’s student population in 1925 and 31% in 1930, up from only 19% in 1920. Dean Sprague retired in 1926.

During World War I, Sprague served as state director of home economics for the U.S. Food Administration. From June 1917 through 1918, she helped lead a statewide campaign to bolster food production and conservation on the home front in support of the war effort. As UConn’s trustees observed, this job required “a woman of broad vision and forceful personality who knew Connecticut people.” Sprague, they said, “more than met these requirements.”

Built in 1942, the M. Estella Sprague Residence Hall in Storrs was named in her honor. —MICHAEL RODRIGUEZ





6.17.23 National Mascot Day — Leaving Ontario for Storrs



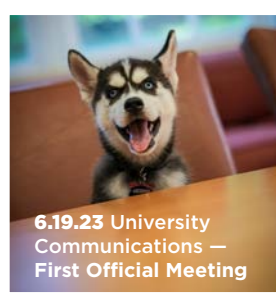
6.18.23
1:10 a.m.
Storrs,
I'm home!



6.18.23
First Bath,
was a real
champ



6.28.23 By the Benton — First On-Campus Walk, secret is out!



6.19.23 University
Communications —
First Official Meeting



8.1.23
Tosceno Ice
Forum —
First Time on
the Ice



8.12.23
Avery Point — First
Time in the Ocean,
jumped right in!



6.20.23 Werth Family Basketball Champions
Center — First Photoshoot, needs some work
on staying put!



O

6.28.23
Wilbur Cross Board
of Trustees meeting,
The Big Reveal — with
my new friends Andy,
Radenka, and Dan

7.20.23
Dairy Bar —
**First Ice
Cream**, loves
it as much
as his big
brother does!

7.18.23 Burton Family Football Complex —
First Athletics Photoshoot

7.29.23
Connecticut Sun
Practice Arena —
**First Time Meeting
Dorka and Pheesa!**

Stats:

- 6.17 - 10 lbs
- 6.23 - 12 lbs
- 7.4 - 17 lbs
- 7.17 - 22 lbs
- 8.14 - 25 lbs
- 9.19 - 35 lbs

Some of my favorite things:
food, crawling under couches,
tennis balls that squeak,
a good elk horn, more food

Illustrations by Ani Somi | Photos by Peter Morenus,
Sydney Herdle, and Jonathan's Crew

14 UCONN MAGAZINE | MAGAZINE.UCONN.EDU

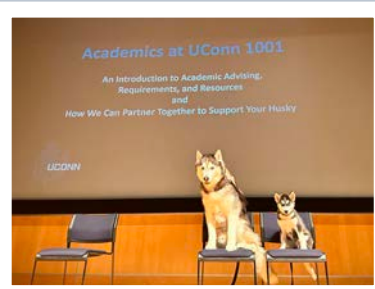
FALL 2023 15



8.19.23
Storrs Hall —
First Deer
Encounter



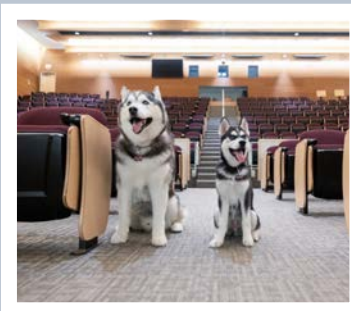
7.10.23 Dodd Center —
First Parent Orientation



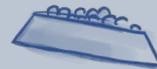
8.7.23
Student Union — First Husky One Card



8.14.23 Volleyball Media Day at Rizza Performance Center —
First Photoshoot with Another 14/15 Combo



7.3.23
McHugh 102 —
First Classroom
Romp, learned
about glass
doors (ouch!)



8.22.23
Rome Ballroom —
First Resident
Advisor Training



8.26.23 Mirror Lake — First Move-In Weekend

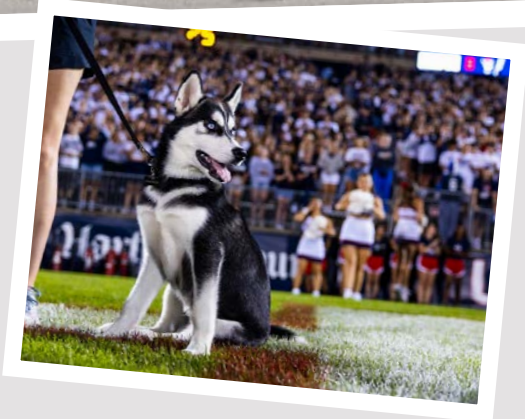


6.20.23
Werth Champions Center —
First Cuddle From a Husky,
Donovan holding XV was
as cute as you'd think; the
follow-up on Sept. 7 was just
as cute



8.28.23
Towers Residence Halls — First First
Day of Classes; the students were so happy
to see XIV and XV together

8.31.23
The Rent — First Football Game, all the lights,
people, noises and he acted like a pro!



Go to s.uconn.edu/babysfirst for a collection of videos of Jonathan XV's discovery of all things UConn

THE MOMENTS THAT MADE SUE BIRD



A CONVERSATION WITH
LISA STIEPOCK

A superstar's superstar, Sue Bird '02 (CLAS) is undeniable Husky royalty, beloved for her prowess on the court and her candor, charm, and cheer off it. Connecticut WNBA fans root for her even when she's on an opposing team, and the Seattle Storm faithful, including myriad little girls in Sue Bird tees, packed arenas throughout

her final of 21 seasons there last year. She has stormed her own lanes in life and basketball — we asked her to share some of the most fateful moments in both.



IN HER SENIOR YEAR AT UCONN, ABOVE, AND, LEFT, DURING HER 2022 WNBA FAREWELL SEASON



The moment she knew she was good at basketball

I think I always knew. But there is a moment ... I was in, like, fifth grade, and I played for a travel team in my town. The coach had a connection with St. John's University, so we got to be the little kids at halftime that come onto the court and play another intramural team. It's a total of 10, 15 minutes max, but it felt very big to a fifth grader. And the ironic part is that St. John's was playing the University of Connecticut, so that's probably the first time Coach Auriemma laid his eyes on me — joking!

As we were leaving the gym later that day, a security guard stopped us and he says to my dad, hey, can I get your daughter's autograph? I have a feeling this is going to be worth something someday. He saw me play as this little kid and saw something. And I think what is so memorable about it is, yes, it's the first time I was ever asked for my autograph, and I vividly remember it, but I think it speaks to the way I was playing, which was probably partly childlike joy, but I must have also shown a little skill, too. I remember shooting reverse layups, and back then you didn't see a lot of fifth graders doing that.

The moment she knew she was really good at basketball

Um, I'm still waiting for that day. No, no, what's the moment that I knew I was legit? I guess around the same time, I think fifth or sixth grade. I'm playing on this AAU team and we go to nationals, where teams from every state come together and play in this huge tournament. Two things happened: One, Sports Illustrated for Kids saw our team and followed us. I remember that article comes out and our team is in Sports Illustrated for Kids.

At the same time, if you can believe this, colleges start sending letters. Like — hello, we saw you play at this tournament and we think you're pretty good. Can you fill out this questionnaire so we have your information — I remember one of my very first letters was from Duke, so that resonated. I was like, oh sh-t, Duke, this is pretty cool. I think that's the earliest memory I have of thinking oh, I might be all right at this. I might be pretty good.

The moment she knew she was Olympics-level good at basketball

It was going into my junior year; the 2000 Olympics had just finished. Coach Auriemma was an assistant for that team. He is back from Australia and back on campus reconnecting

GIRLS 11-AND-UNDER NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP IN 1992

with all of us. He just kind of sits me down and is like, listen, I was just with all these Olympians, and he looks me in the eye and says, if you want to do this, you can do this. I've now seen what it is, up close and personal, and you have whatever it is — you have to want it and you have to still work for it. But you have it. That was a validating moment.

The moment she knew she'd be a point guard

I got recruited by a bunch of different schools and some recruited me as a two, a shooting guard. I remember it was Tara VanDerveer [at Stanford] who said, I just coached the '96 Olympic team and I see you as a point guard. At that point — it's almost weird to think back to that — I was kind of this combo; I could be the one, I could be the two. And she was really the first one to say my value comes as a point guard.

The fact that I also can score, that's what made me a different kind of point guard in that generation. I actually feel very proud — players like myself, Lindsay Whalen, Becky Hammon, you could throw Dawn Staley in there, too. We were point guards where we ran the team, but we could also score. You couldn't ignore us. And for a

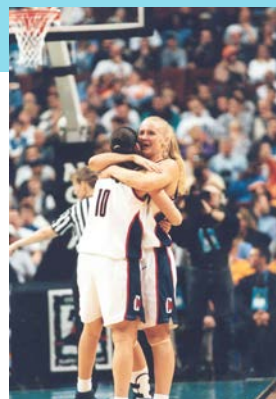


WITH COACH AURIEMMA, TOP, AND HER FIRST OF FOUR OLYMPIC GOLDS

long time, like way back in the day, point guards were only meant to run the team, so we were starting to bring a different vibe to it. And I very much feel like that was a big part of what made me successful. [VanDerveer] planted that seed.

And then, from there, I think it comes back to Coach Auriemma — my time at Connecticut. How I was going to show up as this point guard. What about my natural personality, what could I pull from that that would allow me to be successful? And this story's been told a thousand times, but

your advantage? Seeing everyone, thinking ahead two and three plays. I'm like, OK, I need to make sure Swin Cash is getting the ball, but I also need to make sure Diana Taurasi is getting the ball. And how can I juggle that? Having relationships with your teammates, making sure you're tapping into them in a different way, all at the same time. And I think he was just really trying to make sure I had my fingerprints on everything.



We did a team-building weekend at the Berkshires, ropes courses and all that kind of stuff. And I think it showed him, OK, this is a kid who on the

basketball court doesn't want to make mistakes, she's assessing risk too much. But when he saw me on the ropes courses, I was the first one to volunteer for the hard parts and be like, oh, I'll climb it. And so he made this connection like, hey, what I see in you on this ropes course — we need to see that on the floor. And right away that showed me what I wasn't doing basketball-wise.

And I started my freshman year. To start as a freshman point guard at the University of Connecticut is tough. So already I kind of knew, I'm starting, he must trust me. But I remember there was this one practice, definitely within my first year. And he was being really hard on the whole team, being really hard on me, like nitpicking, nitpicking, nitpicking. And he set us up in a situation destined for failure 'cause that's kind of his M.O., to try to get you to figure it out. And I think I just got to that point, pardon my language, I just got to the point of like, eff this. And I took over the practice, and I did all the things, and we won the scrimmage or whatever it was. I figured it out.

I don't know why he did this, but he actually emailed me and said, basically, today when you did that, I saw what we've been wanting to see from you. It stuck with me because he emailed me and that was unusual. That's a moment.

The moment she knew just how much she could mean to UConn

My sophomore year, I was still growing, still maturing. I was still understanding myself, who I am as

The moment she knew it would be UConn

To be honest, when I look back on my recruitment, it was always UConn. They were always kind of number one. They were always the ones that interested me the most, that felt right. These other schools come in and they're like the shiny new toy. There's some bells and whistles and they're wining and dining you.

And Coach Auriemma, on the day that I was going to decide, I called him up and he asked me, you know, what are you thinking? And I was like, oh, I'm thinking my heart says Connecticut, but my head is a little confused 'cause like I said, all these other schools are planting seeds and they're creeping in there. And he basically was just like, oh, I hope you follow your heart. Those were his final words and obviously I did follow my heart — thank goodness.

The moment she knew Coach Auriemma trusted her

There are two. One, it was preseason my freshman year, my career hadn't even started yet. And I feel like Coach Auriemma had seen something in me very early ... He saw that I like to assess before I jump in. As an athlete, you have to be willing to take risks. Risk is just a part of the job.



WITH SEATTLE STORM COACH LIN DUNN IN 2022 AND TOP, WITH HUSKY TEAMMATE SHEA RALPH '02 (ED) IN 2000

he basically pulled me into his office one day and was like, listen, everything out there is your fault. Yeah, everyone knows this story, but I'll take it a step further. What he was really saying was — I know this now as an adult — I can hold multiple things, multiple thoughts, multiple on-the-court moments, multiple plays, in my head all at the same time. I have the ability to do that. So, how to use that to



BIRD'S YOUNG FANS ARE EVERYWHERE — ONE HANDED HER A FLOWER WHILE SHE WAS INBOUNDING THE BALL DURING HER LAST STORM HOME GAME, AND BIRD ASKED HER TO HOLD ON TO IT UNTIL AFTER THE BUZZER



a player. I was really lucky that I had Shea Ralph as a mentor figure. That year Shea and Svetlana [Abrosimova '01 BUS] got recognized as All-Americans. Rightfully so. They were the backbones of our team. And I remember, it's the Final Four, we're literally about to run out to warm up, and Shea pulls me over and says, you know, even though I got selected as All-American, you were just as deserving. Like, you're an All-American, too. Wow. That meant so much, to see that she had that confidence in me.

The moment she knew it would be Seattle

After my senior year, I was asked to go train with the national team. So I fly out to Colorado Springs, I go to the hotel, I'm in the lobby and Lin Dunn is there and she's like, hey Sue, I just want to introduce myself. I'm Lin Dunn, head coach at the Seattle Storm. And I remember she made a joke around drafting me, like, well you might get picked number one. I remember being like, OK, this is probably happening. But I wasn't thrilled — I did not know a lot about Seattle.

Obviously, we know the end of the story. I love it here. I've spent my entire career here. But it was the distance — I was like Seattle, dang, that's who had to get the number-one pick? I secretly wanted it to be New York. And then, very famously, on draft day after Lin had chosen me — and again, as it turns out, I couldn't have been drafted by a better place — they ask Lin, was there any chance that you were going to trade this pick? And she just looks into the camera and says no. Just that. I think she was planning on drafting me and I think once she saw me in this camp with the national team hold my own as a 21-year-old college kid, I think that solidified it. I've actually never asked her. I should ask her!

A coming-home-to-Connecticut moment

I feel the love every time I go back to Connecticut. It's all love all the time. And when the Connecticut Sun started and we played there in the regular season, that felt like a homecoming in some ways: I get announced as a starter and the whole place erupts. It's amazing. But then we played them in the WNBA finals. And now I'm not getting the same love. They applauded when I got announced, but I look in the crowd and I see a sign that says something like

"Go Sun, Skewer Bird."

My initial thought was, how dare you? Right? But then my second thought was, all right, this is good. The WNBA is getting to a point where these fans love their team no matter who they're playing against.

A moment she knew how much she meant to girls and young women

I think most of the time it comes in the form of just seeing little girls wearing my jersey, especially my final year. I do have my fair share of moments where I have adults come up to me and say, when I was 7 or when I was 10 or when I was 15, I had your poster, and that kind of hits home. But little kids are little kids. They're not really saying much to you. I do have a funny story where a little girl came up to me so serious. And I could tell it took a lot for her to walk up to me. She's like, I just wanna tell you, I'm your role model. And I was like, oh, you are? Thank you.

But I think where it hits for me now is meeting these people as adults and hearing the impact that I had on them growing up.



BIRD AND STEWIE, AKA BREANNA STEWART '16 (CLAS) — AN UNBEATABLE COMBINATION

The winning moment that stands out from all the winning moments

OK, so I could sit here and talk to you about how special it is to win your first major championship, which is 2000, my sophomore year.

I can sit here and talk to you about how special it was to win my senior year, and that is one of the major ones. Why? Yes, because we were so good. Yes, because we went undefeated. But knowing what I know now? There's one team a year, right, that wins the championship? On that team, there's anywhere from one to two, three, four, five who may be seniors. So there's really only a handful of people that get to finish their career smiling. And I feel really lucky, looking back, that I got to finish my college career smiling. No matter what happened my

The Sonics won in the '70s and we win 20-plus years later.

I can talk about all this. But the one that sticks out, for sure, is 2018. And the reason why is because, after all I had experienced and all the success I had had, this felt like I was doing something on

borrowed time. It was unexpected. I had, in some ways, conceded to the fact that I probably wouldn't ever be in the finals again. The Seattle Storm had decided to rebuild, which I signed up for, so I knew what I was getting into in 2015. All the other veterans were gone. We had back-to-back number-one



BIRD WITH HER PARENTS AT GAMPPEL PAVILION ON SENIOR NIGHT 2002 BEFORE A GAME AGAINST PROVIDENCE COLLEGE

offs, we're champions. And I just remember feeling like, well, this wasn't supposed to happen. I can't believe this happened.

And I really got to experience going through a rebuild, getting on the other side of it, knowing my role. In previous championships I was a basketball player who played the games and did what they could for the team and I had points and I had assists. I probably had a couple rebounds here and there, and that was what I did.

This was like, not only did I have points and assists and rebounds and all the things that you do within a game, I had — speaking of fingerprints — my fingerprints all over the way this team handled adversity and handled, really, the entire season. I very much had become a player-coach at that point. So there's something different about that one.

So was that the moment she knew she'd be playing a bit longer?

Oh, it changes everything. Yeah, at that point, now that we're good, it changes everything. Now I'm like, oh, I want to play as long as humanly possible. So now my motivation's to stay in shape, right, to keep going for as long as I can. Sadly enough I missed the 2019



BIRD, WITH DIANA TAURASI '05 (CLAS) IN MOSCOW'S RED SQUARE IN 2007, PLAYED PRO BALL IN RUSSIA FOR 11 YEARS DURING THE WNBA'S OFF SEASON

junior, sophomore, and freshman years, I get to finish smiling. And that's rare.

I can tell you how amazing the Olympics were and what that meant, representing your country. I can talk about being the first champion in Seattle in 25 years.

by the way, in 2018, I want to say we were picked to finish sixth or seventh in the league — and that wasn't even a big locker room moment. We were like, yeah, we're a young team. Let's see what happens. Before you know it, the season ends and we're first. Fast forward, we sweep through the play-

season because of a knee surgery, but I got three more seasons and one more championship out of it.

Key Mom and Dad moments

I think the way I would break down my parents is the ways in which they've influenced me.

My mom, she's very positive and, generally speaking, just good vibes, you know? And as a sports parent, she just always had a perspective that there's other things in life, life goes on. Whether I won the game or lost the game as a kid, whether I played well or I played bad, my mom was very consistent with how she showed up. She was just always there to love me regardless. Whether it was basketball, soccer, track, the minute she picked me up from the game, it was always just, where do you want to eat? She always gave me a perspective, and I

think anyone would tell you basketball is very important to me, obviously. But it's not the most important thing to me. I think I got that from her.

And my dad was always just kind of brutally honest with me, but I never felt judged by him. It never felt like he was being critical. I'd play the game and very matter-of-factly, he'd be like, you were great or very matter-of-factly, you weren't so good today. And that was just the reality. What I took from that, and what has helped me, is I very much live in reality when it comes to basketball. I don't like people sugar-coating me. Keep it real. Tell me how it is. If I was bad, great. I know what I can work on. If I was good, great. I know what I'm trying to replicate. I don't like smoke being blown up my ass.

The coming-out moment

Well, I have kind of these two come-outs, if you will. By the time I was 22, I had essentially come out to all my family, all my friends, even my college coaches. I just hadn't said it publicly. I didn't do that until I was 37. But by 23, I was essentially out in all the ways

except the public way — which is obviously a big one.

The moment she knew Megan was The One

So I met Megan when I was 35, going on 36. And we just — I mean, really, the simplest way to say it is, it was just easy. Everything about it was just easy and calm. Wow. And I had never really known that — obviously I've had other relationships before, some better than others, like everybody else. But I had never really experienced how it just feels right. We started talking and we just haven't stopped.

A Yankee-in-Moscow moment

The thing I'm most thankful for when it comes to my Russian experience — just being in a different culture helped shape my worldview, it helped me be less judgmental as a person. When you're totally immersed in

another culture, you just start to see that there are other ways of doing things. This is a silly example, but you get your produce and instead of putting it in a little plastic bag and taking it to the register to be weighed, you do it yourself, and put a sticker on it. No bag. A small thing, but those things showed me just 'cause we as Americans think we're the best, that doesn't mean there aren't other ways of doing things that are better. Being there really opened my mind to that idea. And what I started to do was, in my own way, challenge the status quo.

The moment she realized the magnitude of her voice, her potential platform ...

That came much later. The 2020 WNBA season, with the pandemic, with all the social unrest, that bubble season. That is really when I understood the magnitude of my platform, my voice. Candace Parker and I did this interview recently and it was incredibly touching the way she described this. She said, there's a lot of people who consider themselves leaders, there are a lot of actual leaders, and sometimes leaders are leaders just because of the title — maybe it's coach, maybe it's captain. But the difference with you, and what makes you the leader you are, and what makes you special, is when you talk, people listen. I think she was speaking to that bubble season.

Actually, if I rewind a little bit, we had our contract negotiations in the fall and winter of 2019. That's when I started to really



to marry, that being held against me, things like that.

... and what she might use it for

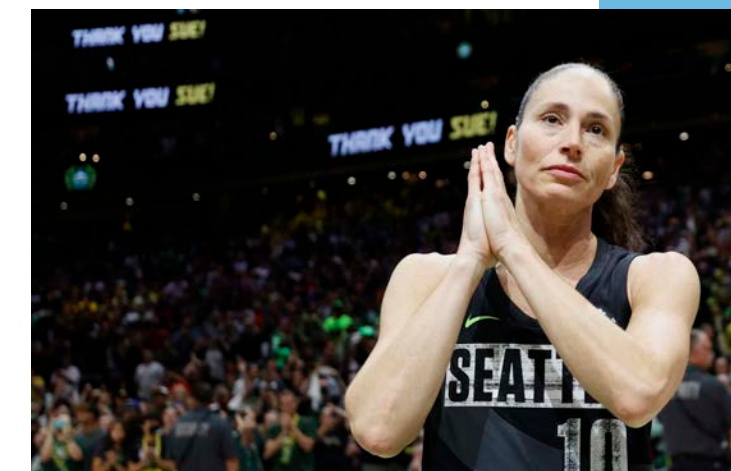
The reality is I'm no longer a basketball player. I've always said when people say shut up and dribble, the answer is obviously no. Because we have microphones in front of our faces all the time. We're getting asked hard-hitting questions all the time. So you have a voice, you have a platform, but I no longer have that in that way, right? Our production company A Touch

More is this vehicle I can now use as a retired player to continue to get the spotlight on marginalized groups or communities that are underserved, it's a way to continue to tell these stories.

And it's a vehicle that both Megan and I can use in our retirement that's fun. I think creating this kind of content is going to be so much fun. It's going to be

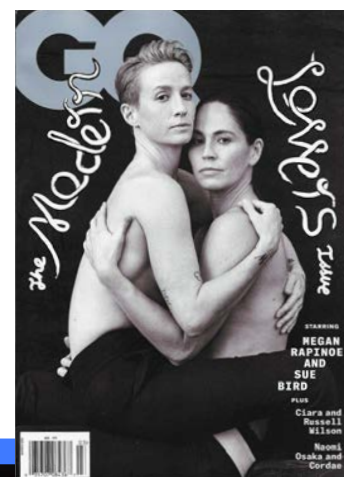
see the power that I had, especially because I was an older player negotiating. I wasn't going to be the recipient of all these benefits. I think people really saw that I was just trying to get the best for them. They believed in me in that way and so, when I spoke, to Candace's point, they listened. I think the combination of those negotiations and then what we all did as a league in the bubble, that's when I started to really get a sense of it. It's not that I'm smarter than the next person, but my expertise is in this world of women's sports, right? I've lived it. There's something unique about that perspective. There's only 144 of us, so compared to the rest of the world, nobody's going to know what we know. I can share those insights in that way, and it goes beyond basketball.

Sports mirror society, women's sports mirror society. Everything that's happening in society is happening to us, whether it's the fight for equal pay and racial equity or having issues just because of who I love and who I want



AFTER HER FINAL WNBA GAME, THE HOMETOWN CROWD CHANTED "THANK YOU, SUE" UNTIL SHE LEFT

exciting, but it's also going to have a lot of meaning in our world. Through telling these stories, you're going to create change. It's just inevitable. 🌟



TEAM USA SOCCER GOLD MEDALIST MEGAN RAPINOE KISSES FIANCEE BIRD AFTER BIRD'S FOURTH TEAM USA BASKETBALL GOLD AND BOTTOM LEFT, THE TWO BEFORE RAPINOE'S FINAL TEAM USA GAME THIS SEPTEMBER



Rob Saunders

UNMASKED

How a UConn puppeteer went from being the beer guy at Whole Foods to creating animatronics for the biggest theme parks, robotics for cinematic superheroes, and crazy-clever costumes for Masked Singers.

By Tommi Lewis Tilden
Photos by Peter Morenus

It was 1990, and the world was mourning the untimely death of iconic puppet master Jim Henson. A 16-year-old aspiring puppeteer in Chester, New Hampshire, Rob Saunders '96 (SFA) had long admired Henson's artistry and aesthetic, the way he blended otherworldly elements and realism on children's television shows like "The Muppets" and "Sesame Street," and in fantasy cinematic visions like "Labyrinth" and "The Dark Crystal."

"For a young person his passing was like a call to arms, to take up the mantle. It sparked a sense of purpose for me and other puppeteers that came out of that time, we felt compelled to carry on his legacy. I felt I gotta do this."

Sitting in his high school counselor's office, Saunders discovered that answering the call could mean earning \$13,000 a year. "To my teenage mind, that figure sounded amazing. In that moment, it was clear to me where I



Saunders created this chupacabra puppet head for Universal Studios Halloween Horror Nights 2022.



From left: Puppeteers guide Doc Ock's swinging tentacles in "Spider-Man 2"; Hugh Jackman's first stab as Wolverine; creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone provided voices for several "Team America: World Police" characters; the singer underneath the leopard mask was revealed to be Seal.

"I was wrapped in fire blankets with all these explosives going off over my head and had to keep my character moving stoically around the bar, doing his thing."

was heading."

Saunders set his sights on, and gained admittance to, UConn's School of Fine Arts, renowned for its illustrious puppetry program, and in so doing became the first of his family to attend college. Almost immediately, he found himself working with the esteemed, longtime head of UConn's puppetry program, Bart Roccoberton Jr., on a production of "A Christmas Carol."

Off and running, Saunders immersed himself in courses for performance, directing, design, and fabrication, and created lifelong friendships with fellow puppeteers including David Regan '95 (SFA), '01 MFA; Tim Legasse '92 (SFA); Jennifer Barnhart '94 (SFA); and Jim Napolitano '93 (SFA). "They're all UConn grads who went on to do well commercially," he says, citing some of their collective work with entertainment giants The Jim Henson Co., The Walt Disney Co., PBS, and Nickelodeon.

Jim Henson Lesson #1: As you start traveling down that road of life, remember this: There are never enough comfort stops. The places you're going to are never on the map.

For five years post-graduation, Saunders honed his craft. "I moved

to Nashville fresh out of college to work as a junior fabricator, building puppets. It was a steady gig, and I learned a lot." Following a brief move to New York City, Saunders ended up with relatives in Toronto where he met special effects designer Gordon Smith. "Gordon couldn't hire me because I wasn't Canadian," Rob explains, "but I ended up working for him for free on a film character with claws." Those claws turned out to be for Hugh Jackman's first appearance as Wolverine in "X-Men."

Broke, but teeming with inspiration, Saunders returned to New York City to work as a mold maker at a stop-motion shop. "I loved New York, but the type of projects I wanted to be involved in were primarily in Los Angeles. New York has a huge television puppeteer network, but I wanted to focus more on monsters and creature effects at that point in my career. So I left to check out Hollywood's film and

entertainment scene."

Saunders landed in LA two days before the catastrophic events of 9/11 unfolded. The entertainment industry ground to a halt and work was scarce. "I ended up taking a job at Whole Foods as their beer guy, but kept knocking on doors and sending out resumes." Finally, opportunity struck in the form of a web-slinging superhero bringing much needed traction to Saunders' career. Steve Johnson's EdgeFX was seeking an artist to create a prototype for a costume in "Spider-Man 2" and Saunders seized the chance, earning his first break in the 2004 blockbuster hit with the credit "Puppeteer: Doc Ock Tentacle."

Saunders was a member of the puppeteering team that helped create and manipulate the arms in the film-stealing scenes where Alfred Molina's villain character Doctor Octopus pleads and interacts with his sentient, clawed tentacles. This visual effect became a

revered part of movie lore and is one reason for the film's critical acclaim.

Word of Saunders' talent spread throughout the industry. "South Park" creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone tapped him for their edgy and satirical "Team America: World Police," which relies on puppets, miniature sets, and punchlines based on the ridiculousness of seeing the childlike, near-human characters in precarious situations.

The puppets were about 18 inches, head to toe, says Saunders. "They were very complex and had nine motors inside their heads to make expressions. Some puppets had up to 12 strings for one controller." Parker and Stone "dumbed down" the puppets to meet their specific vision, though, not using all they were capable of. "I loved working with those guys," Saunders says with a smile. "They are brilliant writers and filmmakers. But I don't think they knew how hard it would be

working with puppets."

Besides acting as a puppet wrangler for the tight 60-day production schedule with 20-hour workdays, Saunders was the puppeteer for a bartender in a scene where one of the lead characters, Sarah, shoots up a bar filled with terrorists. "I was wrapped in fire blankets with all these explosives going off over my head and had to keep my character moving stoically around the bar, doing his thing," he remembers. "And my character survived!"

Transitioning to a less explosive project and deepening his connection to Jim Henson, Saunders served as a legacy effects artist on the 2011 feature film "The Muppets."

"I built a suit for the movie called the 'Muppet Man,' where all the Muppets hide in a human three-piece suit to break into Miss Piggy's office," he says of the first and only time he worked with the Muppet characters. "The puppet community is so small,

“You can’t embrace and connect with [animatronics] in the same way as with puppets. My joke has always been that we were making bulldozers with fur.”

you tend to meet everyone. Years ago, I met Heather, Jim’s youngest child, at a national puppet conference and we became friends. But weirdly, I never really pursued a career with the Henson Company.”

Jim Henson Lesson #2: It’s one of the basic truths of the universe. Things don’t disappear. They just change and change and change again.

Fifteen successful years of freelance and impressive credits led Saunders to a full-time position in Nashville as VP of Operations for Animax, which specializes in theme park experiences. “When I joined, we had a team of 26 people. By the time I left in 2018, that number had skyrocketed to 102. The owner wanted to rebrand from a small, whimsical puppet shop to a cutting-edge company designing mechanical animatronics for theme parks. So that’s what we did.”

Saunders says he enjoyed running a company without the responsibility of owning it. “We did incredible work.

But something was missing ... It was all about machines.”

Machines?
“The process of building high-level animatronics for theme parks is complex,” he explains. “You start with creative design. And then you layer in the mechanical design, the number of movements, how it works, whether it uses electric motors, air pistons, or hydraulics. You also need to take in the power and safety needs, and how long it can last while operating seven days a week in often humid conditions.

“Animatronics are undeniably fascinating, but they can feel like powerful, weighty machines,” he continues. “You can’t embrace and connect with them in the same way as with puppets. My joke has always been that we were making bulldozers with fur.”

Those cold, furry bulldozers made Saunders miss the tactile magic of puppetry and costumes.

When Stoopid Buddy Stoodios in Los Angeles invited him to work on “The Masked Singer,” the timing couldn’t have been better. “It was an intense schedule but exhilarating work,” he says of his five seasons working on the show. “The biggest challenge is making sure the masks are acoustically sound, with no reverberation or interference. We have specialty microphones, but often need to adapt and reshape the foam inside the mask so the talents’ voices can be heard.”

While the world collectively grappled with the 2020 pandemic, Saunders worked on the show remotely from Nashville. “I had a small office set up in my house and was working with a builder in Los Angeles. We would get a drawing and come up with a budget and plan how to build it,” he says. “Then I’d go to Los Angeles to work with the team on it.”

Did he know what celebrity he was creating for in advance? “Never,” he insists. “They kept that a secret. All we had were general specs about the person, like shape and size, or if a person was older or frail so we wouldn’t make the costume too heavy.”

Yet show business doesn’t always go as planned.

“We’d only meet the celebrity at

the first fitting,” Saunders says. “One time we made this elaborate leopard costume for a petite woman. Turns out she changed her mind last minute and they replaced her with the musician Seal, who is 6’3”. So, we had to rebuild the costume to accommodate him. We were always dealing with last-minute alterations.”

Jim Henson Lesson #3: I believe that we form our own lives, that we create our own reality, and that everything works out for the best.

On a trip to a fiber supplier in Lawrence, Massachusetts, in 2022, Saunders’ world took another turn. “I shared my dream of establishing my own puppetry workshop with the owners,” he says. “To my surprise, they offered me a space in their facility to make that a reality. It was a gift that I couldn’t refuse.”

And so, CJS Workshop was born — a costume design, fabrication, and maintenance studio catering to themed entertainment and commercial advertising. Eventually the studio found its permanent home in Groton, Massachusetts, and operates out of an 8,000-square-foot building near the picturesque River Road Trails, where cyclists pass by daily.

“I live walking distance to the workshop,” Saunders says, waving his arms toward the studio’s windows that boast a New England treelined view. He also mentions he needs to end the interview soon to pick up his three young sons — Christopher, Jacob, and Samuel, who inspired the name CJS — at a public school just minutes away.

Jim Henson Lesson #4: Watch out for each other and love and forgive everybody. It’s a good life, enjoy it.

When the talk turns to his vision for CJS, however, Saunders stays planted and engaged, eager to share how he is actively recruiting to expand his team of 16. Right now, he counts four UConn



From left: Dana Samborski '01 (SFA), '15 MA; Rob Saunders '96 (SFA); Will Pike '03 (SFA); Susan Doyle Tolis '92 (SFA), '94 MA; and Sierra Adamo '23 (SFA) outside CJS Workshop in June.

alumni on his team. “I’m always on the lookout to hire people from the program,” he says. “UConn is good about reaching out to me about people they think I might want to work with.”

Saunders is intent on fostering a collaborative, diverse, positive, and respectful culture. He seems like the type of boss you’d want to work for and have a beer with; he speaks with genuine empathy and has kind eyes. “Service to our clients and each other is paramount,” he emphasizes. “We have a responsibility to care for one another.” His company’s four-day workweek is one way he prioritizes a healthy work-life balance.

Remembering his salad days of initial excitement and discovery in New Hampshire, Saunders is also committed to lifting young artists. “I

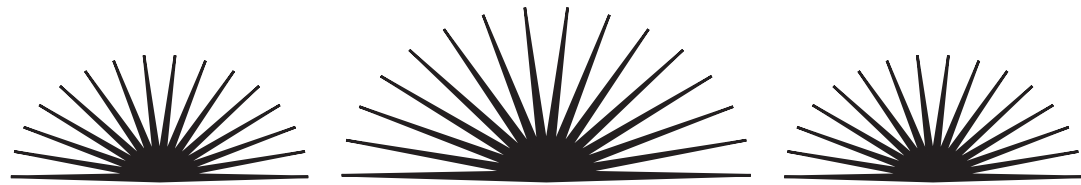
often meet kids at puppet festivals or through my old high school that have unbelievable talent but lack the support to pursue their artistic dreams,” he says. “Parents sometimes struggle to understand a career path in the arts. The key is to showcase the talent and hard work involved, and the fact that you can make a living at it. Of course there are challenges and risks, but that’s true for any profession.”

What about Saunders’ own parents? Did they support his passion? He pauses to find the right words, then shares, “Neither of my parents came from an artistic background — my dad was an electrician, and my mother worked in a nursing home. The concept of puppetry was foreign to them. While they didn’t actively encourage it, they didn’t dismiss it either.”

Right now, he worries about who will take over for his generation of old-school puppeteers. Yes, there is digital puppetry and CGI, but Saunders believes there will always be a need for live performance.

He hopes CJS Workshop acts as a beacon for the next generation of artists. “It costs me nothing to talk to these kids about what it takes to be in this trade. There are the ones who are hungry for it, and you know they’ll do all right. For this profession, you have to fight for it daily. You have to want it daily. You need to be fueled by the hunger for art.”

Jim Henson Lesson #5: Life’s like a movie, write your own ending. Keep believing, keep pretending. ☺



Billion Dollar Bailey

By
KIM KRIEGER
Photos by
PETER MORENUS

Air you can wear. That's how the meteorologist describes the weather in Orlando this August weekend, and at 10 a.m. the track already shimmers with heat. But when she strides onto the red rubber, she is fresh as a CEO in an air-conditioned boardroom about to announce a better-than-expected earnings report. She's in high heels and it's 96 degrees Fahrenheit with 100% humidity, and she looks like she's a whistle away from taking off, a streak of black on red running an 800 like it's 1999. "I love the track. Stepping on it gives you a high every time, it's like ahhhh," Trisha Bailey '99 (CLAS) says. But instead of



Running gave Bailey her start in life and continues to be an inspiration. "In running you have to finish the race," she says. And if she gets knocked down, "my greatest revenge is for you to watch me win."

“... my story, it's not normal. It's deeply disturbing”

sprinting down the track, she stands patiently as her friend and former teammate **Kathy (Holloman) Jackson '99 (BUS), '02 MA** fixes a stray lock of hair, and her publicist uses a little saliva and palm grease to rub dust off her blouse. “You're such a mom,” Bailey compliments the publicist. Then she shows off her nails, bejeweled to spell “Unbroken.” The name of her book being released this weekend is also the perfect word to describe the indefatigable founder of a business empire that stretches from Connecticut to Jamaica. Because broken she could have been.

But in this moment she is the perfect boss lady, the proud Jamaican-born woman who calls all the shots, who runs 16 businesses and a philanthropic organization while raising five children, a mover and a shaker.

Her ability to move — fast — is what first distinguished Bailey. She had early success on the track her sophomore year at Hartford's Weaver High School. And even after her track coach left without a replacement, Bailey continued training, and winning. That track success brought her to UConn, but there was a catch. Her SAT scores were not good enough for her to compete according to NCAA rules at the time. Amazingly, the University took a chance and gave her a scholarship anyway, in expectation that she would get the necessary grades and start winning as soon as she got back on the track.

Freshman year found her at UConn, but still training for the track on her own — and having to succeed at college level work. Gradually Bailey developed a study strategy. Some of the football players had asked to borrow her notes, but she said she would teach them the material instead. When she found she learned better herself that way, she made tutoring the players a regular part of her study schedule, and began getting the grades she needed to compete.

She also became close friends with

some of the players, which caused another setback when a misunderstanding led to one of them accusing her of attacking him. Bailey was arrested, and the football player pressed charges. She almost lost her scholarship, and eventually a judge dismissed the case.

Bailey is deeply appreciative of the chances UConn took on her. And she's paying it forward both as a philanthropist who supports students and the University, and as an employer who takes chances on individuals. When budget cuts threatened to cancel UConn's track and field program, Bailey gifted the University \$500,000 to save it. Shortly thereafter, she funded the Bailey Student Athlete Success Center, with \$15 million, the largest cash donation by an alum and largest gift ever dedicated to UConn Athletics. In doing so, Bailey noted a desire to support less-funded sports programs, and help all student athletes with academics and mental health.

After speaking at Weaver High School's commencement this spring, she surprised a student, an immigrant from Jamaica, with a scholarship to UConn. Bailey earned an MBA and Ph.D. from the University of Phoenix and works with the Jamaican government to help more students earn degrees in science and medicine. Her business ventures stretch across eight states and two countries and include pharmacies, medical supply companies, real estate development, even a 59-horse stable. She was so disciplined about saving and investing her bonuses from her pharmaceutical and brokerage sales jobs after college that she self-financed her business ventures all the way until she began buying commercial real estate. The richest Jamaican-born woman, Bailey is, if not already a billionaire, poised to reach that official status soon.

But before Trisha Bailey was Dr. Trisha Bailey, a business supernova, or even a

track star, she was a young girl growing up dirt poor in Jamaica in the house of her aunt and uncle. She was 13 years old before her mother in the United States sent for her. When her stepfather began sexually abusing her soon after she arrived in Hartford, she felt unable to confide in her mom. Instead, she devised ways to avoid her stepfather. She picked up her little sister at school and began joining sports teams, which is how she found track. Although she was able to escape her stepfather by leaving for college, she was unable to escape the pattern of violent and abusive relationships until much later.

“I've always known my story, it's not normal. It's deeply disturbing — making the decision to write ‘Unbroken’ and to be so raw and open, it's to help other people,” says Bailey. “Young girls, who have not, hopefully, gone through this type of hell — my book can help them see what the predators look like, see what a bad boyfriend looks like.”

It's several hours after the photo shoot, and we're at Bailey's lovely downtown Orlando condo. She's radiating kindness and love and happiness as she discusses her book, her business, her family, her terrible track record with men — and her suicide attempt, which ended with her in a coma. She was flown home cross-country while still incapacitated, and the crew of her first flight simply wheeled her into the airport and abandoned her there. Unable to move or speak, she sat crying in the airport for three hours before someone tried to help her. That abandonment fueled her desire to start a business that treats people with genuine care. “I wanted to make sure nobody in the world ever felt that way, the way I did,” she says.

Bailey's personal story is so shocking, so at odds with her business success, many people don't believe it at first. But perhaps most shocking of all is how positive and generous Bailey remains despite it all. For that, she credits her faith and the faith others, starting with

Right

Bailey and her partner Tory Dandy celebrated her birthday and the launch of her book, “Unbroken,” with a swank party at Serenity Ranch in August.

her UConn advisors and coaches, have had in her.

To celebrate the publication of her radically honest book, Bailey's staff, led by her executive assistant Peteann Burke, hosts a lavish party for her the next evening. It's Saturday night and we are in a throng of people dressed to the nines in black, red, and gold undulating to dancehall reggae in the luxurious main house at Serenity Ranch, her horse facility and events venue.

Bailey arrives at the party in a helicopter that lands on the back lawn at dusk. Clad in a satiny crimson dress and escorted by showgirls, she makes her way into the party as guests chant “Unbro-ken!” She gives a deeply felt speech of thankfulness and then sits down at a throne heaped with red roses to sign copies of her book.

The energy of the party is just ramping up when Kenny Mulfort steps outside to talk with me. The screenwriter met Bailey when he toured her ranch as a possible set location for his TV movie “Honey + Lemon.” He mentioned he had a book, “The Other Side of a Mirror.” Bailey read it. And then she called him and asked him to help write her autobiography. Ghostwriting autobiographies is not Mulfort's thing. But Bailey insisted. Which tends to mean it's going to happen. It also means, if she hires you, she believes in you and she will invest in and nurture you, but also respect how you do things, even if — especially if — it is unconventional.

“I told her if I write it, I'm going to make it entertaining, like a story,” says Mulfort. We're standing under a palm tree in the humid Orlando night, and he is explaining what it was like to channel Bailey's story into “Unbroken.” He describes asking necessary but invasive questions and says Bailey didn't hold anything back, including the suicide attempt and the shocking abuse. “I'm like, I just can't believe this, this is crazy,” he says. But as he began to understand





Left
At her 59-stall horse ranch in August.

Right
UConn was building its first indoor track when Bailey was on the team. "We had to train in the snow on Horsebarn Hill."

"Bailey's staff calls it her ESP. These mind melds ..."

how it all happened, it got to the point where they had a kind of mind meld.

Bailey's staff calls it her ESP. These mind melds. How she just understands, without being told, what an employee needs. Or she has a feeling about something, or someone, and then it happens. Bailey tells me it comes from prayer. "I will know things before they happen, and if I pray, my prayer is answered immediately. I will pray tonight, and the very next morning I will get the answer." She says it is her faith, and her conviction that sowing seeds of hope and goodness leads to harvests of blessings, that give her a special ability to take a chance on people.

When she was just starting Bailey's Medical in 2011, she says she ran into a challenge. She found certain neighborhoods in Florida unwelcoming to a Black woman with an accent and jokes that she needed a "pretty white boy" to sell in those areas. Recent college grad Sean Wideberg was recommended by a colleague. And even though he was only 26, with job experience selling lawn-care services door to door, she had that

feeling that she could make things work with him. So she took a chance, and he became the first employee of Bailey's Medical.

"I went to the interview and she told me she had this vision, and I bought into it. I mean the vision was a 600-square-foot room at that point, no employees, no nothing, but there was a vision there, and we believed in it together," Wideberg says. Sitting at a high top in the foyer surrounded by balloon sculptures, he tells a story about his first sale, a hospital bed, and how Bailey and he delivered it to a man in a dementia ward. One of the other patients in the ward had defecated on the packaging, and as they were cleaning up, Bailey got poop all over her shirt. It didn't faze her, he says, because they had just helped someone, and that's what they do. "We take care of people."

The business grew quickly, and Wideberg with it; he is now COO. Bailey soon had him managing teams of people, many of whom were older than he. He learned leadership from watching her, but also from books she had him read and then give weekly presentations on to the team, a few chapters at a time. He isn't the only one to whom Bailey has assigned book reports — executives whose speaking style she deemed too negative have had to give presentations on positive criticism techniques, for example. This training technique harks back to her UConn tutoring days.

Jessica Dyson, now HR director,

started entry level and says she found it disconcerting when Bailey began to offer her more responsibility, asking her opinion on business decisions. "She eased me into it," Dyson tells me. "And that's kind of what she does, to make you grow into the shoes she's trying to give you."

By now, the party has moved into the late night phase, where everyone feels like they've known each other forever. A group of women including past track teammates, pharmaceutical marketers, an advocate for the homeless, and a princess of Sierra Leone dance together next to the indoor pool. Bailey is still signing books. The vibe is full of love.

And the love is real. Bailey has instilled a fundamental ethos into her medical device company: be kind and caring to people in the worst moments of their lives. You might just be delivering a hospital bed, you might get crap all over you, but you can be kind and caring and take care of people while you do it.

As she explained back at her condo the day before the party, the point of her success and wealth — and her book — is to be able to help other people.

Bailey remembers the manager who, early in her career, let her take off as much time as she needed when her grandmother died. "He did that. Now, I take that, and make sure that that is a part of my leadership. I not only care for my employees in work, but I care for them outside. I can't ask you to care for people if I'm not caring for you." ☺

CLASS NOTES

1950s

➔ **Sondra Melzer '57 (ED)** recently published a book of poetry, "It Was Right Not to Love Him So Much." A retired professor emerita at Sacred Heart University, she also was an adjunct professor at UConn Stamford. Melzer taught for 40 years in public schools in Stamford, Connecticut, where she was department chair at Westhill High School. A scholar of the novels of Philip Roth, she also published "The Rhetoric of Rage: Women in Dorothy Parker." She lives with her husband, **Franklin Melzer '56 (CLAS)**, an attorney, in Stamford.

1960s

➔ **Dom Armentano '63 MA, '66 Ph.D.** reports that he has been writing op-eds on public policy since 1970, including a recent one for The Hill about the continuing mystery surrounding the origin and identity of exotic UFOs. Armentano retired in 1995 from the University of Hartford, where he was a professor of economics. He and his wife of 56 years live in Vero Beach, Florida. ➔ **Mark Shenkman '65 (CLAS), '07 H**, the founder and president of Shenkman Capital Management, received the Museum of American Finance's Lifetime Achievement Award for his outstanding career in the investment industry. ➔ **Geri Lipman King '68 (CLAS)** of Concord, New Hampshire, shares an update. She is a social psychologist and organizational consultant, and her work takes her throughout the United States and, occasionally, abroad. She says she doesn't plan to even semi-retire until she's 102 because the work is so satisfying. She's also written a book, "The DUH! Book of Management and Supervision: Dispelling Common Leadership Myths."

➔ **Carol Milardo Floriani '68 (NUR)** reports that she has retired from hospice nursing and now lives in Easley, South Carolina. She also notes that she and her husband just celebrated 50 years of marriage with a cruise in the Southern Caribbean. ➔ Local author **Arno B. Zimmer '68 (CLAS)**, of Fairfield, Connecticut, has come out with another book. "The Antiquary Book Murders: The Hunt for Little Dorrit" starts off with the murder of an elderly bookstore owner and the discovery of an 1857 copy of "Little Dorrit."

1970s

➔ Westport, Connecticut, attorney **Edward Nusbaum '70 (CLAS)** is one of just three family law attorneys among the 171 lawyers recognized as prominent attorneys by Rutgers Law School over the past 110 years.



➔ **Charles Surasky '71 (CLAS)** and co-author Kent Halland received the Texas Numismatic Association's highest honor, the Calvert K. Tidwell Literary Award. They

were honored for their research and authorship of "The Surviving Postal Notes of Texas" about the experimental form of 19th-century U.S. postal money orders. Surasky also volunteers each week at the North Texas Community Food Pantry — often wearing his UConn Cares T-shirt.



➔ **Liz Scotta '72 (CLAS)** has summarized 20 sketch-books of trips to France into her third book, "Not Just Paris: Scenes from France." ➔ **Susan M. Carroll '73 (CLAS), '75 MA, '81 Ph.D.** and her husband, **David J. Carroll '74 (CLAS), '77 MSW**, of Torrington, Connecticut, have published a new book, "Simplifying Statistics for Graduate Students."

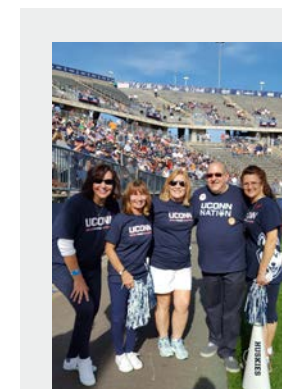


➔ When former UConn Huskies men's basketball player **Lee Barbach '74 (ED)** lost his battle with glioblastoma, a fast-growing, deadly type of brain cancer, five years ago, his daughter, Amber, created

a nonprofit to raise funds for brain cancer research. To date, the Glioblastoma Research Organization has funded five research projects at leading U.S. cancer centers, such as the Cleveland Clinic, and has created a social media community connecting brain cancer caregivers. Find out more at gbmresearch.org. ➔ **Rose Jung-Gaggero '75 (SFA)**, a mixed media artist, was the featured artist for the 2nd Street Art Gallery of Fort Pierce, Florida, over the summer. She recently became a member of the Arts for ACT Gallery, the proceeds from which provide shelter and counseling for abused women. ➔ **David Mark Fetterman '76 (CLAS)** has published his 18th book, "Empowerment Evaluation and Social Justice — Confronting the Culture of Silence," which he dedicated to his mother, **Elsie Blumenthal Fetterman '49 (ED), '60 MS, '64 MA, '66 Ph.D.** He is president and CEO of Fetterman and Associates, an international consulting firm, and is a faculty member at Pacifica Graduate Institute and Claremont Graduate University.



➔ **Robert J. Kirschenbaum '76 (CLAS), '78 MA, '82 Ph.D.** checks in with a life update. He continues to work



➔ **Stephanie (Green) Giancola '78 (BUS)** is living the dream. A former UConn cheerleader and self-proclaimed sports nut, she loves writing so much that she stayed an extra semester at UConn to take a coveted advanced creative writing course. Always a romantic, she has combined her passion for sports and writing to become a USA Today bestselling author. Under the pen name Stephanie Queen, Giancola has published more than 50 sports romance novels. Though she lives in New Hampshire, she still bleeds blue and returns for football and men's basketball games every year.

Giancola reunited with former cheerleaders at UConn's Homecoming in 2017. From left: Patrice Farquharson '79 (ED), Patti (Panuczak) Milardo '77 (CLAS), Giancola, Jeff Rubin '76 (BUS), and Renee (Occhialini) Malinowski '78 (SFA).

as a school psychologist for the Clover Park School district in Lakewood, Washington, a job he's held for 30 years. He has published more than 50 peer-reviewed articles, chapters, and books and is now working on a book called "(Learning) How to Grow Old." He says he plans to retire someday but for now, tries to stay young at heart by playing music with friends and riding his Harley '04 Sportster "very, very fast." He says he would like to reconnect with a former undergraduate named Linda who worked with him at the Good Food Truck on campus back in the day. ➔ **Curtis Tearte '78 JD** shared the news that he was honored with an alumni achievement award at the 75th anniversary of Brandeis University, where he earned his undergraduate degree in 1973. Tearte, a retired IBM executive, is chairman and co-founder of the Tearte Family Foundation, which partners with educational institutions and organizations to offer scholarships, mentoring, and leadership training to underrepresented and first-generation students. Congrats! ➔ **Rick Mahoney '79 JD** and **Carolyn (Berner) Kelly '72 (PT)** regularly help out at the Midwest Food Bank, which sent water, food boxes, and personal hygiene kits from their Disaster Relief hub in Morton, Illinois, to Barre, Vermont, to help victims of the devastating flooding from mid-July storms.

1980s

➔ **Bill Keena '81 (CLAS)** is now market president at AmeriHealth Caritas of New Hampshire. He also has accepted a position on the board of the Granite United Way and serves on the National Volunteer Leadership Council for the March of Dimes. ➔ Congrats to **Roberta Wachtel-hausen '81 (ED)** on being recognized by the Hartford

Business Journal as a 2023 Power 50 member. She's the president of WellSpark Health, a Farmington, Connecticut, provider of corporate wellness programs. ➔ **Jerome "Jerry" Lusa '81 (CLAS)**, of Glastonbury, Connecticut, has published his second book of poetry, "Hometown Poems." He says each free verse poem evokes a memory of a landmark in his hometown of Stafford Springs, Connecticut, up the road from the main campus. His first book of rhyming verse, "Backyard Poems," came out in 2022. ➔ **Tom Connors '83 MS, '86 Ph.D.** was elected vice president and state officer of the New Jersey School Boards Association for a two-year term. He has been a member of the Board of Education in Piscataway Township, New Jersey, for 14 years and is retired from the technology division of the Colgate-Palmolive Company.

1990s

➔ **Anthony Susi '90 MM** reports that five of his newly published compositions have earned a JW Pepper Editor's Choice designation. These include an original Motown-style piece, "Go Big or Go Home," for jazz band; an original programmatic piece, "The Race," for concert band; and a contemporary pairing of "Carol of the Bells" and "We Three Kings" for string orchestra. ➔ **Meredith (Heisler) Rogers '92 (CAHNR)** reports that she and her nieces, Elsa and Lennon Heisler, have written a children's book, "Little Leo's First Big Show," which she describes as a true story about her baby horse's first dressage show. ➔ **Kelli-Marie Valieres '92 (BUS), '05 MA, '08 Ph.D.** was recognized by the Hartford Business Journal as a 2023 Power 50 member. She's the chief workforce officer in Connecticut's Office of Workforce Strategy.

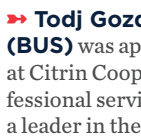


➔ I always think so fondly of my time at UConn, writes **Anthony DiChiara '05 (CLAS)**. I owe everything to my experience. I met my wife **Melissa DiChiara '04 (CLAS)** there, which led to my career in fire safety, but more importantly our two daughters — our youngest actually was born on the 15-year anniversary of the day we met during Homecoming 2002! Our girls have become huge Husky fans and we look forward to taking them to their first game this season.

My family's link to UConn has continued to impact our lives in positive ways. In the Summer 2019 issue of the magazine, the story "Team Impact: A Winning Way to Heal" by Elizabeth Omara-Otunnu caught my eye. After researching the organization, I thought it would be something that would benefit our oldest daughter, Penelope, who was born with a very rare genetic disorder called Emanuel Syndrome. We had an amazing experience with Team Impact, being matched with the Molloy University Softball team here on Long Island. The players openly accepted Penelope as a teammate and Penelope always enjoyed her time attending games, practices, and other events with the team. Penelope recently "graduated," becoming a Team Impact alumna, but we still plan on staying involved with the teams. Our family will be forever grateful to UConn. So much can be said about how our experiences on campus have shaped our lives. Go Huskies!



➔ **Namita Tripathi Shah '93 (BUS)** was elected to Day Pitney's Executive Board.



➔ **Todj Gozdeck '93 (BUS)** was appointed partner at Citrin Cooperman, a professional services firm. He's a leader in the firm's transac-



tion advisory services practice. ➔ **Steven McHugh '94 (ENG)**, an

intellectual property lawyer, has joined Cantor Colburn LLP as a partner. McHugh has served as an assistant clinical professor of law and as supervising patent attorney at the UConn School of Law. Prior to practicing law, Steven held electrical engineering positions at United Technologies Corp., Timex Corp., and Dictaphone Corp.



➔ **Chris Trudeau '95 (CLAS)** recently was promoted to (continued on p. 41)



LIFE LESSONS

IS YOUR BOSS A JERK?

Are you? Tessa West can answer both questions — and help you fix your workplace nightmares.

Have no fear. Soul-crushing co-workers and beastly bosses are everywhere, but you can protect yourself and have a sane, happy work life. So says **Tessa West '08 Ph.D.**, author of "Jerks at Work: Toxic Coworkers and What to Do About Them."

"I have heard all of the tales from hell," says West, a professor of psychology at NYU, who is quick to add "People also come up to me, paranoid, and ask, 'I'm not in this book, am I?'"

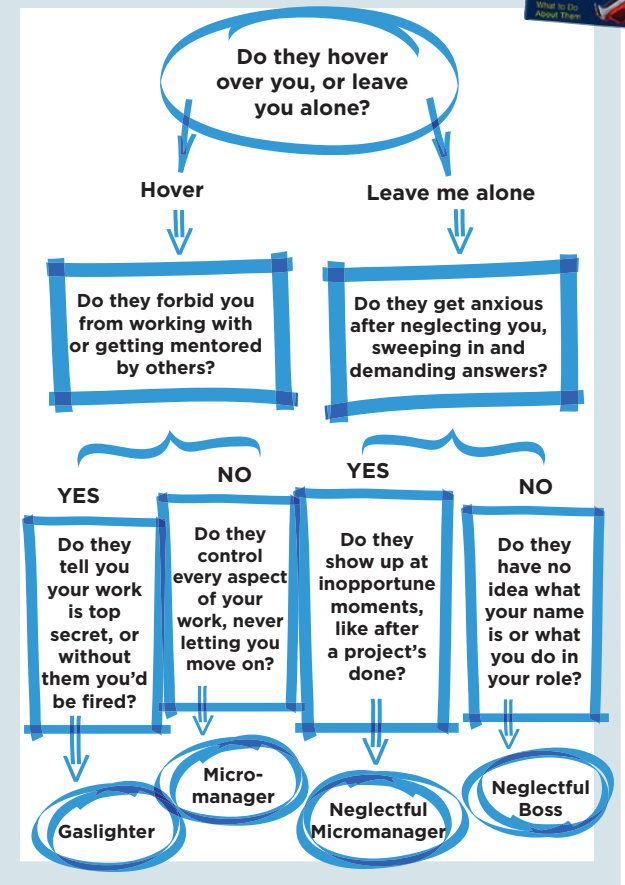
Her guide for dealing with misery-making colleagues identifies the seven most common types of office jerks. Bulldozers do anything to get their way. Credit Stealers ooze friendship while swiping others' work. Neglectful Bosses practice swoop-in supervision. Micromanagers meddle. Gaslighters isolate victims with lies. Kiss Up/Kick Downers belittle staff while brownnosing their own bosses.

The most common crummy co-worker? It's the Free Rider, according to West, who preys on conscientious colleagues too timid to spurn their leechlike ways.

The cure for dealing with all these miscreants calls for a two-step process, she says. First, build a network of work allies and use their insights to decide how to deal with the jerk. Then depersonalize the problem and treat it before it festers. "You want to address very specific behaviors — not why someone did something. When you have a conversation around the behavior, people will be much less defensive," she says.

For those who fear they are guilty of work jerkery, she advises asking for feedback from co-workers in the same way you'd confront a jerk. "Ask people what they think of your specific behaviors — did I give you enough time on that document? Do you feel I gave you the opportunity to speak up in the meeting? Create a habit of asking for that daily feedback and do it in front of a lot of people, so everyone else starts doing it as well. By creating that structure and a system of small daily low-level things, people won't be afraid to give you feedback."

What Kind of Jerk Boss Do You Have at Work?



West says stress can drive people into what she calls "accidental jerk territory" and confesses that the pressure of leading an office reorganization once made her a bulldozer boss. "Everybody hated me," she admits. By sharing her failings in the book, "I wanted to throw myself under the bus to get people to have a little more humility," she says.

"Most of us have an inner jerk. This isn't a bad apple issue. This isn't a personality defect issue," says West. Most people don't mean to be ogres. They try to be good bosses but, for example, pressure from the top makes them micromanage. Worse, an organization's structural flaws encourage people to misbehave. Her next book, "Job Therapy," explores reasons people are unsatisfied at work and comes out next year.

Thanks to the growth of remote work, it's harder to detect a jerk, she says. People no longer cross-pollinate in person and are unable to see who creates the social glue — or mud — that helps or hurts organizations.

"It's not an employee's burden to fix mean people," she says. "But at the same time don't assume other people are going to care about your problem. It's your burden and your responsibility to learn how to communicate to fix it. That's the safest strategy." —GEORGE SPENCER



TRAJECTORY

Neuer, at the German National Library, believes a library's mission "to record everything without fear or favor" is essential to democratic society.

World War, the Leipzig building, damaged by allied bombing raids, became the leading state library of communist East Germany. "Certain publications from the West were strictly off limits to the public," says Neuer. A West German library was opened in Frankfurt in 1946.

In 1990, the two libraries merged during German reunification. Today, along more than 250 miles of shelf space, sits every book, journal, CD, and map published in Germany from the beginning of the 20th century, catalogued in perfect sequence.

Neuer's path to the top of the library world, though, was far less organized.

Arriving in Storrs as a German study-abroad student from the University of Mannheim, Neuer was quickly captivated by New England. He stayed on for a Master of Music in double bass performance and immersed himself in UConn's musical life.

"I played in the wind ensemble, and in the orchestra," says Neuer. "I discovered new repertoire. And I accompanied other kids from bass class on the piano."

He also fell in with the art scene in Hartford. After college, he worked for the Wadsworth Atheneum and went on to hold management positions at Chamber Music Plus and the Hartford Symphony Orchestra. "I was able to use the musical education I had from UConn, along with marketing and administrative skills, to venture into cultural management."

In 2009, Neuer and his wife, whom he'd met in Hartford, moved to New York City. Applying for marketing jobs with nonprofits, he ended up at The New York Public Library, the fourth-biggest library on the planet. It was, he says, a surprise.

"I'd been a reader all my life. But it was just by chance that I ended up in the library world. I worked five years in the marketing department, moving up to director of digital engagement.

WHAT A LIBRARY CAN DO

A music major at UConn, Johannes Neuer now lives in Leipzig, Germany, safeguarding a nation's memories.

A national library is the memory of a country, and Germany's is no exception. An archive of the country's tumultuous and violent story since 1913, the German National Library is the storehouse of a past that must never be forgotten.

"The National Library plays a vital role in German society," says Johannes Neuer '00 MM, the new director of the Leipzig site, the library's original home and one of its two current locations. "It

holds everything that is published in Germany. And it makes no judgments."

It wasn't always so. The library's founding mission was to collect, catalogue, and make accessible all literature published in Germany. But in 1933, the library was incorporated into the Nazi propaganda ministry. "Undesirable" literature was promptly removed from access.

Following the end of the Second

Then I switched over to library administration and became the director of customer experience."

In New York, Neuer saw how the library was changing lives. From its literacy programs to its world-class research collections, the library was enriching minds of all ages, across backgrounds. "I saw what libraries can do for anybody who wants to advance in life," he says.

In 2018, he and his family moved to Germany, where he took a position with a library supply company. But he wasn't satisfied. "I really wanted to go back to library administration, back to

serving the public," he says. "So when I heard the German National Library was looking for a director, I put my name in the hat."

Neuer took the reins in Leipzig this summer at a time of transition. What challenges does he face? Guiding the library through an increasingly digital publishing landscape for one, as well as introducing artificial intelligence into library systems while, at the same time, making sure he protects jobs.

"We have AI that can do full text scans and catalog items at a very fast rate," says Neuer. "So this is a transi-

tional moment for some of our professional colleagues."

The library's founding task — to record everything, without fear or favor — remains a guiding principle for Neuer. "In a democratic society," he says, "it is very important that we don't hold anything back."

And it turns out Neuer is returning to his musical roots as well. The library is home to the German Music Archive, which holds more than 2.1 million works, made up of sheet music and sound recordings. "In a way," he says, "it's like I'm coming full circle." —TOMAS WEBER

technical business operations lead in the group technology division of Informa, where he manages a team of more than 20 engineers and analysts. He's been with the company for 26 years. ➤ **David DeArmas '96 (CLAS)** was named middle school principal of Fredericksburg Christian School in Fredericksburg, Virginia, where he had been director of athletics. He will still keep a hand in athletics, continuing on as head varsity football coach for the Eagles. ➤ **Melissa Kaplan '98 (CLAS)** has published her first novel, "The Girl Who Tried to Change History," a historical fiction tale set in London during World War II.



➤ **Congrats to Christopher Barnes '98 MA** on being named president of

Escalent, a data analytics and advisory firm. Before joining Escalent in 2016, he served as senior vice president for Acturus. Previously, he was senior advisor to the chairman of the Democratic Caucus in the U.S. House of Representatives and managing partner for Pulsar Research and Consulting. He also co-founded the Center for Survey Research & Analysis at UConn, where

he led ongoing studies on the business climate.

2000s

➤ **Rachel Golembeski Criscuolo '02 (CLAS)** reports that she runs a speech therapy practice based in Shelton and Southbury, Connecticut, that primarily treats children with a range of communication delays and disorders.

➤ **Olga F. Jarrin '02 (NUR), '07 MS, '11 Ph.D.** was appointed to the Hunterdon Endowed Professorship in Nursing Research at Rutgers University, where she's been an associate professor in the School of Nursing. An internationally recognized scholar, her research focuses on gerontological nursing and health services. She leads multiple interdisciplinary research projects focused on improving health care delivery, equity, and outcomes for the elderly living with chronic and advanced illnesses. ➤ **Linda De Jesus '02 MBA** was appointed global vice president and general manager of Integrated DNA Technologies. De Jesus previously served as senior vice president and chief commercial officer at Azena Life Sciences. (continued on p. 44)



➤ At the moment there are more than 1,300 species listed as endangered by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. But there are five species no longer on that list, thanks to the efforts of **Susan Meiman '11 MS**, above left, and **Melissa Booker '90 (CAHNR)**, above right.

The two were honored, along with four other colleagues, as Recovery Champions by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for their work saving an endangered sparrow and four plants on San Clemente Island in California. Meiman, a project manager for the Institute for Wildlife Studies, and Booker, a wildlife biologist for the U.S. Navy, lead the San Clemente Bell's Sparrow Monitoring and Management Project on the San Clemente Island Naval Auxiliary Landing Field. Their work resulted in the recovery and delisting of the San Clemente Island paintbrush, larkspur, lotus, bush-mallow, and Bell's sparrow.



REMEMBRANCE

A GOOD LIFE

Renowned graphic artist Peter Good '65 (SFA), who received the University Medal for his work designing the University's oak leaf logo and is perhaps best known as the designer behind the enduring Hartford Whalers logo, died at home in Chester, Connecticut, on May 3 at age 80.

I was immersed in Peter Good's art just through my existence.

I come from a small family. Both of my parents were artists — my dad, Paul Zelanski, was a professor at UConn for almost 40 years. He taught Peter; my mom, Annette (Harding) Zelanski '65 (SFA); and Peter's wife, Janet Cummings Good '66 (SFA). We chose friends to be our family, and the closest were those connected through UConn, both faculty and alumni. I grew up with the Goods — some of my earliest childhood memories were playing at their house. We shared meals and attended parties, concerts at Jorgensen, and so many art openings.

From a set of Christmas stamps issued in 1993 to the UConn oak leaf symbol to the Hartford Whalers logo, the work of one of UConn's first graphic design majors lives on.



I remember always being in awe of Peter's work and knowing I ultimately wanted to work for him. I kept in touch with Peter while I was at UConn. When I graduated, I wanted to make sure I earned my spot at Peter Good Graphic Design (which was the business before he and Jan started Cummings & Good). I got his advice before I took my first job at Newman Design Associates, and when I was ready to leave there, I essentially showed up at his office like a stray cat that they fed and never left. I would find a corner of a desk to work at just to be close to his greatness. Peter was so incredibly generous and kind, and such a thoughtful teacher.

He would let me come with him to client meetings and presentations. He confessed he never liked public speaking, and I quite enjoyed it. I know how lucky I was that he allowed me that experience as a young professional. I have so many memories of driving over the river and through the woods together, just talking about ideas, design, concepts, books, music, and art. Those are my most treasured memories, the quiet moments. It's not the published work that I remember the most — yes I smile every single time I see the Hartford Whalers logo, especially on a young person, the next generation appreciating his design — but for me, it was always the process. It's the thinking, the research, the discovery, the humor, the making of things.

Through the duration of my career, the tools we use as designers have advanced beyond our imaginations. I worked for Peter as computers transitioned into office spaces, but were yet to be fully embraced. We always started with a sketch pad, and I still do to this day. We spent so much time making things in the studio — design was very tactile. One of the things that I learned from Peter was that a good idea will always last. I think that's what makes Peter's work so timeless. Certain design, you can look at and immediately know when it was created, like fashion. There are trends within design and typography that date it to a time period. Peter always avoided that,



Peter Good '65 (SFA) and Noemi Zelanski Kearns '89 (SFA) at a wedding in 1993.

his work started with the purity of an idea balanced with the art and craft of execution. It was never design for the sake of design. There's a capacity with digital tools to make things look polished, but sometimes when you strip it down, there's nothing there. Peter's work was successful as a drawing on a piece of paper — it wasn't the application that made it interesting. It's special because it's smart.

You can recognize Peter's work because his artistry came through so strongly. I understand that passion and love. I understand that joy for design wasn't bound by time or hours that were billed to the client. That's the life of somebody who lives as a graphic designer. Peter was truly looking for the best idea, the best solution — sometimes that took a great deal of time, even if the outcome looked relatively simple.

The very last time I saw Peter, we were planning on having lunch togeth-

er at my studio. I told him then, as I told him every time I talked with him, how incredible it was for me to work for him and that it changed the trajectory of my life. I told him again that I hear his voice every day. I'm still surrounded by him. I've owned Ink&Pixel Agency for more than 29 years, but I continue to recognize his favorite typefaces, glyphs, and ligatures. He's over my shoulder when I kern type, when I force line breaks.

Decades later, I hear Peter. He was so incredibly talented. He loved what he did, and he never compromised. It wasn't work, it was the passion he had for life. That's why his design will live on, and that's why people recognize it even at a glance, because that's how brilliant he was. That's the mark of an artist whose work comes from their being. It's not just a job. He taught me to be a designer for life. I miss him terribly. I truly, start to finish, admire him.

—NOEMI ZELANSKI KEARNS '89 (SFA)



► Sometimes the most random event can lead to a college reunion. For retired Air Force Lt. Col. **Dave Fox '63 (BUS)** and his wife, **Cindy (Beck) Fox '65 (CLAS)**, a retired teacher, it happened when they were viewing some old photos they had recently digitized.

As they sat in their living room watching the images on a big screen TV, one popped up showing Dave's fraternity brother, **Allan Neubauer '64 (BUS)**, with Cindy's father. The photo, shown above, depicted the two in Saigon during the Vietnam War.

The Foxes were dumbstruck by the connection. They never knew that Neubauer, a U.S. Air Force 1st Lieutenant, and Cindy's father, U.S. Army Lt. Col. Louis Beck, had known each other, much less been stationed together during the war. It prompted the Foxes to track down Neubauer and set up a reunion that had been a long time coming (the three are shown above outside a restaurant in Washington, D.C.). "It was great to reunite with both Dave and Cindy after almost 60 years," Neubauer says. "I had tried to find them several times over the years, including using social media, but to no avail."

They discovered that they live about 1,500 miles apart. Neubauer, a retired procurement manager for maintenance and engineering services for BASF Corp., lives in Fort Worth, Texas, with his wife, Linda. The Foxes live in Arnold, Maryland. "Now that we know where each of us lives, I hope we can get together on a more frequent basis," Neubauer says.

TOM'S TRIVIA ANSWERS

1.C; 2.D; 3.B; 4.A

➔ Congrats to **Dennis Nash '04 MBA**, the CEO of the software company Control Station in Manchester, Connecticut. He's been named Connecticut's 2023 Small Business Person of the Year by the U.S. Small Business Administration. The USSBA recognized Nash as "a forward-thinking strategist who has positioned Control Station as an emerging leader in industrial process analytics and optimization," noting his work that "transitioned the company from a hobby business into a Control Station that licenses solutions to half of the manufacturers listed in the Fortune 500." The business supports facilities in more than 70 countries and employs a staff of 15.

➔ Chicago-based Dayton Street Partners has hired **Joe Olin '08 (BUS)** as director of acquisitions for its Miami office. He most recently was vice president of acquisitions at Banyan Street Capital.

2010s

➔ **Ben Arsenault '10 (CLAS), '22 MBA** was appointed deputy commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles, making him one of the youngest deputy commissioners in the state.

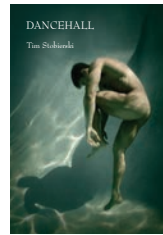
➔ **Garrett B. Cottrell '10 (CLAS)** was awarded the 2022 Coldwell Banker International Sterling Society sales award in Washington, D.C. The award is given to real estate brokers who sell 18 or more homes a year.

➔ **Shane R. Goodrich '10 (CLAS), '13 JD**, a partner at the Morgan, Brown & Joy law firm in Boston, Massa-

chusetts, was elected as a 2023 Excellence in the Law Honoree by Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly. ➔ **Kyle Hayes '10 (CLAS)** joined Foley & Lardner LLP's New York office as a partner in the firm's finance practice group and a member of the energy sector.



➔ **Courtney Marie Donnelly '11 (NUR)** recently joined an outpatient surgery facility in North Carolina, having worked as a head nurse at the University of North Carolina Hospital and, before that, at Duke University Hospital. She lives with her husband, Brandon, and their 3-year-old daughter, Skylar Marie, in Timberlake, North Carolina.



➔ **Tim Stobierski '11 (CLAS)** has a new book of poetry published by Antrim House



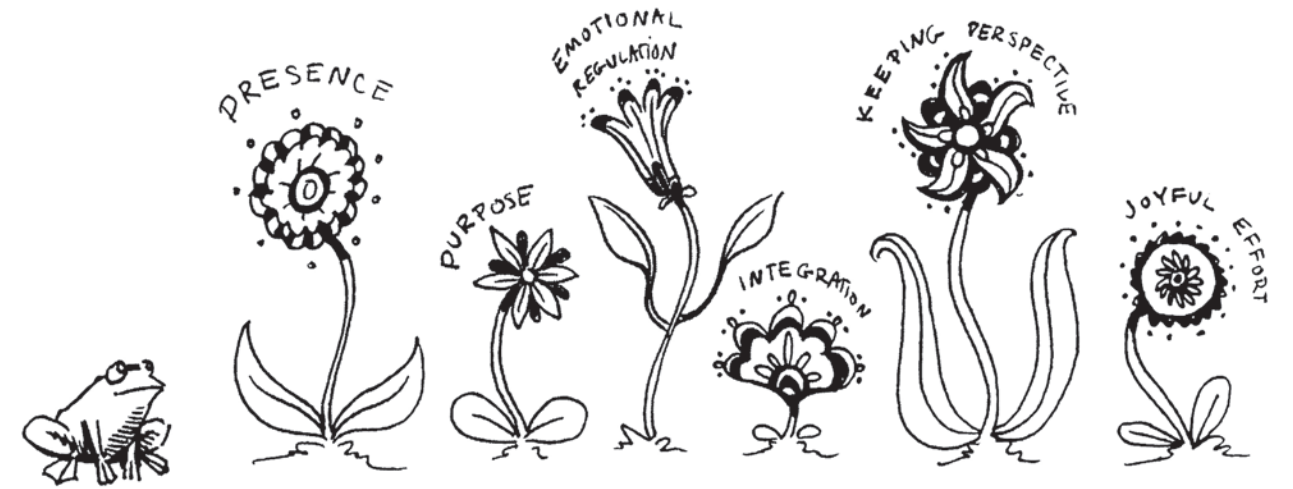
➔ Hermann Trophy winner, three-time All-American, and member of UConn's 2000 national championship team **Chris Gbandi '04 (CLAS)** has taken over as men's soccer head coach. Former coach Ray Reid retired in December.

Books titled "Dancehall," and billed as "a queer love story in five acts that follows the arc of a relationship from its earliest days to its final, somber conclusion." ➔ Talk about perseverance! After 10 years of hard work and setbacks, including learning how to perform surgeries over video during the pandemic, **Alanna Ferguson '12 (CLAS)** has finally become a veterinarian. She was inspired

to take the plunge after observing the veterinarians at the hospital where she had been a technician. She took 10 prerequisite courses while working full time as a vet tech and eventually was accepted to St. George's University in Grenada, West Indies. She is now training to become an emergency veterinarian at Ethos Veterinary Health. "I hit so many roadblocks along the way (continued on p. 48)



➔ **Pam Howard '92 (SFA)** and her firm Firebrick Design won Best in Show at the 47th Annual Connecticut Art Directors Club Awards for an invitation created for The Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts annual fundraiser. The piece "produced a unique experience while balancing traditional type with modern design," said Mike Marques, CADC's executive director.



LIFE LESSONS

BE KIND

The secret to how we can all get along? Start close to home, even closer than you think!

Stop what you are doing. Take a deep breath. Take another deep breath. Those can be the first steps on the path to becoming a kinder person, according to psychologist **Tara Cousineau '87 (CLAS)**, author of "The Kindness Cure: How the Science of Compassion Can Heal Your Heart and Your World."

When Cousineau began writing her book in 2016, she says "local hate incidents in schools seemed on the rise. Public and political discourse was cruel, and social media channels caused more harm than good. I wanted to do something about it."

Of course these are all tensions that exist today. Americans are suffering from what Cousineau calls "kindness phobia." She believes the impulse to be kind is built into our nervous systems, but current events are short circuiting people's emotional wiring. Stress creates emotional tunnel vision. Immediately people zero in on the threat. That jacks up their stress more, and when people are in fight or flight, says Cousineau, they are less generous, less friendly, and less kind.

Besides having her own private practice in the Boston area, Cousineau sees students at Harvard's Mental Health

and Counseling Service and is an adjunct faculty member at the Center for Mindfulness and Compassion, which is affiliated with Harvard Medical School.

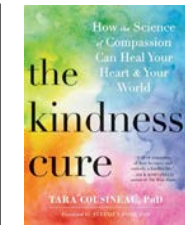
She urges fledgling Samaritans to begin by directing their compassion not to others but toward a surprising audience — themselves, a task many find difficult. "Compassion begins with kindness to ourselves. You must love yourself first. The more you practice kindness for yourself, the more resilient and compassionate you become for everyone else."

Getting started begins by being present in your life, she instructs. "Notice your feet on the floor. Notice what your five senses tell you at any given moment. Instead of being caught in a mind-loop of all the stressors in your day, slow down," she advises.

How will that help? The goal is to retrain the nervous system to respond rather than react. It need not require something demanding or time-consuming like an hour of daily meditation. It's better to practice what Cousineau calls "three by fours" — spending three minutes breathing four times a day.

"Make your cup of coffee, and be present in the moment. Don't do anything else. If you can manage your emotions, you'll be much better prepared to deal with daily stressors," she says.

Being more self-aware makes people happier, and studies show that happiness blossoms into bouquets of benefits. Among other things, mindfulness eases depression and chronic pain symptoms, improves body image, strengthens romantic relationships, and promotes lon-



Cousineau says she wrote this book as a gift for her daughters.

gevity. Happier people are more likely to be kind to loved ones and everyone else in their lives.

Yet many shy away from showing kindness. "Kindness gets a bad rap that it's weak, it's soft, or it's feminine when, in fact,

it's quite the opposite. Kindness is love in action. You have to go forward into the world with fierce compassion and courage. You have to allow yourself to feel comfortable with discomfort. You're putting yourself out there and allowing yourself to be vulnerable," she says.

There's no need to do grand or dramatic deeds for yourself or others. In her book, she tells stories of people who perform modest, yet powerful, acts. A person anonymously left Post-It notes with kind messages in elevators. A UPS delivery man, instead of being numbed by his delivery route, began to see himself as someone who delivers happiness, not boxes. Some of her kindness suggestions include smiling at others; saying "I love you;" complimenting co-workers; getting to know someone who is not like you; picking up trash; volunteering at a charity; and sending a thank-you note or email to someone every week.

"Being kind," writes Cousineau, "is life's long song that we sing to one another." —GEORGE SPENCER



MAKING GOOD



Ryan Matthews speaking at a Susie Foundation event; with his late mother, Susan, and father, Neil Matthews '83 (CAHNR); and with wife, Liz, at the Hartford Marathon.



FOR MOM

Ryan Matthews '09 (CLAS), '16 MPA loved his first job out of UConn re-building homes for Habitat for Humanity in New Orleans. But when he came home to Beacon Falls, Connecticut, that Christmas, his life turned upside down. He discovered that his mother, Susan, had dramatically deteriorated after being diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS).

So he quit his job and began caring for her full time. And then he watched in despair as the disease slowly robbed her of all control of her body over the next 18 months.

"Watching my mom die from ALS was an experience that shaped every fiber of who I am as a person," he says. "I graduated from UConn a little bright-eyed, a little full of myself, and ready to take on the world. ALS gave me this depth of perspective that almost made

my peers seem unfamiliar."

A few months later, he started The Susie Foundation, a nonprofit that supports families caring for relatives with ALS. Now 10 years later, the foundation has raised more than \$1 million and helped hundreds of families. The organization gives grants of up to \$3,000 a year to about 100 families in New England to help offset medical expenses not covered by health insurance. It also supports New England's only summer camp designed to meet the unique and pressing needs of young people helping to care for a parent or family member diagnosed with ALS.

"There are tens of thousands of people diagnosed with ALS every year, but you still feel incredibly isolated when it hits your family," Matthews says. "Part of what I wanted to do with The Susie Foundation is to make it feel

less isolating and at least have one person helping to support the family who speaks the language of ALS."

Matthews runs the Foundation on nights and weekends when he's not at his full-time job as vice president of programs for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Connecticut or caring for his toddler. He discovered his passion for community service at UConn, while majoring in history and political science and engaging in community outreach, intramural sports, Leadership Legacy Experience, and Alternative Spring Break. "All the things I got involved with on campus made me a more well-rounded person and better prepared to handle ALS." —GRACE MERRITT

For more information, visit thesusiefoundation.org.



Board of Trustees Professor of English Literature and Feminist Theory Gina Barreca has a piece in "50 Years of Ms.: The Best of the Pathfinding Magazine that Ignited a Revolution" and has published "Fast Fallen Women," the latest in her popular series of flash fiction and nonfiction compilations. The 75 essays in "Fast Fallen" include 27 by UConn alums, including Bobbie Ann Mason '72 Ph.D., '02 H, alongside new and original works by "bad girls" Amy Tan and Jane Smiley. Says Barreca in the book's dedication, "Here's to every woman who lost her virginity but kept the box it came in. Here's to every woman who felt she was the only girl who wasn't pure, perfect, and upright. And Mom, here's to you: You were not a bad girl. You were simply ahead of your time."



Jessica Vosk



American Ballet Theatre Studio Company



Holiday Pops

The Best of MUSIC, DANCE & ENTERTAINMENT

Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood Live!
King For A Day

Sun, Oct 22, 2 pm (\$26-31)

Randy Rainbow For President
Sat, Oct 28, 8 pm (\$46-51)

Le Consort
Thu, Nov 2, 7:30 pm (\$36-39)

Jessica Vosk - Cabaret
Sat, Nov 4, 8 pm (\$46-56)

Molly Tuttle & Golden Highway - Cabaret
Sat, Nov 11, 8 pm (\$36-56)

American Ballet Theatre Studio Company
Fri, Nov 17, 8 pm (\$36-39)

Messiah Sing
Thu, Nov 30, 8 pm (Free)

MacMaster & Leahy
Sun, Dec 3, 3 pm (\$36-46)

Holiday Pops
Fri, Dec 8, 8 pm (\$76-91)



Fall Events on Sale Now
jorgensen.uconn.edu
Spring 2023 events to be announced soon!

Box Office: M-F, 10 am - 5 pm
(860) 486-4226 | jorgensen.tickets@uconn.edu
On the UConn Storrs campus



SHARE YOUR NEWS!

➔ To submit a Class Note send an email: alumni-news@uconn-alumni.com

or write:
Alumni News & Notes
UConn Foundation
2384 Alumni Drive,
Unit 3053
Storrs, CT 06269

➔ To submit an obituary email: contactus@foundation.uconn.edu

Obituaries can be found at foundation.uconn.edu/obituaries

Submissions may be edited for clarity and/or length.

and had multiple amazing experiences working in different animal hospitals and countries (with leatherback sea turtles in Grenada and numerous types of wildlife in South Africa). It has all made me a stronger doctor and human," she says.



➔ Best wishes to **Julia (Leonard) Cricchi '12 (ED)**, **'13 MA** and **Kristopher Cricchi '11 (CLAS)**, of Guilford, Connecticut, who were married in September 2021 at Mystic Seaport.
 ➔ **Marty Summa '12 (ED)** was hired at Greenfly as a customer success manager for sports to help lead their collegiate athletics and small teams. ➔ **Benjamin Rafala '13 (CLAS)** graduated from the Connecticut State Police

Academy in 2020 and is now a Connecticut State Trooper with Troop H in Hartford.
 ➔ Captain **Nicholas Hurley '13 (CLAS)**, **'15 MA** was selected by the U.S. Army Center of Military History as its 2023 Scholar in Residence. He will serve two years on active duty, first as an instructor in the history department at the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, then as a staff member at the Center of Military History in Washington, D.C. He enlisted in the Army National Guard in 2010 and was commissioned as a Field Artillery Officer through the UConn ROTC program in 2013. In civilian life, he served as curator of the New England Air Museum in Windsor Locks, Connecticut.



➔ **Rhea Debussy '14 MA, '18 Ph.D.** was named an "Icon of Pride" for Columbus Pride, the Midwest's second largest pride festival, in June 2023. Stonewall Columbus, which organizes the event, cited her transgender rights activism, legislative victories for the LGBTQ+ community, and impact in Ohio and beyond.



➔ **Jen Morenus '97 (SFA) '18 MA**; **Leticia Quintino '22 (BUS)**; **Francine Quintino-Suchanek '16 (CLAS)**; **Camilla Vallejo '19 (CLAS)**; and **Silvia**



➔ **Jasmine Brown '15 (CAHNR)** was appointed as a board member of the American Forest Foundation. Brown, a doctoral student in forestry at Michigan State University, serves on the steering committee for the Women's Forest Congress and is a member of the Society of American Foresters and Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences.

Luque-Blakz '16 (BUS) traveled to Alfenas, Minas Gerais state, Brazil, for the Aug. 12 wedding of Quintino-Suchanek and shared a pic from the next-day barbecue.
 ➔ **Jack Gordon '17 MBA** is now chief financial officer of Harri, a recruitment and workforce management platform for the hospitality industry. Gordon joined Harri in 2022 as senior vice president of finance.

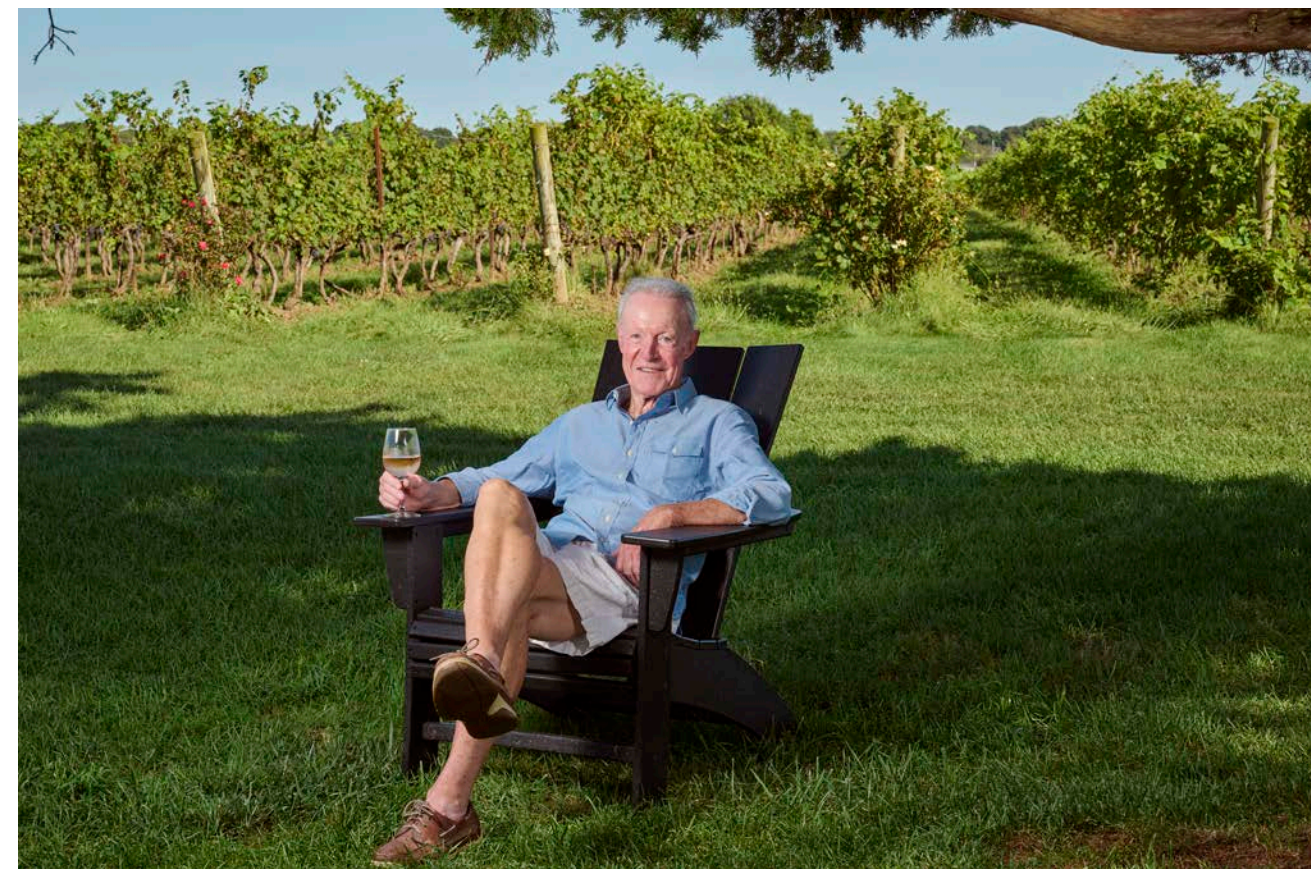


➔ **Dr. Meenakshi Vishwanath '17 MDS**, was elected to the board of directors of the American Board of Orthodontics. She is an associate professor at the University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Dentistry.
 ➔ **Hannah (Soto) Pilz '17 (CLAS)** and **Griffin Pilz '17 (CLAS)** met senior year playing intramural soccer. This March they said goodbye to all the other fish in the

sea and tied the knot at The Florida Aquarium in Tampa Bay. She is a business analyst, and he a data engineer.



➔ **Parker Gregory Shpak '18 (CLAS)** reports that he and business partner, Victor Tomasso, have launched a coffee roasting business called Those Guys Coffee Co. in New Hartford, Connecticut. They don't have a store, but their coffee can be ordered online or found in a variety of cafés and retailers around the state.



Peter Morenus

JOB ENVY

Everything's Coming up Rosé

They'd barely finished renovating the WWII-era private airplane hangar into a tasting room, barely planted their first vines, when they hosted a beautiful September wedding for friends — and unwittingly turned their budding winery, Saltwater Farm Vineyard in Stonington, Connecticut, into a sought-after wedding venue. Demand is so high that, two decades later, **Michael Connery '75 JD** and his wife, Merrily, find themselves opening a second vineyard and event venue, Kingdom of the Hawk, in North Stonington, a few miles inland.

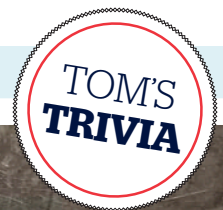
It all started with a listing for 108 acres on the Stonington coastline that Michael, poised for a "next chapter" after 30 years as an attorney in Manhattan, suspected would be as good a host to French grapes as the soil across the bay on the North Fork of Long Island. "If they can do it there ..." he surmised. And he was right. The Connerys have harvested cabernet franc, merlot, pinot noir, chardonnay, and sauvignon blanc grapes, and learned that merlot doesn't winter as well in Stonington as it does on Long Island. But sauvignon blanc does even better.

That matters little to the wedding parties. They are as taken with the greens and golds of the marsh grasses and grape vines, the spectacular sunsets, and ubiquitous egrets and osprey, as the Connerys were when they bought the place. The once decrepit airplane hangar is now a timber-trussed tasting room where wine casks transform into band backdrops and retro twinkle lights create electric arbors. "Our couples return with their newborns," says Merrily, "and now some of the newborns are getting ready to go to high school." Perhaps they'll have *their* weddings at Kingdom of the Hawk. —LISA STIEPOCK

Two of the things Michael Connery likes most about his second-chapter vocation as a vineyard owner are the view and "that sense of creating something tangible."

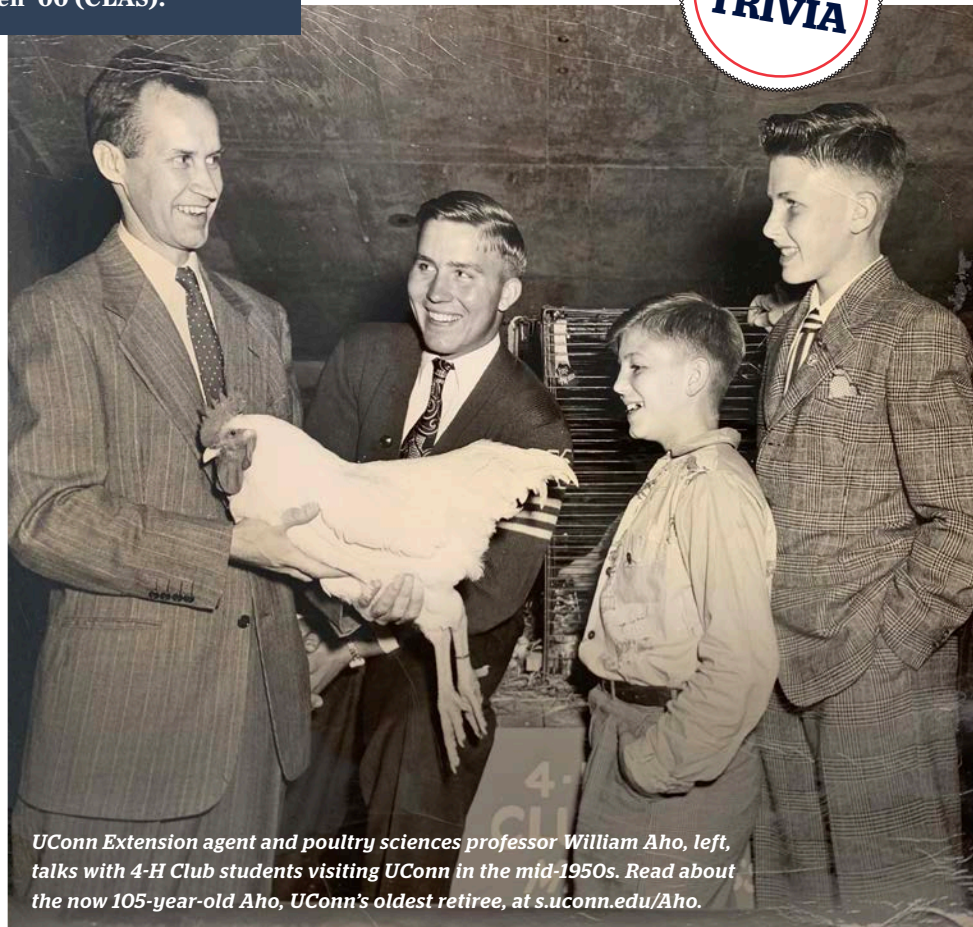
CHALLENGE YOURSELF TO TOM'S TRIVIA!

Go to s.uconn.edu/fall23 or p. 44 to see if you know as much as King of UConn Trivia Tom Breen '00 (CLAS).



- 1. One of the books written by Nechama Tec, a professor of sociology at UConn Stamford from 1974 to 2010, was turned into a 2008 film starring Daniel Craig and Liev Schreiber. What is the name of the film?**
A: Renaissance
B: Munich
C: Defiance
D: Infamous
- 2. In September 1989, dining halls began serving weekend meals for the first time in UConn history as part of an effort to get more students to remain on campus all week. The change was accompanied by a large rally at which effigies of what object were tossed onto a bonfire by students?**
A: Empty plates
B: Calendars
C: Cars
D: Suitcases
- 3. Starting in fall 1993, it was finally possible to do what at the Student Union?**

- A: Use the internet
B: Walk the length of the upper floors
C: Eat lunch
D: Get from the ground floor to the top floor without an elevator



UConn Extension agent and poultry sciences professor William Aho, left, talks with 4-H Club students visiting UConn in the mid-1950s. Read about the now 105-year-old Aho, UConn's oldest retiree, at s.uconn.edu/Aho.

- 4. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, UConn Extension held a local version of a national contest aimed at encouraging poultry farmers to adopt new scientific methods of breeding larger, meatier chickens. What was the name of this contest?**
A: The Chicken of Tomorrow
B: Victory Chicken
C: Chickennecticut
D: Chicken for Dinner, Chicken Forever