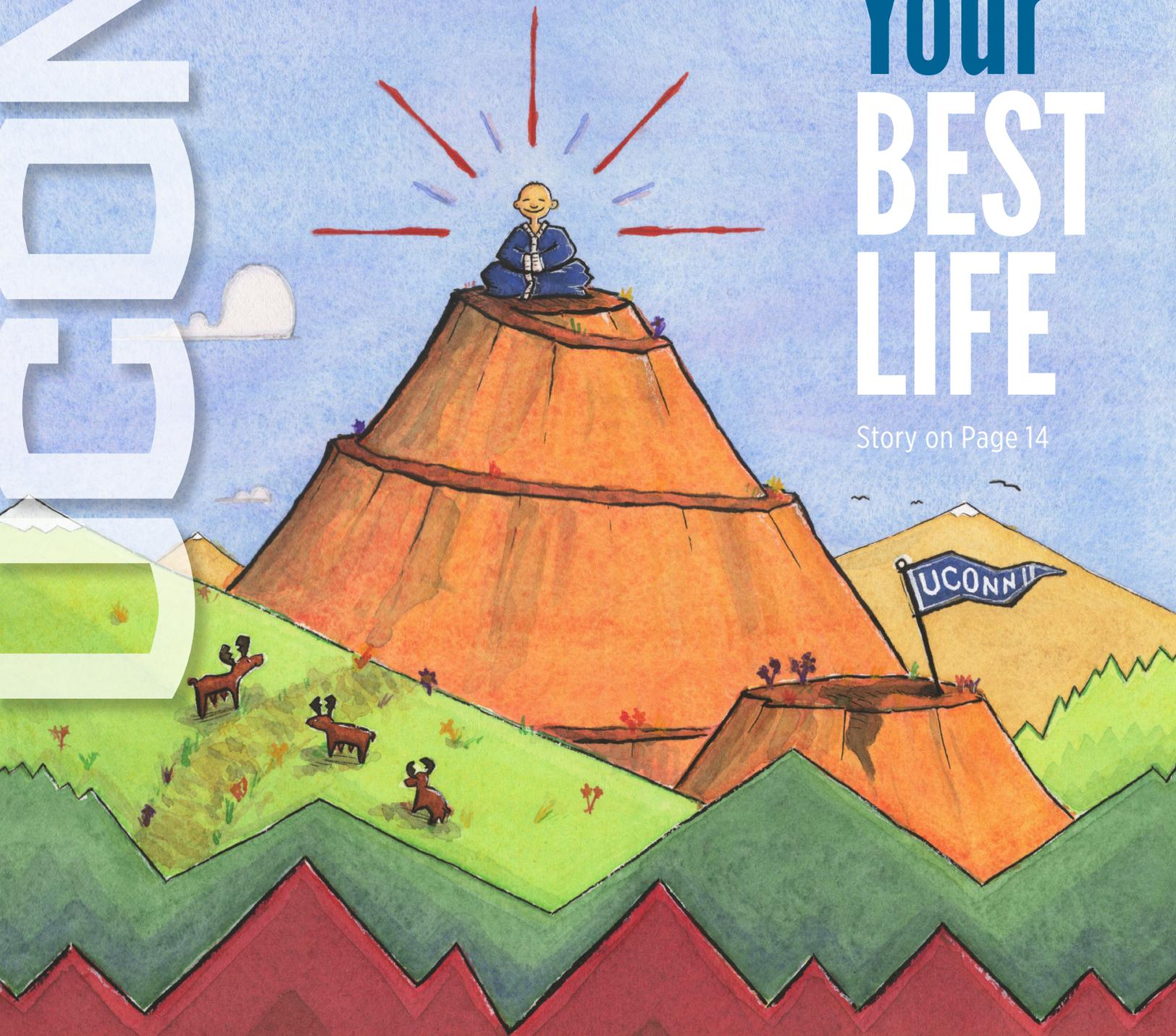


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# Living Your BEST LIFE

Story on Page 14



## As You've Never Seen Before

The next time you swat away a pesky fly, picture this.

Thanks in part to UConn alum Mark Smith '13 MS, ultra-high-resolution images like this one may very well guarantee you'll never look at anything the same way again — whether it's the intricate eyes of a flesh fly or the otherworldly surface detail of tattooed human skin.

As co-founder of high-tech startup Macroscopic Solutions, Smith is offering an entirely new view of the world through an imaging technology called the Macropod. The device, which captures two- and three-dimensional images of items minuscule or massive in stunning detail and focus, also is portable, having been designed for scientists documenting specimens abroad or out in the field.

"You can take this anywhere," he says. "You can set it up outside and image the night sky and shooting stars, but we've advanced the optics so much that we can also image objects that are as small as one micron."

Although he once knew next to nothing about running a business, Smith — a scientist at heart who enjoyed photography as a pastime — acted upon a longstanding hunch that this kind of macrophotography technology held enormous potential for fellow researchers far and wide if it could be made easily transportable.

Smith was a geosciences graduate student at UConn when he decided to enter the University's Innovation Quest competition, which invites aspiring student entrepreneurs to propose their ideas for commercial ventures. "I thought, 'Why not try it?' Let's see how the idea takes in the world of business," he says. "And I ended up winning it."

With \$15,000 in first-place prize money, plus business support, he launched the company in 2013, and has since been selling the Macropod to scientists worldwide — as well as donating one of the devices to high school classrooms or nonprofits for every 10 Macropods sold.

"I always had the idea that this could be a commercialized product, but never the idea that it could be a business — especially a business that I could operate," says Smith. "Now I see that there's a high potential in advancing science through this technology."

"There are a lot of different ways that people can spin this — ways we haven't even thought of yet." 🐾



View a mind-boggling photo gallery of specimens imaged by the Macropod on our new website, [magazine.uconn.edu](http://magazine.uconn.edu). Or, watch a video about the Macropod's technology at [s.uconn.edu/macropod](http://s.uconn.edu/macropod).



This extreme close-up of a flesh fly (sarcophagidae) was captured at 5x magnification with the Macropod by Macroscopic Solutions. This species of fly typically measures between .16 and .9 inches in length and has such distinct characteristics as checkering on the abdomen and red eyes. High-resolution, zoomed-in images like this help with species identification, scientific communication, and education.

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NATIONAL DISASTER

In the past 35 years, the rate of obesity among children aged 6 to 11 has more than tripled. Researchers and policy experts at the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity, now at UConn, are dedicated to reversing the trend.

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UConn's INSIDER GUIDE TO LIVING YOUR BEST LIFE

Need some advice? We tapped into the vast expertise of our faculty, students, and alumni to bring you tips to improve your life. Wondering how to water ski or how to dream bigger? Look no further.

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HUSKYMANIA

Jennifer Wendry comes from a family of rowing coaches, but when she came to Storrs in 1997 to lead UConn's first varsity women's rowing program, she faced more than a few challenges. Wendry reflects on the effect Title IX had on the sport and on the program's growth over the past 18 years.

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LEADERS OF THE PACK

After common rotator cuff injuries, many patients are left unable to lift or move their arms, and doctors don't always know why. A team of UConn Health researchers is testing the limits of surgery and working with adult stem cells to give hurt shoulders new life.

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**UConn alum Mark Smith '13 MS and his startup Macroscopic Solutions are offering a new view of the world through an imaging technology called the Macropod, which captures ultra-high-resolution images like this one of a damselfly. Learn more on page 2.**

Stay connected with what's happening at UConn via our online resources at [social.uconn.edu](http://social.uconn.edu).



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# A DIFFERENT KIND OF SUMMER CAMP

BY ROB CHUDZIK '91 (CLAS), '15 MS  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER MORENUS

Retired U.S. Navy Capt. Cornelius “Neil” Guinan '89 (CLAS) recently concluded 30 years of decorated military service, which included leading several Navy SEAL teams, as well as his most recent post as Deputy Commander, Special Operations Command Europe. Guinan now serves as executive director of Camp Trident, a nonprofit camp program held in locations around the country that seeks to increase self-confidence, maturity, initiative, and teamwork skills in teenage boys.

## 1 What was your journey to the Navy SEALs like?

I joined the Marine Corps after high school, after deciding that I wasn't quite ready for college. While stationed in Beirut with the Marines, I met some Navy SEALs — after working with them, I decided I wanted to be one. When I finished my time in the Marine Corps, I decided to go to UConn ... I graduated in 1989 with a BA in political science and went straight into Officer Candidate School in Rhode Island, then to SEAL training.

## 2 What got you through SEAL training, and what life lessons did you take from that experience?

Perseverance and, most importantly, the desire to not let yourself, your family, or your friends down — those are the things that drove me. Also, when I went through SEAL training, I was older [at 27] than most of the candidates, so I had the benefit of many life experiences to lean on. One of the biggest lessons I learned was that your body can go much further than you think it can — if your mind will let it. SEAL training is more about mental strength than about physical strength.



### 3 How did your UConn experience impact your career?

My political science degree from UConn certainly provided me with a valuable background and understanding of geopolitics, which has been critical in all my roles. Whether in Latin America, Africa, Europe, or the Middle East, I had a much better understanding of the region as a result of my education. Even if I hadn't studied a specific country, I had the tools to quickly get up to speed on the current geopolitical situation when I was sent there.

Additionally, the team environment we had at the UConn Rugby Club was second to none. We had one heart in that club, and we were all part of it. That same team culture, camaraderie, and attitude are very prominent in the SEAL teams as well.

### 4 After leading SEAL teams, you took on a much different role in Europe — was that a difficult transition?

During most of my tours in Afghanistan and Iraq ... I would control multiple operations from a command center [and] would periodically go into the field with the troops, to stay tied in with the operators and the environment on the ground.

Going to Europe was a change of role and environment; I had spent the previous 10 years in Central Command (Afghanistan and Iraq) and then had to get to know Europe. There are 51 countries under the area of responsibility of European Command, [where I was] meeting with military and civilian leaders in different European countries, trying to encourage their continued support for joint special operations forces.

So I went from a command and control combat role to political-military discussions with military and civilian leadership. I didn't join the SEALs to work in an office, but it was an important role, and I'm proud of the work we did.

### 5 What was your motivation for starting Camp Trident?

My wife, Mia, and I believed that I had something to offer young men. I wanted to try to help kids deal with some of the challenges of growing up today. Back in the '70s and '80s, if you got into a little trouble, it wouldn't necessarily ruin the rest of your life. The world is a bit harder for kids today. Camp Trident is an effort to help boys realize that they are turning into men, and to help them start to take on responsibility and become more mature. We try to help them transition from that awkward 12-year-old into a mature 17-year-old — but not necessarily take five years to get there.



For more Camp Trident photos, visit UConn Magazine's new website at [magazine.uconn.edu](http://magazine.uconn.edu).

### 7 What do you see the kids getting out of the camp?

We hear [from parents] that the kids seem to have a much greater awareness of responsibility. ... Some of those who benefit most are from troubled backgrounds or single-parent homes. They get the message that it's not mom and dad's fault anymore. You can be whatever you want to be, but to do that you have to start taking responsibility and determining your direction.

### 8 Are there any success stories from campers?

We have had two campers who have recently been admitted to the U.S. Naval Academy, and many who were admitted to other colleges and universities. This camp is not at all about recruiting kids for the military, but about letting kids know that they can be whatever they decide to be, and building the confidence and responsibility to get there.

### 9 What are the plans for Camp Trident's future?

We're going through the process of becoming a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and also expand[ing] to four separate camps — Virginia, Massachusetts, Colorado, and a fourth to be determined. The goal is to provide the opportunity to as many teenagers as possible.

### 6 What is the philosophy behind the camp's work?

We strive to give the boys an exciting outdoor experience, away from electronics and the everyday pressures of teenage life. We do some fun, cool things while overcoming some fears — whether it's heights or being out at night or on the water. During the process of becoming more confident in this environment, they become open to messages about being more responsible and maintaining integrity.

### 10 What are your post-retirement plans?

I plan to home-school my three daughters [aged 6 to 11] for a year, continue to run our camps, and take time to plan the next steps in my career. There are many opportunities out there, but I'm not going to rush into anything. 🐾

# WHO I AM TODAY

BY ASHWINI JOSHI '17 (ENG)



For biomedical engineering major and aspiring physician Ashwini Joshi '17 (ENG), substantial scholarship support has offered immeasurable opportunities to grow not only as a successful UConn student, but also as a researcher, community leader, and global citizen. The recipient of UConn's Nutmeg Scholarship, as well as the University's first-ever Stamps Scholar, Joshi, a native of West Hartford, Conn., shares her insight into the invaluable experiences now available to her as she strives to make the most of every day in Storrs — and beyond.

My thoughts raced as I opened an envelope from the University of Connecticut. In this envelope, I knew, would be the first of several college decision letters that would shape the future of my high school self. "Congratulations," it began.

The letter went on to inform me that I had received the Nutmeg Scholarship, a merit scholarship covering the full cost of attendance for four undergraduate years at UConn. One interview and three months later, I was also awarded the Stamps Scholarship, which would provide additional enrichment funding for activities such as studying abroad and pursuing research interests. I was beyond grateful that UConn believed in me and knew that, with this support, I would have great opportunities in Storrs.

Over these past two years, I've come to love UConn more than I ever imagined. As a pre-med biomedical engineering student, I have enjoyed challenging coursework ranging from physics to organic chemistry to English. Even outside the classroom, several opportunities have helped me develop as a student and thinker. Last spring, I began working with a biomechanics professor on an ergonomic knife-handle design project in a musculoskeletal systems modeling laboratory. This coming summer, I am looking forward to conducting medical research on a certain type of thyroid cancer. As I continue on through my undergraduate years, I am confident that I will be learning how to solve the current, complex problems in medicine and biomedical engineering in creative ways.

Beyond my focus in the science, technology, engineering, and math — or STEM — fields, I have also been able to develop my interest in French language and culture through a minor in French. Last summer, between my freshman and sophomore years, I spent four weeks in Toulouse, France. Through unexpected conversations at the bus stop, classes at a language school, daily trips to the boulangeries and pâtisseries, dinners with my host family, and day trips to nearby villages, I lived my childhood dream of

traveling to France. The Stamps Scholarship's enrichment funding made this amazing experience possible, and I cannot thank the Stamps Family Charitable Foundation enough for supporting my goals.

On campus, my sorority Phi Sigma Rho — a social sorority for women in engineering — has been a constant source of encouragement and opportunity, allowing me to grow as a leader and member of the greater UConn community. In addition to becoming involved through service projects such as teaching middle school girls about engineering, I have also been able to invest myself in the sorority itself through my position on the sorority's academic board. Encouraging my sisters in their academic endeavors in engineering has been incredibly rewarding and, in the next year, I look forward to developing further as a leader on our executive board.

I am also incredibly grateful and fortunate that Phi Rho exposed me to HuskyTHON, a yearlong fundraising effort culminating in an 18-hour dance marathon benefiting the kids at Connecticut Children's Medical Center. In my freshman year, I was eager to stand on my feet for 18 hours to dance for those who cannot. At HuskyTHON, I was amazed to see just how a few thousand college students can change the lives of so many families when we all come together to work for a common goal. Serving on the management team this year, I am already achieving one of my goals of using my own skills and time to help others. I am looking forward to the HuskyTHONs to come and am thankful that my scholarships have given me the time and freedom to pursue something so meaningful.

As I reflect on my past four semesters here at UConn, I have come to the same conclusion that I did after my first semester: I would not be the person I am today without the generous support from my scholarships. Their value goes beyond the funding itself by providing me chances to develop my personal qualities, and I would like to pass this opportunity on to future students. After graduation, I know I will find a way to give back so that someone else can come to love UConn as much as I do. 🐾

## YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO TRANSFORM LIVES

The UConn Foundation has launched a five-year, \$150 million student-support fundraising initiative. At a time when many colleges and universities are seeing a decline in applications, undergraduate applications at UConn now exceed 32,000 — triple the number in 1995. Equally significant, in recent years each incoming class has surpassed the previous one in academic accomplishment. UConn is more competitive than ever, and a top choice for many of the best and brightest.

**\$150 MILLION**

The Foundation's ambitious initiative aims to keep a UConn education affordable and, through merit and need scholarships like the one created by the Stamps Family Charitable Foundation, attract more high-achieving students.



Every gift matters, regardless of size. To find out how you can transform a life through scholarship or fellowship support, please visit, [transformlives.uconn.edu](https://transformlives.uconn.edu).



# National DISASTER

BY TIM MILLER

As obesity rates in America surge, a growing group of UConn researchers and policy experts works to stem the rising tide.



In 2004, then-Surgeon General Richard Carmona appeared before a U.S. Senate subcommittee to testify about a growing public health crisis in America. The problem had multiplied in the past few decades, becoming particularly acute among children. The threats posed by this crisis, Carmona warned, were so grave that America was at risk of seeing the first generation in its history have a shorter life expectancy than their parents. Carmona wasn't talking about tobacco, or drugs, or violent crime. He was talking about obesity.

**IN THE PAST 35 YEARS, THE RATE OF OBESITY AMONG CHILDREN AGES 6 TO 11 HAS MORE THAN TRIPLED.**

In the decade since Carmona's testimony, the statistics have grown even more grim. More than one in three American adults suffers from obesity, as do nearly one in five American children. Obesity leads to osteoarthritis, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and several types of cancer. In the past 35 years, the rate of obesity among children ages 6 to 11 has more than tripled, leading Marlene Schwartz, director of the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity at UConn, to call the trend "a national disaster."

## A PERSONAL MISSION

Schwartz should know. As the director of one of the nation's few public policy centers focused exclusively on obesity-related issues, she leads a team of researchers and policy experts dedicated to reversing the troubling trend. The Center, which in January left its longtime home at Yale and moved to Hartford to become part of the Center for Health, Intervention, and Prevention (CHIP) at UConn, differs from many scientific research centers in that its mission extends far beyond the walls of academia. The Rudd Center doesn't just do research; it puts that research into action.

"If all I'm doing is publishing in a journal," Schwartz says, "that's not helping anybody else. As a researcher I only want to do research that answers an important question for public policy."

That passion for advocacy is as much personal for Schwartz as it is professional. Around the time of Carmona's 2004 Senate testimony, Schwartz was both a clinical psychologist working with an increasing number of obese children, and a mother with children entering elementary school. She realized that there was a connection between the obesity epidemic she was seeing in her clinical work and the environment her own kids faced at school.

"I realized I could continue to do clinical work and help people one at a time," Schwartz says, "or I could try to change the

environment that was making it so difficult for these families." With the launch of the Rudd Center in 2005, and its first major effort focused on changing the environment in schools, Schwartz saw the opportunity to merge her roles as scientific researcher and concerned parent.

## SODAS IN SCHOOLS

The problems in schools weren't about the way the kids were being taught, according to Roberta Friedman, another faculty member at Rudd. The problem stemmed from the environment outside of class. "In the classroom we teach kids to eat fruits and vegetables," Friedman says, "but if they walk out into the hallway and the vending machines are full of candy bars and soda, what's the message there?" Changing that message meant working with legislators to change the law, which is Friedman's specialty.

Scientific articles have long been notorious for their muddled narratives and impenetrable prose. Conclusions often lie buried beneath mountains of tables and figures, with key findings sometimes sandwiched between less relevant results. Friedman's job is to scour those articles for the salient points and translate them into language that can be easily understood and acted upon. "[Articles] are written for scientific journals," Friedman says. "Often the conclusions need to be pulled out and put into English."

In 2006, that work of translating scientific findings into useful legislative information scored its first major victory. Working with Don Williams, then-president of the Connecticut State Senate, Rudd researchers were instrumental in helping craft legislation that banned the sale of sodas and other sugary drinks in all Connecticut public schools. The law was one of the first in the nation and remains one of the strongest such laws anywhere in the country, helping trigger a policy shift nationwide. Today, 24 states have similar laws on the books.





Marlene Schwartz, center, director of the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity, speaks with colleagues in March.

PETER MORENUS

**FROM NEW HAVEN TO HARTFORD**

Schwartz stresses that the research that helped power the legislation was greatly facilitated by Connecticut's unique structure of government. "Even in a state as small as we are," she says, "we have 159 school districts." That means there may be hundreds of different policies to compare and contrast against one another — an advantage from a research perspective, according to Schwartz.

In contrast, many states clump several communities together under the umbrella of huge school districts, the largest of which oversee more students than the entire state of Connecticut does.

Friedman, too, sees the Center's recent move from New Haven to Hartford and from Yale to UConn as an opportunity to cooperate more closely with state government, particularly through CHIP — what she calls "a wonderful confluence of policy people and researchers."

At the same time, adding Rudd's impressive roster of researchers to CHIP's already robust program of research in obesity prevention stands as yet another milestone in the University's continued growth into a powerhouse research institution. "It adds some remarkable synergies which are just terribly exciting," says Jeff Fisher, Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor of Psychology and director of CHIP. "We began with an HIV prevention focus, and were internationally known in that area. I'd say we are now as strong in obesity prevention as we are in HIV prevention."

**BATTLING THE STIGMA OF OBESITY**

In recent years, the work at Rudd has expanded into new and previously unexplored areas of obesity research. One of these, led by Rudd researcher Rebecca Puhl, is the study of how weight-based stigma affects people struggling with obesity, and what role public policy can play in helping combat those stigmas.

The first step, according to Puhl, is challenging the persistent assumption that obesity is a matter of personal choice, or the result of a defect of character. "That's a false assumption," says Puhl, pointing out that obesity is now officially classified

as a disease by the American Medical Association. Yet many assume that people who suffer from that disease are simply lazy, a ludicrous proposition, Puhl contends, in a country where two-thirds of the population are overweight or obese. "Two-thirds of our population aren't just lazy," she says.

Yet that stereotype is persistent and its negative effects are felt in the workplace, in schools, and beyond. According to Puhl, "Weight-based bullying is the most prevalent reason kids are bullied in school — more than sexual orientation, more than race." And employees struggling with obesity are denied the kinds of legal protections given to people with other mental or physical disabilities. With the exception of a handful of state and local laws, it is legal to not hire someone, fire them, or assign them a lower salary, all based on weight.

**'AN ENEMY TO HEALTH'**

These outside pressures make the struggle infinitely harder. "We've known for decades that disease-related stigma is an enemy to health," says Puhl, and obesity is no exception. "When people experience bullying or stigma as a result of their weight, they are more likely to binge eat, more likely to avoid physical activity, and more likely to have depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts and behaviors."

Combating that stigma is a key component of the Rudd Center's work moving forward, as are a host of other initiatives, including improving the way obesity is handled by health care professionals, changing the way obesity is portrayed in the media, and addressing the way

unhealthy foods are marketed, especially to kids.

That work may seem daunting, and the challenge is formidable, but the efforts of those at the Rudd Center may be beginning to show results. National statistics on childhood obesity indicate that while overall rates remain high, the youngest demographic — children ages 2 to 5 years — recently saw a sharp decrease, with the obesity rate falling from 13.9 percent to 8.4 percent over an eight-year period.

Whether this change represents a turning of the tide in the battle against obesity remains to be seen, but from their new space in downtown Hartford, the Center's growing team is perhaps better equipped than ever to continue the fight — from battling weight-based stigmas to partnering with legislators to shape progressive policies going forward. 🌱

**"IN THE CLASSROOM WE TEACH KIDS TO EAT FRUITS AND VEGETABLES, BUT IF THEY WALK OUT INTO THE HALLWAY AND THE VENDING MACHINES ARE FULL OF CANDY BARS AND SODA, WHAT'S THE MESSAGE THERE?"**

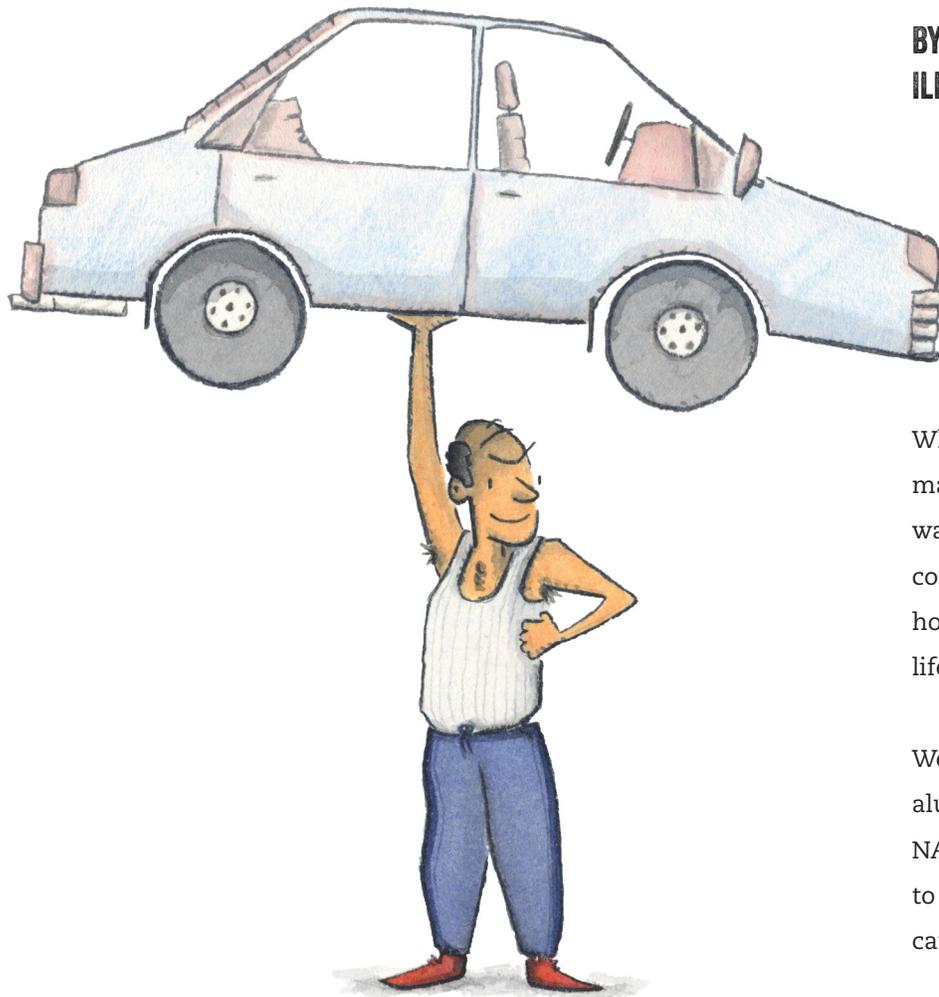
— ROBERTA FRIEDMAN



For more information about UConn's Rudd Center, visit [uconnruddcenter.org](http://uconnruddcenter.org).

# UConn's Insider Guide To Living Your BEST LIFE

BY JULIE STAGIS '10 (BUS, CLAS)  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY CHRIS CATER '13 (SFA)



What's the secret to success? How can you make the most of every day? Whether you want to be more creative or wish you could complete a triathlon, our UConn-inspired how-to manual offers insight into some of life's burning questions.

We've rounded up a selection of UConn alumni, faculty, and students — from a NASA chief scientist to an acupuncturist — to share their practical advice on how you can live your own best life.



## HOW TO BE MORE CREATIVE

Studies show creative people are happier, and coming up with creative solutions to problems can get you ahead at work. But finding that creative spark is sometimes difficult.

**James C. Kaufman**, UConn educational psychology professor and internationally respected creativity expert, is here to help.

**Be Open.** One of the strongest personality traits observed in creative people is openness to experiences, Kaufman says. Whether it's trying a new restaurant or skydiving for the first time, new experiences can inspire new ways of thinking.

**Think: What's the Issue?** "Probably the most underrated component of the creative problem-solving process is finding and recognizing what the problem is," Kaufman says. "If all your friends tell you that you dress poorly, you can identify the problem as, 'I need to dress better,' or 'I need new friends.' And everything else depends on how you identify the problem."

**What's Your Motivation?** If you're looking for a creative outlet, think about your goals, Kaufman says. Do you want to be creative to express yourself or to connect with others? To impress someone? To be world-renowned? There is no right answer, and often figuring out the why can lead to the how, he says.

## HOW TO WATER SKI

You've graduated college and joined the real world, but that shouldn't stop you from having some fun. **Mike Rambone '09 (ED)**, '10 MA and **Chris Nuelle '11 (BUS)**, founders of Lakeside Watersports in Danbury, Conn., say gliding across the water on skis is a sure way to impress your friends and have a blast. They

say the most important tip for success in water sports is to let the boat do all of the work. Read more water skiing tips on the new *UConn Magazine* website at [magazine.uconn.edu](http://magazine.uconn.edu).



## HOW TO BREAK YOUR FACEBOOK ADDICTION

You're probably not actually addicted to Facebook or your smartphone — only about 6 percent of people are clinically diagnosed as compulsive users, says **David Greenfield**, assistant clinical professor of psychiatry at the UConn School of Medicine and founder of The Center for Internet and Technology Addiction. But most people today do overuse or abuse their smartphones or the Internet, he says.

Studies show there are neurobiological causes behind this, according to Greenfield. When your phone buzzes, it means something is waiting for you.

The release of dopamine — a pleasure chemical — every time we see a text message from a friend or a funny email has essentially turned us into a society of Pavlov's dogs, he says.



### Try Greenfield's Tips on Cutting Down:

1. Be aware that technology is powerful.
2. Take control of your technology. Make conscious choices about when and where you're going to use it.
3. Have tech-free days or tech-free hours. Experiment with setting limits.
4. Turn your phone off when you're in social environments and start a conversation.
5. Limit your use of things like online gaming. These have addictive properties regardless of where you're using them, but combining them with an addictive smartphone "is like adding gasoline to a fire," Greenfield says.

"What we have is a digital drug," he says. "I'm not a Luddite. I'm suggesting more conscious use of it, more moderated use of [technology], and taking more control of it — instead of it controlling you."

VIDEO



See the world through the eyes — and drawings — of UConn alum and cartoonist **Chris Cater '13 (SFA)**, who illustrated this issue's cover story, in our special *UConn Magazine* video at [s.uconn.edu/chriscater](http://s.uconn.edu/chriscater).

## HOW TO WIN A CHESS MATCH

Alexander Fikiet '16 (CLAS) has earned the title of Life Master from the United States Chess Federation by being rated upwards of 2,200 in more than 300 USCF-rated chess tournament games. Secretary of the UConn Chess Club, Fikiet says patience is the key to winning.

"Whenever I play a game, I am sure to take into account my opponent's ideas and actions first, and adjust my play towards that," Fikiet says. "I want the game to be as safe as possible, and only then do I want to take action toward winning."

Fikiet says he enters each match with a broad plan, which he tweaks as he goes to avoid his competitor's tricks and traps.

"Finally, if I feel that I have a winning advantage, I generally triple-check my next moves in order to make sure I don't make a mistake," he says. "Converting a winning advantage into a win against a good player is probably the most difficult part of chess."



## HOW TO DE-STRESS

Everybody's been there: Thoughts of your big presentation at work are keeping you up at night; that fight with your mom is literally causing a headache; or mulling over a daunting decision is giving you panic attacks.

"Everyone in this world has some sort of underlying stress issue that is affecting them in an unhealthy way," says **Traver Garrity '07 (SFA)**, a licensed acupuncturist whose practice is steps away from UConn's Storrs campus. "One of the main ways to stay healthy is to try to find some sort of outlet to keep the stress level in check."

Chinese medicine, of which acupuncture is a major part, is based on a theory of balance, particularly regarding qi, which means "life force." (Qi is also known as chi or ki.)

Stressors get in the way of energy flow, causing such symptoms as tension headaches, anxiety attacks, and gastric distress, Garrity says. But there are simple ways to combat these negative effects.

Certain types of exercise, including yoga, tai chi, and qigong, are focused on balancing qi, "using Chinese medical theory to keep the channels open and moving," according to Garrity.

Daily stretching, taking some time out for self-reflection, or

meditation can all help — "whatever people can do to quiet their minds," she says. "Deep abdominal breathing is also going to help calm the nervous system."

## HOW TO OWN YOUR VOICE IN THE PROFESSIONAL WORLD

Having and expressing educated opinions on important matters is vital to getting ahead professionally. **Lucy Gilson**, UConn management professor and academic director of the Geno Auriemma Leadership Conference, says becoming an expert in something is a surefire way to find your voice.

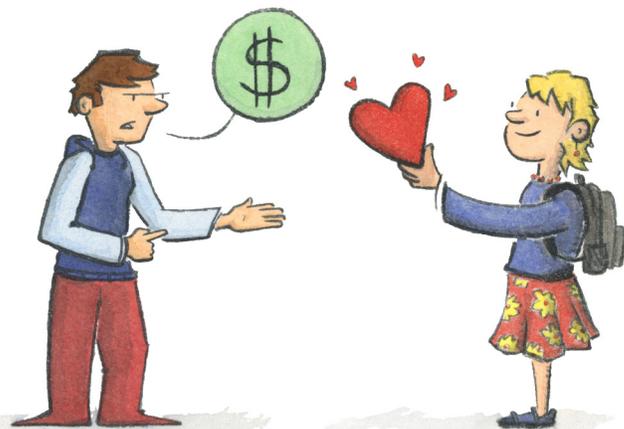
"There's a lot of research with regard to leadership that indicates CEOs and top executives are people who have been functional specialists, who have come up through a discipline," she says. "And the people who have been sort of generalists — often women — tend not to reach these top levels, but rather stay in mid-level managerial jobs."

"When it comes to finding your voice, the key piece is to figure out what you're good at and what you want to be known for, and to specialize in that. Become the expert that people go to," Gilson says. "If you find something that you're passionate about, and you can become an expert in that, you're much more likely to be able to talk knowledgeably and to do well."

## HOW TO STOP A BULLY

If you've ever been teased, bullied, or harassed, you could benefit from the strategies outlined by special education professor **George Sugai**, director of UConn's Center for Behavioral Education and Research and co-director of the national Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.

According to Sugai, the same basic framework can be used by people of all ages to stop unwanted behaviors. "The goal is to disengage assertively as quickly as possible — in developmentally and contextually appropriate ways — so the interaction can't escalate, and then problem-solve strategies that prevent it from happening in the future," says Sugai, who is also a professor of special education in the Neag School of Education and the Carole J. Neag Endowed Chair.



## "QUESTION EVERYTHING; BE OPEN TO THE UNUSUAL AND THE EMERGING, TAKE INFORMED RISKS, AND BE AUDACIOUS."

— **DENNIS BUSHNELL '63 (ENG), UCONN ALUM AND NASA CHIEF SCIENTIST, ON HOW TO DREAM BIG**

## HOW TO FIND YOUR IDEAL WORKOUT

Despite late-night infomercial claims, there is no "best exercise" out there, according to **Linda Pescatello '77 (CLAS), '81 MS, '86 Ph.D.**, Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor of Kinesiology.

"The best exercise would be the exercise you continue with," Pescatello says. "The rule of thumb is: Something is better than nothing. Getting out of the chair is big."

American College of Sports Medicine exercise guidelines — edited by Pescatello and considered the gold standard for exercise professionals — essentially amount to an hour of exercise daily, something that's hard for even some of the fittest people to achieve, Pescatello says.

Consider what activities you enjoy, as well as your goals (whether it's weight loss, maintenance, or muscle toning) and what time of day you are most willing to exercise to find the right program, she says. "You have to look at those things around you that are going to set you up for success."

## HOW TO PUSH YOUR LIMITS

**Mike Ryan '88 (SAH)** is quite familiar with going beyond his comfort zone.

A six-time Ironman triathlete, the 51-year-old has completed the Empire State Building Run-Up and Escape from Alcatraz Triathlon three times each. He has run with the bulls in Spain — twice. Lately, he's spent a lot of time on "mud run-type things," like the Tough Mudder races.

"Look for your ability to excel in everything," says Ryan, who recently left a 26-year career as an NFL athletic trainer and founded Mike Ryan Sports Medicine in Jacksonville Beach, Fla. He also serves as the sports medicine consultant for NBC Sports Sunday Night Football.

"People just have to stretch their imagination," he says. "Don't think of the limitations, the job, the kids, the mortgage, things like that — What's really going to get you excited? What do you really want to do?" 🐾



For extended versions of these segments and more UConn-inspired advice on life, including our featured video, go to *UConn Magazine's* new website at [magazine.uconn.edu](http://magazine.uconn.edu).



# TITLE WAVES

BY ROB CHUDZIK '91 (GLAS), '15 MS  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER MORENUS



Carrying on a family legacy, Coach Jennifer Wendry has been the force behind UConn's Division I women's rowing team since it was established.

Early spring mornings on Coventry Lake come with a certain beauty — the fog blanketing the water and the sun peeking through the surrounding trees as it rises. The picturesque setting almost makes one momentarily forget the icy chill that accompanies a springtime dawn in Connecticut.

This is where Jennifer Wendry, head coach for the UConn women's Division I rowing team, feels most at home. Coaching rowing is her family business: Wendry grew up in a home above a boathouse in upstate

New York, where her father, Bill Sanford, served as the rowing coach at Syracuse University for 37 years. Two of her uncles, her sister, and a cousin have all been college rowing coaches.

Wendry came to Storrs in 1997, ready to lead UConn's first varsity women's rowing program and take advantage of the growing opportunities that the Title IX ruling had created in the sport.

## TESTING THE WATERS

When passed into law, Title IX of the United

States Education Amendments of 1972 wasn't immediately viewed in the context of intercollegiate athletics. But after numerous legal interpretations and court rulings over the subsequent 25 years, one of the outcomes was that Title IX stipulated that all federally-funded colleges and universities were required to provide athletic opportunities to both men and women on a "substantially proportional basis." This prompted the UConn administration to establish a women's rowing program to achieve the required

**"OUR PHILOSOPHY IS THIS: OBVIOUSLY, WE WANT TO WIN. BUT IT'S REALLY ABOUT WORKING WITH KIDS AND HELPING THEM GROW, FROM THE TIME THEY GET HERE UNTIL THE TIME THEY GRADUATE."**

— COACH JENNIFER WENDRY

proportionality of men's and women's varsity athletic teams offered by the University.

"While the University was mandated to start the program," Wendry says, "they didn't do it begrudgingly. They embraced it and supported it."

However, that didn't mean that it was smooth sailing from the start. Initially, there wasn't a full understanding of what establishing a varsity rowing program entailed, including the unique equipment requirements that went with it.

"I was hired a week before classes

started," says Wendry, "and when I arrived, I asked, 'Where's the erg [ergometer, or rowing machine] room?'" Discovering that there was no equipment in place, she had 10 ergometers purchased and installed in a repurposed storage room in the Greer Field House, a new boat purchased, and a truck rented for trips to races.

With the stresses of getting a new varsity team off the ground, Wendry says "there was no place to go but up" that first year. And regardless of the hiccups, her newly minted student-athletes were appreciative of everything they had, having

come from a club sports team where the students had handled all of the organizational duties and personally covered many of the costs, including travel and uniforms, while sharing most other gear with the men's crew club.

## 'AN EASY SELL'

Since those early days, the team's results under Wendry have steadily improved. Most recently, the team finished third at last year's inaugural American Athletic Conference Championship and won the Frosh/Novice 8 race at the Head of the



**“IT REALLY DOES CHANGE THEIR LIFE — IT REALLY CHANGES EVERYTHING ABOUT THEIR COLLEGE EXPERIENCE, AND IT CHANGES WHO THEY BECOME IN LIFE BECAUSE OF WHAT THEY’VE ACCOMPLISHED.”**

— COACH JENNIFER WENDRY

Schuylkill Regatta in Philadelphia this past fall. Those results, coupled with the recent addition of 10 scholarships on top of the four that were already available, bring a palpable sense of excitement about the future of the program.

“UConn is the easiest place in the world to recruit,” Wendry says. “We have a beautiful campus, and the academic offerings are fantastic. Our team dynamic is great, prospective students see the athletic success we’ve had in other sports, and it’s exciting for them. But in the past, when it came to offering a scholarship, I couldn’t say ‘We’re going to pay for your education.’ UConn may have been their first choice, but if the next school offered them a full scholarship, we’d lose them. Now, being able to offer a full scholarship, it’s such an easy sell.”



In the first years of the program, many of the team members were walk-on athletes who found out about the team while on campus and had competed in other sports in high school, but saw an opportunity to compete in an NCAA Division I athletic competition.

While about half of the team’s rowers are still walk-ons, the team is now able to recruit more experienced rowers, something the coach partially attributes to the effects of Title IX.

“I think Title IX really helped the sport of women’s rowing take off nationally,” Wendry says. “In the late ’90s, high schools

were seeing the scholarship opportunities for their student-athletes and wanted to take advantage of the opportunity. So there were many more women’s rowing programs starting up at the high school level, and we’re seeing more experienced rowers coming through.”

**HER GROWING LEGACY**

Over the past 18 years, Wendry has been quietly building more than a rowing team: she’s been building a UConn rowing family, watching student-athletes come in as freshmen and working to help them develop both as athletes and as people.

“Our philosophy is this: Obviously, we want to win,” she says. “But it’s really about working with the student-athletes and helping them grow from the time they get here until the time they graduate.

They have a family at home, but we try to create an environment of a second family here in Storrs and provide them with a support system for the good times and the bad. By their senior year, they can go out and become whatever they want to be. That’s what makes it fun, seeing that growth.”

Since coming to UConn, Wendry has seen her own rowing legacy grow even beyond Storrs; at last count, eight of her former rowers are now coaching at the intercollegiate level. “There have been so many opportunities through this sport over the last 18 years, not only for athletes, but for coaches as well,” she says.

Historically, the origin of the UConn varsity women’s rowing program may be forever linked to Title IX, and Wendry summarizes the effect of Title IX in one

word — opportunity.

“Because of our program, the opportunity arises for athletes who wouldn’t have otherwise had ... the experience of competing at a Division I level,” she says. “It really does change their life — it really changes everything about their college experience, and it changes who they become in life because of what they’ve accomplished.”

At the same time, she realizes that opportunities can go unrealized without hard work. With the growth of the program, “I feel like I have a new job,” Wendry says. “The focus has changed, because now we are confident that we can win a conference championship. Realistically, in the past, that would have been much more of a challenge. Everything is starting to fall into place.” 🍷



VIDEO



Learn what it takes to be a UConn rower in our bonus *UConn Magazine* video at [s.uconn.edu/rowingvideo](https://s.uconn.edu/rowingvideo).

# PAYING IT FORWARD COMMUNITY SERVICE AT UCONN

Every year, UConn students, faculty, and staff give back to the community in a variety of ways — from a student-led annual, all-night dance-a-thon to raise money for a nonprofit children’s hospital to health care professionals who volunteer their time to offer free medical and dental screenings to migrant farm workers.

**\$39.7  
MILLION**

Economic impact of all UConn faculty, staff, and student volunteer activities FY2013.

**1,397,130**

Hours UConn students spent volunteering in 2013.

**\$560,401**

Amount raised through the HuskyTHON annual dance marathon, the largest student-run philanthropy in the state, for the Connecticut Children’s Medical Center in 2015.

**28,800**

Hours served each year by UConn students during Alternative Spring Breaks, in locations from Hartford, Conn. to Haiti.

**29**

UConn’s Migrant Farm Worker Clinic offers **6** dental clinics throughout Connecticut, offering free health care to **339** farm workers.

**23,500**

Hours of community service donated by the UConn Extension program’s Master Gardeners, with a value of **\$664,110** to the communities and citizens served.

**'12**

UConn has been named to the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll for three consecutive years.

**'13**

**'14**

**54**

Connecticut-based agencies partner with UConn to offer semester-long placements for student volunteers.

**2020**

The year through which UConn has been designated as a **Community Engagement Institution** by the **Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching**.

notes

## WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY FROM GAMEPEL PAVILION?



Be sure to 'Like' UConn at [facebook.com/UConn](https://facebook.com/UConn)

To celebrate our on-campus arena’s 25th anniversary this past January, we asked our UConn Facebook fans.

Here are a few of their answers. Read more about magic Gampel moments at [s.uconn.edu/2gv](https://s.uconn.edu/2gv).

**Matilda "Jerre" (Yenowich) Dumbrill '52 (CLAS)** is the author of *Makhorka: The Green Cigarette*, published by CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform in November. It is her first novel and is based on real events surrounding 20th-century Russia. ♦ **Edward J. Fisher '56 (ENG)** published the third edition of his book, *Lands of In-KO-8 Trilogy*, through Xlibris in October. This new edition contains all three original stories: *The Now Time*, *The Before Time*, and *The Planet Within*. ♦ **Robert Gregory '59 (CLAS)** was named 2014’s “Living Treasure” by the Junior Woman’s Club of Milford (Conn.) for his accomplishments through the Milford Chamber of Commerce and volunteer organizations where he has served. Though retired from his position as Milford’s economic and community development director, he is serving as a major coordinator for the city’s 375th anniversary. ♦ **Barbara B. Marchand '61 (ED)** worked in the physical therapy field for 53 years. She retired after 13 years with Naugatuck (Conn.) Visiting Nurses Association. ♦ **Francis Dillon '62 (BUS)** wrote his second novel, *Vacationland Terrorists: Alarm in the Countryside*, published by booklocker.com in August. ♦ **Richard H. Gowen '63 (CLAS)**, a retired teacher and coach from Quaboag Regional High School in Warren, Mass., was inducted into the New England Basketball Hall of Fame in June 2013 at the DCU Center in Worcester, Mass. ♦ **Joel Hirschhorn '64 (CLAS)**, attorney at the law firm GrayRobinson P.A. in Miami, was named to the 2015 Best Lawyers in America list of outstanding attorneys.

♦ **Philip F. Nohrr '64 (BUS), '67 JD**, managing partner of the law firm GrayRobinson P.A. in Melbourne, Fla., was named to the 2015 Best Lawyers in America list of outstanding attorneys. He also was reappointed in November by Florida Gov. Rick Scott to the Judicial Nominating Commission. ♦ **Alan M. Cohen '67 (CLAS), '70 JD**, under the pseudonym Avi Morris, published his first novel, *Crocodile Mothers Eat Their Young*, in August through All Things That Matter Press. ♦ **Alice (Andrews) Frazier '68 (CLAS)** retired after working for 39 years in family practice in central Ohio. She and her husband have two grandchildren and enjoy following UConn basketball. ♦ **Tim Vellrath '69 (CLAS), '96 MBA**, founder of Vellrath Group in Pequabuck, Conn., received the 2014 Excellence in Construction Innovation Award from the Association of Walls and Ceilings Industries. ♦ **John W. Rafal '71 (CLAS)**, founder and vice chair of Essex Financial Services in Essex, Conn., was honored by Barron’s in Orlando, Fla., in September for his 10 consecutive appearances on Barron’s Top 100 Independent Financial Advisors list each year since its inception in 2004. He was also inducted into Barron’s first-ever Top 100 Financial Advisors Hall of Fame. ♦ **Jack "John" DeWitt '73 Ph.D.** published his first novel, *Delicious Little Traitor*, in January through Black Opal Books. The novel is the first in the Varian Pike mystery series. ♦ **Joseph B. Wocoski '73 (CLAS)** is the author of *New Testament Word Search Fun! Book 1: Gospel of Matthew*, the first in his series of New Testament

word search books published in May 2014 by CreateSpace. ♦ **David Gallogly '74 (CLAS) DeSilva '74 (CLAS)** have created a Facebook page called “Class of '74 UConn,” where Class of 1974 alumni can share their UConn memories. ♦ **Deborah (Mazzotta) Prum '74 (CLAS)**, has released an audiobook, *First Kiss and Other Cautionary Tales*, on audible.com. It is a collection of humorous essays, which originally aired on NPR member stations. ♦ **David Baram '75 (CLAS)**, managing member of law firm Baram, Tapper & Gans LLC in Bloomfield, Conn., was re-elected in November as state representative for District 15, representing Bloomfield and Windsor, Conn. He also chairs the General Law Committee. ♦ **Howard J. Bryerman '75 (BUS)** and his wife, Simone, have opened a franchise of PROSHRED®, a shredding business. ♦ **Getulio P. Carvalho '76 Ph.D.** is a member of the board of directors for the Government Accountability Project (GAP), a nongovernmental organization and law firm in Washington, D.C., that works to protect and defend whistleblowers. For more information about GAP, visit [whistleblower.org](https://whistleblower.org). ♦ **Donna A. Rosequist '76 (CLAS), '82 MBA** is vice president at Segal Rogerscasey, assisting clients with the design of private equity programs. She was previously director at Alpha Investment Research in Darien, Conn. ♦ **Buzz Kanter '77 (CLAS)** is editor-in-chief and publisher of Stamford, Conn.-based *American Iron Magazine*, and publishes other motorcycle magazines. He competed in the Motorcycle Cannonball Endurance Run in September

and finished 29th overall, riding on his 1936 Harley-Davidson. ♦ **David Matulis '77 MSW** is a member and writer for UConn Radio Station WHUS. His radio personality, the Cruzer, was named the “Best Radio Personality” by *The Advocate’s* Best of Hartford Readers’ Poll 2014, and his “20th Century Rock” show on WHUS won “Best Radio Show” from the same poll. ♦ **Joan Seliger Sidney '77 Ph.D.**, writer-in-residence for UConn’s Center for Judaic Studies and Contemporary Jewish Life, is the author of *Bereft and Blessed*, a poetry volume published by Antrim House in April 2014. ♦ **Gerri (Chaneles) Chanel '78 (CLAS)** is the author of *Saving Mona Lisa: The Battle to Protect the Louvre and Its Treasures During World War II*, published by Heliopa Press in May 2014. ♦ **Stephen Madigosky '78 (CAHNR)**, professor and chair of the environmental science department at Widener University in Chester, Pa., was named one of three inaugural Distinguished University Professors last year by the university. The award recognizes excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service. ♦ **Joseph C. Papa '78 (PHR)**, president and CEO of Perrigo, was named the No. 47 best-performing CEO in the world by the *Harvard Business Review* in November. He also serves as chairman of Perrigo’s board of directors. ♦ **Alan Sidransky '78 (CLAS)** is the author of *Stealing A Summer’s Afternoon*, his second novel, published in June by Berwick Court. His first novel, *Forgiving Maximo Rothman*, published in 2013, was a finalist for the National Jewish Book Awards in the category of “Outstanding

“I was one of the coordinators for the Gampel ushers when the first game occurred. The most amazing moment was when the first UConn basket happened you could hear the roar of the crowd under that dome. No one had heard that before and it was amazing.” — Maria A. Sedotti '80 MA

“Shabazz Napier’s buzzer-beater versus Florida last year.” — Austin Smyth '15 (BUS)

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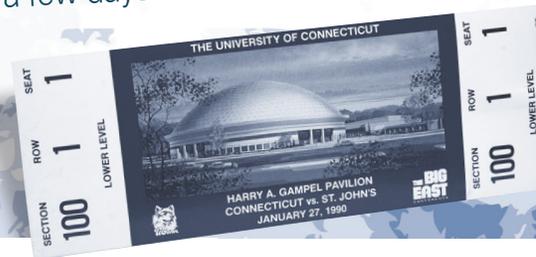
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"Watching the men win the National Championship there on the TV screens in 2004. As a freshman, it was a very special time — particularly when the women won a few days later!" — Kaela Heaslip '07 (CLAS)



"(Sitting) front row in the student section on Feb. 22, 2003, when Coach Calhoun came back after surgery to defeat St. John's."

— Adam Lupino '06 (CLAS)

"Although a deadline was looming over our heads, David Schreiber '03 (SFA), Aimee (Howard) Contois '03 (SFA) and I, ditched our projects to watch the women beat Old Dominion on the screens in Gampel in the 2002 Final Four. They would eventually win the national title with an undefeated season." — Christine (Jaworski) Ballestrini '03 (SFA)



"Watching both the men's and women's teams play from the press table on the sidelines. It was awesome to be in the middle of the action — and it was a great 'real-world' experience covering games for the Nutmeg Yearbook!" — Michael Wynn '06 (CLAS)

Debut Fiction." He lives in New York City. ❖ **Robb Delprado '79 (BUS)** is president of Western Data Systems Inc., based in Houston. He joined Western Data in 2008 as COO. ❖ **Philip Moore '79 (SFA)**, director of marketing and communications at Goodwin College in East Hartford, Conn., is an alumnus of the Leadership Greater Hartford Quest program and a facilitator with the Connecticut Men's Gathering Inc. ❖ **Robert Morehouse '79 (NUR)**, '96 MS received his ANCC Board Certification as an Informatics Nurse (RN-BC) in June 2014. He is a clinical systems coordinator at Visiting Nurse and Health Services of Connecticut, where he has worked since 1996. ❖ **George Murray '79 (BUS)**, '85 MBA is president of the Zale Division at specialty jewelry retailer Signet Jewelers Limited. The Zale Division is one of the three main divisions of Signet. He has worked for Signet Jewelers for more than 22 years. ❖ **Gary Z. Siegel '79 (BUS)** is vice president of finance, principal financial officer, and principal accounting officer at Orangeburg, N.Y.-based Vision-Sciences Inc. Previously, he was vice president of finance at Genta Incorporated. ❖ **Carol S. Carver '80 (BUS)** is senior vice president of commercial banking at Webster Bank in Waterbury, Conn. She has been with Webster since 1999 and was previously vice president and relationship manager of commercial banking. ❖ **Elizabeth Fry '80 (CLAS)**, managing principal of TWG Inc., a compliance and strategic advisory firm, was inducted into the International Marathon Swimming Hall of Fame in 2014 at a ceremony on the Isle of Bute, Scotland. She volunteers

as marathon director for the St. Vincent's Medical Center Foundation's SWIM Across the Sound, and, as an undergraduate, was part of the UConn Swimming and Diving Team. ❖ **Hank Gruner '80 (CAHNR)**, vice president of programs and exhibits at the Connecticut Science Center in Hartford, Conn., received the Dr. Sigmund Abeles Science Advocate Award from the Connecticut Science Teachers Association in April 2014 for his continued efforts to engage the public and lawmakers in a discourse on conservation and biodiversity. ❖ **Houston Lowry '80 MBA**, president at the law firm Brown & Welsh PC in Meriden, Conn., was elected a life member of the American Law Institute in 2014. ❖ **Harriet (Perلمان) Manis '80 (PHR)** received her doctorate in pharmacy from the University of Florida in August 2013. ❖ **Thomas M. Foran '81 (BUS)** is vice president of underwriting and product development for the Employee Benefits Group at Standard Insurance Company, headquartered in Portland, Ore. ❖ **William Keena '81 (CLAS)**, chief operating officer at Acclaris Inc., in Tampa, Fla., is responsible for operations in the U.S. and India. ❖ **Dennis Laganza '81 (BUS)**, vice president and director of state government relations for Richmond, Va.-based Genworth Financial, was appointed in October to the Board of the Virginia College Building Authority by Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe. ❖ **Gerald DesRoches '82 (BUS)** is managing partner of the Metro New York practice of Andersen Tax, which provides a wide range of tax, valuation, and financial consulting services.

He is a member of UConn's School of Business Hall of Fame. ❖ **Susan (Hewitt) D'Orvilliers '82 (ED)** is a development officer at Family Centered Services of Connecticut in New Haven, Conn. ❖ **Douglas G. Elliot '82 (BUS)** is president of The Hartford in Hartford, Conn. He had been president of commercial markets. Previously, he was president of Hartford Steam Boiler. He is a member of UConn's School of Business Hall of Fame. ❖ **Deborah A. Fuhr '82 (BUS)**, managing partner and co-founder of London-based research and consultancy firm ETFGI, received the 2014 William F. Sharpe Indexing Lifetime Achievement Award in December, which recognizes the most accomplished innovators and practitioners in the indexing industry. ❖ **Thomas F. Hill '82 MA**, '83 6th Year retired in July after serving 30 years as a school psychologist in the Southern Tier of New York. He lives in Elmira, N.Y., with his wife, Michele. ❖ **Paul W. Catanese '83 (CLAS)**, writing as P.W. Catanese, has signed with Simon & Schuster for two novels. The first is the start of supernatural adventure series, titled *Sulfur*, slated for release this fall. The second book will be the next title in that series, to be released in 2016. He has written eight other novels for middle-grade and young readers, and his *The Books of Umber* trilogy was nominated for several regional book awards. He and his wife, **Lisa Catanese '83 (CLAS)**, live in Columbia, Conn. ❖ **Tom Chase '83 (ENG)** is examiner with the Professional Ski Instructors of America, Eastern Division, and coaches

alpine racing at Ski Sundown in New Hartford, Conn. He also works in Aerospace Systems Engineering with United Technologies Aerospace Systems in Windsor Locks, Conn. He has been working in both fields since graduation. ❖ **Joseph C. Ferraiolo '84 (BUS)** is area general manager for New Haven County with Frontier Communications Company in Stamford, Conn. Previously, he was vice president of Auto and Boat Relocation Services LLC. ❖ **Thomas W. Prete '84 (ENG)**, '01 MBA, vice president of engineering at East Hartford, Conn.-based Pratt & Whitney, was inducted into the Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering in June, recognizing him among the state's leading experts in science, engineering, and technology. ❖ **Donna Rizzo '84 (CLAS)**, professor of civil and environmental engineering at the University of Vermont (UVM) in Burlington, Vt., received the 2014 George V. Kidder Outstanding Faculty Award from the UVM Alumni Association in October. The award honors excellence in teaching and advising. She was also recently named to the Dorothean Chair in UVM's college of engineering and mathematical sciences, which honors faculty whose work promises to advance the field, who are doing major scholarly work with graduate students, and who teach basic engineering to undergraduates. ❖ **Sheryl Smith '84 MA**, '85 Ph.D., a licensed clinical psychologist who owns a private practice in Cheshire, Conn., has been designated a Certified Consultant by the Association for Applied Sport Psychology. She is a member of the American College of Sports Medicine, American Psychological

Association, and Association for Applied Psychophysiology and Biofeedback, and is included in the United States Olympic Committee Registry of Sports Psychologists. ❖ **Frank Catalano '85 (CAHNR)** is co-owner of Microgreenz, a business venture he and his wife launched via Kickstarter in October that comprises an indoor growing system for harvesting nutrient-dense greens within 10 days of planting. ❖ **Andrew Chasse '85 (SFA)**, owner of Hansoo Taekwondo Academy in Glastonbury, Conn., has run the martial arts school for 17 years. The school includes a specialized program for children on the autism spectrum. ❖ **David D. Kennedy '85 (BUS)**, '89 JD is executive vice president and general counsel at Infosys, a next-generation information services company in Glastonbury, Conn. Previously, he held management positions at IBM, JDA Software, and Better Place. ❖ **Ruben Klein '85 (CLAS)** is chief financial officer of Comark, a designer and manufacturer of computer and display solutions in Medfield, Mass. He previously served as CFO for United Pipe & Steel, a national distributor of pipe to the plumbing industry. ❖ **Sheila (Walsh) Schanck '85 (CLAS)** is chief information officer of Ruppert Landscape, a commercial landscape construction and management company in Laytonsville, Md. ❖ **Rebecca Tumicki '85 (CLAS)**, adjunct professor at Olympic College at Bremerton, Wash., serves as an I-BEST instructor, supporting manufacturing and electronic classes. She previously spent

eight years teaching math in Saudi Arabia, and walked the Camino de Santiago in 2007. ❖ **Stephen M. Holcomb '86 MBA** is CEO at SmartPay Solutions in Southington, Conn. ❖ **Steven H. Mikel '86 MBA** is president and CEO at Houston-based Caprock Oil Inc. ❖ **Mike Baldassari '87 (SFA)**, a theatrical lighting designer, has most recently created the lighting designs for Broadway shows such as "First Date," "Cabaret," and the Tupac Shakur musical, "Holler If Ya Hear Me." He earned an Emmy award nomination for his work on U2's performance from the Top of The Rock during the premiere of "The Tonight Show." He has worked for productions in Paris and Moscow and continues his work

with Yo Gabba Gabba's tours. ❖ **Patricia M. Kane '87 (BGS)**, '02 MBA, director at Connecticut Wealth Management LLC, in Farmington, Conn., was named for the fourth consecutive year to *Medical Economics'* list of "Best Financial Advisers for Doctors." ❖ **Nicholas Sentementes '87 (BUS)**, '92 MBA is vice president of middle market equipment finance at First Niagara Financial Group Inc. ❖ **Gary Katz '88 (SAH)** is a physical therapist and the CEO of Pivot Physical Therapy, which provides services at more than 70 clinics throughout the mid-Atlantic region and which serves as a clinical affiliation partner with UConn's Physical Therapy Program. ❖ **Alison McCarthy '88 MBA** is working

in insurance sales at John H. Wygal & Company, a full-service insurance agency in Norwalk, Conn. ❖ **Patricia A. Saunders '88 (CLAS)** is the author of two books of poetry: *Through the Fire and Loving Me*, published by AuthorHouse in 2012 and 2013, respectively. ❖ **Douglas J. Hammel '89 (BUS)** is principal of grades 5 and 6 at Abraham Baldwin Middle School, part of Guilford (Conn.) Public Schools. He was previously principal at Deans Mill Elementary School in Stonington, Conn. ❖ **Stephen Pirigyi '89 (BUS)** is executive vice president at independent broker/dealer LPL Financial in San Diego, Calif. ❖ **Nicole S. (Leger) Stajduhar '89 (BUS)** is director of finance for the town of Stonington, Conn. She is a certified public accountant

and previously worked as finance director for the town of Old Lyme. ❖ **Mark Danaher '90 (CLAS)**, '94 MA is a master career counselor and president of the National Career Development Association, where he has been an active member for more than a decade. ❖ **Eric J. Kaplan '90 MBA** is a solutions consultant on the North America team of Reval, a global provider of comprehensive and integrated software and service solutions for treasury and risk management headquartered in New York, N.Y. ❖ **David C. Osella '90 MBA** is a senior vice president and relationship manager at Pittsfield-Berkshire Bank-CBT Region. He also serves on the board of the Community Renewal Team and is a member of the Real Estate

Finance Association. ❖ **Laura C. Rubbo '91 (CLAS)** is director of international labor standards at the Walt Disney Company in Burbank, Calif. She is on the board of overseers for UConn's Human Rights Institute and was part of the United States delegation to the International Labor Organization's 2014 International Labor Conference in Geneva, Switzerland. ❖ **John Sponauer '92 (CLAS)**, '10 MBA is vice president of communications at Wheeler Clinic in Plainville, Conn. ❖ **Sean F. Mulready '93 (CLAS)**, '02 MBA, senior vice president of commercial real estate at Webster Financial in Hartford, Conn., serves on the board of the Northside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance and on the local advisory committee



## 50 YEARS OF PUPPETEERS

Master puppeteer Frank W. Ballard established UConn's Puppet Arts Program, part of the School of Fine Arts' Dramatic Arts Department, in 1965. Today, UConn remains one of few schools in the world to award puppetry degrees. Graduates of our bachelor's and master's programs have found success on stage and screen, performing in shows from "Sesame Street" to "Robot Chicken." A yearlong celebration will kick off this summer with UConn hosting the National Puppetry Festival.

Be sure



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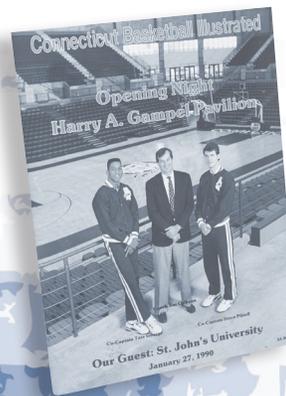
at facebook.com/UConn

"My personal favorite moment was the first-ever ESPN College GameDay broadcast in 2005. I was a freshman and it was the biggest sporting event I had ever attended. UConn lost to Pitt, but I was in the front row of the student section and the atmosphere was so electric, I still get chills thinking about it." — Tim Ehrens '08 (CLAS)

"Watching the men beat Duke to win it all in 1999 on the big screens. 'We shocked the world!'"

— Matthew James '98 (CLAS), '00 MA

"Camping out for the UConn-Texas game in January 2010. It was freezing, but we decided it was worth it as Texas was No. 1 at the time. UConn won, and we were sitting in the first few rows of the student section and everyone rushed the court. A perfect ending to a great game and to my senior year." — Catherine Pomposi '10 (CLAS)



"Favorite Gampel memory was when No. 3 UConn defeated No. 2 Villanova in 2006. The place was electric!"

— Josh Brandfon '07 MA

of the Local Initiatives Support Collaborative. ♦ **Leslie A. Zoll '93 (BUS)**, manager for accounting, tax, and business consulting firm Blum Shapiro in West Hartford, Conn., is serving on the Connecticut Society of Certified Public Accountants (CTCPA) Advisory Council for the 2014-15 activity year.

♦ **Scott D. Beggs '94 MBA** is chief financial officer at Basin Street Properties, a real estate investment firm in Reno, Nev.

♦ **Kristen Dixon '94 (CLAS), '97 MA** is a senior instructor for the Addiction Research and Treatment Services (ARTS) program in the department of psychiatry, division of substance dependence, at the University of Colorado School of Medicine in Aurora, Colo. She also serves as the deputy executive director of ARTS. ♦ **Sabrina Trocchi '94 (CLAS), '15 MPA** is chief strategy officer at Wheeler Clinic in Plainville, Conn.

♦ **Al Foreman '95 (BUS)** is partner and chief investment officer at private equity group Tuatara Capital LLC, in New York City. ♦ **Lois A. Krause '95 MBA** is a consultant at KardasLarson in Avon, Conn. Previously, she was director of human resources at Capewell Components Company.

♦ **Joshua D. Goldfarb '96 (BUS)** is an advisory partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, in Hartford, Conn. ♦ **Amy E. Macione '96 (CLAS)** has started a company, Amy's Paintings and Bookmarks, and has published a virtual art gallery titled "Amy's Bookmarks and Watercolor Sketches."

♦ **Jamie Diaferia '97 JD**, founder of professional services communications consultancy Infinite Public Relations, has merged the firm with U.K. counterpart Spada to form

Infinite Spada, a 45-person consultancy with an annual revenue of more than \$7 million and offices in New York, San Francisco, and London. ♦ **Don Laviano '97 (CLAS)** and Angela Swirski announce the birth of their daughter, Scarlett Lorraine Serafina, in July 2014.

♦ **Maicharia Weir Lytle '97 (CLAS)** is CEO of United South End Settlements in Boston.

♦ **Melissa B. Cummings '98 MBA** is chief marketing and sales officer at Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island. She also serves on the board of directors for the University of Connecticut Center for Health Care Management and Insurance Studies. ♦ **Sara M. Lorello '98 (CLAS)**, child and family therapist intern at Seacoast Mental Health Center in Portsmouth, N.H., received her MS in marriage and family therapy from the University of New Hampshire in August. She is currently working toward licensure as a marriage and family therapist. ♦ **Natasha M. Pierre '98 MSW**, policy and legislative director for the state's Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, was named to a four-year term as Connecticut's Victim Advocate by Gov. Dannel Malloy this past December. ♦ **Jonathan Zupnik '98 (BUS)** has launched an imported bottled water line, called Jeju16, from Jeju Island, South Korea. For more information, visit sixteenwater.com. ♦ **Michael J. Arman '99 MBA** is chief financial officer at Proclida Funding, based in Englewood Cliffs, N.J. He oversees tax compliance, treasury, reporting, and loan services.

♦ **Daniel C. Dipillo '99 (BUS)** is an assurance partner focusing on industrial products,

aerospace, and defense sectors at PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, in Hartford, Conn.

♦ **Andrew S. Hersom '99 MBA** is senior vice president of investor relations at People's United Bank in Bridgeport, Conn. Previously, he was director of investor relations at Travelers and a financial analyst at Citigroup. ♦ **Hon. Ingrid Moll '99 JD** was appointed a judge of the Connecticut Superior Court in April 2014. ♦ **Dina (Burns) LaTour '00 (CLAS)**, previously editor of *UConn Magazine*, is director of communications and digital strategy at UConn's Neag School of Education.

♦ **Gregory J. Fedele '00 MBA** is president of Innovative Capital Holdings' subsidiary Sabreliner Aviation, based in St. Louis. Previously, he was senior vice president of customer business, helicopters and light turboprops, at Rolls Royce. ♦ **Jose C. Oliveira '00 (BUS), '01 MS** is a tax manager at accounting, tax, audit, and consulting firm Moriarty & Primack PC, in Springfield, Mass., and a member of the Connecticut Society of CPAs and AICPA. ♦ **Jeremy Pollack '00 (BUS)** and his wife, **Crista Grasso '99 (BUS)**, are owners of Nearly Naked™, a luxury bridal and boudoir jewelry boutique in Tolland, Conn. The company was selected as a

finalist in the style category for the 2014 Martha Stewart American Made Awards, a nationally recognized awards program celebrating rising stars in the nationwide designer community who have turned their passions for handcrafted, well-designed goods into small businesses and make their products in America. ♦ **Thomas Sullivan '00 MBA** is a senior advisor of insurance for the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System in Washington, D.C. Previously, he was a partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers in Hartford, Conn. ♦ **Jeff Talbot '00 (BUS)** is a principal with Insula Capital, based in Sarasota, Fla. He works on sourcing, financing, and renovating Florida apartment properties. ♦ **Alex Thacher '00 JD** is principal at Ernst & Young's Seattle office. He is a member of the New York State Bar, the District of Columbia Bar, the Connecticut Bar, and the U.S. Tax Court.

♦ **Lisa (Dabkowski) Van Zanten '00 (BUS)** and **Christopher Van Zanten '99 (ENG)** announce the birth of their daughter, Mila Frances, in September 2014. Lisa is a senior program manager at Technolutions in New Haven, Conn., and Christopher is a civil engineer at Langan Engineering & Environmental Services in New Haven. ♦ **Michael A. Bell '01 MBA** is chief financial officer of Voya Investment Management in Windsor, Conn. ♦ **Michelle H. Craig '01 (CLAS)**, an independent scholar whose research focuses on African and Islamic art, received the Getty Museum Postdoctoral Scholar Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities for 2014-15.

♦ **Clyde W. Tinnen '01 MBA** is partner in the Chicago and Stamford, Conn., offices at international law firm Kelley Drye & Warren LLP, focusing on corporate law. ♦ **Rob Yirigian '01 MBA** is deputy area manager in the Glastonbury, Conn., office of engineering and design firm Parsons Brinckerhoff. ♦ **Hillary (Royer) Sirois '02 (CLAS)** and **Eric Sirois '09 (ENG), '14 Ph.D.** announce the birth of their second child, Luke Sirois, in May 2014. Luke joins a big sister, Claire. ♦ **Alison (Vachon) Nicholes '03 (CLAS), '07 DMD** and **Glen R. Nicholes Jr. '06 (CLAS) (SFA)**, along with daughter Violet, welcomed baby Reed Vachon Nicholes to the family in September 2014. ♦ **Cara Quinn '03 (ED), '04 MA**, sixth-grade teacher at Sunset Ridge School in East Hartford, Conn., was named the Connecticut Teacher of the Year for 2015. ♦ **Jason Rojas '03 (CLAS)**, director of community relations at Trinity College in Hartford, Conn., is now also serving as chief of staff to the college's president. Last May, he received Trinity's Trustee Award for Staff Excellence. ♦ **Jack Sheedy '03 (BGS)** is news editor of *The Catholic Transcript*, the newspaper for the Archdiocese of Hartford. He has won several journalism awards for his work with *The Catholic Transcript*, and his 2012 memoir, *Sting of the Heat Bug* (2012, Signalman Publishing), was endorsed by Pulitzer Prize winner Susan Campbell and NEA grant-winner Cortney Davis. ♦ **Carl Li '04 (SFA)** plays the character Chicken Wing in "Revenge of the Green Dragons," directed by Andrew Lau and Andrew

Loo, and executive produced by Martin Scorsese. The film was released in October 2014 and premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival. ♦ **James O'Leary '04 (BGS)**, retired from the Norwalk, Conn., Police Department after 30 years of service as a detective, lives in Florida, and works as a special education teacher at Port Charlotte, Fla., High School. ♦ **Kelly (Carino) Sadick '04 (BUS)** and **Chris Sadick '03 (BUS)** announce the birth of their second son, Alex, in March 2014. Alex joins his parents and brother, Jack, in Fairfield, Conn. ♦ **Todd W. Sibley '04 (BUS)** is assistant vice president of commercial lending at Leominster Credit Union in Leominster, Mass. ♦ **Anthony DiChiara '05 (CLAS)** and **Melissa (Staats) DiChiara '04 (CLAS)** announce the birth of their daughter, Penelope (Penny) Ann, on June 9, 2014. ♦ **Niamh Cunningham '06 (CLAS)** is manager of special

projects in the Office of the Secretary at Yale University in New Haven, Conn. Previously, she was program manager of principal gifts at Yale's Office of Development. ♦ **Krystal (Kliger) Reifer '06 (CLAS), '08 MS** and Chad Reifer were married on Aug. 31, 2014 in Stratford, Conn. They live in Arlington, Va. ♦ **Erin Seneca '06 (CLAS)** and Danielle Barany announce their engagement, with a wedding ceremony planned for winter 2015 in New Jersey. ♦ **Nicholas Tarasovic '06 (CLAS)** and **Krista (Forte) Tarasovic '08 (ED), '09 MA** announce the birth of Ava Leigh in May 2014. The family lives in Connecticut. ♦ **Andrew Bzowyckyj '07 (PHR), '09 Pharm.D.**, clinical assistant professor at the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Pharmacy/Truman Medical Center in Kansas City, Mo., was named the 2014 Distinguished Young Pharmacist of the Year in Missouri by Pharmacists Mutual Companies. The award is presented annually to a pharmacist in each state for individual excellence and outstanding contributions in state pharmacy association activities, community affairs, and professional practice. ♦ **Justin Signore '07 (BUS)** is a Chase private client mortgage banker at JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A., in Stamford and Greenwich, Conn. ♦ **Katherine Azzinaro '08 (CLAS)** and **Joseph Milositz '06 (CLAS)** married on Oct. 11, 2014, in Newport, R.I. ♦ **Christina S. Brown '08 (BUS)** is assistant vice president and cash management officer at Simsbury Bank. ♦ **William S. Hall '08 MBA** is a premier advisor at Wells

Fargo Advisors, a distinction reflecting his professional successes at the company. ♦ **Timothy Kelly '08 MBA** is Northeast regional manager at MonoSystems Inc., in Rye Brook, N.Y. Previously, he was a founding partner at Declan Consulting. ♦ **Patrick LaMondia '08 (BUS)** is an associate at the law firm Wiggin and Dana in New Haven, Conn. ♦ **Kristen (Mooney) Stone '08 (CLAS)** is assistant director for program approval and veterans education at the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education in Boston. ♦ **Michael Terrenzi '08 Pharm.D.** and **Danielle (Pierce) Terrenzi '08 Pharm.D.** announce the birth of their daughter, Annabel Eve. ♦ **Melanie E. Thomas '08 (BUS)** is a marketing assistant at CONRIC PR & Marketing/Publishing in Fort Myers, Fla. She is a three-time Big East Academic All-Star and the author of *Heart of a Husky* (2009, Clerisy Press). ♦ **Terrence C. Baltimore '09 (CLAS)** is creative director for a creative advertising and marketing agency, and has established his own website, thedocumenterrry.com, where he posts recent work and collaborations. ♦ **Steven B. Ferrigno '09 MBA**, broker/owner at Ferrigno-Storrs, Realtors LLC in Storrs, Conn., and president of the Tri-County Board of Realtors for 2015, received the Board's 2014 "Realtor of the Year Award." He was named in *Connecticut Magazine's* "Connecticut Top Real Estate Agents Highest in Service and Overall Satisfaction" for 2011 and 2012. ♦ **Colin A. Mansfield '09 (BUS)** is an analyst in the corporates group at Fitch Ratings in New York,

based First County Bank, and was named one of the Fairfield County's 2014 "40 Under 40" business executives. ♦ **Benjamin Marcus '11 (ENG)** is an associate at intellectual property law firm Cantor Colburn LLP in Hartford, Conn. ♦ **Justin Paluch '12 (BUS, ED)** is assistant women's basketball coach at Colgate University in Hamilton, N.Y. ♦ **Elise K. Prairie '12 (BUS)** is an assistant account executive at marketing communications agency Cronin and Company LLC, in Glastonbury, Conn. She previously worked for Media Storm in Norwalk, Conn. ♦ **Kayla Farrands '13 (CLAS)** is a specialist of PR/strategy at communications firm (add)ventures in Providence, R.I. She previously served with AmeriCorps VISTA at Serve Rhode Island. ♦ **Christina Colón Williams '14 JD** is an associate at the law firm Wiggin and Dana in New Haven, Conn. ♦ **Sarah B. Jeffrey '14 MBA**, administrative fellow at Bristol Hospital, received the Early Career Healthcare Executive Regent's Award from the Connecticut Association of Healthcare Executives in July for her contributions to the advancement of healthcare management excellence and to the goals of the American College of Healthcare Executives. ♦ **Kevin G. Palumberi '14 J.D.** is an associate attorney at law firm Chipman Mazucco in Danbury, Conn. ♦ **Shuai Yang '14 Ph.D.** successfully defended her dissertation "Two Essays on Matching Strategy in Paid Search Advertising" and joined Donghua University in Shanghai as an assistant professor of business administration in fall 2014.

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Share the milestones in your life with your fellow UConn alumni. Let us know what's new with you.

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STEM Residence Hall



Downtown Hartford Campus



South Campus Gateway



UConn Health — Outpatient Pavilion



UConn Health — Hospital Tower

BY TOM BREEN '00 (GLAS)

## GETTING OFF THE GROUND

Our campuses statewide continue to evolve, with projects that will allow UConn to house more talented students, integrate with Connecticut's capital city, and continue to provide top-quality medical care.

### STORRS

#### STEM RESIDENCE HALL

Construction has begun on the new \$79 million, 210,000-square-foot, multistory residence hall for students in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines. The dormitory is the first project awarded under the ambitious Next Generation Connecticut program, which aims to put UConn at the forefront of research and innovation. The residence hall, to be located near the Hale and Ellsworth dorms, will include STEM

educational facilities along with 727 student beds, including 23 that are fully compliant with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act. The project began in November, with completion slated for Summer 2016.

#### SOUTH CAMPUS GATEWAY

As travelers arriving at UConn from the southern end of the Storrs campus have noticed since the fall, it's no longer possible to just suddenly "find yourself" on campus. Thanks to a visionary re-imagining of the area, there's no mistaking that you've arrived at UConn.

Wider sidewalks to encourage pedestrian traffic, new landscaping features, and distinctive signage to promote upcoming events and performances in the School of Fine Arts and other venues are all part of the new "gateway" to the campus that complements the adjacent Storrs Center Development.

Developed for roughly \$1.5 million, the new streetscape helps tie the campus to the burgeoning development at Storrs Center, which includes the Co-op Bookstore, the Ballard Museum of Puppetry, and an urgent care clinic operated by UConn Health.

The improved look at the corner of Route 195 and Bolton Road, near the entrance to the Music Library, is one way in which UConn is helping to fulfill the

original vision of the Storrs Center project by creating a vibrant mix of academic, artistic, and commercial pursuits at one of the most visible and visited sections of campus.

### HARTFORD

#### DOWNTOWN CAMPUS

When UConn's Hartford campus moves downtown in the capital city in fall 2017, it's going to mean a lot more than just a change of address.

As dynamic new renderings show, the planned Hartford campus will be a milestone for the University and for the city, anchoring the continued growth of UConn's academic mission while contributing to the revitalization of downtown.

The new location will bring students

closer to potential internships, service projects and, jobs in urban K-12 schools, government agencies, businesses, nonprofits, and other entities.

About 2,300 commuter students and 250 employees will be based at the campus, which will return UConn to its urban roots; although located in West Hartford since 1970, the regional campus was first established in Hartford in 1939.

The center of the campus will be the restored *Hartford Times* building, which will retain its iconic façade. A new, attached five-story building will offer state-of-the-art classrooms and labs for University students and faculty.

The nearby Graduate Business Learning Center will be consolidated with the other programs at the new campus, including the Department of Public Policy and School of Social Work.

The University will also add a master's

degree program in engineering at the campus, along with expanded public policy, urban studies, and education programs.

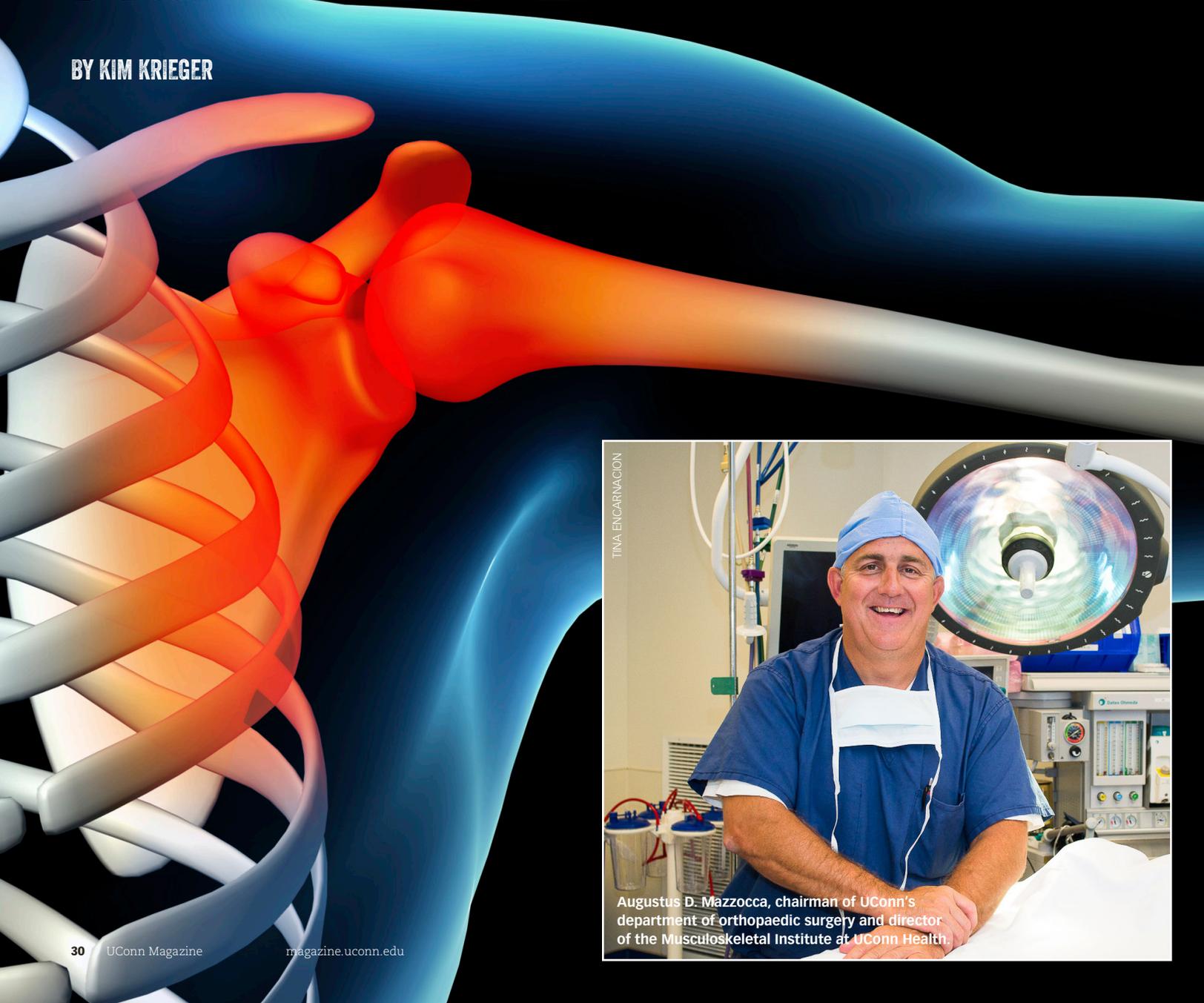
### FARMINGTON

#### UConn Health

In September, the final steel beams were put into place on the 11-floor hospital tower at UConn Health, scheduled for final completion in early 2016. The brand-new facility will include 169 private patient rooms, a 43-bed emergency department, and 11 state-of-the-art operating rooms. The hospital tower is one of the most dynamic results of the Bioscience Connecticut initiative, which has also resulted in the new Outpatient Pavilion and The Jackson Laboratory for Genomic Medicine, both located on UConn Health's campus. 🐾

# GIVING SHOULDERS NEW LIFE

BY KIM KRIEGER



Augustus D. Mazzocca, chairman of UConn's department of orthopaedic surgery and director of the Musculoskeletal Institute at UConn Health.

TINA ENCARNACION

He's shirtless when he steps into the camera frame, late 30s, brown hair with a mustache. He swings his arms out to the side and down, then straight up and down.

"That guy's amazing. He was hit by a train," says Augustus D. Mazzocca, chairman of UConn's department of orthopaedic surgery and director of the Musculoskeletal Institute at UConn Health. As if he heard Mazzocca's words, the man in the video drops and does a one-armed pushup.

After the train accident, Mazzocca's team repaired the group of muscles and tendons known as the rotator cuff that kept the man's arm firmly in his shoulder socket. The video was taken half a year after that surgery. It's impressive. Watching the guy, you'd never know he'd had a traumatic injury.

He's one of the lucky ones. Rotator cuff injuries are very common, due to overuse, sports injuries, and other unknown reasons. They don't always heal, leaving patients unable to lift or move their arms, and doctors don't always know why. Sometimes muscles degrade faster than they regenerate. Sometimes tendons don't reattach to the bone, or mysteriously atrophy until they're too short to do anything.

"The patient with a bad outcome is the patient that drives us," Mazzocca says. He leads a team of researchers at UConn searching for better ways to heal stubborn rotator cuff injuries. They're testing the physical limits of surgical repair, comparing physical therapy techniques to find the fastest, most effective regimens, and cultivating the body's ability to heal itself with its own adult stem cells.

## MECHANICAL REPAIRS

In a lab down the hall from Mazzocca, research engineer Elifho Obopilwe is sitting next to a workbench outfitted with a clamp. A Dremel tool lies nearby. The lab feels like a high-end auto body shop, except for the human shoulder bone mounted to what looks like the business end of a giant nutcracker.

Obopilwe is testing how much strain a newly-repaired shoulder can take. The giant nutcracker is really a Material Testing System (MTS) machine. The MTS presses down or pulls up with a certain force, over and over and over again. Sensors attached to the bone and tendon can report exactly how much strain the shoulder feels. And if the repair fails — if a tendon tears or a bone breaks — the sensor record will tell exactly how much force was too much. Obopilwe has it set to 100 newtons of force, about how much you would feel if you extended your arm straight out and lifted it to be parallel with your shoulder.

Obopilwe performs the tests on pieces of cadavers, since it would be unethical to strain a living person's repair until it failed. Cadavers don't heal or change. When the surgeon tries out a new repair on a cadaver, that repair has the strength and resilience that it would on a live person the moment they come out of surgery, before they start to heal. Although patients don't move their arms right away, these tests

VIDEO



Lean more about the work of Augustus Mazzocca and his research team in our bonus video at [s.uconn.edu/rotatorcuff](https://s.uconn.edu/rotatorcuff).

give an idea of the minimum strength a patient would have post-surgery.

"That will give the surgeon the confidence to tell the patient, 'Start moving,'" Obopilwe says.

Getting patients to use their arm safely and comfortably is the goal. Part of Mazzocca's team focuses on the results, tracking the clinical outcomes of the surgeries as carefully as they test the mechanical repairs. They test different physical therapy regimens to see which ones help patients recover fastest and most completely. True success is determined by what the patient can do and how good they feel. A successful surgery not only repairs torn tissue and gets the patient moving his arm again, but also improves his quality of life.

## HEALING AT THE CELLULAR LEVEL

But some patients, about 15 percent, just don't heal. The UConn team suspects a biological reason, a failure of the body to communicate at the cellular level.

To jumpstart the body's healing process, they do something unusual. They harvest the patient's own stem cells during the surgery, concentrate them, and then deliver them into the repair. These adult stem cells, harvested from bone marrow within the patient's humeral bone, have the potential to turn into bone, tendon, or cartilage.

"They're confused cells," which have not yet differentiated into a specialized cell type, says Mary Beth McCarthy, a research associate. She knows how to nudge them so they reliably turn into a specific tissue type in a petri dish. But FDA regulations classify such modified stem cells as drugs, and right now there is no clear path to getting them approved for use in humans.

Instead, McCarthy is working on a scaffold that can be sutured to the footprint on the bone where the tendon should reattach. The scaffold itself is made of the patient's own blood plasma and adult stem cells. Down the road, McCarthy sees more studies being done on "smart" scaffolds, where one side of the scaffold will be imbued with molecules that signal stem cells to turn into bone, and the other with signals for tendon. The team hopes that the patients' stem cells will get the message and grow appropriately, so that even stubborn rotator cuff injuries will heal.

Rotator cuff surgery is a big sacrifice, in time and in pain. Mazzocca is the first to admit it. But if someone has trouble moving his arm, if he's in pain when he moves, eats, and tries to sleep, he's usually eager to try to fix it. Fixing it, healing those torn tendons and muscles in the rotator cuff, is the team's ultimate goal, Mazzocca says.

"Someone who hasn't used his or her arm in 10 to 15 years and you're able to return that function to them — that's the big thrill." 🐾

# UConn

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