

# UConn

MAGAZINE

SUMMER 2020

UConn

## Our Defining Moments

### In This Issue:

THE ALUM WHO RUNS  
A COVID-19 TESTING  
LAB AT THE CDC

THE STUDENTS WHO  
WANT US TO SEE  
BEYOND COLOR

THE EDUCATION PRO-  
FESSOR WHO REFUSED  
TO HOMESCHOOL



**SNAP!**

### **If a Tree Blooms ...**

Spring sprang on the Storrs campus even though most humans were not there to enjoy it. The University, though, was not closed. Courses moved online on March 23, and on May 9 our alumni ranks grew by 8,912 — congratulations and welcome to each one of you.

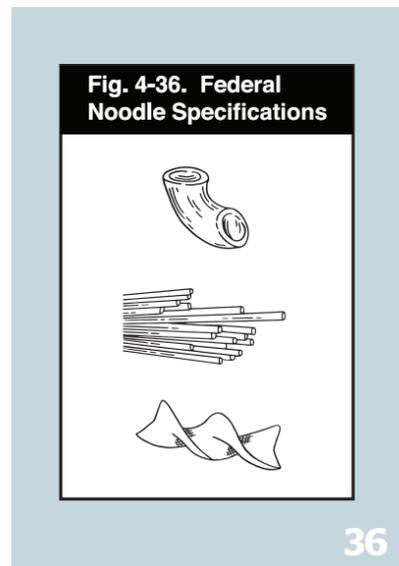
SNAP!

## Where the Wild Things Are

As in our childhood storybooks (and dreams), animals took over cities, towns, suburbs, and exurbs while people around the globe locked down to slow the spread of Covid-19. Goats crashed through a village in Wales, ducks paraded down boulevards in Turkey, cows sunbathed on beaches in Spain, peacocks window-shopped in Dubai, macaques mobbed streets in Thailand. In Storrs, Jonathan XIV had the shelves of Homer Babbidge Library all to himself — “Balto” or “The Call of the Wild”? Although the physical space was closed, the library provided online support to students, even creating early morning (as in 2 a.m.) Help Desk hours for students on the other side of the globe.

HOMER BABBIGE LIBRARY, STORRS, CT





FEATURES

SECTIONS

- 17 OUR DEFINING MOMENTS**  
The stalwart Husky has a storied legacy of forging paths through darkness and danger to deliver aid wherever it is needed. Huskies don't hunker down. They plow ahead. They find creative, innovative ways around any obstacle. They find ways to help. These Huskies — students, staff, professors, doctors, nurses, and graduates new and old — have been doing just that as we navigate a global pandemic.
- 30 THE NEW REPARATIONS MATH**  
Professor of public policy Thomas Craemer realized that the typical calculations concerning slavery reparations in this country simply did not add up. They were based on an 8-hour work day, 5 days a week. Slaves were slaves 24-7. So he did some new math. *By Maya A. Moore '19 (CLAS)*
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Alums share lessons on getting into an exercise groove, beachcombing for good, speaking your mind, marrying tech and art, and making your "leisure time" matter. Plus Class Notes, Tom's Trivia, and more.



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**Editor** Lisa Stiepock  
**Art Director** Christa Yung  
**Photographer** Peter Morenus  
**Contributing Photographers** Tina Encarnacion, Sean Flynn  
**Student Worker** Sarah Negron '20 (CLAS)  
**Class Notes** Grace Merritt  
**Copy Editors** Julie (Stagis) Bartucca '10 (BUS, CLAS), '19 MBA, Gregory Lauzon  
**Web Designers** Christine Ballestrini '03 (SFA), Yesenia Carrero, Kathleen (McIntyre) Cosma '14 (SFA)

**University Communications**  
**Vice President for Communications** Tysen Kendig  
**Associate Vice President for Creative Strategy & Brand Management** Patricia Fazio '90 (CLAS), '92 MA

**Email:** [uconnmagazine@uconn.edu](mailto:uconnmagazine@uconn.edu).  
**Letters to the editor and other comments are welcome.** Send address changes to UConn Foundation Records Department, Unit 3206, 2390 Alumni Drive, Storrs, CT 06269

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**Table of Contents** Getty Images/Lyubov Ivanova edited for UConn by Christa Yung, Neil Jamieson, Mike Chase, Peter Morenus  
**From the Editor** Peter Morenus  
**Tom's Trivia** Peter Morenus

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FROM THE EDITOR



JUST LISTEN

When we started working on this issue, magazine production was business as usual, and the world felt somewhat normal. Of course, it wasn't.

As Commander Alison (Laufer) Halpin '05 (CLAS) at the CDC (page 18) knew all too well, coronavirus was ready to explode across the country, shining a harsh light on the inequities and injustice that make "normal" so different depending on who you are and where you live.

A few short months later, on the day we go to press, Black Lives Matter protests rage across the country (an echo of many times, particularly the late '60s — see page 12), and I find myself trying to understand the level of vulnerability black people in this country feel while going about ordinary day-to-day activities. I try to understand the level of helplessness and abject fear a mother of a black child in this country today feels. Of course, I can't know those feelings. All I can do is listen to those who do know and try to understand in an effort to effect change.

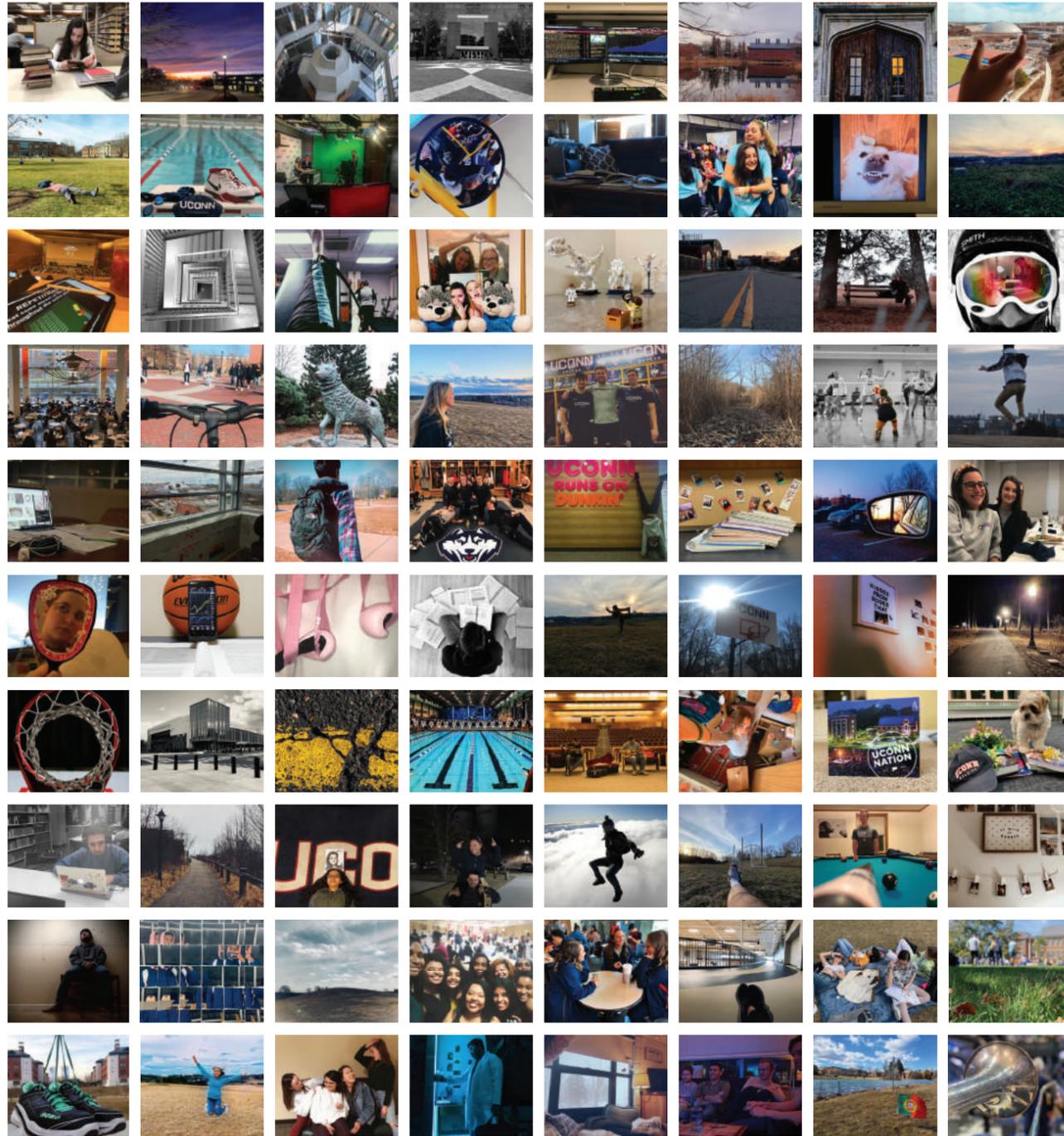
Listen the way public policy professor Thomas Craemer listened, growing up in Germany, to the stories of Holocaust survivors. Those stories inspired him to study political science and, recently, to calculate slavery reparations that "help us wrap our minds around the magnitude of the injustice" (page 30).

The way Louis Goffinet '17 (CLAS) listened to his neighbors when they asked for his help in running errands, but whose stories revealed other needs, too, all of which he found ways to answer — and whose karma must be through the roof (page 53, and pictured above).

The way Kelly Ha '19 (BGS) listened to family and friends who won't go out because they fear they'll be harmed simply for being Asian, and who helped create a campaign to help the world see beyond color (page 23).

Like they did, we need to listen when our fellow humans tell us when they can't work, when they can't feed their families, when they can't pursue their happiness — when they can't breathe.

*Lisa Stiepock*



ON CAMPUS

LIGHT YEARS AWAY

Each semester Stephen Stifano assigns his COMM 1000 students “1,000 Words,” asking them to encapsulate their UConn experience in a photo worth, well, you know. He ends each class with a video montage of these photos. This spring, about two weeks after the assignment was due, the entire campus shut down due to Covid-19. He posted the montage saying, “Here is a snapshot of what feels like a simpler time — but the time that you should remember, especially you seniors, as your experience at the University of Connecticut.” Watch the video, set to “Light Years” by The National, at [s.uconn.edu/montage](http://s.uconn.edu/montage).



LETTERS

Old fans, new fans, and freshly inspired fans wrote to share love for Geno Auriemma and Chris Dailey and WBB alums who are doing such amazing things in sports and life. Here’s a smattering of the letters we received on that subject and more, edited for length; find more online. And please add your own:

Email me at [lisa.stiepock@uconn.edu](mailto:lisa.stiepock@uconn.edu) or post on our website at [magazine.uconn.edu](http://magazine.uconn.edu).

The Making of Champions On and Off the Court

➤ This story is heartening for all who believe a college experience, whether involving sports or not, must be about learning, being a better human being, and bringing back value to the community, along with acquiring the tools needed for a professional career. Jack Crane, via our website

➤ I played basketball at UConn from 1958–62. In 1971–72 I was a grad assistant coach of the first team to participate in an AIAW regional championship. Recognition of pre-Geno history would be of interest. Sarah Rich, via our website

➤ I was fortunate to meet Maya Moore at one of Geno’s charity golf tournaments. She is a down to earth individual, intelligent, and a great

personality. It’s not surprising that she is involved in criminal justice. Daniel F. Bonyeau, via our website

➤ I am so proud of the university, its staff, its students, and their achievements. Michael A.S. Goba ’89 (BUS), via our website

The Isis Terminator

➤ Brett McGurk is truly an amazing man and our country is fortunate to have people like him serving. Janet Kinard, via e-mail

Genetics for Justice

➤ Great to see that Beach Hall, site of my geography classes in the 1960s, continues as a special UConn asset. And to learn of an incredible person with a balanced approach to a special and shared skill! John Somerville, via our website

Best Buds

➤ As a new RA, I too went on an adventure with Jeff while he was our head resident in the Jungle. One late fall weekend we trekked up to the Maine/New Hampshire border to canoe and rough it with the fall foliage in full display. I’ll never forget it. Rest in peace, Jeff. Jeff Daigle ’89 (BUS), via our website

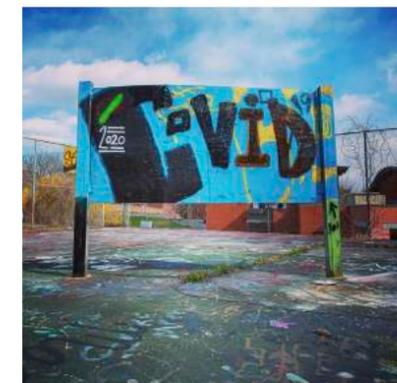
Old-School Soda

➤ One day when I was about 10, I went outside to retrieve our Hosmer soda delivery. I heard a ball bouncing and saw this tall redheaded delivery man shooting hoops in our driveway. He threw the ball to me and we played a few rounds of Horse. Looking at Bill Potvin’s photo I think it may have been him. Much different than the big corporate businesses that are go, go, go. Scott Adams ’04 (ENG), via our website

SOCIAL MEDIA

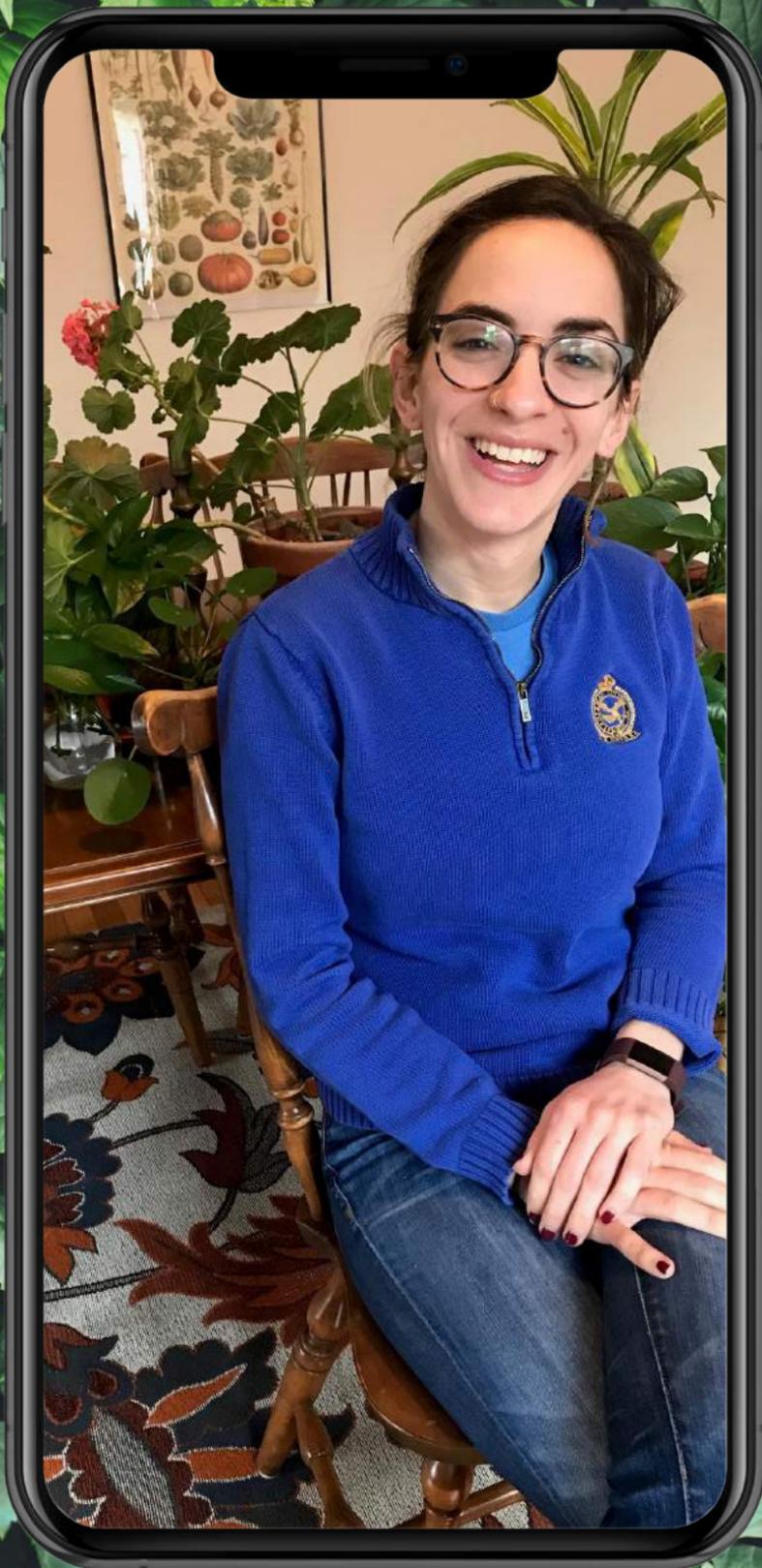


Everyone’s doing their part to social distance. #UConnNation (@uconn)



UConn Graffiti Wall behind Northwest #graffiti #uconnviews #graffitiart (@uconnseanflyn)





CHECKING IN WITH

## ABBY BEISSINGER, PLANT DETECTIVE

“It’s beautiful to me,” says plant pathologist Abby Beissinger of specimens that would elicit “Oooh, gross!” sounds from 99% of the population. Commercial growers and home gardeners bring or mail her samples of plants they suspect are sick with pests or disease. She often goes microscopic, drilling down to a cellular level to make a diagnosis.

“Seeing what emerges is super exciting,” she says. “And here’s why. Each pathogen looks so different. With fungal spores, it’s not that one’s a circle and one’s a zigzag; one will look like a tadpole, and one looks like a crystal ball. It’s this whole world we don’t have access to unless we have bionic eyeballs — or a microscope.”

Admittedly “exciting” and “beautiful” are not the first words a farmer receiving a diagnosis might utter. But it’s important to know what is ailing their plants so they can remedy it. Recently, Beissinger, who runs the Plant Diagnostic Lab in the Ratcliffe Hicks building at Storrs, combed through some 500 leek samples looking for pupa she then raised in petri dishes. In so doing, she helped confirm that the commercial farmer who sent the leeks had one of the first known cases of allium leafminer in Connecticut. “Allium leafminer can completely decimate a leek field,” says Beissinger. So knowing it’s here is critical for controlling it

this season and preparing for next.

The Lab collaborates with UConn’s Home and Garden Education Center (HGED); both are part of the College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources Extension program. You don’t need commercial crops or even live specimens to take advantage of the Lab’s expertise. As with so much else these days, Beissinger’s work is increasingly digital — telemedicine for plants. As of mid-May, she’d received 120 digital samples, nearly double last year’s tally. The shift is not solely a result of coronavirus.

“I’ve been really trying to ramp up my social media content for the Lab. It sparks people’s minds. They’ll think, ‘Oh, I’m seeing something like that in my garden,’ or ‘Oh, I’ve always wondered about this.’” Which plays right into Beissinger’s hand. “One of my main goals is to help people see how really interconnected we are to plants.”

### Sleuthing 101

Beissinger always felt that connection to some extent — growing up outside Chicago, she planted impatiens with her mom. But it wasn’t until the end of her senior year at University of Wisconsin–Madison that she found her pathological calling. Needing one more science class to graduate, the anthropology major who had also been drawn

to environmental agriculture studies chose “Plants, People, and Parasites.”

“It was just a 100 course, a gen-ed, but I was absolutely floored. It was just so thrilling to me.” She went to grad school for plant pathology. “You could say it was a highly uninformed decision, but I just had this gut feeling that there would be a need for understanding how plant diseases affect people.”

With people spending so much more time at home, demand for the Lab and HGED services has been growing. “It’s just this massive resource for home gardeners,” says Beissinger. “What kind of tomato do you want to grow? What soil does your rhododendron need?” As for her Lab, you can snail mail or email to submit samples. For \$20, you get testing, microscope photos, and instructions on what to do. And digital diagnoses are free.

Beissinger has some advice for all the people getting into gardening this summer. The greenhouse and nursery industry in Connecticut had to completely redo business models, going to curbside delivery, at their busiest time of year. She suggests finding garden centers in your area — you’ll help the local economy and find people who really know their plants. —LISA STIEPOCK

Find links to local resources and contact info for labs and centers at [s.uconn.edu/beissinger](https://s.uconn.edu/beissinger).



Left: Beissinger in her home office. Above: The plant detective’s photos of bitter rot disease on an apple. From left: the naked eye view; views of fungal fruiting bodies where spores are emitted; a spore within the tissue viewed under a compound microscope; and spores free floating on a microscope slide.



Peter Morenus

TASTE OF STORRS

## SUMMER SMOOTHIES

Like so many local restaurants, UConn Dining Services pivoted to provide takeout meals to the students who had to stay on campus. Looking ahead to summer, the chefs also spent some time devising these whole-food smoothies that will be served at the Student Rec Center.

### Strawberry Banana

- 1 1/2 cups milk, almond milk, or coconut milk
- 1 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 1/2 cup ice
- 2 cups frozen sliced strawberries
- 1 banana, sliced

Place all ingredients in a high-powered blender and blend until smooth. Pour into two glasses and enjoy.

### Peanut Butter Banana

- 1 cup milk, almond milk, or coconut milk
- 1/2 cup nonfat Greek yogurt
- 2 frozen sliced bananas
- 1/3 cup peanut butter
- 1/3 cup quick or rolled oats

Place all ingredients in a high-powered blender and blend until smooth. Pour into two glasses and enjoy.

### The Green Machine

- 2 cups tightly packed spinach or kale leaves
- 1 1/2 cups fruit juice, milk, almond milk, or coconut milk
- 1 cup each frozen mango and pineapple chunks
- 1 banana, sliced
- 1/2 medium avocado

In a high-powered blender, blend spinach or kale and desired liquid until smooth. Add mango, pineapple, banana, and avocado, and blend until smooth. Pour into two glasses and enjoy.

### Very Berry

- 1 cup milk, almond milk, or coconut milk
- 3/4 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 1 cup each frozen raspberries, strawberries, and blueberries
- 1 tablespoon chia seeds (optional)

Place all ingredients in a high-powered blender and blend until smooth. Pour into two glasses and enjoy.

UConn Talks

On the end of the modern-day greeting:

**“A handshake can transfer 124 million bacteria, twice as many pathogens as a high five.”**

Dr. Cato T. Laurencin, University Professor and professor of orthopedic surgery, *Science*, May 12, 2020

On why “Moby-Dick” may be having a moment:

**“He does not care about his boat, his people. He only cares about that ambition. The whole idea of monomania feels relevant right now.”**

Mary K. Bercaw Edwards, associate professor of American literature, *The New York Times*, May 1, 2020

On the pandemic causing an increase in everyday creativity:

**“Perhaps you make your private YouTube channel of punk Sondheim covers public and start getting solid viewer response.”**

James C. Kaufman, professor of educational psychology, *Psychology Today*, April 9, 2020

On discovering a dementia-linked gene:

**“It... could help us understand why some people stay active to age 100 and beyond, while others become disabled and die in their sixties.”**

Dr. Chia-Ling Kuo, assistant professor of public health sciences, *Forbes.com*, May 26, 2020

On quality issues with big pharma:

**“Generic drugs are supposed to be identical, but they may not be as safe as you think.”**

C. Michael White, professor of pharmacy practice, *Forbes*, May 7, 2020

On killing Covid-19:

**“Most viruses, especially respiratory viruses, are easily ‘disassembled’ by soap when they are outside your body.”**

Paulo H. Verardi, associate professor of pathobiology and veterinary science, *USA Today*, March 16, 2020

On kids learning, just differently, during school closures:

**“We need not siphon public dollars into the hands of testing, tutoring, and textbook industries, but instead find new ways to engage a generation of learners like no other.”**

Rachael Gabriel, associate professor of literary education, *The Washington Post*, May 19, 2020

On using his chemistry lab and grad students to make hand sanitizer for senior centers and first responders:

**“I thought, how can we possibly help?”**

Jeffrey McCutcheon, associate professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering, *WILLI*, May 13, 2020



**FLASHBACK**

**OCT. 15, 1969, STUDENT PROTEST AGAINST THE VIETNAM WAR**

The *Connecticut Daily Campus* offices were upstairs in the Student Union, so it was a simple matter for me to step outside to take pictures throughout this Vietnam War demonstration that involved hundreds of students. On a personal note, it was my experience that the Black Power protests of the early '60s and the antiwar protests of the later '60s caused a coalition of these two movements that addressed some racial divisions. Obviously, this is still a work in progress. But, as I came from a high school in West Haven where in 1965 I didn't know a single black person, this "integration by protest" was a revelation for me. —PHOTOGRAPHER HOWARD GOLDBAUM '70 (CLAS)



Seven of the nine Puerto Rican students in the class of 2020 gathered for this photo just days before they thought they'd be heading out for spring break. Instead, the campus shut down and most headed back home. From left, back row: Alejandro Rodriguez, Sofia Nieto, Eduardo Abreu, Javier Gomez; front row: Greishka Cordero, Alexandra Aponte, Francisco Fadhel.

OUR STUDENTS

## SI SE PUEDE

**This class of seniors (and near-seniors) had already weathered a number of major storms before the pandemic hit**

When Alexandra Aponte '20 (ENG) spoke to her mom on the night of September 19, 2017, she wasn't too concerned about Puerto Rico.

Talks of yet another hurricane were circling the news, just two weeks after Hurricane Irma had hit the island, but Aponte knew to think twice before panicking. Born and raised on the island, Aponte lived through various hurricane warnings for storms that would either slow down drastically by the time they hit the island or miss it all together. In fact, the running joke, she says, was that Puerto Rico had a magic shield that protected it from tropical storms. So when she hung up with her mom, she was convinced she'd hear from her first thing in the morning, and once again the hurricane would have been all talk.

But when she woke up there was no call.

Aponte wasn't alone. Eight other students from Puerto Rico, who started at UConn with her in 2016, were in the same predicament — some unable to reach their families and friends for hours and others for several weeks.

Nearly a category 5 hurricane, with winds at 155 mph, Hurricane Maria became the strongest to hit Puerto Rico in 80 years. Causing widespread destruction, Maria left millions without electricity or clean water for months and caused nearly 3,000 fatalities, a number reported much later in an independent study by George Washington University.

When all nine students committed to UConn they did so in hopes of tapping into greater opportunities. And, of

course, as they settled in freshman year they were prepared to find their fair share of hurdles, even more than the average student. From speaking English every day to seeing snow for the first time, their experience was similar to that of international students, they say, with the exception of holding a U.S. passport.

But Hurricane Maria was one challenge none of them could foresee. Just weeks after starting their sophomore year here, their friends and families were shaken like never before, 1,633 miles away. And all they could do was watch from the sidelines.

"The hardest part for all of us was not being able to take a boots-on-the-ground approach. All we had were pictures and videos showing us a Puerto Rico that we didn't recognize," says Diego Rivera '21 (ENG).

Classes were missed, exams were failed, and campus leaders were stumped in the face of uncertainty. But when they could have given up and returned home, they pushed forward.

Inspired by the catastrophe, they were more determined than ever to not only graduate in hopes of returning to Puerto Rico one day to make a difference, but also to represent their island the only way they knew how — with resilience.

"Being Puerto Rican means staying positive, finding joy in even the simplest of situations, and looking out for one another," says Javier Gomez '20 (CLAS).

"That's exactly how we got through Hurricane Maria. Friends became family and we all helped each other from there on out. We become one in the name of the island."

Three years after Hurricane Maria, Puerto Rico has experienced several other turbulent moments, including a change in government, earthquakes, and more recently, of course, the devastating effects of Covid-19. But with each experience, these students say both they and their island have grown stronger.

Indeed, this is the most decorated senior class of Puerto Ricans UConn has seen. From working as guides at the Visitor's Center to excelling in the Honors Programs, these Huskies have made their mark across campus.

Typically, an average of two to three students directly from Puerto Rico drop out of UConn each year for a variety of reasons, says Aida Silva, Senior Associate Director of Admissions. This is one of the largest groups to graduate in a long time, she says, and one of the most accomplished. She can't wait to see what they do next.

We caught up with all nine students just before campus closed and most headed home. With one of the country's strictest lockdowns, Puerto Rico has aimed to keep Covid-19 cases at bay by enforcing a curfew and travel ban among other things. Like the rest of the graduating class of 2020, they were unable to celebrate their accomplishments at Gampel Pavilion. While sad, they agreed it was for the best.

"Obviously commencement is important because it's a celebration of us. But this small sacrifice to save lives is worth it. We've gone through so much that this is nothing to me," Daniel Cintron '20 (CLAS) told us.

And virtual graduation gave them the chance to celebrate with friends and family, who otherwise wouldn't have been able to attend. "While this is not what I expected, I think this is how it had to happen," said Aponte. "No better place to graduate than the island that shaped me."

### Alexandra Aponte '20 (ENG)

Since the moment Aponte set foot on campus, she saw the value in student involvement. She has been a key player in the Puerto Rican/Latin American

**"When she hung up with her mom, she was convinced she'd hear from her first thing in the morning and once again the hurricane would have been all talk."**

Cultural Center, a STEM Scholar, an event coordinator, and the president of the Puerto Rican Student Association (PuRSA).

But overall her greatest accomplishment, she says, was as chairperson for the Student Development Committee in the Undergraduate Student Government. There she was influential in starting conversations about culture and identity at UConn through an initiative she helped create, the Cultural Awareness Series.

"Attending and graduating UConn is the easy part," Aponte says. "The challenge is occupying spaces you wouldn't often see minority students in. If you don't see yourself represented somewhere, you make space for yourself and get things done."

She'll start with a job in Connecticut, joining Pfizer as a manufacturing engineer later this year.

### Diego Rivera '21 (ENG)

Influencing infrastructure policy in Puerto Rico is Diego Rivera's long-term goal. It would combine his three passions: engineering, politics, and his home.

As an Honors civil engineering student with a minor in political science and mathematics on a pre-law track, Rivera spent the last academic year everywhere but the classroom. Fall semester he completed a co-op with Apex Companies in South Windsor, Connecticut. Spring found him in Washington, D.C., interning in the office of Rep. Joe Courtney (D-CT), where his tasks included giving tours of the U.S. Capitol — a job familiar to Rivera, who has been a UConn tour guide since sophomore year.

Rivera's internships and travels mean he will need a fifth year to complete his academics, and says he's excited to return to UConn, especially the Visitor's Center.

"I hope to be a motivation to potential students during my tours. If I came from Puerto Rico without knowing what to expect, they can do it too — especially if they're from New England," he says.

### Javier Gomez '20 (CLAS)

As a kid, Gomez remembers his grandfather encouraging him to always be a helping hand. At UConn he kept this in mind.

Whether he was giving rides to classmates in need or translating for full-time dining services kitchen staff, he was known for his reliability. By his senior year he was promoted to student manager at Buckley Dining Hall, while continuing to ace his biology courses.

Post-graduation, he plans to take a gap year to work in a hospital in Puerto Rico and hopes to then embark on his next journey: dental school. He'd like to open his own pediatric practice one day.

### Sofia Nieto '20 (CLAS)

If you had told Nieto during her Husky-for-a-Day experience that, upon graduating from UConn, her list of accomplishments would include being a STEM Scholar and the first Puerto Rican admitted to a Special Program in Law and founding her own nonprofit in Puerto Rico, she never would have believed it.

But that's the beauty of college and liberal arts, she says. She started as an Honors chemistry student and found a passion for immigration and civil rights law along the way. Nieto's nonprofit organization, Mujeres Poder, is the individualized project she did as part of UConn's first cohort of the BOLD Women's Leadership Network.

Based in Puerto Rico, Mujeres Poder provides resources to existing women's nonprofits, making information easily accessible to the public.

“I see these women leading organizations in Puerto Rico as pioneers, and I want to be able to give back any way I can,” says Nieto.

**Eduardo Abreu '20 (CLAS)**

Unlike the other students who came directly from Puerto Rico, Abreu and his family moved to New Jersey a week before his freshman year of high school. As a son of Dominican parents raised in Puerto Rico, he was always very proud of his identity. But he admits to losing sight of his roots in high school, as one of only three Latinos amid hundreds of students.

It wasn't until he started at UConn, he says, that he felt at home again, surrounded by many other students who understood his childhood in Guayana, Puerto Rico. Abreu was a biological science major on a pre-PA track, the social media coordinator for PuRSA, and a UConn tour guide.

As a guide, he says he made it a point to highlight UConn's six cultural centers and programs and the added support they provide to minority students, such as him.

**Daniel Cintron '20 (CLAS)**

Growing up in San Juan, just a three-minute drive from Ocean Park Beach, you could always find Cintron by the shore, he says. But when he returned this past December to the same spot he used to frequent, there was no shore to enjoy. He doesn't know the exact cause, but he suspects climate change. We're starting to witness the effects worldwide, especially in small islands like Puerto Rico, he says.

Finding solutions is Cintron's passion — stemming from his time as a chemistry student. He worked with animal minerals as an intern with Synchrom in Minnesota and mesoporous materials in the UConn research lab of professor Jie He. He hopes a recent contribution to a science journal, *Advanced Functional Materials Journal*, is just the first of many. He'd like to combat climate change, perhaps helping make solar panels more affordable to consumers, especially in Puerto Rico.

**“Obviously commencement is important because it’s a celebration of us. But this small sacrifice to save lives is worth it.” –Daniel Cintron '20 (CLAS)**

Post-graduation he'll pursue his master's and doctoral degrees in chemistry at the University of Pittsburgh.

**Greishka Cordero '20 (CLAS)**

Cordero has always wanted to be a doctor, and she's well on her way. She'll be attending UConn School of Medicine in the fall, as the first Puerto Rican admitted into the Honors Special Program in Medicine.

She hopes to become an obstetrician-gynecologist in Puerto Rico to advocate for the health and reproductive rights of women, especially women of color. Doctors have left the island in alarming numbers in the last few years, leaving a population of about 3.4 million people with limited access to health care.

“It may be hard for physicians on the island right now, but it will be worth it,” she says. “It's my duty as a Puerto Rican to give back to my community.”

**Francisco Fadhel '21 (ENG)**

Fadhel, a civil engineering major, says he couldn't have imagined these last four years without his friends from the island. His favorite event at UConn by far was Noche Boricua, which celebrates Puerto Rican culture and shares food and traditions with others at UConn. Like Rivera, Fadhel will be returning to UConn for a fifth year and plans to work in engineering in Florida after graduation, before eventually returning to Puerto Rico.

**Alejandro Rodriguez '20 (CLAS)**

Being a student tour guide was much more than just a job for Rodriguez. From the moment he transferred junior year from Fordham University, he saw it as an opportunity to learn about, and advocate for, his newfound passion — UConn. His friends started calling him the “Visitor's Center King of Facts.”

Rodriguez has advocacy in mind with his history major and double minor in philosophy and Latino and Latin American studies. Though his family now lives in Woodbridge, Connecticut, he plans to get a law degree and then return to Puerto Rico to work in public policy.

During his two years at UConn he was instrumental in a wide range of research and won a SHARE grant for his project “Puerto Rican Heritage Trail,” exploring Puerto Rican migration to Hartford.

Rodriguez says that wherever his career takes him he will always be proud of his time as a tour guide and influencing others to love UConn as much as he does. —CAMILA VALLEJO '19 (CLAS)

**UPDATE**

**LAMBDAVISION GETS AWARD FROM NASA**

The UConn spinoff company working on a retinal implant it hopes will restore sight for millions is taking its science to space.

LambdaVision, founded by chemistry professor emeritus Robert Birge and run by CEO Nicole Wagner '07 (CLAS), '13 Ph.D. and CSO Jordan Greco '13 Ph.D., has been selected, along with implementation partner Space Tango, to receive a \$5 million award from NASA.

The funding will allow the company to use the U.S. National Laboratory in the International Space Station to explore, in a series of flights over three years, the benefits of microgravity for producing the startup's artificial retina.

Find more at [s.uconn.edu/lambdavisision](http://s.uconn.edu/lambdavisision).

UConn Nation United

# Our Defining Moments

**The stalwart Husky has a storied legacy of forging paths through darkness and danger to deliver aid wherever it is needed. Huskies don't hunker down. They plow ahead. They find creative, innovative ways around any obstacle. They find ways to help. Amid this global pandemic, these Huskies — students, staff, professors, doctors, nurses, and graduates new and old — have been doing just that. ▶**

Read more at [s.uconn.edu/covid](http://s.uconn.edu/covid).

## > Commander Alison (Laufer) Halpin '05 (CLAS) Is Doing Her Part to Protect America

A Commander in the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service, Halpin runs a Covid-19 testing lab at the CDC.



One of the most frustrating things about a pandemic, says Dr. Alison (Laufer) Halpin '05 (CLAS), is that everything comes in waves. Preparing for each wave, she says, is like trying to turn an aircraft carrier when you can see the tsunami on the horizon.

Halpin runs one of the clinical testing laboratories for Covid-19 at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta. She was battling the first U.S. waves of the disease in January and February, before most of us knew it was coming.

When we spoke to her in early May, she said, "Covid has been going on for so long it's hard for me to remember what life was like before."

During the thickest of the thick of it, Halpin was in charge of 25 CDC staff with whom she worked at the lab 24-7 for eight weeks, doing all the diagnostic testing for Covid — trying to get health organizations their results as quickly as possible. They would see people on the news, like those on massive cruise ships, and know their numbered samples had come from those people.

"It's incredibly important to remember that these are kids and wives and husbands and grandparents and this can be life threatening for a lot of people and that's really awful," says Halpin. "I can say we are always happy when we get a negative test result."

Halpin is a Commander in the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service and led the Domestic Infection Control Team at the CDC during the Ebola outbreak in 2014. Ebola was like this too, she says, but to a lesser degree. "Ebola was huge — Covid is gargantuan."

Two things concern her most about this pandemic. First, people with no symptoms can spread it unknowingly, and second, we live in a time when people fly all over the world, which, she says, "has really changed the dynamic of how a pathogen can spread."

Halpin is quick to remind that she's not a virologist. But it's clear that successfully combating both those things requires

**"Ebola was huge — Covid is gargantuan."**



Halpin with her family outside Atlanta in May.

efficient, broad testing capacity.

Fortunately, by April, most state health departments were up and running doing their own testing.

"We went from processing hundreds and hundreds of samples a day down to fifty," says Halpin. To keep them well-rested and on their game, her group transitioned to being the secondary — or surge — lab, which means they are now able to work from home until a surge in testing need brings them into the lab.

### CONTAINMENT

From their respective homes, with kids and dogs interrupting their Zooms, her team has been working on a number of other Covid-related projects, including opening up new avenues for local testing.

"Prevention measures of covering your cough, cleaning and disinfecting, and hand washing; those are incredibly important," says Halpin, "but so is containment. We need to know who is sick and we need to contain them to stop the spread. That's a real priority."

To that end, the team is evaluating equipment alternatives to submit to the FDA. "A different product line or a different company can open up a whole new supply chain line, alleviate some of the stresses, and get testing to happen

locally — if they have this robot or instrument in their laboratory they can onboard it for testing."

The team is also working with a number of groups to sequence the virus and get the sequence data up on public repositories like the National Center for Biotechnology Information. "So you go from one laboratory being able to work on something to the entire world being able to work on it, and I think we've seen where getting data out publicly can advance the science."

Even now, as the surge team, the work is intense. But Halpin doesn't flinch at the responsibility. "I'm in public health. I have this sort of vocational calling, the sense that it's really important to give back," she says.

### MENTORS

It would seem Halpin was destined for public health work — her mother was director of research administration for clinical studies at Albany Medical Center in New York, and her dad worked for the New York State Department of Health in the AIDS Institute. But Halpin says she was well into her UConn undergraduate career before her own path became clear.

"I knew I liked science," she admits, but "I was also considering French. I liked a lot of things. I just kept doing things that I liked. I took Bio 107 with Dr. Tom Terry and it was amazing. So I took microbiology and then I took pathogenic microbiology." That last class studied the extraordinary effect the simple act of hand washing had on patient outcomes, which she found fascinating. "It was a huge turning point for me," she says. Another turning point was the work she did with leeches and gut microbiology in Dr. Joerg Graf's lab. She's still passionate about microbiomes and how they affect the gut. And still appreciative of her UConn mentors.

"They really did change the trajectory of my career, and I'm forever grateful for that. Dr. Terry and Dr. Graf were very encouraging of me, and I certainly would not have ended up where I am without them."

She's paying that forward, supporting and caring for staff and walking the walk when it comes to

CDC wellness programs, which, she notes, are always important but are critical during a response.

### FAMILY

"I think although it's incredibly scary for a lot of people and it's stressful, when you can see a group of people come together and work at a level of productivity and incredibly high quality and also take care of each other as a team or a family, that is when things go well. That's when there's strong communication, strong support and leadership. We definitely don't want this to ever happen again, but we're learning, we're getting better, not just for the long term but the short term. We still don't know what the resolution of this pandemic will be."

She tries to lighten the load with humor, sharing memes and GIFs, and she checks in with each team member

regularly. "I make sure they're eating, taking care of themselves, getting what they need for their houses. Or sometimes it's just talking to them, reminding them to keep doing the things they love as best they can."

What does that look like for Halpin? Working out in her home gym or getting out to do something active with her husband, whom she met doing triathlons, and their 4-year-old daughter. Fortunately Cannon, their whippet, requires lots of walking.

She also gets a lot of satisfaction from the work she does. "I could talk all day about the amazing people I work with, how humble and hard-working and inspirational they are," she says. "And I love the work we do — being able to impact patient safety on a national level."

"I actually look forward to Mondays!" —LISA STIEPOCK



Jakubowski fills a truck with donated food at Rentschler Field in May.

### > Extra Points

"Our emergency food distribution system has never been more important," says Jason Jakubowski '99 (CLAS), '01 MPA. The president and CEO of Foodshare gathered volunteers who have been at Rentschler handing out food to Connecticut families since March.

## > UConn Nation Fighting Covid Through Innovation and Creativity

Students, staff, and alumni are battling this novel virus and coming together for their communities in myriad ways. Here are just a few of the Huskies making us proud to bleed blue; find more about them and others at [s.uconn.edu/covid](https://s.uconn.edu/covid).

**1.** Dr. Chris Wiles wears the mask frame he designed and UConn scientists and engineers produced using 3-D laser cutters and printers. It improved the fit of 40,000 stored masks.

**2.** From top: Sahil Laul '19 (CLAS), Sameer Laul '15 (CLAS), and Aziz Sandhu '19 (CLAS) collaborated over Zoom with Anupam Laul (not shown) to design and develop an app that could improve communications during future crises.

**3.** To minimize staff exposure to Covid-19, Emergency Department Chief Dr. Rob Fuller and ED Dr. Paul Kaloudis devised a protective enclosure. Intubation boxes also were manufactured and donated to hospitals by KVC Builders of Waltham, Massachusetts.

**4.** Joe Luciani and others at the Innovation Partnership Building worked with industry partners and other UConn departments to send hundreds of face shields each week to UConn Health.

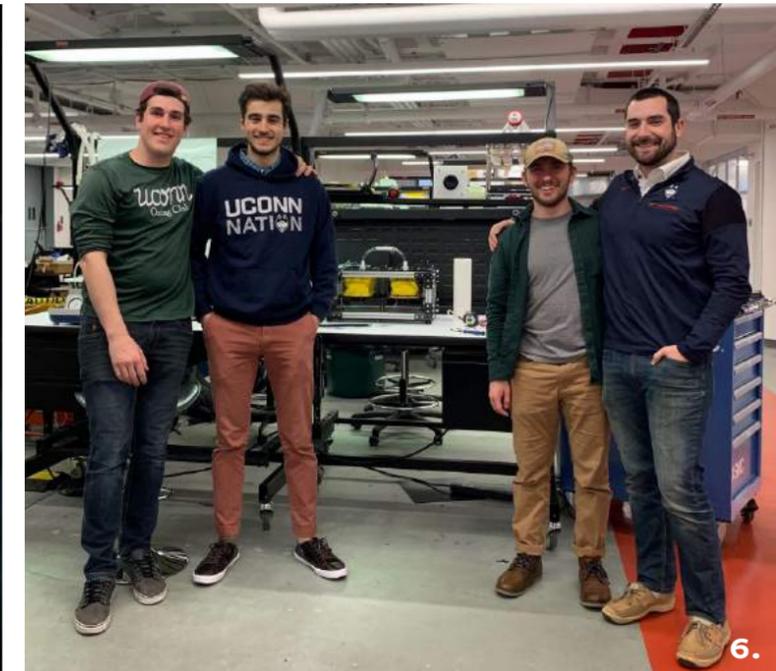
**5.** Yuansun (Sonny) Jiang, who is pursuing a masters in quantitative economics, created the Covid-19 Connecticut Data Visualization website that tracks the spread of coronavirus in the state.

**6.** From left, Justin Schroeder '20 (ENG), Noah Pacik-Nelson '20 (ENG), Matt Grasso '19 (ENG), and Mark Waldner '19 (CLAS) worked to design and create an emergency ventilator.

**7.** Days after campus shut down, physics professor Jason Hancock was working in his kitchen and living room using dummy heads from the medical simulation lab to create better masks.

**8.** Bill Davenport '85 (CAHNR), '86 MS started Operation Community Impact, which reroutes surplus dairy products to more than 100 Connecticut food pantries.

**9.** Tracey Lafayette '15 (ED), '16 MA records herself reading a story every day and shares the link with her third-grade students. "I am trying my best to keep this one thing constant for them," she says.





### > Skyping for Science

When schools worldwide were abruptly closed and parents everywhere scrambled to fill their children's days with at least some meaningful activity, Sarah McAnulty '19 Ph.D. was ready.

In mid-March, Skype a Scientist, the nonprofit organization McAnulty founded in 2017 to break down barriers between everyday people and scientists, shifted from its usual practice of matching scientists with classrooms via video call to bringing those scientists right into people's living rooms.

"Our scientist roster has tripled in the last month because so many scientists are home, unable to do their experiments and looking for something positive to do," McAnulty said in mid-April. "It's totally awesome because it means we can reach a lot more people." Indeed — in the month beginning March 15, nearly 3,000 signups came in from 47 countries.

"Today I set up @SkypeScientist for my kid, and let me say this was the coolest thing for us parents whose kids are missing school. 10/10 recommend!" Utah Twitter user @SNAFU\_Sara posted. Her 7-year-old son — whom she says is advanced in science and doesn't always get the answers he's looking for in school — talked about viruses with Laura Canaday, an immunologist pursuing a doctorate at the University of Cincinnati. He showed Canaday a detailed picture

he had drawn of coronavirus, complete with labels.

It was the type of personal connection McAnulty envisioned when she started the project as a UConn graduate student.

"We've noticed in the last 10 to 15 years, there's sort of this growing mistrust of science, right? You've got people doing

juice cleanses instead of just eating fruits and vegetables," says McAnulty, now an assistant research professor of molecular and cell biology. "As scientists, we need to build trust up with people.

"And I think a lot of times the first step there is just getting a chance to get face time with scientists and realizing that we're real people and not how we're depicted in movies and TV, which is often as socially awkward, sometimes evil, crazy-haired white guys."

Skype a Scientist, which started with McAnulty reaching out to teachers on Facebook — "Would you like to have your class talk to a scientist?" — snowballed in popularity as word spread at conferences and in national press.

Since its founding, nearly 5,000 scientists have held 26,000 sessions, with participants from 70 countries and all 50 states.

The organization's programming for broad audiences has also been in high demand while the world stays home.

"After Hours" adult science trivia nights have moved from local bars to Zoom. "Skype a Scientist Live" streams have ramped up from three times a month to four times a week, drawing up to 500 people apiece for such general interest topics as a deep dive into "wind" with London-based environmental scientist Dani Rabaiotti, co-author of "Does It Fart? The Definitive Field Guide to Animal Flatulence," and an examination of "Everything Wrong with [Netflix hit documentary series] 'Tiger King'"

with conservation biologist Imogene Cancellare.

Though the topics, whether for adults or kids, are often light, the goal of showing children that they, too, can be scientists is vital, says McAnulty.

And the effort seems to be working. "Just spent an hour speaking w/ an 11-year-old in Canada who found me @SkypeScientist of her own accord in order to ask me HOW TO BE A #DOCTOR. Had questions prepared," tweeted Dr. Sheyna Gifford, a physician and aerospace medicine researcher. "Dear World: We might be saved after all. Happy Friday. :)" —JULIE (STAGIS) BARTUCCA '10 (BUS, CLAS), '19 MBA



### > Half Full Brewery all in for responders and restaurant workers

As part of their "Together We Can" campaign owner Conor Horrigan '11 MBA and the rest of the "hoptimists" at Half Full Brewery thanked health care workers and first responders by setting up a contactless drive-through giveaway of their brews — beer or the new Rise & Grind hard coffee. Volunteers, human and canine, helped with the handouts while also collecting personal protective equipment (PPE) donations. Half Full also is selling All Together IPA, proceeds from which go to the CT Restaurant Association for those in crisis due to Covid-19.



### > MSW candidate Kelly Ha '19 (BGS) wants us to see Asians as mothers, fathers, CEOs, doctors, nurses, baristas, students . . .

More than 30% of Americans have witnessed someone blaming Asian people for the Covid-19 pandemic, according to a recent national survey, and those incidents occur in a number of forms — from a sideways glance or a mask pulled tighter to the face to spitting, shouting, and bodily harm.

"My family members are constantly afraid to leave the house because they fear they're going to be attacked," says Kelly Ha, a Master of Social Work student from West Hartford (above left). "They're afraid they're going to be hit or they're going to be verbally abused. My privilege is that I haven't felt that yet. But this is happening, and I think it's really important that we bring awareness to this."

That's why Ha decided to get involved in the new campaign #IAMNOTAVIRUS. Created in response to growing reports and outright displays of anti-Asian rhetoric and behavior around Covid-19, #IAMNOTAVIRUS started as a portrait project — founded by West Hartford photographer Mike Keo — that sought to portray Asian Americans as the neighbors, community members, and business owners that they are. Each portrait is accompanied by a three-item "I Am" statement describing who the person is, in their own view, beyond their race or ethnicity.

"The statements are about who you are as a relatable person in the community, to stop the dehumanization of the Asian community as just being a virus," Ha says. "So, for me, my three 'I Ams' are that I am a Master of Social Work student, I am a mental health advocate, and I am a health care worker."

Ha sat for a portrait early on in the campaign, before social distancing and stay-at-home measures took effect, but she didn't want to just be an image in the campaign. Part of a long history of political social work organizers, she wanted to do more. She joined the campaign as its outreach coordinator and is now campaign manager. Recently the social work student has been working mental health advocacy and outreach into the campaign's mission. —JACLYN SEVERANCE

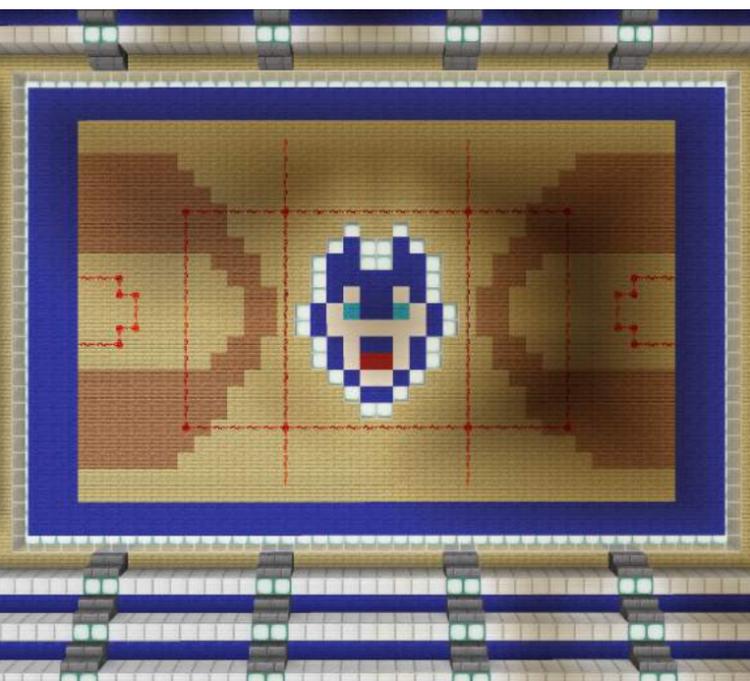


> A two-week-long, multi-disciplinary, one-credit online course titled "The Covid-19 Pandemic: Impacts on Health, Business, and Society" reached an enrollment of more than 4,000 students — easily the largest class in UConn history.



Husky blue hearts popped up everywhere to specifically honor the staff at UConn John Dempsey Hospital and all our UConn Health heroes.

“You are living in uncomfortable times, so in some sense you are living in the greatest time of your life. It’s great to be uncomfortable because that’s when you find out just how great you can really be.” — Geno Auriemma



> “I wasn’t ready to leave UConn forever” — Sarah Negron ’20 (CLAS)

I knew the Covid-19 situation was bad, but I never would have thought it would take away the last two months of my senior year. I left for spring break with every intention of returning three weeks later, according to the most recent email at the time from President Katsouleas. I locked the door to my dorm room, hugged my friends goodbye, and said, “Stay safe and I’ll see you soon.” Little did I know that was the last night I would ever spend in my dorm room with friends that I may never see again.

Four days into spring break, I received an email from President Katsouleas that read, “Coursework at UConn will continue to be delivered online for the remainder of the spring 2020 semester, including final exams, and I am sorry to say that there will be no May commencement exercises this year.” My heart sank to the pit of my stomach.

I immediately sent a screenshot of the email to my friends. The group chat rang out in crying emojis and statements of complete shock. “What about all of our stuff still in our dorm? They can’t have thousands of students return all at the same time to get our things. Are we going to get refunds for housing and meal plans? What about the international students or students that don’t have homes to return to?”

My professors were frantically sending emails saying they weren’t sure how their classes were going to proceed. A majority of my classes were built around in-class participation and group projects. Many of them said they wouldn’t be holding virtual lectures during normal class hours because they now have to homeschool their young children. They would create PowerPoint slides.

As I click play on lecture after lecture, I’m having trouble focusing. I can only think about how my immediate future has changed so drastically in such a short amount of time, and all of my last moments at UConn that I was looking forward to and will never get to have.

I had been applying for jobs to begin immediately after commencement in May, but now that most people have to work from home and companies are laying off many of their employees, who knows when they’ll be looking to hire new employees again? The economy is going to suffer for a long time due to this pandemic, which means the job hunt for the Class of 2020 will, too.

I wasn’t ready to leave UConn forever. I wanted to cherish the last night in my dorm room, the last time I’d have dinner with my friends in the dining hall, and the last time I’d walk across campus with the “UConn Senior” button pinned to my backpack. I did all of those things for the last time, except I didn’t know it would be the last time.

The worst part is when I vocalize

my disappointment and the people around me reply, “You’re still going to get your diploma. They’ll reschedule commencement. You’ll see your friends again. It’s not the end of the world.”

It may not be the end of the world, but it’s the end of my world at UConn. I know I’ll graduate, find a job, and see my friends again, but if I knew that the day I left for spring break was my last as a UConn senior, I would have breathed the air in a little deeper, looked around a little longer, laughed a little harder, and hugged my friends a little tighter.

*Sarah Negron worked at UConn Magazine the past two semesters. We were lucky to have her and luckier that she shared these thoughts during the first few days of pandemic reality. In June, Negron started a job as talent assistant at Chloe Productions — it’s WFH for now. She hopes to hug her friends tightly at a non-virtual grad party in August.*



> Less Pomp, More Circumstance

The Class of 2020 diplomas were real, but for the first time UConn commencement was virtual. Leading up to the ceremony’s broadcast from Jorgensen on May 9, some traditions remained (mowing the graduation year into the Horsebarn Hill grass), some were tweaked (posing at the statue alone or in socially distanced groups), and some were new (UConn graduation in Minecraft). President Thomas Katsouleas’s remarks streamed live on UConn’s YouTube channel as he introduced taped speeches from Gov. Ned Lamont; **Wawa Gatheru ’20 (CAHNR)**, our first Rhodes Scholar; **Jamie Gooch ’11 MS, ’19 DNP**, a nurse and nursing professor; and Geno Auriemma, before Board of Trustees Chairman **Daniel Toscano ’87 (BUS)** conferred nearly 9,000 degrees. “Each generation has a defining moment . . . Now, this is your time. This will define your generation. This is you now,” said Auriemma.

## > Mobile Testing of a Different Flavor

Beth Schweitzer '98 MD takes a sample kit from the UConn Dairy Bar truck, which was pressed into service for walk-up and drive-through Covid-19 testing outside the Hilda May Williams Student Health Services Building on Glenbrook Road on April 14.

Student Health and Wellness (SHAW) wanted a familiar and friendly place for students to be tested on the Storrs campus. And what's more familiar or friendly to students than the Dairy Bar?

Students started with tele-health appointments and, if tested, received face masks and self-isolation instructions.

"Our SHAW staff, like all health care professionals, have been on the front line of Covid-19 right from the beginning and are performing with great skill and selflessness," says Eleanor Daugherty, associate vice president for student affairs.

Thanking UConn Dining Services for the use of the Dairy Bar truck, Daugherty said, "I can't wait until it is back for its intended use!"



Peter Morenus

## > Finding a Better Way — and Getting PPE to Millions

When entrepreneur Nadav Ullman '12 (BUS) heard that schoolchildren had been asked to make cloth medical masks for health care workers treating Covid-19 patients, he knew he had to act.

“This seemed like something you’d hear about in a Third World country,” Ullman says. “I initially thought, ‘How could this happen?’ and my next thought was, ‘Who is going to do something about it?’”

In less than a month, Ullman and six other entrepreneurs — experts in everything from tech to health care to

**“This seemed like something you’d hear about in a Third World Country,” says Ullman. “How could this happen? Who is going to do something about it?”**

government, and most of them strangers to each other — banded together to create Project N95, a national medical-equipment clearinghouse.

What Ullman and Project N95’s team discovered was that there were manufacturers worldwide who could alleviate the personal protective equipment (PPE) shortage, but the supply chain had broken down. The complex problem required myriad solutions, but to date they’ve helped 6,800 U.S. hospitals and health care centers source 252 million units of PPE. Their success has been touted everywhere from *Forbes* and Bloomberg to CNBC and *The New York Times*.

“We are, essentially, a rapid-response team, sourcing medical equipment at a time when it is extraordinarily difficult to find. We will keep it going for as long as it takes,” Ullman says. “While I wish this service had never been needed, I’m glad that this project is bringing tremendous benefit to the health care community.” —CLAIRE HALL



Xingyi (left) and Xingru Chen on campus in early May

## > Staying in Storrs

Coronavirus restrictions and dangers have kept the Chen sisters from going home to Guiyang, China. They fear if they do get home, they won’t be able to get back to UConn to finish their studies, research, and internships. Xingru Chen '21 (CLAS) studies psychology and HDFS and hopes to work in mental health, “something we need to focus on more and care about more,” she says. Xingyi Chen '21 (BUS) is a finance major and co-founder of the UConn Mental Health Coalition, work she feels is especially important now. “At this challenging time, we need to be together no matter what kind of platform. I FaceTime with friends and colleagues to cheer each other up. Summer is coming, and everything will be better — we can make that happen.”

**> “Drugs like hydroxychloroquine bought over the internet from non-registered pharmacies are likely counterfeit, and not only will they not help you, they could have harmful chemicals in them that could hurt you.”**

—Pharmacy professor C. Michael White

## > Going Viral in the Time of Covid-19

On March 9, sitting in my hotel room after a long day observing and interviewing teachers, principals, and coaches for a research project on teacher leadership and school improvement out of state, I opened two emails that would change my life for the foreseeable future. The first was from UConn’s provost stating the new travel restrictions due to Covid-19. Faculty were no longer to travel for data collection and the university was moving online. The second, from my children’s school district, indicated that due to a teacher’s spouse testing positive for Covid, schools would close for two days for a “deep clean.”

By the time I had made it to the airport and paid an exorbitant amount of money to get on the next flight home, those two days had turned into two months — working from home and homeschooling were our new normal.

Freaked out and concerned for all the other working parents and educators trying to simultaneously be the best teachers, workers, caregivers, therapists, parent wranglers, and providers — I posted the following tweet:

*I’m just going to say this and judge me all you want. We are not planning anything educational for our kids. Homeschool will not happen. We will survive and watch too much tv. We will eat cookies and carbs and hope for the best. We will love and try not to go insane.*

To my surprise, the tweet went viral and led to my writing an op-ed in *The New York Times* entitled “I Refuse to Run a Coronavirus Home School.” Since then, in addition to trying to keep my sanity, I have appeared on shows from “Good Morning America” to “Central Time” on Wisconsin Public Radio, spreading the message to parents that all we can do right now is our best and that’s enough. That we need to have self-compassion because it’s going to be messy, and to remember that educators, too, need

our support and compassion as they attempt to be superhuman so we can feel a bit more human.

This experience of going viral has also taught me some important life lessons I hope to carry forward post-pandemic.

### Take the Risk:

At every juncture in this journey after my initial tweet, I was asked to do something that felt incredibly risky personally and professionally. Why did someone want to hear from me? Would it be good enough? Would I sound like a fool? Would I potentially offend or embarrass people I care about? Would my TV appearance prove that I have a face for radio? Despite these fears, I went for it (with the love and support of my incredible spouse and many people I trust), and the result was far more positive than negative. I have met so many wonderful people as a result of taking these risks, and I have grown so much, while maybe (I hope) helping a few people feel less alone along the way. The risk was more than worth it and made me bolder and more ready for whatever the future brings.

### Tell Your Truth:

My research often focuses on how educators come to understand and experience their roles, including some of the challenges and rewards they incur while doing so. This means a lot of my time is dedicated to interviewing people and hearing their stories. However, even though so much of my work is dedicated to storytelling, I never really thought about telling my own. Moreover, if anyone had said my story would touch a nerve, I would never have believed them. What this experience reinforced for me is that everyone’s story matters — even mine. It matters because in telling our truths we let people know they are not alone, that each of us is part of a “we” and not just a “me.” This sense of connection makes us stronger and more able to persist when it is most needed (i.e., now).



Jennie Weiner, associate professor of educational leadership in the Neag School, at home with her 8-year-old twins Manny and Rufus and their dog Junior.

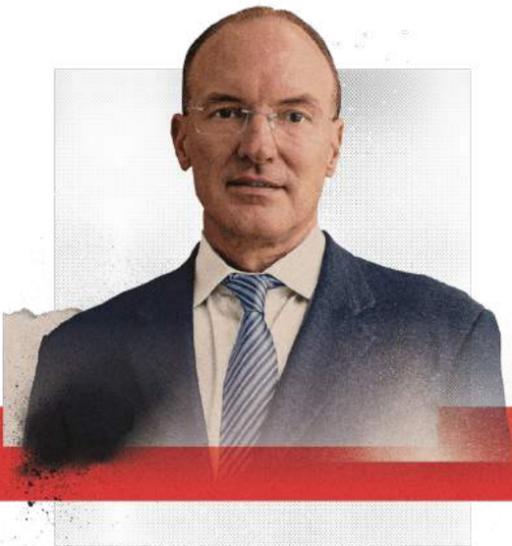
The world will begin hearing more from me, and I hope from you, in the future.

### Don’t Read the Comments:

When I said yes to *The New York Times* and wrote the op-ed, my husband made me promise I would not read the comments section. It was the best decision he ever made for me. While my inbox was flooded with people writing to me directly — sometimes positively and sometimes less so — it kept me away from the trolls and/or those with perhaps more knee-jerk reactions to my piece. Instead, I heard from thoughtful folks who often provided helpful critiques that made me think more deeply about current conversations and the world. This process made me realize that, while anyone should be able to say what they want, you can pick and choose who you listen to and why.

I hope by the time you read these thoughts, the worst has passed and we are working together to heal, while planning for a “normal” that is better and more just. In the meantime, however, I will end the way I sign my emails now — stay safe, stay sane, and sending all the virtual hugs and good cheer possible. —JENNIE WEINER ☺

It doesn't add up,  
 thought Thomas  
 Craemer — because  
 slaves didn't work  
 eight-hour days



Historical figures seldom leap off the pages of history books, and we rarely hear their voices outside of those texts. However, professor of public policy Thomas Craemer will tell you that the education he received growing up in postwar Germany prepared him for just such a chance meeting.

Craemer's parents were children when the war ended. The professor, whose research focuses on race relations and reparations, says that in the immediate postwar era no one wanted to talk about the war or the atrocities that defined the Nazi era. It wasn't until his parents were adults that the curtains were drawn back, and a new wave of interrogation and accountability began.

"Their generation started asking their parents, 'Where were you? What did you do? Why did you not act? Did you know anything?' and so on," says Craemer.

The results were far-reaching. Craemer says his generation had a public-school curriculum that included a lesson about the Holocaust in every subject.

"Except for physical education, every school subject had the Holocaust front and center," Craemer says. "That was tough. You know it's there. You sit in these lectures, you've seen the documentary videos, and you can't help but feel very ashamed. And so I grew up with this desire to be able to express to a Holocaust survivor how I felt about it. But of course, I never thought this would happen."

By Maya A. Moore '19 (CLAS)  
 Illustrations by Neil Jamieson

THE NEW

# Reparations Math



“THE MODEL  
CALCULATIONS  
HELP US  
TO WRAP  
OUR MINDS  
AROUND THE  
MAGNITUDE  
OF THE  
INJUSTICE.”

Decades later, Craemer’s interest in his country’s past culminated in the pursuit of a doctorate in political science at the University of Tübingen, Germany.

It was there in his hometown at his parents’ apartment that light dinner conversation with friends gave way to a harrowing tale of survivorship. With it came the long-awaited opportunity for Craemer to contend with the barbarity and complicity of his grandparents’ generation up close. Craemer sat across the table from the Holocaust survivor at the center of that tale, a man named Mieczu Langer.

A year later in 2001, Craemer and his parents embarked on a commemorative trip with Langer and Langer’s wife and grandson. The group — half German, half Jewish — toured the sites of atrocity from Langer’s story. They saw the house in the Krakow ghetto to which Langer and his family were forcibly relocated. Craemer says he took notice of the wall that enclosed the ghetto where the house stood — it looked like gravestones set side by side. Langer led the group to the intersection where the Nazi guards selected him for slave labor — he didn’t know it at the time, but those standing across the road from him were sent to the gas chambers.

“And then he showed us the crematory,” Craemer says, his voice breaking again. “That was the crematory he was destined for, and he escaped. All of it was so deeply moving. It was kind of a way of making history come to life on a very personal level, and to be able to embrace and connect over it was priceless.”

After Langer’s passing in 2015, Craemer found out that his friend had been receiving reparation payments from the West German government since the 1970s.

“I’m sure it signaled to him that Germany was taking its legacy seriously and was making amends,” says Craemer. “And of course, to me, it was also a significant signal that my country was acknowledging our historical injustices.”

Today Craemer resides in the South Bronx with his ball python, Madame Curie, and his African grey parrot Alex. He teaches courses on diversity and inclusion and on race and public policy. Reinvigorated national conversations about reparations have focused new attention on Craemer

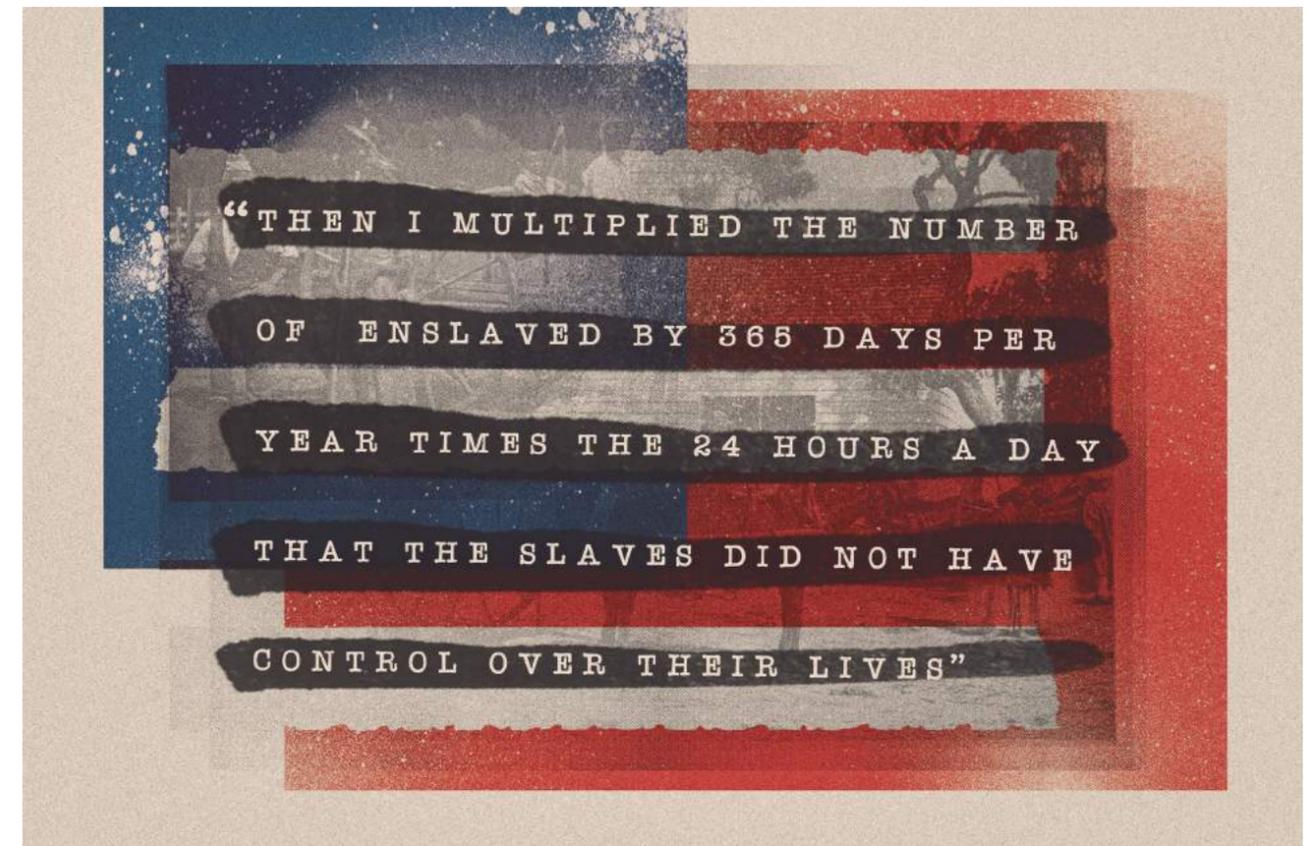
and his research.

We talked in his UConn Hartford office about the case for reparations through the lens of his life experiences.

**Japanese Americans who were victims of WWII internment received an apology and \$20,000 reparations from then-president Ronald Reagan. Holocaust survivors received reparations from the German government. What can be gleaned from these historical examples when talking about reparations for slavery in the United States?** I think one thing is, one lesson is, you can never fully repair. So reparations are, in a way, a misnomer. To me, it’s a symbolic gesture of contrition — you acknowledge the historical injustice, you vow it’ll never happen again, and you give a symbolic token of your sincerity. It’s like when you’ve wronged your neighbor, instead of just saying sorry, you say sorry and bring flowers or a bottle of wine that makes it more meaningful. It’s a symbol.

**Your research estimates that reparation payments for American slavery would equal \$14 trillion — an incredible number. How did you arrive at that figure?** I estimated how many slaves there were in each year that the United States existed, and I excluded colonial slavery. The slave population was counted every 10 years and, for the years in between, I used linear interpolation to estimate the enslaved population. Then I multiplied the number of enslaved by 365 days per year times the 24 hours a day that the slaves did not have control over their lives.

And then I just did the calculation: What would a slave owner have had to pay at the time to have a white person or a free laborer? I found historical wage information about unskilled labor, even though many of the enslaved were skilled. This estimate is conservative because unskilled labor wages were minimal — like 11 cents per hour. I multiplied the number of hours that the enslaved were available to slave owners times the hourly wage. Then I compounded that with a very conservative interest rate of only 3% — that doesn’t even make up for inflation. That’s how I arrived at the \$14 trillion in 2009 dollars.



At the time, it was worth one year of the U.S. GDP. Further compounded to 2018, it’s like \$18 or \$19 trillion. I haven’t done the calculation for 2020 yet, but it grows. It’s usually roughly one time the U.S. GDP. That’s a super conservative estimate. Much more realistic interest rates at the time were 6%. I did the calculation also with 6%, and it just explodes. It gets into the quadrillions.

**An April 2019 article in CNN Politics said, “Most formulations have produced numbers from as low as \$17 billion to as high as almost \$5 trillion.” However, the article called your estimate “modest” when compared to others that went as high as \$97 trillion. Would you consider your estimate to be modest?** I’m not saying that that should be the amount paid back. For me, the model calculations help us to wrap our minds around the magnitude of the injustice. Capital from American slavery provided the startup loan that the United States then took to have an A-rated economy — and it took that loan by force

from African Americans. At some point, there is a need to start paying back the loan.

**Reparations have been a big part of the national conversation lately, putting your work in the spotlight. What has that experience been like?** It’s a big surprise. I’m glad that it finally has made the mainstream. It’s an important topic. When I started this research and initially did public opinion research on it to see how supportive or opposed people were, they were mostly opposed. To know that it gained that much momentum is gratifying.

**What suggestions do you have for looking at reparations through a bipartisan lens?** I’m very surprised that it popped up as an issue on the Democratic side because one of the early mainstream proponents of reparations that I can remember is conservative commentator Charles Krauthammer, who was in favor of reparations as a one-time lump sum payment instead of affirmative action. In its structure, reparations are a much more conservative policy because it’s about individual responsibility. You have to be a deserving, eligible recipient.

**What question do you get asked the most when it comes to reparations?** I get asked about precedents for reparations a lot. Slave owners received reparations for slavery in several instances. One was the Haitian independence debt, where France demanded an indemnity from Haiti for the abolition of slavery so that they could pay off the slave owners that fled from Haiti to France due to the loss of their property. Haiti paid that from 1828, I believe, to

“IT’S SHOCKING.  
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SLAVERY.”

1947 — into the 20th century.

Another instance was when Great Britain abolished slavery in 1833; it paid 40% of the national treasury’s spending budget on slavery reparations going to the former owners. It took up loans to finance these reparations payments, and they were paid from 1833 to 2015 — the last of the payments concluded just five years ago!

And then in the United States, when Lincoln abolished slavery in Washington, D.C., the American government paid reparations to the slave owners — about \$300 per enslaved.

It’s shocking. Former slave owners received reparations from the American government for the abolition of slavery. So as long as the recipients were white, there was never a question about whether it was too long ago, whether it made any sense, or whether it was too complicated to figure out.

**When reparations were paid out to survivors of the Holocaust like Langer, many of the perpetrators were still living. What do you say to the argument that the U.S. shouldn’t pay reparations because neither the direct perpetrators nor survivors are still alive?** The institutions are still alive. The federal government is still alive, and the federal government allowed slavery to exist. It could have quickly abolished it. Many Northern states did. That shows that it was possible at the time. The institutions still exist; companies still exist; the capital of companies still exists.

Slavery provided the startup capital for the U.S. economies. That capital is still alive, and it grows exponentially every year, of course, in more and more diffused hands, so you don’t see it accumulated anywhere. In private hands, it has decreased, but as a sum, that capital still grows, and it grows exponentially.

**What would you say to Americans who may be reluctant to contend with the legacy of slavery in America because of how heinous it was and how deep-rooted it remains? How can this translate to understanding policy proposals like reparations?** We were all very proud of claiming the legacy of our forefathers. I’m speaking as an American — I’m very proud

of the American Revolution, of the founding fathers, of the democratic experiment that they started, of the experiment of human equality — although it was flawed at the time, the ideas were great.

We’re all very proud of that, and we accepted that positive legacy as if we had invented it ourselves. Nobody alive today was alive when the revolution took place, so does that mean we shouldn’t have freedom of speech or we shouldn’t have religious freedom? No, we claim those things as our birthright because we inherited them.

The problem is we also inherited the legacies of slavery, the racial wealth gap, and the double standards that the founding fathers had. So, we can love our founding fathers, but we can also be critical of them.

And that’s kind of what I had to learn growing up — being angry at my grandparents and ashamed of them, and at the same time loving them as people. And both work at the same time. You can be both proud and ashamed of your forefathers for different things.

**What are you working on now?** I feel very honored to be part of the reparations planning committee, led by professor William Darity of Duke University. Darity put together a large group of experts, mostly African Americans, who are researching various aspects of reparations. We are working on a report that should come out this year, talking about how to estimate, for example, the contributing factors to the wealth gap.

There are other aspects of the report as well: What should the design of a reparations policy be? What role does genealogy play? The report looks not only at slavery but also at Jim Crow discrimination, New Deal discrimination, discrimination during World War II, and afterward with the GI Bill. The report also considers post-civil rights discrimination and looks at how all that affected African Americans living today.

**You spoke about growing up in a culture of accountability and contending with your country’s past at a young age. Why was that important?** It instilled a curiosity about history and about what went on in my generation. That curiosity took on a life of its own, and we started researching our home-



town and looking into which stores and establishments had belonged to Jewish families.

Now people do the research and put what’s called Stolpersteine or “stumbling blocks” into the pavement. These are little bronze cobblestones that have inscriptions on them with the name of the family that owned a given property and a brief story of what happened to them in the Holocaust. You can see this all over Germany.

The Stolpersteine initiative is a bottom-up initiative. So it led to a culture of actively looking for documentaries and historical accounts and discussing them actively. There was a culture of ongoing commemoration that goes beyond just checking the box and saying, “You have reparations paid.” ☺

### In the Moment

Maya A. Moore earned her UConn degree in journalism and political science in December 2019 and was the *CT Mirror*’s 2019 Emma Bowen Foundation intern. Moore interviewed Professor Craemer for this story in his Hartford office the week before all campuses closed: Before this experience, my work-from-home process often consisted of interrupting chatter from my roommates in the next room or negotiating for the best dimly lit table at the nearest Starbucks. Covid-19 has laid siege to our lives, our routines, and our selves so by no surprise, the circumstances under which I was able to write this story were unusual and, at times, both arresting and devastating. The week before I interviewed Thomas Craemer my paternal grandmother passed away, and the plans we had for her Los Angeles send-off slipped away as the country began to lock down. In between periods of transcribing audio from the interview were tense family meetings that ultimately led to the decision to have only my father and his six siblings attend the burial. After completing my first draft, I laid out the clothes I would wear the next day to watch my grandmother’s funeral via FaceTime. Over a matter of days, the tone of the emails from the corporate heads of my “bread and butter” retail job swung from unrealistic optimism to discrete panic, and I’ve now joined a growing population of Americans in unemployment limbo.



As my story underwent its first edit, we received news that my father had tested positive for coronavirus after arriving back in Connecticut. My father’s symptoms have finally plateaued along with the gut-wrenching worry my family and I have experienced. Now, like everyone else, all we can do is wait. Many people are trying to retain their routines, their sanity, and their humanity. For me, this story and this process lent itself to that endeavor.

Written & Illustrated by Mike Chase '11 (JD)

# Dancing on a Sunday? Don't Do That!

For the millions of people now stuck inside their homes, boredom is a reality of daily life. Sure, we're trying to slow the spread of a deadly virus, but all those hours need to be filled somehow. And eventually the mind runs out of completely legal things to do. That's where crime comes in. Sweet, sweet crime.

► Of course, I'm not talking about the big crimes. Going out and robbing a bank would not be exercising appropriate social distancing. And what's the point of grand theft auto when there's no place to go? But take a cruise through the United States Code and the Code of Federal Regulations and you'll find thousands and thousands of little things that can relieve a bit of boredom and land you in federal prison. If you're having a hard time finding them, don't

worry — I do it for you daily on my Twitter feed @CrimeADay, where I've been counting and posting all the federal crimes on the books every day since 2014. That's how I know you can't sell a barrel with an oversized bulge. Shoot a fish from an airplane? Can't do it. Pretend to be a member of the 4-H club? Off limits. Even mailing a mongoose to someone is a federal crime, no matter how generous your intentions may be.

### Who is Mike Chase?

UConn Law alum Mike Chase is a lawyer by day, mad tweeter and author by night. Want more diabolical crime drawings or to know why these laws are still on the books? Go to [s.uconn.edu/crime](http://s.uconn.edu/crime). Want to aid or abet? Join the fun at @CrimeADay.

► Look, obviously you should never commit any crimes no matter how silly. So if I haven't been clear: don't commit crimes (they're making me say that). But what's a bored member of UConn nation to do in these strange times? Let's start in the kitchen.

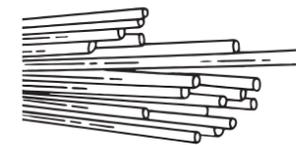
During these fresh-food-challenged times, we've all been eating noodles like we did when we were in college. They're cheap and delicious and they're in the pantry. Be careful though. If your noodles don't meet federal specifications you may have to come up with money for a lawyer like me to defend you. For spaghetti, that means you can't go around making noodles with a diameter of more than .11 inches. Or say you're more of a macaroni and cheese kind of person. Well, your noodles had better be under .27 inches to keep the feds away. Naturally, you're wondering: What about ramen? Well, so far, the government is willing to look the other way on that. Plus, federal noodle crimes are only crimes if you're selling or distributing illicit noodles. Any good noodle lawyer will tell you that. Here's a chart from my book "How to Become a Federal Criminal" to help you comply.

Fig. 4-36. Federal Noodle Specifications



#### Macaroni

- Must be tube-shaped
- Diameter is between 0.11" and 0.27"



#### Spaghetti

- Must be tube-shaped or cord-shaped
- Diameter is between 0.06" and 0.11"



#### Vermicelli

- Must be cord-shaped
- Diameter is under 0.06"

#### Egg Noodles

- Must be ribbon shaped
- No federal size requirements

► Other federal crimes you can commit at home might be born out of loneliness. For example, when Skype or Zoom goes down, you might resort to a good old-fashioned CB radio to talk with friends or colleagues. But don't tell a joke or make a sound effect on that walkie-talkie: both are prohibited by 47 U.S.C. § 501 & 47 CFR § 95.413. Or what about carrying on a conversation with someone you have reason to believe is a pirate (many of my colleagues fall into this category)? Well, that's prohibited by 18 U.S.C. § 1657 and could get you three years in prison.

Some estimates suggest that there are more than 4,450 federal criminal statutes and more than 300,000 regulations with criminal penalties. That means it's going to take me until the year 2848 to count them at a rate of one each day. But all Huskies should know that the feds don't have a monopoly on strange crimes. Connecticut has its own penchant for weird crimes.

► For those of us who may have been “enterprising” students during our time at UConn, be advised that Connecticut General Statutes § 53-392b makes it a Class B misdemeanor to write a term paper for someone else. That could mean up to six months in jail if you’re caught writing someone else’s essay. If reading that last part just made you break out in a cold sweat, just act natural and keep reading. And relax, the statute of limitations is just one year.

### Selling a Term Paper

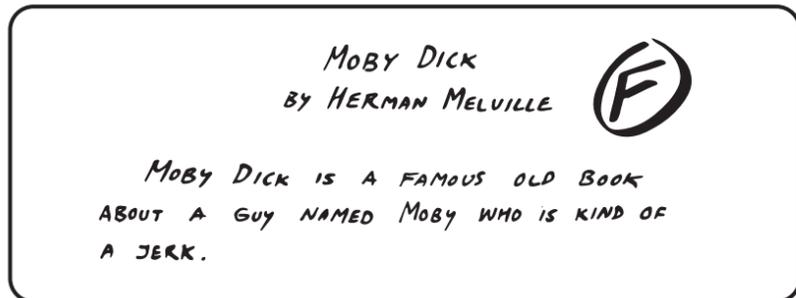
#### 1 WRITE THE PAPER



#### 2 GET PAID



#### 3 DON'T WORRY ABOUT QUALITY



Even selling a terrible essay is a crime, though it's more likely the customer will testify against you if they get an F.

► Connecticut has a long history of making it a crime to have fun, even in trying times. Until 1976, Section 53-300 of the Connecticut Statutes made it a crime for any person to be “present at any concert of music, dancing or other public diversion on Sunday or on the evening thereof...” You don’t have to be lawyer to see that dancing on Sunday was a crime — an actual crime — until not that long ago. Naturally, you’re wondering whether any of these silly crimes could possibly result in a person being charged and convicted. Well, in the 1963 case of *State v. Morais*, a restaurant owner was charged under the no-Sunday-dancing law. Police showed

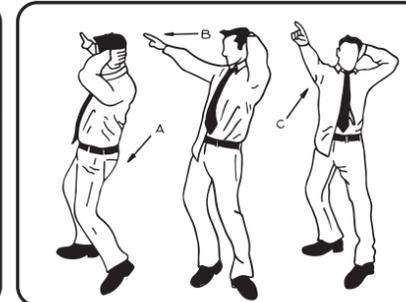
up at Anthony Romano’s restaurant one Sunday afternoon and said: “If you have dancing, Mr. Romano, someone is going to get arrested.” In response, Romano said, “Well, we’re going to have dancing,” and then he walked away. Awesome response? Yes. Criminal? Also yes.

### Illegal Sunday Dancing

#### PICK A SUNDAY



#### BUST A MOVE



#### WAIT FOR THE COPS



► Heck, even margarine — yes, margarine — has landed Connecticut residents in hot water with the authorities. Both Connecticut and federal law have long made it a crime to give out single servings of unlabeled margarine unless they are triangular in shape. Square margarine, circular margarine, or even rhomboid margarine are illicit in the eyes of the law. Sure enough, in 1952, another Connecticut restaurateur was hauled off by the police when he was busted giving his patrons square pats of margarine.

Now, it might seem like I’m saying that everything is a crime. You might be thinking that it’s impossible to go about your daily life without running afoul of some criminal prohibition among the untold thousands of federal laws on the books. So let me offer a glimmer of hope: I went to the UConn School of Law, and I know a business opportunity when I see it. The more time lawmakers spend pumping out crime after crime, the more job security there will be for the margarine lawyers, the Sunday-dancing lawyers, and the oversized-noodle lawyers among us.

So relax. ☺

### In the Moment



Mike Chase '11 JD worked on this from his home in Granby, Connecticut, while lawyering, fathering, and tweeting: I always knew it was probably a bad idea to promise the world (or at least Twitter) a new ridiculous federal crime every day, on top of a busy practice representing clients in and out of court. But when the Covid-19 crisis began, so did a set of totally new obligations: fighting for justice remotely and advising clients in a time when prison became an even more dangerous place to be. Luckily, I have my 4-year-old son and 6-month-old daughter to serve as young non-degreed associates and to remind me there’s more to life than just federal noodle crimes.



For more on the art of Elizabeth Ellenwood '20 MFA, go to [s.uconn.edu/ellenwood](https://s.uconn.edu/ellenwood).

### THE ART OF FLOTSAM AND JETSAM

Growing up in Florida and Connecticut, Elizabeth Ellenwood '20 MFA walked the shoreline picking up trash, following her grandfather's advice to "leave the beach better than we found it." Years later she combined her art and beachcombing in "Among the Tides," in which Ellenwood uses a variety of photo processes to create an artistic visualization of the impact consumerism is having on the world's oceans. The piece "November 3, 2018 Collection" is an installation of 240 cyanotypes (cyan-blue prints) of beach trash from a walk that day. Since starting "Among the Tides," she has picked up 3,417 items during 39 beach walks over nearly 36 miles. Ellenwood recently won a Fulbright Scholarship and an American Scandinavian Foundation Grant to Norway for 2020–2021, where she will collaborate with an environmental chemist and a marine biologist to create work based on marine pollution.

### CLASS NOTES



▶▶ Helping to train volunteers, **Anton Jungherr '54 (BUS)** has co-founded a nonprofit organization, the California Association of Bond Oversight Committees. The group provides citizen volunteers with school bond construction oversight training in California. He lives in Hercules, California.  
 ▶▶ **Paul J. Magnarella '59 (BUS)** published "Black Panther in Exile: The Pete O'Neal Story," about an influential member of the Black Panther movement who was arrested in 1969 and convicted for transporting a shotgun across state lines. In the book, Magnarella, a veteran of the United Nations Criminal Tribunals and O'Neal's attorney during his appeals process, describes his legal appeals to overturn what he argues was a wrongful conviction.



▶▶ **Clifford L. Bampton '60 (CAHNR)** writes in with a life update. He's been retired for 24 years and lives with his wife, Linda, on their farm in Pittsboro, North Carolina. Previously, he held various leadership positions for Ducks Unlimited Inc. Before that, he was a district game biologist and supervisor of western Wildlife Management Areas and assistant executive director of the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission.  
 ▶▶ **Rance A. Velapoldi '60 (CLAS)** has lived in Norway with his wife since he retired in 1999. The two travel the world visiting such places as South Africa, China, Tibet, Nepal, Peru, Italy, France,

Georgia, and Armenia as well as visiting their children and grandchildren in the U.S. two to three times per year. They split their time between Norway and the U.S., where Velapoldi's chemical career covered industry, academia, and government; where he spent 30 years of his research career at the National Institute for Standards and Technology (formerly the National Bureau of Standards). One of the years in government was spent working on Senator John Glenn's committees of Energy, Nuclear Proliferation, and Government Services and Government Affairs. He also worked for five months at Hebrew University, Israel, as the first American exchange scientist under the Public Law (PL) 480 Program and one year performing research at Norsk Hydro's Geology Division in Bergen, Norway.  
 ▶▶ Congratulations to **Joel Mandell '61 (CLAS), '66 JD** and **Ellen Solomon Mandell '64 (CLAS)**, who met at UConn Hillel mixer in 1960 and celebrated their 55th anniversary in August 2019! Joel retired from the Connecticut Attorneys Title Insurance Co. in 2009. The pair lived for 43 years in Simsbury, Connecticut, where Joel served as an elected member of the Simsbury board of selectmen for 14 years and Ellen was saluted as a Simsbury Hometown Hero in 2002. They moved to Indian Land, South Carolina, in 2010 and have three sons, two daughters-in-law, and four grandchildren. ▶▶ **Jeffery M. Dorwart '65 (CLAS)**, a professor emeritus at Rutgers University, has published his tenth book: "Dorwart's History of the Office of Naval Intelligence, 1865–1945."  
 ▶▶ Retired banker **Gary C. Palmer '66 (BUS)** has published his first book, "Investment Guide," to help savers maximize returns and minimize fees. He lives with his wife, **Patricia '64 (ED)**,

in San Diego, California.  
 ▶▶ Congrats to **Barbara Hatcher '67 (NURS)**, who was inducted into the Washington, D.C., Hall of Fame for her varied and continued work in improving the health for the citizens of the D.C. area. Hatcher achieved many breakthroughs over the course of 51 years of nursing, instigated system-wide change, and provided leadership in health care policy and practice. Among those, she was the first nurse to sit on the March of Dimes Medical Advisory Committee of the metropolitan D.C. area and was the first woman, African American, and nurse to serve as secretary general of the World Federation of Public Health Associations. She retired in 2018 as a faculty member of George Mason University's School of Nursing and is now principal of The Hatcher-DuBois-Odrick Group, LLC, a health care consulting firm.  
 ▶▶ Husky love is built to last. **Carol A. (Bober) Erickson '68 (NUR)** writes in to say she met her husband, **Paul F. Erickson '65 (CLAS)**, on a blind date at UConn in 1965 and, this past September, they celebrated their 51st anniversary! She reports that he retired last year and she is still working full time as a school nurse. Congratulations! ▶▶ Congrats also to **Anthony "Tony" J. Pulino '69 (ED)**, who competed at UConn in track and cross-country from 1965 to 1967 and recently was inducted into the Middletown (Connecticut) Sports Hall of Fame. ▶▶ And **Philip Madell '69 (CLAS)**, of Topsfield, Mass., reports that he was appointed to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners by Gov. Charles D. Baker. A lawyer in private practice, he also serves as legal counsel to the National Counter Intelligence Corps Association. Previously, he served in state government in Kansas, was a consultant

to the California Assembly, taught at several colleges, and held senior management positions in the private sector.



▶▶ **Paul A. Michelson '71 (PHR)** reports that he is retired and living with his wife, Suzanne, in Harrisburg, Pa. After UConn, he went on to earn a master's and a doctorate in pharmacy. He has published 20 papers and presented at major pharmacy meetings. As a clinical pharmacist, his major interest was in infectious diseases and antibiotics. He's also an avid cruiser and stamp collector.  
 ▶▶ Congratulations to **Wally Lamb '72 (CLAS), '77 MA, '84 MFA, '13 H.** His 1998 novel, "I Know This Much is True," was turned into an eight-episode HBO miniseries starring Mark Ruffalo. ▶▶ **Gary Hunt '72 (CLAS), '74 (SFA)** also checked in with a life update. In 1990, he started a children's charity, Bookbag Santa, which donates 1.5 to 2 tons of used school supplies to disadvantaged children in the U.S. and overseas. Every summer, he gets a group of 30 to 40 volunteers together to make a delivery trip to three schools in Belize. Find more information at [bookbagsanta.com](https://bookbagsanta.com). ▶▶ *Nostrovial* to **Vladimir Wozniuk '75 (CLAS)**, who has published "The Karamazov Correspondence: Letters of Vladimir S. Soloviev," the first fully annotated and chronologically arranged collection of the Russian philosopher-poet's most important letters. Soloviev was known for his close association with author Fyodor M. Dostoevsky, and the letters reflect many of the qualities and contradictions that personify the title characters of Dostoevsky's

last novel, “The Brothers Karamazov.”



➔ And the award goes to: **David Fetterman '76 (CLAS)**, who received the Presidential Award from the American Anthropological Association in Vancouver for his contributions to applied anthropology. In addition, the International Association of Top Professionals named him Top Anthropologist of 2019 at an awards gala in Las Vegas. ➔ **Tom Morganti '76 (CAHNR)**, a veterinarian, reports that he is living in Avon, Connecticut, “with a bunch of animals and humans” and has published his fifth book, “The Manticore Affair and Others: Nine Tales of Disquiet and Unease.” ➔ **Christopher F. Droney '79 JD, '16 H** is stepping down from the bench. He retired as a senior judge for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit and returned to Day Pitney LLP as a partner in its litigation department. He was appointed to the appeals court by President Barack Obama in 2011 after serving 14 years as a judge for the U.S. District Court in Connecticut. He previously served as U.S. Attorney for Connecticut and was mayor of West Hartford. ➔ Meanwhile, the Connecticut’s Office of Health Strategy named **Ken Lalime '79 (PHARM)** CEO of the Community Health Center Association of Connecticut, as a member of the new Cost Growth Benchmark Technical Team and Cost Growth Benchmark Stakeholder Advisory Board.



➔ **Beth (Turcy) Kilmarx '80 (CLAS)** recently became associate dean and director of Cushing Memorial Library and Archives at Texas A&M University. ➔ Congratulations to **Thomas Hébert '81 MA, '90 6th Year, '93 Ph.D.** and **Karen Rambo-Hernandez '11 Ph.D.**, who both won top research awards at the National Association for Gifted Children’s annual conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Hébert received the NAGC Distinguished Scholar Award while Rambo-Hernandez won the NAGC Early Scholar Award. ➔ Meanwhile, **Brian Doyle '81 (BUS)** checked in from the Iron Sharpens Iron ministry, a religious organization for men and teenaged boys. Doyle, who is president, founder, and national director, reports that the Christian organization hosts conferences across the country and has served a total of about 500,000 men. ➔ **Steven Sirica '82 (ENG)** was named senior fellow/discipline lead for engine performance and operability at Pratt & Whitney. ➔ Tune in to **Marianne Evans-Ramsay's '83 (CAHNR)** new podcast “Sweet Support” for people with pre-diabetes and diabetes. She’s a dietician and certified diabetes care and education specialist at Wentworth Douglass Hospital in Dover, New Hampshire, and developed the podcast with coworker Megrette Fletcher. ➔ **David Samuels '83 (BUS)** was elected to board of directors of the Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, which partners with the National Park Service to provide concerts and performances in the park, located in Vienna, Virginia.

➔ Kudos to **Marcia L. Marien '84 (BUS)**, finance director controller for the town of Brookfield, Connecticut, who was honored for her distinguished service by CTCPA Women through an awards program celebrating Connecticut’s exceptional CPAs. ➔ **Jamie Meyers '84 (CLAS), '93 MBA** joined Evolent Health as senior vice president and chief actuary. ➔ **Susan (Pearson) Gambardella '85 (CLAS)** made a major career move. After more than 25 years at the Coca-Cola Co., including serving as chief of staff for longtime CEO and chairman Muhtar Kent, she joined Kimberly-Clark in January as president of North America for Kimberly-Clark Professional. ➔ Also, classmate **Bernie Gracy '85 (ENG)** was named Boston CIO of the Year in the enterprise segment and presented with an ORBIE Award, which recognizes leadership, innovation, and vision in technology executives. He is chief digital officer for Agero in Medford, Massachusetts. ➔ Speaking of awards, **Jessica Sarin-Perry '87 (SFA)** won the Berklee College of Music Professional Education Division Dean’s Award for Teaching Excellence. She is a full-time faculty member in Berklee’s professional music major. Outside of Berklee, she’s a singer/songwriter and leader of the Jes Perry Band, teaches private voice lessons, and serves as a board member of Berkshire Choral International. ➔ **Joseph D. Bruhin '87 (CLAS), '92 MBA** was appointed senior vice president and chief information officer at Breakthru Beverage. He’ll serve on Breakthru’s executive leadership team and oversee the implementation and execution of an IT strategic plan. ➔ And **Eric R. Judge '87 (BUS), '92 MBA**, a financial advisor at Edward

Jones, just published “Out of Town Landlord: Lessons Learned During the Great Recession.” ➔ **Mary-Ellen Barrett '88 JD** is one of nine prosecutors named to the National Human Trafficking Advisory Board with the National District Attorney’s Association. She is deputy district attorney of the sex crimes and human trafficking division of the San Diego County district attorney’s office. She’ll be assisting prosecutors in Tanzania, working to achieve justice for human trafficking victims and survivors. ➔ In other legal news, **Richard J. Colangelo Jr. '89 (ENG)**, the prosecutor in the famed Fotis Dulos case and state’s attorney for the Judicial District of Stamford/Norwalk, was named Connecticut’s chief state’s attorney. He’s a longtime prosecutor who has specialized in child exploitation cases involving the Internet and has tried many major felony cases.



➔ Congrats to **Kathryn Luria '91 BGS**, senior vice president for community affairs and director of philanthropy at Webster Bank, who was selected by the American Bankers Association Foundation for its most prestigious award: the George Bailey Distinguished Service Award, named after the iconic character in “It’s a Wonderful Life.” ➔ Meanwhile, **John Toscano '91 (BUS)** is on the move. He was named partner at Blum Shapiro, a business advisory firm, where he will help lead Blum’s education practice. Toscano, who lives in Cheshire, Connecticut, has given keynote speeches at many education industry events for



TRAJECTORY

ON THE MARCH

“It’s strange to think that I was worried about accidentally eating unpasteurized soft cheese a few months ago, and now I am writing my will and preparing for the worst case scenario (while hoping for the best, of course),” **Alexandra March '10 (CLAS)** told us in April. With her first child due in June, the self-described “type A, planner, worrier” is being forced to set aside her spreadsheets during a time that makes even type Cs consummate type As. “All this time I thought that the worst I would have to protect her from in the early days would be the common cold, and I would combat that by wiping off her tiny, ever-sticky hands, feeling like the most capable doctor in the nation’s best hospital. Now I realize that not only can I not prepare for her birth in a pandemic, but it’s also likely that a lot of her life will be beyond my protection. My spreadsheets will be useless. I’m forced to accept that I can’t plan for everything; I don’t have any choice but to be agile — no one knows what the world will look like in three months,” wrote March in *The New York Times* in April. March doesn’t usually write for the *Times* — she works behind the bylines. As senior staff editor for the opinion section, she runs eight digital newsletters for the *Times*, including “Debatable,” with its opposing views on major topics. Her role encompasses a bit of everything for the opinion section’s digital realm, from co-running its

Instagram with a colleague to working on push notifications, LinkedIn, Flipboard, and Apple News. It’s a job that largely can be done on a laptop and phone from anywhere, she says, so the WFH transition was easy, but “the work itself has changed,” she says. “We’re sort of existing in a chronic breaking news situation that’s very much a marathon, not a sprint. The coronavirus is the storyline that has consumed the world, and part of my job is making sure we are reaching readers with these stories in a way that feels valuable and is answering the questions that they’re asking at that moment, rather than contributing to the panic that I think we’re all feeling a bit right now.” One of the biggest challenges of her job is staying current in the digital universe. “Tech moves very quickly,” she explains. “In the role I’m in, I’m always trying to figure out if the tech is worth adapting to. There’s Amp for email — is that something we should consider? I work at emerging platforms — is TikTok something we should consider in the opinion section?” March touts the benefits of good old-fashioned email, considered passé by some Millennials and Generation Z. “It offers a direct line to readers. If we hear from a reader who’s angry, I can respond to them directly: ‘Hey, let’s talk.’ A lot of people who I’ve responded to replied, ‘Oh my God, I’m so sorry. I had no idea there was actually a person reading this.’” **GREEN PASTURES** March grew up in Branford, Connecticut, along the shoreline. She always knew she wanted to live in New York City. “Originally I wanted to be a Rockette,” she reveals, “but then I grew up and became five feet tall.” She also assumed she’d go to school in New York. “I thought I wanted to be in the city, somewhere different from where I grew up, so I was partial to schools like NYU,” March admits. “Then I visited UConn. It was green and open and seemed like this little microcosm. It almost was a city — its own little city.” A journalism major from the start, she joined *The Daily Campus* in the

commentary department, since re-named the opinion department. “I was taking a lot of newswriting classes and Journalism 101 in school, so opinion gave me an opportunity to learn something I wasn’t getting a taste of in my classes,” says March. She eventually ascended to commentary editor. “Most of my favorite college memories were closing the paper at 3 in the morning after copy editing for hours,” March says, recalling “having to think about the scope of the world in a way that would appeal to college students and including different types of voices in the paper.” After graduation, she landed a job reporting for the *New Haven Register*, the state’s second-largest newspaper, where a favorite career anecdote fore-shadows her current situation. “After Hurricane Irene hit [in August 2011], everyone was trying to work remotely, roads were down, you couldn’t really travel around. Most of my colleagues lived by the shoreline, but I was inland and still had power and Wi-Fi. So we set up a makeshift newsroom from my apartment,” says March. “I was cycling between filing stories, making phone calls, and making people food!” she says with a laugh. “But it showed how important local journalism is, the lengths people in local news will go to make sure they’re getting the news out to readers.” March moved to New York City to work for the nonprofit Community Solutions, which fights homelessness, then went back to journalism for stints at Mic and HuffPost. Two years — and a lifetime ago — she joined the *Times*. “While things may be different than I expected, I certainly have no reason to complain. I am grateful to be employed and have food and shelter; that I work for an employer whose leaders have been flexible and supportive, while also publishing critical journalism; that so far, my pregnancy has been uncomplicated and my husband and I are healthy. This virus has taken many things from so many people and it’s heartbreaking. So far it has given me perspective that I hope will last well beyond the point that we’re all able to hug one another again.” —JESSE RIFKIN '14 (CLAS)



LIFE LESSONS

## STAYING WELL MEANS STAYING ON THE MOVE — EVEN WHEN YOU'RE STUCK AT HOME

“Wellness” may be among the biggest buzzwords of the past decade (not to mention a \$4.5 trillion industry), but it has taken on new meaning as people the world over try to balance widespread uncertainty and stress with a new, socially distanced way of life.

“I think of wellness as the activities and habits that we develop to not only keep us sane but promote overall well-being and satisfy that itch to be a better version of yourself,” says **Emily Abbate '10 (CLAS)**, a freelance journalist and podcaster who believes her “mission as a human is to empower other people to be their best selves and to move with some sort of intention.”

On her podcast, “Hurdle,” she’s asked more than 100 guests — from Olympic runner Desiree Linden and celebrity trainers Jillian Michaels and Gunnar Peterson to Headspace co-founder Andy Puddicombe and The Meatball Shop restaurateur Michael Chernow — about their #HurdleMoment, a turning point that allowed them to break free of struggle through some form of wellness. You better believe she

has a story of her own — and it started at UConn.

Abbate recalls sitting at her desk in Hicks Hall, procrastinating on homework one spring day at the end of her freshman year in 2007, when a digital scale tucked under her bed since move-in caught her eye. She knew she’d gained weight but had no idea how much and was shocked when “204” populated the screen.

“I got off the scale and threw on some old sweatpants and a hoodie and sneakers and did something that at the time was totally not instinctive to me at all, which was run down three flights of stairs and out the door.”

Less than a minute into her run, she collapsed into the grass.

“I was just so exhausted and beside myself, tears streaming down my face,” says Abbate. “I just knew that I needed to make a change.”

Since then, Abbate has lost (and kept off) 70 pounds, fallen in love with running, and completed eight marathons (she had planned to run her ninth in London in April before it was post-

poned due to the pandemic).

Exercise became such a part of her identity that she leaned hard into the niche a few years after graduation, eventually landing *Self* magazine’s fitness editor position. When *Self* ceased print publication in early 2017, Abbate became a full-time freelancer, with health and fitness stories published everywhere from *Runner’s World* to *GQ* to *The Wall Street Journal*.

She not only talks the talk — “Hurdle” recently hit 1.3 million listens and was called “addictive” in *The New York Times* — she walks the walk, too. When she decided to specialize in fitness writing, Abbate earned certifications as a run coach and personal trainer so she could always stand by her advice.

Her top tip for those looking to start a wellness routine, especially those looking to work out at home during the pandemic is, to borrow a well-known fitness-world slogan: Just do it: “Try what sounds good, and don’t be afraid to change it up if you don’t like that meditation app or yoga class,” she says.

The abundance of digital fitness classes being offered on Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Zoom while businesses are shut down means there’s something for everyone, Abbate told listeners on a late-April mini-episode of “Hurdle,” and technology means you can still set a date to work out with friends or family for motivation.

And remember — the point isn’t to achieve fitness excellence.

“Little, small habits lead to major change,” says Abbate. “The most important thing is that you started and are dedicated to making it a habit. The best part about ‘Hurdle’ is this constant reinforcing notion that hard stuff happens to all of us, but we are all capable of handling it,” she says. “It doesn’t matter if you’re the CEO of a publishing house or a world-class athlete, at the end of the day we all face our fair share of adversity.”

Still apprehensive? Remember that Abbate’s fitness life began with a 1-minute run followed by a flop in the grass. And despite all the marathons she’s now run, she says, “that night in the grass was my biggest victory.”

—JULIE (STAGIS) BARTUCCA '10 (CLAS, BUS), '19 MBA

private boarding and day schools and was a 40 Under 40 awardee from *Hartford Business Journal*.  
 ➔ And classmate **Mary R. Gilhuly '91 (BUS)**, the EVP and CFO of Community Mental Health Affiliates, Inc., was commended for her distinguished service by CTCPA Women during an awards program celebrating Connecticut’s exceptional CPAs.

➔ **Merton G. Gollaher '91 JD** joined Garfunkel Wild in its Stamford, Connecticut, office as a partner in the firm’s health care and corporate groups. Gollaher was previously a research scientist engaged in molecular genetics and protein chemistry research.  
 ➔ **Vincent Mascola '91 (CLAS)** was named dean of students at Greenwich Catholic School, a pre-K–8 school. Previously, he spent 15 years in the classroom as a teacher in grades 1–6 in Guilford, Connecticut, and 12 years in sales and marketing.

➔ **Kelli-Marie Vallieres '92 (BUS), '05 MA, '08 Ph.D.**, a past Neag School Alumni Award recipient, is a member of Gov. Ned Lamont’s workforce council.

➔ **Amy J. Dinallo Magyar '94 (BUS)** has written and illustrated a children’s book, “Bobby B. Button and His Magic Button,” a story based upon her son’s rare genetic condition, urea cycle disorder. The book is designed to foster awareness of the condition and show that not all children are the same, but that their differences can be amazing.

➔ President Donald Trump named Admiral **Peter J. Brown '95 JD** as his special representative for Puerto Rico’s disaster recovery. He will coordinate efforts to rebuild infrastructure on the island in the wake of Hurricane Maria in 2017 and a magnitude 6.4 earthquake in January 2020. ➔ In other class news, **Fred Kuo '95**

**(CLAS)** was appointed to the board of directors of the Keane Foundation in Wethersfield, Connecticut.

➔ And **Rhea Klein '95 Ph.D.**, a former public school teacher, administrator, and educational consultant, was appointed to the board of education in Bolton, Connecticut. ➔ **Scott Orstad '95 (CLAS)** recently joined Catholic Health Services of Long Island as vice president of marketing. Previously, he was director of marketing at NuVance Health in Norwalk, Connecticut. He lives in Stamford with his wife, Beth, and daughter, Caitlin.

➔ **Donna (Cathey) Sodipo '96 MA** was named chief program officer for YMCA Hartford, where she will develop, implement, and evaluate YWCA Hartford Regions programs and increase capacity and strengthen community partnerships. Previously, she was senior vice president of education at Connecticut Public Learning.

➔ Also, **Stephen J. Nelson '96 Ph.D.**, a professor of education and educational leadership at Bridgewater State University and senior scholar in the Leadership Alliance at Brown University, visited Storrs in November to talk about his new book, “John G. Kemeny and Dartmouth College: the Man, the Times, and the College Presidency.”

➔ And UConn law professor **Joseph MacDougald '96 JD**, executive director of the Center for Energy and Environmental Law, received a 2019 Excellence in Energy Award from the Connecticut Power & Energy Society, recognizing his influence on shaping Connecticut’s energy landscape.

➔ Also climbing the ladder: **Jennifer Haddad '97 JD** was elevated to principal at Cohn Birnbaum & Shea in Hartford, where she is a member of the firm’s



MAKING GOOD

## IN FASHION

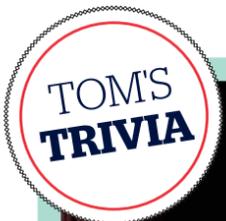
**Ahmed Diakhate '23 (BUS)**, a finance major at UConn Stamford and the owner of LOST! Clothing fashion company, has created and donated 250 face masks to health care workers on the frontline of the Covid-19 pandemic.

“It feels great to be able to help the people around me who are putting their lives on the line to dismiss the horrid situation we are all in,” says Diakhate, a Hamden native. “I had the tools to be able to do so, and I feel creating these masks and donating them was the best way for me to use them.”

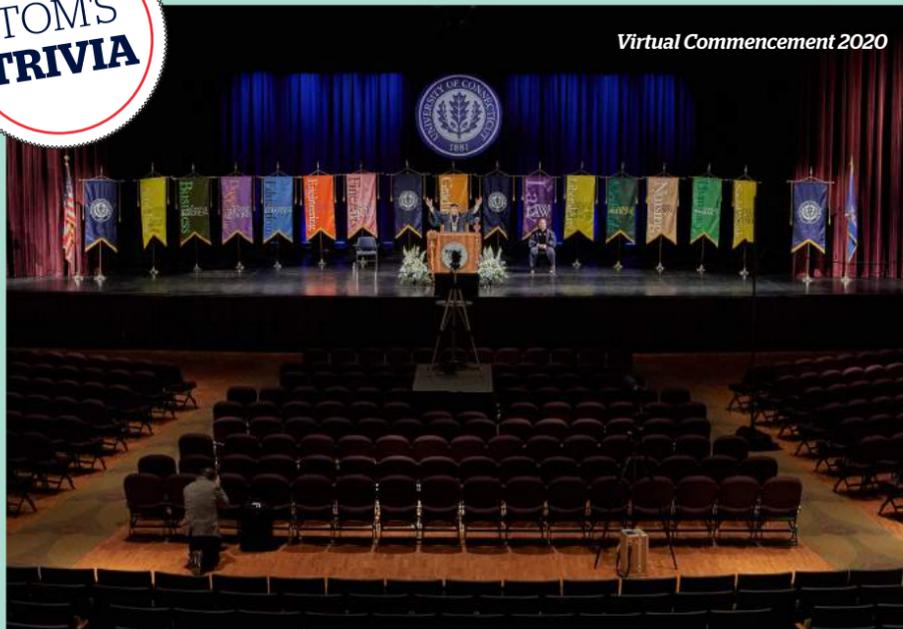
Diakhate, who sewed the antibacterial masks between breaks in his studies, distributed them to Yale New Haven Hospital and Masonicare, a senior living center in Wallingford. He chose those two institutions because family friends work there. He gradually became so skilled in making the face masks that he could complete one in about five minutes.

Diakhate started his clothing brand, LOST! Clothing, almost two years ago. The name came from the idea that clothing, and life, is what you make of it. He’s produced five collections to date, including a best-selling T-shirt, hoodies, and denim jeans and jackets. He handles all aspects of the business himself, from design to marketing — he likes compiling skills.

“I think in a time of need, like this, everybody should learn something new and, if they can, they should do something to better the world,” says Diakhate. —CLAIRE HALL



TOM'S TRIVIA



Virtual Commencement 2020

**CHALLENGE YOURSELF TO TOM'S TRIVIA!**

Go to [s.uconn.edu/summer20trivia](http://s.uconn.edu/summer20trivia) or flip to p. 52 to see if you know as much as UConn Trivia King Tom Breen '00 (CLAS).

- 1.** This year, the Covid-19 pandemic forced UConn to hold a “virtual” commencement for graduates. But this wasn’t the first time a commencement ceremony has been canceled at UConn. What was the most recent previous cancellation?

A: 1970, when protests over Kent State shootings led to an abbreviated spring semester  
 B: 1942, when nearly 40% of the University’s graduating class had enlisted in the armed forces after Pearl Harbor  
 C: 1914, when curriculum changes made all the graduating seniors back into juniors  
 D: 1902, when a sudden thunderstorm forced the cancellation of a ceremony that had only 31 graduates
- 2.** Before it became a central plaza open only to pedestrians, Fairfield Way was a busy, congested road with cars parked along the sidewalks. What was the last year Fairfield Way was known as Fairfield Road?

A: 1998      B: 2001      C: 1995      D: 2000
- 3.** On Halloween night 1942, UConn students and residents from surrounding towns gathered on Horsebarn Hill for an activity designed to boost wartime morale. What was it?

A: A visit by Eleanor Roosevelt, who toured the agricultural facilities  
 B: A Halloween-themed war bond carnival, with proceeds going to the war effort  
 C: A demonstration air raid in which several buildings were destroyed  
 D: A cow-milking competition staged by the Women’s Army Corps
- 4.** Before WHUS, there were several student-run radio stations at UConn, including WABL and WCAC. One of these stations, though, didn’t have call letters and went by a different name. What was it?

A: Radio Connecticut      B: The Nutmeg Network  
 C: The Husky Network      D: The College Broadcast Service

commercial real estate group. ➔ In more good news: **Igor Bochenkov '99 (BUS)** joined Nicola, Yester & Company, P.C., as a partner. He is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and serves on the board of directors of MARC Community Resources, a Middletown, Connecticut, nonprofit. He lives in Newington with his wife, Yulia, and daughter, Polina. ➔ And congratulations to **Donald L. Anderson Jr. '99 (BUS)**, senior vice president and CIO of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, who was named to the board of directors of the Wall Street Technology Association, an organization for technology and business professionals in the financial industry.



➔ Kudos to **Christopher T. Calio '00 MBA, JD**, who became president of Pratt & Whitney, where he is responsible for development, program management, sales, customer support, and aftermarket services of the company’s portfolio of large commercial engines. Previously, he served as president of its commercial engines business. ➔ Meanwhile, **Joey Lee Miranda '00 MBA**, a lawyer at the Robinson+Cole Environmental, Energy + Telecommunications Group, was recognized by Client Choice as the 2020 winner in the Energy & Natural Resources category for Connecticut. ➔ And **Beth-Ann Ryan '00 (CLAS)** was appointed head librarian and department chair at Delaware Technical Community College in Wilmington, Delaware. ➔ **Susan A. Martinelli '01 MSA**, the office managing

partner and assurance partner at RSM US LLP, was cited for her distinguished service by CTCPA Women during an award program celebrating Connecticut’s exceptional CPAs. ➔ **Josephine Baah '01 (BUS), '11 MBA** joined the board of directors for Journey Home, a nonprofit

that seeks to provide innovative solutions to homelessness. She is chief executive officer of Blissful Royal Creations, an event planning and design boutique in Windsor, Connecticut. ➔ And **Danielle McGrath Braun '01 (CLAS), '05 JD** was promoted from



FIRST JOBS

**BAPTISM BY FIRE**

The nursing class of 2019 has not been eased into the working world. “I just came off orientation in January,” says **Mia Hrabcsak '19 (NUR)**. “I’m not just learning how to be a good nurse, but how to be a good nurse in the middle of a pandemic.” Hrabcsak had just come off a shift on the surgical orthopedic floor at UConn Health Farmington. With elective surgeries on hold, the floor was filled with overflow Covid-19 patients, and things were stressful. “It’s hard to imagine we haven’t hit our surge. People are rushing in constantly; how could it get much worse?” The hardest part, she says, is watching people suffer alone, especially when they are put on ventilators. What gets her through? “I would definitely say it’s my UConn nursing friends. They are going through the same thing. They understand the perspective and share the same fears.” In fact, when she needs a happy place to think of to de-stress, Hrabcsak thinks of graduation. “It was a big milestone. Four years of really hard work and it was all worth it. The end goal of nursing is to help people, and that’s still what I’m doing — just in the middle of a world-wide pandemic.” —LISA STIEPOCK

associate to counsel at Shipman & Goodwin LLP in the firm’s Hartford office. ➔ Also moving up, **James Coogan '02 (BUS), '04 MS** was appointed vice president, investor relations and business development by Kaman Corp. Coogan joined the company in 2008 and previously held positions at Ann Taylor, Mohegan Tribal Gaming Authority, and PricewaterhouseCoopers. ➔ **Gregory P. Muccilli '03 (CLAS)** has been promoted to partner at Shipman & Goodwin LLP in the firm’s New Haven office. ➔ Meanwhile, the U.S. Secretary of Commerce appointed **Jeffrey J. White '03 JD** of Robinson+Cole LLC to serve on the Connecticut District Export Council for Connecticut. ➔ In other career moves, **Vonetta Romeo-Rivers '04 6th Year** is now director of teaching and learning for Regional School District 11 in Connecticut. She was previously director of performance, evaluation, and talent management for Manchester Public Schools in Connecticut. ➔ And **Peter M. Bryniczka '04 JD** made partner at the law firm of Schoonmaker, George, Colin, Blomberg, Bryniczka & Welsh P.C. in Greenwich, Connecticut. ➔ Meanwhile, **Kelly Fiala '04 Ph.D.** was named founding dean of Salisbury University’s College of Health and Human Services in Salisbury, Maryland, having served as transitional dean since it opened in July 2018. Previously, she was interim dean of Salisbury’s Samuel W. and Marilyn C. Seidel School of Education and Professional Studies and, before that, assistant professor and coordinator of clinical education of athletic training. ➔ And **Julia N. (Simons) Reinhardt '04 (CLAS)** was appointed assistant vice president and branch sales manager

of BankNewport’s North Kingstown branch. A native of East Lyme, Connecticut, she is a member of the United Way of Rhode Island Young Leaders Circle and resides in Newport, Rhode Island, with her husband, Matthew. ➔ Congratulations to **Thomas Farrish '05 JD**, who was sworn in as a magistrate judge for the District of Connecticut in January and presides over the Hartford federal courthouse. Previously, he was a partner at Day Pitney LLP, where he built his practice around insurance disputes and other complex commercial matters as well as a pro bono practice representing indigent prison inmates. ➔ **Jen Maitland Hyde '05 (ED)** reports that she is program director for Back on My Feet in Boston, a national nonprofit that helps homeless people through the power of running and community support along with employment and housing resources. ➔ Also, **Robert L. Clements '05 (BUS)** became office director at Goldstein & Goldstein LLP, a personal injury, accident, and nursing home law firm. He will manage day-to-day operations, personnel, and technology and site visits. ➔ **Bryan Olkowski '05 6th Year**, the principal of Torrington (Connecticut) Middle School, recently became the new superintendent of the Washington Central Unified School District in East Montpelier, Vermont. ➔ **Tara Maroney Pickett '06 (CLAS) (BUS)** joined the New York State School Boards Association as a project and web content manager, overseeing the website and managing projects throughout the organization. Previously, she provided academic advising and communications at Hudson Valley Community College and the University of

Bridgeport. ➔ In legal news, **Aidan R. Welsh '06**, a partner at Schoonmaker, George, Colin, Blomberg, Bryniczka & Welsh PC, in Greenwich, Connecticut, has been named a fellow in the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers. ➔ And **Dallas C. Dodge '06 (CLAS), '09 JD** was appointed corporation counsel for the town of West Hartford, where he formerly served on the town council. He is a partner at Roy & Leroy LLC, a government relations consulting firm, but will provide legal services to the town separately through his law firm, the Law Office



KUDOS

➔ **Aimee Loiselle '19 Ph.D.**, a postdoctoral fellow with the Reproductive Justice History Project at Smith College, won the coveted Lerner-Scott Prize for the country's best doctoral dissertation in U.S. Women's History from the Organization of American Historians. The group called her dissertation "Creating Norma Rae: The Erasure of Puerto Rican Needleworkers and Southern Labor Activists in a Neoliberal Icon," completed under the direction of Micki McElya with Christopher Clark and Peter Baldwin, "a stunningly successful combination of original scholarship, compelling prose, and sophisticated argumentation."

of Dallas Dodge PLLC. ➔ In international news, **Aaron Mushengyezi '07 Ph.D.** was named vice chancellor of Uganda Christian University. He and some colleagues recently paid a visit to Storrs to build collaborations with UConn. Previously, he served as dean of the Department of Languages, Literature, and Communication at Makerere University in Uganda. ➔ **Rachel (Goldfarb) Lyke '07 (CLAS)** earned her doctorate in higher education administration in 2019 from Northeastern University. ➔ And **Gregory S. Bombard '07 (CLAS)**, a trial lawyer whose practice focuses on trade secret litigation, business torts, and other complex commercial and intellectual property disputes, was made partner at Duane Morris LLP. ➔ Also, **Erik Kleinbeck '07 MBA** has joined Third Avenue Management LLC, a New York-based registered investment adviser, as head of business development. ➔ Also moving onward and upward, **Edwin J. Tucker '08 MBA** was named chief medical officer at Mirum Pharmaceuticals, Inc., a biopharmaceutical company focused on novel therapies for debilitating liver diseases. ➔ **Amanda Slavin '08 (ED), '09 MA**, founder of brand consulting firm CatalystCreativ, has published "The Seventh Level: Transform Your Business Through Meaningful Engagement with Your Customers and Employees." ➔ Saxe Doernberger & Vita, PC, elevated **Bethany L. Barrese '09 (BUS), '12 JD** to partner. Her practice focuses on complex insurance policyholder coverage issues, particularly assessing and litigating bad faith and unfair trade practices claims. ➔ And **Katherine A. Donovan '09 (BUS)**, a senior audit associate at Whittlesey &

Hadley, was named one of the "Women to Watch" by CTCPA Women, an award program celebrating Connecticut's exceptional CPAs.



➔ **Michael Fedele '10 MBA** was named to the 40 Under 40 list by *Sports Business Journal*, which recognizes the best young talent in the sports business. ➔ **Laura Mesite '10 (SFA), '11 (CLAS)** reports that she has earned a doctorate in human development and education from Harvard University. ➔ Robinson+Cole LLP has promoted **Taylor A. Shea '10 JD** to partner. She is a member of the firm's business transactions and manufacturing industry teams, representing privately and publicly held companies. ➔ Also, **Chris Barrett '10 JD** joined Baker Donelson in Nashville, Tennessee, as an associate. He practices labor and employment law. Before entering private practice, he served as a law clerk in the Connecticut Appellate Court

and the Connecticut Superior Court. ➔ In other legal news, **Kelly A. Scott '11 JD** was named partner at Pullman & Comley, LLC, where she represents clients in all areas of matrimonial and family law. ➔ Meanwhile, **Mary S. Connolly '11 (BUS)**, an auditor at Deloitte, LLP, and **Ilona Gooley '11 (BUS)**, an accountant with the Blum Shapiro Foundation, Inc., were named among the "Women to Watch" by CTCPA Women, an awards program celebrating Connecticut's exceptional CPAs. ➔ **Robert L. Truitt '11 MBA** was appointed chief financial officer at AmeriFirst Home Mortgage, a division of AmeriFirst Financial Corp., in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Previously, he was CFO at Flagstar Bank's mortgage division and held senior roles at JPMorgan Chase & Co. and Morgan Stanley. ➔ **Jonathan H. Schaefer '11 JD** was promoted to counsel at Robinson+Cole LLP, where he works in the firm's environmental, energy, and telecommunications group. ➔ Attention marketers: **Melanie Deziel '12 (CLAS)** published her first book for marketers and creators, "The Content Fuel



➔ **Melissa Stern '11 (CLAS)** and **Daniel Stewart '13 (BUS)** married in November at the Waldorf Astoria in Orlando, Florida. The couple first met in 2010 through Greek life (Kappa Kappa Gamma and Sigma Alpha Epsilon) and began dating shortly after graduation when they moved to New York City. Nearly 50 alumni attended the wedding.

MAKING GOOD

MARRIED TO THE ARTS, ENGINEERING — AND EACH OTHER

Long before a new institute at UConn bore their name, they were juniors living in McMahon Hall, attending a "bring a date" dinner together.

Donna Samson, a graphic design major from Vernon, Connecticut, and John Krenicki, who studied mechanical engineering and hailed from northern New Jersey, became a couple right away. They both graduated in 1984, married a year later, had three children, and set out on illustrious careers in industry, private equity, and the arts.

And they always knew they wanted to give back to the place where it all began. At UConn, they say, their horizons were broadened, their eyes opened to what else was out there. "We each grew up where we lived in the same house, went to the same school, had the same circle of friends," says John Krenicki, who estimates that since he and his wife graduated college, their family has moved 15 times. "UConn gave us a willingness to move out, meet new people. It stretched our minds."

Over the past three decades, the Krenickis have honored their alma mater by establishing endowed professorships in biomedical engineering, genomics and personalized medicine, digital media and design, and chemistry and with scholarships in the schools of Engineering and Fine Arts. When Anne D'Alleva, dean of the School of Fine Arts, and Kazem Kazerounian, dean of the School of Engineering, presented them with the idea for a collaborative institute, they jumped at the opportunity to fund an effort marrying their respective disciplines, giving \$5 million to launch the Krenicki Arts and Engineering Institute.

The Institute answers student demand for courses like technical theater and industrial design that teach skills increasingly in demand across the employment spectrum. Starting this fall, fine arts and engineering students



Donna (Samson) and John Krenicki, both '84, met at UConn and have given back as board members and prolific donors. John received an honorary doctorate from UConn in 2007.



can pick up a minor in industrial design or theater/entertainment engineering. Plans for those joint majors are also in the works and expected to be offered beginning fall 2021, says Daniel Burkey, associate dean for undergraduate education and diversity in the School of Engineering, who co-directs the Institute with Alain Frogley, associate dean in the School of Fine Arts. The Institute will also be funding undergraduate scholarships and graduate assistantships, and the university has created two supportive faculty positions, one in each school, with the new hires in place by the fall.

The Institute is poised to become a national leader in STEAM programs. For example, it would be one of just a handful of universities offering theater/entertainment engineering degrees, alongside prestigious institutions like Carnegie Mellon University and Purdue University (where John Krenicki earned his master's). Through the Institute, UConn theater professor Ed Weingart has led a consultative and collaborative project with Purdue faculty to establish entertainment engineering as a field nationally.

What happens when you bring artists and engineers together this way? Deans from both schools envision a space where different types of creativity

can lead to imaginative solutions and radical breakthroughs. It will allow students to explore in new ways such fields as robotics, sound engineering, and digital media, and could lead to collaborations in areas such as virtual reality, therapeutic inventions that can read and respond to emotions, and the application of innovative aesthetics to product design.

For Starters

The unofficial kickoff of the Institute's activity was a February workshop and lecture by members of Rhode Island-based design studio Pneuhaus, hosted by the Art and Art History Department. At the start a bystander would be forgiven for their confusion as strips of colorful Mylar, rolls of packing tape, and the type of blower fans you might use to dry up a flooded basement were scattered about the main gallery area in the Fine Art Building.

After a primer on inflatable theory, 15 students from several departments in engineering and fine arts got to work, dividing into three teams that spent six hours strategizing, problem-solving, cutting, and taping, transforming the materials into a huge inflatable sphere.

"At first we were a bit skeptical that we could put together something wor-

thy,” says Gordon Markman ’21, whose individualized bachelor of fine arts concentration in industrial design is pending approval (he’ll graduate before the official major is available). “We didn’t know what would happen until we inflated. There were a host of technical and logistical solutions we had to approach as a team, one being working inside the ball to connect the seams.”

When the time came to test their work, “we rigged our [rainbow] ‘Pride’ ball to the compressor and something truly magical happened — this multicolored 10-foot-tall sphere arose out of the floor. We were all blown away,” Markman says. He is, perhaps, the archetypal Krenicki Institute student. Fascinated by technology and engineering since he was young — “I would take apart everything I owned” — Markman was thrilled to be accepted into engineering, but after a year felt the creative passion that had been inspiring his personal projects was missing. Discovering industrial design “awoke a huge passion” in Markman, and since he created his own major, “I’ve had the opportunity to work on some really fascinating projects that reside in the broad spectrum between art and engineering and which combine the two,” he says. Similarly, Pneuhaus not only creates inflatable art installations but also inflatable event spaces and even inflatable habitats for NASA, showcasing just a fraction of the diverse applications for this niche combination of studies.

The interactions observed during the workshop exemplified the broader lessons students will learn from the interdisciplinary collaborative, says Christopher Sancomb, the assistant professor who is shaping the newly established Industrial Design program. “One of the things that I really want to focus on is drawing together students from different disciplines so those dialogues can happen,” he says. “Students in other disciplines working together, discovering their overlap, discovering and appreciating each other’s areas of specialty so they can really learn to thrive in cross-disciplinary environments, because frankly that’s where we’re all working, regardless of field.”

Burkey believes the iterative process artists use will be valuable to students

with engineering backgrounds. “A lot of engineering students are very high-achieving and very failure-averse,” he says. “Nobody likes to fail, but the thing the design process really insists upon is your first idea is rarely your best idea and rarely your last idea. The design folks really get, ‘Let’s be creative and think outside the box.’ Failure is part of that, and they understand that. Let’s iterate, come around to this idea a couple different times from a couple of different ways,” Burkey says. “I think that’s the biggest thing.”

**Opposites Complement**

That kind of eye-opening experience is what the Krenickis say they got from UConn and what they hope students get from their namesake program. Although they joke that they need to go through the program themselves to learn from each other’s differing backgrounds, it’s clear that they’ve been doing just that, balancing each other out with seemingly opposing perspectives, since they met in McMahan.

“I hope that the art majors succeed in their careers, that they have a career,” says Donna Krenicki, an artist and a member of the School of Fine Arts Advisory Board, before John interjects.

“A financially rewarding career,” says John, a senior operating partner with the private equity investment firm Clayton, Dubilier & Rice, who previously spent 29 years at General Electric Co., where his executive positions included vice chairman and president and CEO of GE Energy.

“Well, emotionally and intellectually rewarding and also creatively rewarding,” Donna finishes. “I hope that they can find a place to put their talents and make some money off of that.”

John Krenicki sums it up: the world isn’t black and white; they hope students who go through the Institute programs learn to adapt, just like they have throughout their lives and careers, moving new places, trying new things. “For the art students, I hope that they have more exposure to the STEM field, because that’s where the world is heading. “And for the engineers, that they’re more well-rounded and more creative. You look at a company like Apple — it’s a design company, not purely tech and engineering, so you see the importance of having engineers who can see a bigger picture and are more interesting, more well-rounded people. That’s the vision.” —JULIE (STAGIS) BARTUCCA ’10 (BUS, CLAS), ’19 MBA



A team of fine arts and engineering students builds a Mylar sculpture at the first Krenicki Institute workshop.

# UCONN NATION STANDS TOGETHER

UConn draws its strength from an immensely loyal family of alumni, friends, students, parents, faculty, and staff. **Huskies Forever** means we know we can turn to each other in times of need. As the global pandemic response evolves, we are heartened by the outpouring of compassion and support for the UConn community, particularly for our students.

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**TOM'S TRIVIA ANSWERS**

1. C, 2. A, 3. C, 4. C.

Framework: How to Generate Unlimited Story Ideas.”

➔ And **Samuel F. Blatt '12 (CLAS), '19 JD** has joined Nirenstein, Horowitz & Associates, P.C., as an associate attorney.

➔ **Sarah Boyle '13 (CLAS), '15 MS** is a remote traffic coordinator at ESPN in Bristol, Connecticut, where she does content scheduling for the SEC, Big South, Southern, America East, Atlantic Sun, Horizon, and Missouri Valley conferences, among other special events and broadcasts, such as the College Softball World Series, the “First Take” sports show, and the “Golic and Wingo” sports talk radio show.

➔ And **Andrew C. Cottiero '13 (BUS)** has joined the Siegfried Group, LLC, in its Greenwich, Connecticut, market as an associate manager. He started his career at RSM, an audit, tax, and consulting firm, and most recently was a senior analyst at PetVet Care Centers. ➔ Congrats to **Stephen Schirra '14 (CLAS)**, who was named to the 40 Under 40: Class of 2020 list in *Connecticut Magazine* in recognition of the work done by his charity, Around the Worlds, Inc., to help underserved children. Since 2015, his charity has held free soccer camp programs for more than 5,100 children in 49 countries and indirectly served nearly 60,000 kids through equipment donations and other programming. ➔ **Kelvin Roldan '15 6th Year** reports that he has headed to the Ocean State to become deputy state education commissioner in Rhode Island. Previously, he served as a Connecticut state representative from Hartford, becoming deputy majority leader and vice chairman of the budget-writing appropriations committee. Prior to that, he was an advisor to three Hartford school superintendents and two mayors. ➔ Kudos to **Daniel Lage '15 JD**, a partner at Ruane Attorneys at Law in the firm’s Shelton, Connecticut, office, who has been named to the 40 Under 40: Class of 2020 list in *Connecticut Magazine*. Lage specializes in criminal defense law and represents clients discriminated against by employers and

the government. ➔ Best wishes to **Reed Alexander Goodwin '15 Ph.D.**, who married Karen Ruth Dubbin on March 14 at the Palms Hotel & Spa in Miami Beach, Florida. He is a staff scientist in the biology department at Stanford University and she is a biomaterials postdoctoral researcher at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. ➔ **Kimberly Grendzinski '16 (CAHNR)** studied desert and marine landscapes and ecological and social field methods last summer in Baja through a global field course with Miami University. Kimberly, a wild animal keeper at Prospect Park Zoo, lives in Brooklyn, New York, and is a graduate student at Miami. ➔ **Jenna Stone '18 (ED), '19 MA; Kaylee Thurlow '18 (ED) (CLAS), '19 MA; and Lauren Kang '18 (ED), '19 MA** presented at the annual meeting for the National

Council for the Teachers of English in Baltimore, Maryland, in November. ➔ **Glynn Johnson '18 (BUS)** is a marketing coordinator at ESPN in Bristol, Connecticut. ➔ **Jieqiong (Cheryl) Gao '19 Ph.D.** successfully defended her dissertation, “Three Essays of Corporate Finance,” and accepted a tenure-track position as assistant professor of finance at New York Institute of Technology. ➔ **Miguel Colon '19 MS** is associate director for Community Outreach Programs, Services, and Initiatives at UConn. ➔ **Ryan Holland '19 (ED)** is director of women’s hockey operations for Princeton University in Princeton, New Jersey. ➔ **Erin Flaharty '19 JD** joined Halloran Sage at the firm’s Hartford office. ➔ And **Andres Jimenez-Franck '19 JD** and **Thomas H. Wilkeson '16 JD** have joined Pullman & Comley as associates.



➔ After proposing on Horsebarn Hill when he was a graduate student and she was a UConn police officer, **Joseph A. Cichocki '10 (CLAS), '14 Ph.D.** married Caitlin Farr in November 2019 in Chatham, Massachusetts, in front of a large contingent of alumni. “Caitlin and I now live in Boston and go back to Storrs frequently to walk Horsebarn Hill,” he says.

**IN MEMORIAM**

Please visit [s.uconn.edu/juneobits2020](http://s.uconn.edu/juneobits2020) to find obituaries for alumni and faculty. And please share news of alumni deaths and obituaries with *UConn Magazine* by sending an email to [alumni-news@uconnalumni.com](mailto:alumni-news@uconnalumni.com) or writing to Alumni News & Notes, UConn Foundation, 2384 Alumni Drive Unit 3053, Storrs, CT 06269.



Peter Morenus

**JOB ENVY**

**LOCAL HERO**

The job **Louis Goffinet '17 (CLAS)** loves having so much right now — not the full-time job teaching science to eighth graders and coaching soccer in Lebanon, Connecticut, or the part-time job as a weekend and evening facilities supervisor at Mansfield Community Center, where he’s worked since high school (he loves those, too) — but the volunteer job. That one wasn’t intentional. “My dad volunteered me,” he says, “which was generous of him.”

Goffinet was happy to do the grocery shopping for their elderly neighbor, who was worried about exposure to Covid-19. After a couple trips, he posted on the Mansfield Connection Facebook page offering to shop for other elderly neighbors. He got dozens of takers, including a mom who said she wasn’t in his intended demographic, but her young family was having a tough time. Both she and her husband had been laid off and, since her husband had medical issues, she didn’t want to risk trips to the store, and the delivery service fees were becoming too much. Could he make a trip for them? Of course, Goffinet shopped for the family, but he also posted on Facebook, asking if anyone wanted to help pay for this particular food run.

In an hour he had the \$200, and 7 weeks later his Neighbors Grocery Fund has \$30,000 and countless grateful neighbors. Most grateful perhaps? “These twins, 7- or 8-year-olds, they were almost crying, squealing, jumping up and down when they saw the Cheez-its in my bags,” says Goffinet, who can relate. “I remember having very specific cereals I liked as a child.” So on the form for the funds, knowing parents will focus on need, he asks what their children’s favorite snack foods and cereals are. “I always get something that’s more about making them happy. That’s important, too.” —LISA STIEPOCK

➔ For more about Goffinet, go to [s.uconn.edu/goffinet](http://s.uconn.edu/goffinet).

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Looking for  
Tom's Trivia?  
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