

ON AIR WITH A DANETTE // A HISTORICAL RECORD FOR REAL PEOPLE // THE MIGHTY FRUIT FLY

UConn

MAGAZINE

SPRING 2024

*
STAR

UConn's observatory is back thanks to a couple of moonshots — and a team of volunteer students, employees, alums, professors, and an elite telescope builder.

POWER *

SNAP!

1.18.24

At last! In mid-January temps dipped low enough — for long enough — to freeze Swan Lake. Pick-up hockey ensued.





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Too often history is written by the powerful. In March 2020 anthropology professor Sarah Willen knew the moment we were living through should be documented in real time by real people. Since May 2020, her ongoing “Pandemic Journaling Project” has amassed more than 27,000 entries.

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Alum Marvin Prince gives color commentary on his role as a producer and Danette on top sports broadcast “The Dan Patrick Show.”

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UConn Nation

Alums designing for happiness, dumpster diving for history, running student exchanges for peace, and engineering BrewConn beer. Plus Class Notes, Tom’s Trivia, and more.



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From the Editor Peter Morenus, Contributed Photo, Michael Grinley

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FROM THE EDITOR



HUSKIES – AND AUSSIES – ARE EVERYWHERE

From top: Freeman and Fergus at The Iron Horse in November; Nelson and Alice in 2000; Stiepock and Blue in 1995

A while back, an old friend and colleague from Northampton, Massachusetts, called to ask if I'd talk to a friend of hers who was considering getting an Australian shepherd dog. My first Aussie, Almost Blue, came to the office with me when she and I worked together, and she knows I've had a string of them since. I had no idea saying yes would result in a great story for this magazine – and a new puppy for me. (To be fair, no one who knows me would be surprised about that second point.)

Chris Freeman and I chatted about the pros and cons of this dog breed, and when I mentioned I live in Storrs, I discovered not only is he a UConn alum, but also he was lead singer of the celebrated UConn band Poor Old Shine, aka Parsonsfield. A few weeks later both Freeman '12 (CLAS) and I had made treks to a farm in Appleton, Maine, and returned with 8-week-old pups, Freeman's Fergus and my Tuxedo, now 2 years old. The Aussie thread running through my life has created countless meaningful connections, some momentary, some lifelong. And now my UConn affiliation is doing the same – on and off campus. I've encountered, and had memorable conversations with, gear-adorned Huskies across the U.S. and in Copenhagen, Denmark, and Florence, Italy – so far.

Freeman's and my shared connection to both UConn and Northampton intersects with Aussies another way. When I first worked with writer Peter Nelson, a frequent contributor to this magazine, he had an Aussie named Alice, who was a fixture in downtown Northampton. I could often find Nelson by glancing down the street to whatever eatery an unleashed and perfectly behaved Alice was waiting outside of, accepting treats and pats with enthusiasm heavily tilted in favor of the former. Nelson is now part of a non-profit Freeman runs that is working to restore a revered Northampton music venue. Read all about it in Nelson's story on page 7.

Lisa T. Stiepock



FEEDBACK

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

Here's a sampling of web, social media, mailed, and emailed comments on our last issue, edited for clarity and length. Find more and join the conversation at magazine.uconn.edu.

Thanks so much for UConn Magazine, Fall 2023. I always look forward to the publications. UConn was a great experience when I received my MA. Great professors — what an experience! I was so lucky to find UConn.

Stanley R. Howe '67 MA, Bethel, Maine

Baby's Firsts

➔ Dark October morning in Connecticut with sad news all around. This story brought me smiles and joy. Just wonderful to have a new member of Husky Nation with a terrific mentor to show him the way. Thank you!

Beth Grenham
West Hartford, Connecticut

➔ Will the school logo now be changed to include XV's "bandit eyes"?

Arthur Bartolomeo '68 (ENG)
Wesley Chapel, Florida

➔ I love that face! He will be a great representative for the fierce Huskies. During my days at UConn Jonathan was all white, but lovable also.

Reid Crawshaw '62 (BUS)
Jacksonville, Florida

➔ We are just so lucky to have a University that's given its state a reason to smile every time Jonathan the Husky is

around. I personally want to thank all the kids at the fraternity who have made our mascots (XIV and XV) stars — training them, and taking exceptional care of them.

Donna Tillbrook

The Moments That Made Sue Bird

➔ Sue, thank you so much for what you have done. Unknown to you, I worked at UConn when you were a student athlete there. I remember all the times your team won. It was wonderful. When I retired, I moved back to Seattle and found you again. I am so glad to have seen you play and to have known what you brought to your teams. I wish you all the best in life.

Sharon Alexander
Tumwater, Washington

➔ I really enjoyed reading this article. And seeing the pictures ... especially the one of Sue as a little girl with a basketball she seems to

be whirling around. 🥰🥰🥰

Helen Beaty

➔ As a lifelong Husky hoops fan, I have always loved watching Sue Bird on the court and off the court. She created joy both ways and will always be remembered as "the greatest"!

Brian Koches '79 (ENG)
Baltimore, Maryland

Unmasked

➔ Great article on a very talented man. I had the pleasure of working with Rob [Saunders] in Los Angeles and almost immediately I knew the production could not have chosen a more driven and talented leader than Rob. It's so great to read that he is still pushing the art of puppetry and that he's still fueled by his hunger for art! Bravo!

Ross Shuman
Los Angeles, California

A Good Life

➔ I am in tears just finding my special friend from my years in the fine arts program studying side by side with Peter and Janet at UConn. He and Janet were my dear friends. I am just learning about Peter's passing through UConn Magazine. Noemi described Peter exactly. He had a huge heart, was so well liked and always took time when I stopped into Chester at his business. Please send my heartbroken thoughts at his loss to Janet and hope I will hear from her soon. UConn has always brought forth such gifted individuals such as Peter. He should be recognized in a huge way by



Love Stories

➔ My husband, Ben '66 (CLAS), and I met at UConn in the fall of 1963. I was a sophomore from Cheshire and he, who had returned after dropping out the previous year to study in France, was from Stonington. He had been assigned to Tau Kappa Epsilon as a freshman and he subsequently joined that fraternity. I knew who he was since he was dating the roommate of a girl in my sorority, Kappa Alpha Theta, who was from his hometown, but we did not get to know each other until one night in October at A's and I's when we shared a dance. After that, we began dating and it soon became obvious that we were meant to be together.

We got pinned in February 1964, engaged in the fall of 1964, and married in August 1965, two weeks after I turned 21 and before the start of my senior year, and when he was 23 1/2, at a time when "living together" was not yet a thing. We lived in Clubhouse Apartments, which was brand new, before graduating in 1966. Ben's graduation year had been 1964 and he only needed to attend half-time the year that we married so that we could graduate at the same time.

We moved to Chicago so that Ben could pursue a Ph.D. in French at Northwestern. After spending a year in France, we moved to Ann Arbor, Michigan, where we have resided ever since, with time outs for sabbaticals in Korea and California. He taught French at Eastern Michigan University and I taught ESL for Ann Arbor Public Schools. We have five grown daughters, three adopted from Korea (one of whom is now deceased) and two from China, and three grandchildren. We have many fond memories from our time at UConn where it all began for us so many years ago.

Phoebe (Leavenworth) Palmer '66 (Home Ec.), Ann Arbor, Michigan

the fine arts department. All my best to Peter's family.

Ann (Molday) Williams '65 (SFA)
Mansfield Center, Connecticut

➔ When I was an undergrad at UConn I spent 1976-77 at the University of Lisbon and, for Christmas, my parents sent over a box that had treats from home, including a Whalers T-shirt (which I still have). Later, as a grad student, I worked as a photographer for the University. One of the magazines or newsletters was doing a piece on Peter Good as he was getting some kind of award. I was assigned to get the pictures for the story. While there I listened to his explanation of how he came up with the Whalers design, including defining the "H" in negative space with the other two elements. In its simplicity, it is truly a genius design.

Proof of its genius is in its ability to serve more purposes. While the Whalers had a farm team in Binghamton, New York, they used the logo but it was rotated so that the "W" was now a

"B". The other night here in Maryland I played a game for the Killer Whales in a local hockey league and their logo included a version of the Hartford logo but with the "H" reworked to a "K". (Who knows if anyone gets royalties from that one!) Pretty much every league across America has a team that uses a version of the Whalers logo.

Also, a few years ago my daughter and her husband, who both grew up in Connecticut, had a Whalers-themed wedding (in Vermont), complete with an intro by Chuck Kaiton, the Voice of the Whalers. (By the way, I sometimes play now with some guys who played for the Whalers then.)

So somewhere in the archives (circa 1985) there are the photos that I took of Peter Good that evening. Who knows? I may even have been shooting in color that night (a rarity).

Doug Baker '78 (CLAS), '82 MA, '86 MA
Rockville, Maryland

In follow-up correspondence, Baker shared that he; his wife, Mary Turner

Baker '81, '82 MA, '86 Ph.D.; and their siblings and step-siblings count at least 16 UConn degrees among them! — Ed.

Be Kind

➔ Great article and reminder to start the year and always lead with kindness!

Kathy L. Harrison
Events & Conference Services
Coordinator, UConn Stamford

Feedback

➔ I was pleasantly surprised and delighted by my name mentioned in Guy Caruso's letter in the Fall 2023 issue.

I truly remember those days/years at UConn serving on the Connecticut Daily Campus for my four years. I followed Guy as sports editor, had a column titled "Right From The Lip," and was promoted to managing editor and interim editor-in-chief in subsequent years. Those memories and other extracurricular activities will remain with me forever!

Charlie Lipson '67 (BUS)
Palm Desert, California





CHECKING IN WITH

THE FRONTMAN

Chris Freeman '12 (CLAS) grew up in Farmington, Connecticut, the son of a lawyer and a health care manager. At age 13, his father, the lawyer, brought him up to The Iron Horse in Northampton, Massachusetts, to see Big Al Anderson of NRBQ. From that point on Freeman knew he wanted to be a musician.

"I was an English major at UConn," he says, "but the whole time I was going to be a musician. I was going to be in a band. I knew that's what I wanted to do."

As a freshman, he joined the men's a capella group CDN, then found his true love as a member of The UConn Folk Music Society, which met on Tuesday nights in the Student Union. "It was a group of folk musicians with guitars and banjos and mandolins. Someone might play Irish music. Once a guy played clawhammer banjo, and I'd never seen a hand move like that before — it was a profound moment for me. Over the next two years, that club got mistaken as a band, but it was just the jam that ended the night. We'd play anything — except 'Wonderwall.'"

Freeman's legendary UConn indie rock band Poor Old Shine (later Parsonsfield) evolved from there. "We played all over. Any big student festival. South-a-Palooza on South Lawn. UConn-a-Roo outside the Student Union. We played at the Coventry Farmers Market. We played anywhere anyone would have us in Connecticut. Once we graduated, we made a really crappy business plan and decided none of us were going to apply for jobs. We found a house on Storrs Road for \$300 a month. It had no heat. There was a river running through the basement."

Rescue came in the form of a two-year gig writing the music for, and performing in, a musical called "The Heart of Robin Hood," which started at the A.R.T. in Cambridge before touring to Winnipeg and Toronto. "We were on the stage as part of the show. We had actors

who ended up winning Tony awards."

It meant steady money and steady gigs in 1,000-plus-seat theaters. Albums and tours ensued, with the requisite highs — like flying to Alberta, Canada, to play for some 7,000 people at the Edmonton Folk Festival. And lows — like a gig in Omaha with seemingly more people in the band than the audience, where a 4-year-old climbed up on stage and played the drums during an acoustic set or the time they drove all night from Nashville to New Jersey and Freeman woke up in the back of the van only to discover the vehicle had broken down and was up on the hoist in a repair shop.

By the time COVID forced the band to reassess, the thrill of being a touring musician had been wearing off for Freeman. "The constant travel just got to me, and I realized the thing that was missing: that it's really important to me to feel connected to a community where I actually live."

Early last year Freeman became executive director of The Parlor Room, a nonprofit that books shows and runs a musical education program in Northampton. In the fall, it purchased The Iron Horse, as iconic to the town as The Hollywood Bowl is to Hollywood or The Apollo Theatre is to Harlem. Freeman is working to raise \$750,000 to reclaim and reconfigure the venue he visited at age 13 with his dad, starting with a new kitchen and bathrooms on the ground floor. The hope is to begin booking shows for May.

"Our mission is to enhance the health and vitality of our community through the power of music. If it means giving somebody the opportunity to see an incredible musician up close, when they've only been to huge concerts, that is a whole crazy experience." An

experience with a ripple effect, he says: It directly helps the audience members and the artists, as well as the community and the city of Northampton.

"People have moved here because of music and art. Given the state of things, the empty storefronts you see, art and music are the ticket to the economic revitalization of Northampton," says Freeman, adding that it won't happen by booking venues with cover bands, but by introducing new generations of bands. "There's magic that happens here, every night. We've had High Tea and we've had Wallace Field, both doing their album releases [at The Parlor Room]."

Between overseeing educational programming, fundraising and seeking new members and donors, supervising construction, booking shows, and fielding pitches from musicians looking for gigs (but don't send him a CD; he doesn't have a CD player), Freeman is über busy — and happily so.

"We're doing this to enrich the community. The Iron Horse has an identity. It represents the whole area. Maybe The Parlor Room will be where people play their first gig, and The Iron Horse will be for acts and bands that have a following." Freeman himself chose Northampton for its musical identity.

"Being on the road, in my van, I was disconnected from a sense of community. I was unrooted. The unique part of the band, at UConn, was being embraced and supported by the local community. We were mission-based, too, in a sense, making music for UConn and the people in the area. But the bigger the band got, the more we traveled and toured, the less I felt that. Here, I'm giving something back that people want. That's what musicians do. You're providing a service for people. What I was doing at UConn was really rewarding, and this is a continuation of that."

—PETER NELSON

Northampton's iconic Iron Horse music hall has been shuttered since March 2020. Freeman, of the UConn band Poor Old Shine, is raising money to bring the music back.



Celebrating her Ghanaian culture, Naadu Adjoka-Nartey wears a shirt of Ankara, or African wax print fabric, characterized by bold colors and designs.

OUR STUDENTS

“THAT’S MY CALLING”

Naadu Adjoka-Nartey knows UConn is the right school (times two) and family practice is the right profession

On a recent weeknight in Storrs, Naadu Adjoka-Nartey '16 (CAHNR), '24 MSN was taking a rare breather from work and studies. A second-year master's student in the Family Nurse Practitioner program at UConn School of Nursing, Adjoka-Nartey also holds down a job as a tier III clinical nurse at busy Yale New Haven Hospital.

Between overnight hospital shifts, classwork, clinical rotations, and supervising Emergency Department techs and others in Yale New Haven's teaching program, Adjoka-Nartey has developed a few ways to relax and recharge. One is to hit the bike path near her home in West Hartford for fresh air and exercise.

“The fun thing is I can listen to my lectures while I ride,” she says, laughing. “So I’m able to take care of myself but also not be crippled with the anxiety of not actively learning!”

Another outlet is Grad_BlackSTEM, a UConn student organization that regularly sponsors meet-ups, lectures, and networking events.

“We’re a community of graduate students who identify as Black and are in STEM majors,” Adjoka-Nartey says. “We try to provide a supportive place to connect academically and professionally. We have people in engineering, health care, earth sciences. We have people in mathematics. I think it creates a positive impact in the

Black STEM community, but also at UConn as a whole. We’re better UConn students for learning from one another — and we’re better people in the community.”

Strictly speaking, club events are not entirely recreational for Adjoka-Nartey. She serves as the group's president. On this particular evening, she was helping to put on a cultural exchange night, where members from around the world give brief presentations about their countries, share traditions, and bond over grad school experiences.

“There’s food and everyone is dressed up in their gear,” says Adjoka-Nartey, who was born and

raised in Accra, Ghana, before coming to the United States as a teenager. “It’s one of my favorite events. It’s exciting just to celebrate culture.”

As a student and a nurse, she says she is always looking for ways to build connections among people. She remembers choosing UConn as an undergraduate in part because it felt like a place that could be as big or as small as someone wanted it to be. On the one hand, it was a global university. On the other, it nurtured and supported students as individuals, offering different points of contact within the larger community.

“I wanted to go to a school where I would meet other Ghanaian people, other African people, and people from other continents and backgrounds,” Adjoka-Nartey explains. “That was very important to me. And having been able to do that as an undergrad and now as a graduate student has been very interesting. You see that the school becomes bigger and bigger and yet smaller and smaller.”

When she completes her MSN in May and gets certified, she plans to practice in neighborhoods afflicted by lack of health access and poor health

“We’re better UConn students for learning from one another and we’re better people in the community.”

literacy, places where people end up using the emergency room for even minor issues.

The dearth of primary-care resources produces poor outcomes for everyone. Patients who rely on hospitals for initial contact may not be getting adequate preventive care to begin with and, after discharge, are at risk of missing follow-up treatments. Meanwhile, emergency rooms are overwhelmed by people who aren’t having emergencies, straining the entire system.

“I want to be part of the movement to increase health equity in the communities that need it most,” says Adjoka-Nartey. “That’s my calling,

that’s what I really want. To be able to bring resources to people affected by health disparities.”

One key to patient-centered care, Adjoka-Nartey believes, is a provider’s ability to collaborate with patients. Every person coming through the door of a primary care facility arrives with unique issues and a varying ability to articulate them. Effective treatment begins with the provider figuring out where the patient is coming from, listening carefully to what they are saying — or possibly not saying.

She cites the example of a woman who presents for prenatal care. During examination, the patient gives off nonverbal cues that cause the nurse to suspect she’s in an abusive relationship. But the partner is present and the woman’s not talking. On the fly, the nurse must find a way to extract the critical information.

“I’m really excited about my future as a family nurse practitioner,” Adjoka-Nartey says. “There are just so many things that require collaborative care with the patient. Through teaching, patient education, evidence-based practice, I’ll be in a unique position to do that.” —KEVIN MARKEY

THIS JUST IN

A Save for LiveSafe

Capt. Justin Gilbert believed the new LiveSafe app offered by the UConn Police Department could be a potential lifesaver for students — if only they knew about it. After a semester of availability, the app had only 400 active users. “We weren’t getting much traction,” Gilbert says. “And that was really frustrating because this app has really great safety features.”

As good fortune would have it, marketing professor Joseph Pancras had heard about the app and called the police department to ask a technical question. He reached Gilbert who, upon discovering he was talking to a marketing expert, asked for advice about promoting the app more effectively. Pancras thought it would make an ideal student-led initiative, and last semester he created an undergraduate Special Topics course to market the technology on campus.

The impact was profound. Today, some 3,000 UConn students and employees are using the app, which, among many safety and wellness features, lets students invite friends to monitor their travel when walking or driving, and provides both parties an immediate connection with police dispatchers if help is needed. —CLAIRE HALL



Hear from some of the marketing students at s.uconn.edu/safeapp.

UCONN TALKS

On the ubiquitous pay screens that prompt consumers to add a gratuity for counter service:

“This tipping culture has gotten out of hand and it’s making people mad.”

Narasimhan Srinivasan, marketing professor, CT Insider, Sept. 29, 2023

On the unprecedented drop in our global insect population:

“They’re the little things that run the world, and if they continue to decline at current rates, we’re going to start losing serious ecosystem functions, the world won’t work the same, ... and ultimately [it] will have a tremendous impact on humanity.”

David Wagner, ecology and evolutionary biology professor, BBC News, Oct. 6, 2023

On using oral histories to ensure ordinary people are part of the historical record:

“There’s not going to be a New Haven Register headline that says, ‘Boy eats ham sandwich, does not get struck by lightning.’”

Andy Horowitz, history professor and Connecticut State Historian, WNPR, Oct. 20, 2023

On electing the earnest:

“Those serious people may not be entertaining, perhaps not fun to drink a beer with, or even exciting or fundamentally inspirational, but they most often will work to get the tough and complicated jobs done.”

Mark A. Boyer, geography professor, Hartford Courant, Nov. 19, 2023

On why fitness centers need AEDs:

“Even the fastest ambulance is not going to make it in time.”

Rebecca Stearns ’08 MA, ’12 Ph.D., kinesiology professor and COO of the Korey Stringer Institute, NBC Connecticut, Nov. 10, 2023

On toddler milks — which the American Academy of Pediatrics called unregulated, unnecessary, and nutritionally incomplete:

“It could be called the gateway sugary drink.”

Frances Fleming-Milici, Rudd Center for Food Policy & Health research professor, Associated Press, Oct. 23, 2023

On children living through the Israel-Hamas War:

“The traumatic stress that these children are experiencing on an ongoing basis [is] actually shifting their whole development, and it’s preventing them from moving forward in their development in a way that can profoundly cause changes and a loss of years of their emotional and psychological life.”

Julian Ford, psychiatry professor and clinical psychologist, WNPR, Nov. 10, 2023

On why he’s on a mission to heal loneliness and division among Americans:

“You can’t spend 10 years thinking about violence in America without trying to grapple with the underlying emotional state of a country in which people shoot first and think later.”

Sen. Chris Murphy ’01 JD, Vanity Fair, Nov. 7, 2023

On preserving New England’s stone walls:

“Each wall that disappears is a binding thread being pulled from the patchwork quilt of our shared historic landscape. At some point, things fall apart.”

Robert Thorson, Earth sciences professor, Smithsonian Magazine, Nov. 14, 2023

COLLECTIONS

Tapeworm eye candy, that’s what Janine Caira, Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, calls the photos of parasitic survivalists as colorized by Kirsten Jensen ’96 MS, ’01 Ph.D. Shown is *Echinobothrium dougbermani*; find hundreds more in their book “Planetary Biodiversity Inventory (2008-2017): Tapeworms from the Vertebrate Bowels of the Earth.”





MAKING GOOD

AN URBAN HEALTH CARE BOOTCAMP

Petra Clark-Dufner '81 MA is a force, calling on students rapid fire, but gently and with humor, cajoling answers from the health care professionals at this urban services bootcamp and keeping them on their toes. “Zach,” she says, pointing to a young man in the back. “Talk to me about the windows. In terms of your rotation, does any of this have relevance to what you just did? Talk to me.”

The physician assistant resident replies, “You need to assess how the patient is feeling. And with the windows, you can find out very quickly where you need to dive deeper.”

“Excellent,” Clark-Dufner says.

For nearly two decades, Clark-Dufner has been training students of health care as director of UConn’s Urban Service Track Scholars Program (UST), part of the Connecticut Area Health Education Center. She is now on her 17th cohort, of about 65 students each, in the two-year program that started in 2007. The broad mission is good, accessible health care for everyone. The students, who clearly

Petra Clark-Dufner at UConn John Dempsey Hospital in Farmington, Connecticut last December.

adore Clark-Dufner, come from the schools of Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing, Pharmacy, and Social Work, as well as the Quinnipiac University physician assistant program.

“We have retreats, shared reading assignments, interprofessional learning communities, a student-alumni podcast series, and community-based clinical trainings and experiences,” Clark-Dufner says. “We look at things like health care financing, cultural humility, advocacy, health promotion, basic screenings, but more importantly, how to engage and talk to the community members and patients.”

Part of that education involves a two-part bootcamp where students receive hands-on training at UConn Health in Farmington. They learn how to approach and communicate with patients, focusing on five essential windows into a patient’s health. They look at skin, the literal boundary between the body and the viruses and toxins and microbes that make us sick. They look at eyes, not just for the emotions they might reveal, but because they are portals through which a provider can observe the circulatory system and the brain. They look at how much pain a patient is experiencing, where it comes from, and how it presents. They look at a patient’s nutrition — what a patient eats can show how much attention they are paying to their health. In the same way, Urban Service Track Scholars are taught to look at a patient’s feet, because if a patient hasn’t been clipping their toenails or washing between their toes, they may be neglecting other kinds of self care, and the feet are a place where chronic illness can first appear.

Student perspectives

Zach Maddox, 31, comes to the program, and this bootcamp, from law enforcement in Manchester, New Hampshire, where, working with

the sheriff’s office, he saw people he couldn’t help. He’s now at Quinnipiac, training to be a physician assistant, specializing in emergency medicine.

“You have to train for those scenarios because you have to realize, someone is seeing you on the worst day of their life,” Maddox says. “Whatever you yourself have been through that day, for the person in front of you, they are struggling. You have to learn to listen to their perspective, not yours. The situation isn’t always what meets the eye. A suicidal patient is going to tell you, ‘I’m fine.’ I had a deep conversation with a man who had Lou Gehrig’s disease, who some people thought was depressed. But we talked about his wife, and his son, and making sure his benefits would come to him, and his funeral expenses, and the things that were weighing on him. It’s about human interactions.”

Julia Levin '21 (CLAS) is a second-year medical student from Dartmouth, Massachusetts, who wants to provide primary care. “When you see a patient in a clinic, you’re first considering the acute reason they’re there — foot pain, weight loss, chest pain,” she says, “but Urban Service Track teaches you how to look beyond that, to consider what aspects of a patient’s life are causing that specific ailment. I wouldn’t call it old fashioned, but it brings us back to what the root of good medicine is. As doctors, there’s an aspect of privilege. We all have biases. We have to learn to help patients according to what they need and not who they are or where they come from. UST gives you the tools you need.”

Where it counts

UST students collaborate with community partners to provide care and outreach to the medically underserved, through kids’ camps, homeless shelters, senior centers, schools, free clinics, community health fairs, special outreach events, even giving vaccinations door to door.

“We tell our students to be change agents,” Clark-Dufner says. “Some of our students who actually come



Second-year medical student Julia Levin, at ProHealth Physicians Glastonbury Primary Care, says Urban Service Track taught her to look for the root causes of a patient’s ailment. Zachary Maddox, a physician assistant resident at Optimus Health Care in Bridgeport, Connecticut, keeps this in mind from UST: “You have to realize, someone is seeing you on the worst day of their life ... you have to learn to listen to their perspective, not yours.”

from underserved backgrounds take what they’ve learned and go back into those communities, but we’ve also had students from suburban communities, or rural communities, who have felt passionate about what we’re teaching. Everyone who goes into medicine is compassionate, but our students have a different level.”

Clark-Dufner is a change agent supreme, modeling for her students the empathy, energy, and motivation they will need. “I’m not a clinician,” she says. “I’m an educator, from a family of educators. Every single student is worth the investment of time and nurturing. It’s been a wonderful challenge.” —PETER NELSON

TOP 10

“IT’S NOT ABOUT THE FOOD”

One of the best meals TV chef Joel Gamoran '07 (CLAS) recalls eating was at UConn — sort of. He was studying abroad in Italy and biked to a trattoria with a friend. “They plucked the fish out of the ocean and just grilled it right there, squeezed lemon on it, and it was the best thing I ever had. Now was it the fish? Was it the lemon? No, it was the bike, it was the 20-year-old me, it was the Italy, that seasoned that fish.”

Gamoran’s latest cooking show, PBS’s “Homemade Live,” sees the chef and friends recreating such food memories. Gamoran took up cooking at age 14 to battle anxiety and has been “spreading the gospel” ever since. “Cooking’s like giving someone a hug.” He’s a serial TV guest as well as host, who seeks to counter the cooking intimidation factor by maximizing the fun. “I’m not getting too sciencey, I’m not getting too foody — it’s not about the food, it’s about empowering people. And having fun. Because ultimately that’s what cooking’s all about — the joy of living.”



Gamoran says he’s met lots of fun people in the green room including Tom Hanks, but his favorite “has to be Peggy from ‘Mad Men’ [Elisabeth Moss]. I had a little crush on her. My wife said, laughing, ‘Were you flirting with her?’”

JOEL’S TOP 10 TV APPEARANCES



1 Strawberry Salad on “Scraps” 2017
“Scraps” was my first TV show. That particular episode I got to make a salad with my mentor, Sally Hiebert, in one of my favorite places in the world — overlooking Point Reyes up in Sonoma County. I was pinching myself

— standing there with the cameras and Sally in one of the holiest places in the world for me. I was just in euphoria in that recipe.



2 Confetti Ice Cream Sandwiches on “Sesame Street” 2022
I mean, come on, it’s “Sesame Street.” And it was Elmo’s birthday, so we got

to make ice cream bars and sing “Happy Birthday.” It was amazing to be on that set and see the professionalism. There’s like three people to each puppet, it’s just mind-blowing. I even got Elmo and Cookie Monster to record a special message for my kids!



3 Lavender-Rubbed Steak on “The

Today Show” 2013
This was the first time I was on “The Today Show.” Standing there with Hoda and Kathie Lee, I was so nervous, but I got through it. They say if you can just get through that first segment and deliver, you’re on for life, and that’s what I’ve found. Were there any glitchy moments that first time? Well, yeah: the very first thing I ever said on national TV. I worked for a company called Sur La

Table and it’s weird to pronounce. Kathie Lee called it Sur La Tabla and I didn’t want the company to be upset so I corrected her in a funny but nice way: I go, Sur La Tabla! And then Kathie Lee says, What are you — French? And I go, No, no, no, I’m Jewish, and she died laughing. And it goes back to this idea of how it’s not about the food — be there, be present with them, have fun, make jokes, the way

that you would with your friends. That’s what got “The Today Show” interested — they’re like, OK, this is not just a run-of-the-mill chef, this is a guy who can play off one of the best journalists in the world. So, yes, it was a little glitch, but that moment was my breakthrough moment.



4 Chipotle Tuna Tostadas on “Homemade Live” 2023
My new show. I’m so proud of this show! It’s in front of a live studio audience on PBS. This tuna tostada — years and years ago I was hired to cater a wedding and this was the late night food to serve after the dancing. It was going to be on this cute little sailboat in San Francisco Bay. So I’m getting all the groceries on the boat, and I go back to the car to get another load, come back to the boat, and half my groceries are just gone! It’s so weird — a seal stole my groceries and ate all my food so I couldn’t make the tostadas for this bride. I felt so bad. And that’s what “Homemade Live”

is all about — thinking of these funny memories, these great food memories, and then re-creating them. I got to make those tuna tostadas that that frickin’ seal stole from me, and it was a blast. Everyone just loved that story, the energy was high, and it was just so cool to see that show get off the ground.



5 Fried Trout Bones on “Scraps” 2018
The Bozeman, Montana, episode — we were fly fishing with a guy named Eduardo Garcia. He electrocuted himself in an accident on a hunting trip, so he has a hook for a hand. Meanwhile he’s one of the best chefs I’ve ever met. He uses his hook to grab hot pans and he’s also incredibly delicate. He taught me how to fly fish and we caught all this trout. “Scraps” is about using everything, so we fried the bones into this crunchy, beautiful snack, and it was just this incredibly cool moment sitting and cooking in this river with this unbelievable champion of life.



6 Sweet Corn Polenta on “Scraps” 2017
The Seattle episode of “Scraps.” I got to come home after 21 different cities and do my home. There’s something about sweet corn in Seattle, it’s unbelievably candy-like, and family, friends, everyone came out to the shoot. It felt like a full circle moment, very meaningful.



7 Grilled Salmon and Creamy Cauliflower on “The Today Show” 2017
This recipe just works, and it’s representing a newer part of my life where I’m really trying to be mindful of what I’m eating, shed some weight, and be healthy. This salmon with creamy cauliflower — you don’t miss mashed potatoes, you don’t miss meat, you just feel fulfilled. And the reviews were insane, better than cookies or anything meat-related. It was interesting for me to see

that, a real unlock — OK, I can do healthy food, and people will really enjoy that.



8 Sticky Cranberry Hand Pies on “Sesame Street” 2021
“Sesame Street” is always just a marquee experience for me. This was my second time on, I felt so much more confident, I understood what the rules were. Like Cookie Monster is 30, so talk to him as an adult, and Elmo, he’s 3, so talk to him like a toddler. There’s all these things you don’t realize as a viewer that you find out on set. I remember we were rolling out the dough for hand pies, and they were like, well, Cookie Monster can’t touch the dough, so they quickly made a fake dough that wouldn’t stick to his fur that looked exactly like my dough. I mean this team is just insane.



9 Bourbon Milkshakes on “Homemade Live” 2024
Do I need to say anything else? Bourbon. Milkshakes. Done.



10 Pickle Brined Fried Chicken on “The Today Show” 2015
This was a “Scraps” recipe we did on “Today.” Katie Couric has been a friend, mentor, and a really big reason I’ve had success. I asked her to go back on the show to cook with me. She was hesitant ‘cause she’s already been on there for like a bajillion years, but she came on and she helped me promote “Scraps,” so it was a really cool moment. I don’t think I would have had a show if it wasn’t for her. I pitched it to every channel you can imagine and everyone said no, no one wants to see you eat your garbage. I was like, no, we throw away way too much food, so let’s inspire people not to. And then Katie — we have a long story about how we became friends, but bottom line, we were friends — and she took one meeting with me and of course the network was like this is great, we love this. No one loved it before, but now that Katie Couric is involved ...!
—LISA STIEPOCK

✧ STAR POWER ✧

✧
A team of employees, students, researchers, an alum, and an elite telescope builder brought this important piece of research equipment and UConn history back to life.



by Elaina Hancock '09 MS and Lisa Stiepock ✧ photos by Milton Levin '04 Ph.D.

The late Cynthia Peterson, who became the first woman on the UConn physics faculty in 1968 and spent 49 years there, was known for her passion for teaching and outreach, her generous sharing of knowledge, and — perhaps most significantly — for her dogged campaign to build an observatory in Storrs, a pursuit that succeeded in 1979 with the unveiling of the East Road Observatory.

It took a decade of persistent lobbying, planning, and building by Peterson and machinist Richard Mindek. Peterson started the process as soon as she was hired and, five years later, the University agreed to match any grant money she could get from the National Science Foundation. A year later the NSF gave her nearly \$15,000 and the University kept its promise.

When the observatory became fully functional in January 1980, The Hartford Courant reported that, through their new telescope, astronomy students could see the moons of Jupiter, Saturn, and Mars, the planets of Neptune and Pluto, and — weather permitting — details on the surface of Mars and Jupiter.

The East Road Observatory saw a few decades of enthusiastic use by students, professors, and plenty of girl and boy scouts before it fell out of repair around the turn of the century and was largely forgotten. Then, in the fall of 2022, it entered the orbit of UConn physics professor Matthew Guthrie.

“When I learned that it was no longer in use, I asked around to see why and how we could get

it up and running again. Getting it fixed up was not in my skill set, so I didn’t think too much more about it,” says Guthrie. “Then Allen Hall, a local award-winning telescope designer, emailed our department chair out of the blue in January. He wanted to donate a telescope that he built. We connected and I told him about the derelict observatory. About a week later we were taking it apart.”

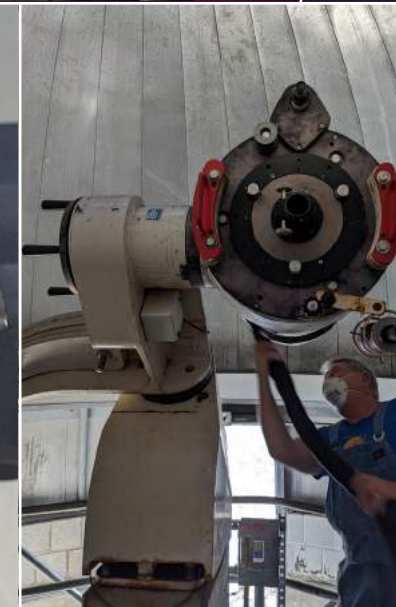
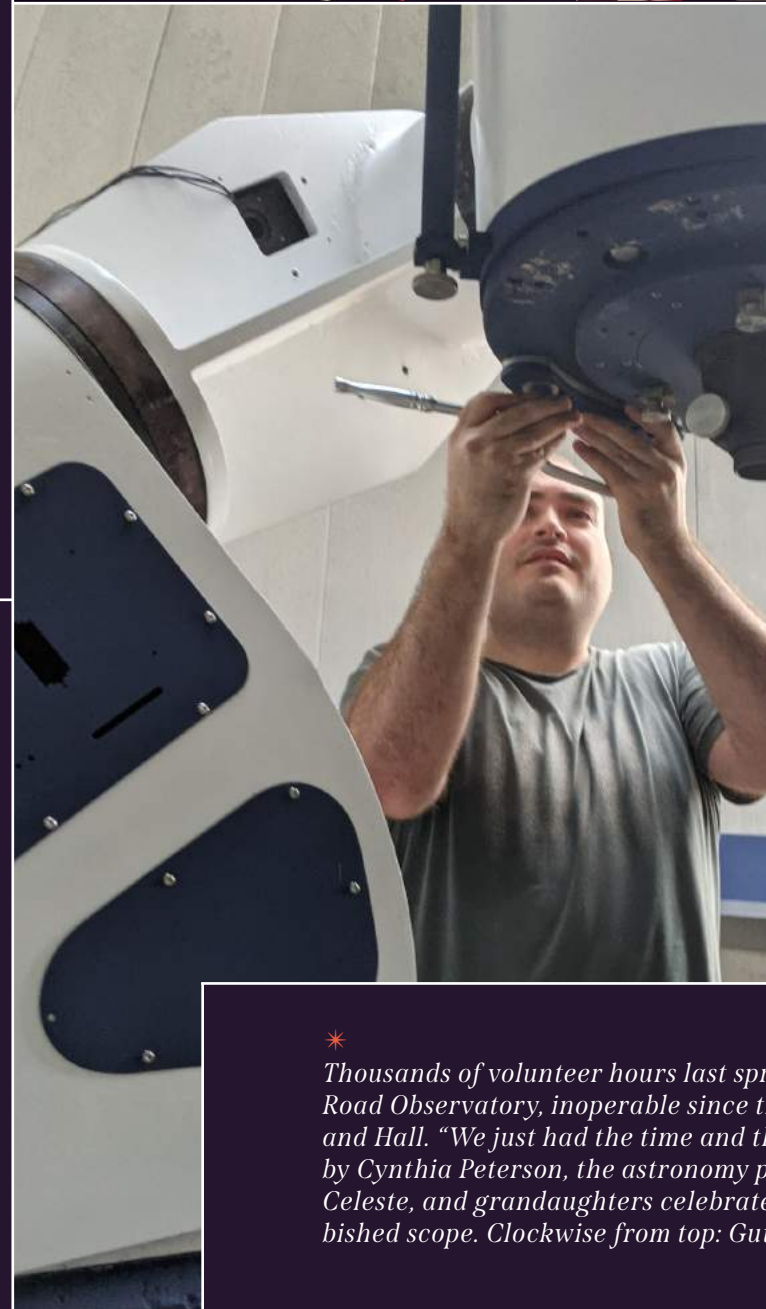
Guthrie says the facility was in rough shape, and Hall admits he thought it was a lost cause, but they stuck with it. Finding Hall was haystack-needle-level luck says Guthrie. “His mechanical and technical skills are exactly what we needed to get this place restored to its former glory, and given the work and upgrades we’ve already made, they’re even better than the original design.”

The two had lots of help from staff, students, researchers, and, especially, one particular alum. Dennis Perlot ’82 (ENG) was there the April day they found the observatory’s logbook with the last, ominous 2009 entry that read, “Dome stuck, shutters frozen.” As an undergrad he took astronomy with “Doc Peterson.” When his then 11-year-old son took a UConn summer science class a few years ago, says Perlot, “guess who his instructor was? Cynthia!”

By late October last year, after months of repairs, troubleshooting, and cleaning out critters and junk, the observatory was back in action. Channeling Peterson’s spirit, Guthrie, Perlot, and Hall had persevered.



Finding Hall was haystack-needle-level luck



Among the next-up goals for the team is securing funding to repair an overgrown and decrepit access road to the observatory. For now, astronomy students will be treated to occasional star parties. Eventually the hope is to once again open the observatory to the community.



Thousands of volunteer hours last spring, summer, and fall led to this October reopening of the old East Road Observatory, inoperable since the mid-'90s. A lion’s share of the work was done by Guthrie, Perlot, and Hall. “We just had the time and the ability to dedicate to it,” says Guthrie, adding they were inspired by Cynthia Peterson, the astronomy professor whose decade of diligence built it in the '70s. Her daughter, Celeste, and granddaughters celebrated the reopening with the team by planet gazing through the refurbished scope. Clockwise from top: Guthrie and Celeste; Perlot and Hall; a granddaughter; Guthrie; Hall.



“This will be a force for good”

“Getting the facility back up and running has been an amazing and rewarding experience. This will be a force for good in the department and at the University,” says Guthrie. “Our department has big-shot astrophysicists who work on JWST [James Webb Space Telescope] and Hubble. They like their telescopes to be in space, but having a telescope here is a powerful thing.”

UConn researchers have access to a network of telescopes around the world, but now, once again, students and researchers can get hands-on experience with an earth-bound scope right here in Storrs. “There’s nothing more fun than going through the theory in class and then seeing what it looks like with your own eyes and making that connection,” says Guthrie, “That’s one of my basic philosophies of being a teacher, you can do all the theory that you want, and you probably can be pretty good at it. But if you can’t apply it, and see what that theory does in real applications, there’s no point. Things like this observatory are great tools for building that perspective.”

Upgrades have enabled research the observatory was previously not capable of, and Guthrie hopes to set up the system so it can be controlled remotely and, eventually, project images to a live screen at the campus planetarium (now under renovation).

“With tracking, the scope rotates just a little bit at a constant rate to track along with the motion of the stars and that lets us do real science because you must look at something for a long time to really study it. One of the things that we’re excited to do is exoplanet studies, where you need to take a few hours of exposure to accurately measure how much light you’re getting from the star so that any variability in that light you can attribute to a planet passing between us and the star. Doing that requires accurate tracking.”

It was at sunset on October 24 last year that the team fired up the new 16-inch telescope and explored deep sky objects, planets, even the Apollo 15 landing site. They are working on giving the building they were in a new name: The Cynthia Wyeth Peterson Memorial Observatory. 🌌



Celeste Peterson looks through the rebuilt telescope – lens trained on Saturn – for the first time. A biology professor at Suffolk University in Boston, Cynthia’s daughter has been sifting through her mom’s papers, working with Guthrie on a memorial in Gant Science Complex.



Who Tells Our Story?

Pandemic

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

Four years.

This March marks four years since we were told to stay home, just for two weeks, to “flatten the curve.” March Madness was canceled. Tom Hanks tested positive. And fear was mounting as hospitals became packed with sick people, personal protective equipment became scarce, and, everywhere, people started dying of COVID-19.

While many of us were scrounging for hand sanitizer and figuring out whether it was safe to handle our mail, researchers at UConn and the world over wasted no time. They began designing better ventilators and masks, developing vaccines, improving logistics to deliver PPE.

And then there was UConn anthropology professor Sarah Willen, who quickly recognized we were living through history that should be documented in real time. Having journaled throughout her life, Willen figured a series of online questions prompting journal-like entries that recorded individual pandemic experiences would prove valuable to researchers in her field and in others, especially history.

Since its launch in May 2020, the ongoing “Pandemic Journaling Project” has amassed more than 27,000 entries, capturing the observations of and emotions experienced by real people across the globe throughout this mass event.

“Anthropologists aren’t the kind of researchers who know how to build an air purifier with, like, a piece of string and duct tape and a hair dryer. We don’t

know how to do that sort of thing. But we do know how to create a welcoming, nonjudgmental space,” says Willen, who enlisted Brown University anthropologist Katherine A. Mason as her partner on the project. “So we did, and all sorts of people brought all sorts of experiences into it.”

... I’m tired. It’s been more than two months of being home and I am so tired. I am trying to balance working from home full-time, being a surrogate teacher to a high school student and middle school student, and special education student. I am the hunter/gatherer for all household provisions, the bill payer, the chef, the best friend to my 13-year-old daughter, the therapist for my son, and the sounding board for my husband. I am the end-all-be-all for everyone and I am tapped out ... I’m just so tired. I’m tired of working. Tired of schooling. Tired of this whole coronavirus. I remember when I thought being a working mom was tough. Now I am a working everything. —woman in her early 50s, June 3, 2020

... You know, I’m anxious. Professionally, my work insists I constantly puzzle through scenarios, lead solutions, repeat. I have never had to focus on one challenge 24/7 for months on end. It’s an unremitting state of mind. And it can

be tiring. I am also grateful. I will never again have this time with my family. I cherish the informal interaction, the reduction of chores, making family dinners, working out regularly, realizing, honestly, how much money and time I waste in “normal” life. I will miss a return to normal that takes away the simplicity of this time.... —woman in her 40s, June 4, 2020

I feel full of rage, sadness, and empty. My grandmother passed away from COVID. Words cannot begin to describe the amount of pain I feel from her sudden passing.

Over the past three days, she is the 10th person who I have seen die from COVID. I just found out a few more close friends are hospitalized for COVID-19. It makes me wish I could have it so they could live. I actually did have it back in March 2020 but I was lucky, I only had a mild case and was able to move forward.

I just feel angry at times. Angry at how people are taking this as a joke and it comes at the cost of human lives. —woman in her 20s, January 12, 2021

Think about it.

Most of us can remember the vacillating thoughts and feelings we experienced throughout 2020 and to varying

“These stories give us an incredible window into how the pandemic challenged our sense of what it means to be human.”

— Sarah Willen

Nearly 3,000 of the 27,000 journal entries included images; below and on the following pages is a sampling of those (lightly edited for clarity).



July 7, 2020

< My mom and I went to CVS the other day, and we went into the cards aisle looking for picture frames or things related to arts and crafts. We were shocked when we saw how many cards were gone. As you can see, on the righthand side of the photo almost all of the “Care and Concern” cards were gone, completely cleared out. When my mom saw it she gasped and put her hand to her mask. It was shocking. Our minds immediately jumped to the thought of so many people having the virus that CVS almost ran out of cards ... the implication of all of those cards being gone definitely makes you think.



January 20, 2022

< My friend suffering from Long Covid anosmia noted today that it has been a full year since she had a normal sense of smell or taste. One year ago was the last day she enjoyed the taste and smell of fresh baked chocolate chip cookies. Eating is now a chore ... and many days, barely tolerable. She is no longer able to smell or taste if something is dangerous or spoiled (smoke, gas, bad milk?). Have lunch with friends? Dinner out? No thanks. She dreams of smelling the ocean, fresh cut grass, and oh, those chocolate chip cookies.



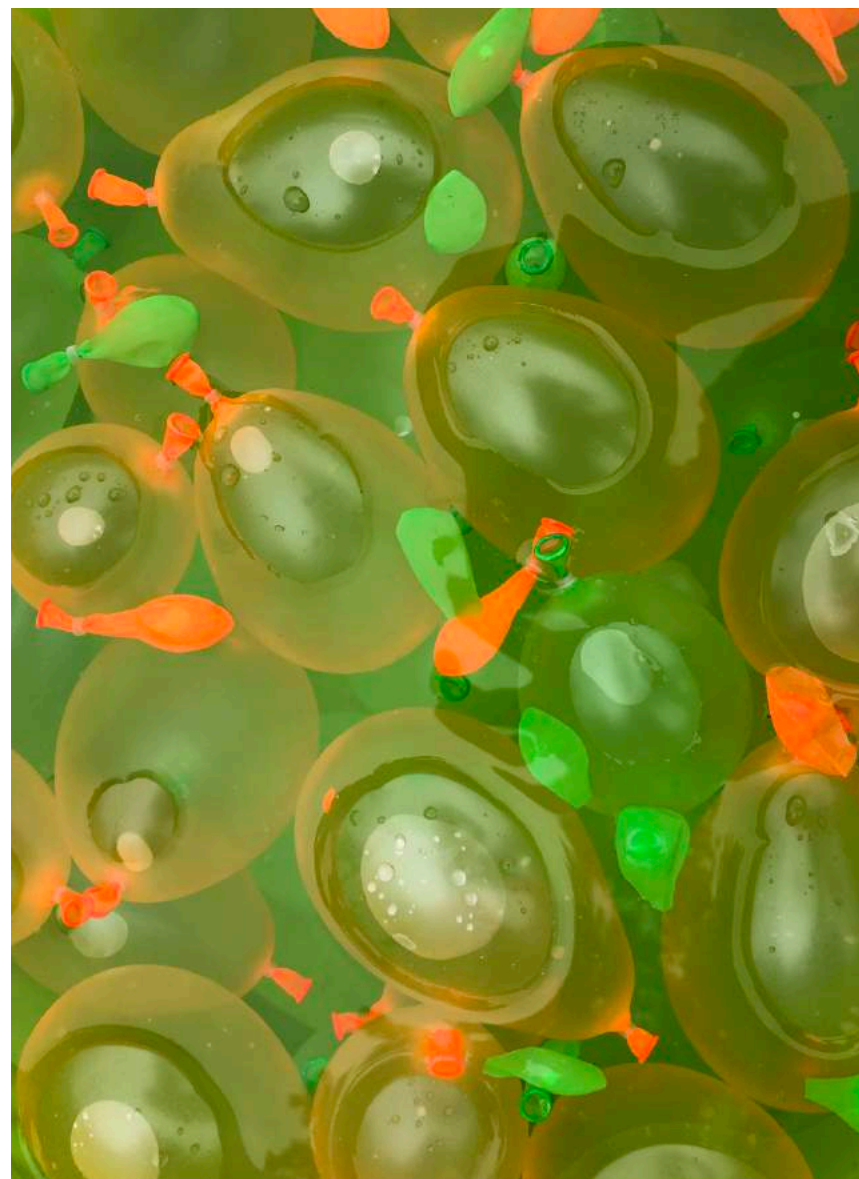
September 4, 2020

< This is myself (in the fighter pilot helmet) hugging my daughter who had been working as an ICU nurse with strictly COVID prone vented patients for 4-6 weeks straight. I was getting calls from her in the middle of the night crying and hysterical because she was profoundly sad that COVID patients were coming in talking and walking and then would be on vents within 24 hours. We each drove 2 hours to meet and I brought the family dog. Our dog stayed with her for 3 weeks and I truly believe that this saved her life (mentally at least) ...

February 8, 2022

> Day #653 Haiku
in Corona Time

Groundhog Day today
Each day has felt like that film
For the past two years



January 26, 2022

^ Since my husband is undergoing cancer treatments, and is awaiting (hopefully) a chance to get a second booster, we're not traveling in person. Instead we've established a pandemic-induced routine of reading aloud to each other. We've explored China at the time of Mao's Revolution, explored Orwell's British countryside and home, and are about to go to Chicago's World's Fair via Erik Larson. We treasure this daily ritual, and it's something we wouldn't have thought of doing, were it not for the pandemic.

June 19, 2020

< It was my daughter's last week of school. It's a tradition to have a water balloon toss on Field Day but as schools are not open we had one in the backyard with three other friends. I initially thought I would make my daughter wear gloves but then I didn't. We had hand sanitizer and all of that. But this photo of the water balloons makes me think of all of the parents trying to normalize a very abnormal time. I love that it represents that effort but I also see potential COVID on every balloon!



February 10, 2022

^ This made me laugh! We order everything online now rather than going to stores shopping. We had made 3 purchases from Amazon. So a few days ago we got 3 packages delivered and when we looked at the street there were 3 Amazon trucks, one for each package. Not an efficient delivery system that's for sure.



April 7, 2022

^ COVID continues to feel like this thorn on a rose bush ... ever present danger despite the promise of beauty. Can't let your guard down or you may get pricked. The rain drops emphasize a longing for sunshine, light and a carefree spirit which is not the same as COVID fatigue. I think we're beyond that now ...

“Individual people’s lives matter. Individual stories matter.”

— Sarah Willen

degrees in the years since — and how those have evolved as the nation and world have

emerged from a global crisis into something resembling normal (though whether it's “new” or “back to” is up for debate). The tightrope we walked between anxiety and gratitude. Fear we'd contract the illness or lose someone we love, the sadness of isolation from loved ones, all mixed up with simple joys. Confusion over new public health information, or the rejection of those messages. The stress of navigating remote learning, even grocery shopping. The very real losses of life, of rituals, of the things that make families families. And, of course, the ways our own experiences and understanding and values differed from others'.

Willen says it's all reflected in the entries. Everybody experienced the pandemic, but not everybody experienced it the same way. The journaling prompts were designed to capture those variations, to ensure the record contains the stories of people from all walks of life.

“Usually, history is written only by the powerful,” the PJP website states. “When the history of COVID-19 is written, let's make sure that doesn't happen.”

The project is a form of “archival activism,” which Willen and her team define this way: a strategic commitment to facilitating equitable history-telling in the future through inclusive collection and preservation practices in the present.

“It's not that people who have influence and privilege necessarily mean to create inequitable historical narratives, but that's what tends to happen if the historical record is thin on evidence about people who don't have privilege

or influence,” says Willen, who is also co-director of the Research Program on Global Health and Human Rights at UConn's Gladstein Family Human Rights Institute. “Ordinary people deserve to have their stories included in the history books.”

Take the way U.S. history curriculum is primarily told from the point of view of white men and not Native Americans, for instance, or women, or enslaved people.

“If we have more robust data on everyday people — and especially everyday people from groups that tend not to be represented in the historical record — we'll have so much more power. We'll have so much more capacity to understand the specifics of how this pandemic affected particular communities, especially communities that have endured discrimination, exclusion, and structural violence, and put those specific, grounded stories in broader historical contexts.”

In the first phase of the project, from May 2020 through May 2022, the journal entries came from more than 1,800 people in 55 countries but primarily the U.S., with about half of American participants identifying as non-white. About 80 percent were women — getting more men involved was “a nut we never managed to crack,” according to Willen. Participants were surveyed on intake about demographics, occupation, beliefs and more, painting a detailed picture of each respondent while maintaining their anonymity.

The team employed the survey in addition to the journaling to thread the needle between anthropological and historical paradigms, protecting the privacy of human research subjects while ensuring the information would be useful to all who might want to delve into the data.

“It required a lot of thought and a lot of planning to bridge these different disciplinary concerns and generate an archive that would have value, not just in the near term, but also in the long term,” Willen says. And the possibilities for

“In their journals, real people are often struggling, in real time, to figure out how to be themselves in a world that’s no longer recognizable.”

— Sarah Willen

analyzing and disseminating the data are virtually endless.

So far, Willen, Mason, and colleagues in their field have published two special collections of research papers based on the project, examining topics including grief, loss, and isolation among health care workers; stress in Black women; and even journaling as a coping mechanism.

With a multitude of conclusions still to be drawn about specific groups, Willen, ever the anthropologist, is most excited to explore how the pandemic impacted individuals at their cores — in their struggles to live flourishing lives, or to live according to what she calls their defining commitments: those values and beliefs that make them who they are and without which they wouldn’t recognize themselves.

“In their journals, real people are often struggling, in real time, to figure out how to be themselves in a world that’s no longer recognizable.

“Suddenly, space wasn’t space. Time wasn’t time. Relationships, bodies, air — all these incredibly basic things suddenly became something we couldn’t rely on. And that made it really difficult for many of us to be true to our sense of who we are and who we want to be as individuals and in relation to everything around us,” says Willen. “Each person’s story matters on its own terms, for sure. Taken together, these stories give us an incredible window into how the pandemic challenged our sense of what it means to be human. It’s really easy to focus on darkness and terror and loss and grief in this public health crisis — and all that is definitely in the journals. But humans are more than that. Even when we’re experiencing loss or grief, we find ways to play. We find ways to entertain each other. We find ways to express love.

“I don’t think you can really tell the story of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on humanity without including all those expressions of creativity and playfulness and joy.” ☺

What is the PJP?

Part anthropological research study, part historical archive, part large-scale mental health intervention, and part tool for self-reflection, the Pandemic Journaling Project (PJP) was launched by anthropologists Sarah Willen at UConn and Katherine Mason at Brown University. After completing an in-depth survey, participants are asked to answer several questions using text, images, and/or audio. The team then follows up via email or text — weekly from May 2020 through May 2022, now quarterly for those still participating — with a new set of questions.

Each time, participants are asked “How is the coronavirus pandemic affecting your life right now? Tell us about your experiences, feelings, and thoughts,” and a choice of two new questions inviting them to share their thoughts on topics ranging from their emotions to their living situations to international politics, the future, and even their experiences with the project itself.

An interactive traveling exhibition has brought a poignant collection of images, writing, and audio from the journals to communities in Hartford, Connecticut; Providence, Rhode Island; Heidelberg, Germany; Mexico City, Mexico; and Toronto, Canada.

In December, a data set containing nearly 27,000 entries and important context about phase I of the project was deposited into the Qualitative Data Repository at Syracuse University, where for the next 25 years researchers can request access. In 2049, all records will become publicly available.



March 25, 2022

^ Two years ago when we abandoned our offices and started to work from home, I was surprised to find I missed the spaces around campus almost as much as I missed people. I’ve been back to work since July 2021 after I got vaccinated, but not all the buildings were reopened to the public. Last week I happened to walk through the education building, an airy and colorful space which I have always enjoyed. I stopped to take a picture because I was just so happy to be able to walk through this space again.



Sarah Willen

Learn more about the project and search thousands of “Featured Entries” at s.uconn.edu/pjp



February 2, 2022

^ Day #645 Haiku in Corona Time
Entering new phase
With renewed optimism
The future is now

January 11, 2022

> After a year in which we had a new virus and no way to fight except with masks, social distancing, and staying isolated, having an effective vaccine is a game-changer for sure. Last year my friends and I hiked nearly every Sunday. None of us had access to the vaccine, and some of us are over 65 years old. We put on masks and quizzed each other about our carefulness in avoiding groups and people outside our households. We got lucky; none of us ever tested positive for COVID-19. Now we are all vaccinated and boosted, and we get into each others’ cars and drive out to the wilderness areas together with barely a qualm. Last Sunday I invited two new people to join our group. One of the more careful members of our group asked whether the additional people had been vaccinated. They had, and we had a wonderful time on a beautiful winter day.



April 2, 2021

^ My mom died this week. She didn’t die of COVID, but she died *with* it. But she was still forced to die alone. Her husband of 46 years is devastated. He was able to spend 15 minutes with her earlier in the day in full PPE. He wasn’t supposed to touch her, but he snuck his hand in anyway. And those lines on the picture are because we had to watch on FaceTime and take a screenshot. You hear about these lonely deaths. But you don’t truly understand the depth of it until your family experiences it. It’s so complicated, and adds a layer of grief on top of what’s already an unimaginable loss. We will never recover from this.



The Anatomy of a Fruit Fly (class)

BY KIM KRIEGER
PHOTOS BY PETER MORENUS

The patient lies still on a white platform while the young surgeons glove up. Reaching for the scalpel, one of them hesitates.

“Remember that toothpaste motion we discussed!” says **Kate Gavilanes ’22 (CLAS)**. Gavilanes has never attended medical school, but she has a wealth of surgical expertise.

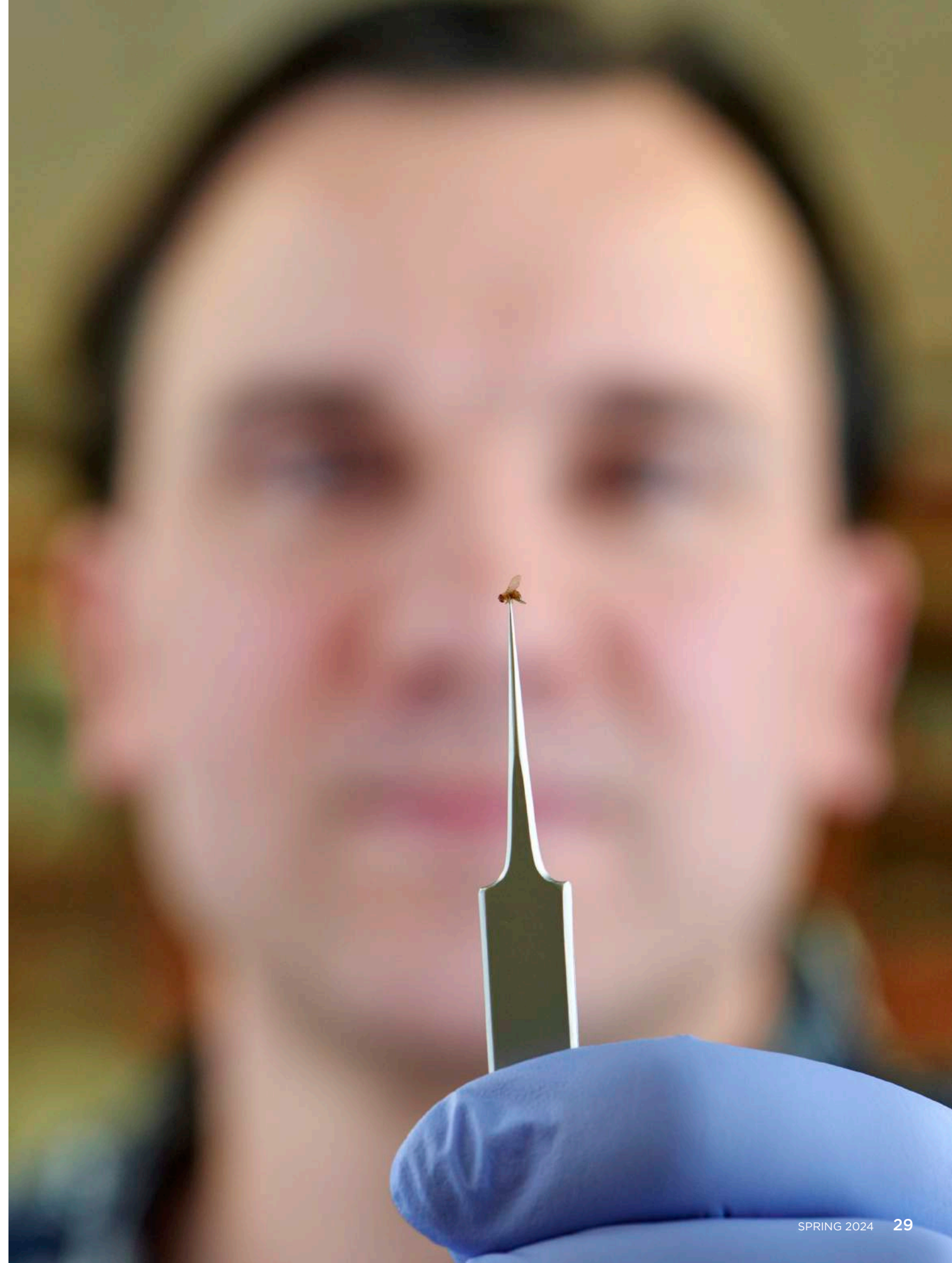
“In non survival surgery,” clarifies physiology and neurobiology (PNB) professor Geoff Tanner, Gavilanes’ master’s degree supervisor and a fellow instructor. The two teach a class that focuses on that most basic of lab animals: the fruit fly. Open to any undergraduate, the course confers skills in fly husbandry, anatomy, genetics, metabolism, and all the assays, biochemistry, and statistics needed to do it. The purpose of this class is to bridge that chasm that every student encounters if they decide to do medical or biological research: to get a job in a lab or go to med school, you need experience. But you can’t get experience without a job in a lab.

Gavilanes and Tanner have an easy back and forth, with Tanner focusing on teaching the students scientific

method and fly physiology, while Gavilanes instructs them on surgical and laboratory techniques. Jeff Divino, the third instructor in the course, acts as professional devil’s advocate.

“I try to identify with where our students are coming from,” PNB professor Divino says. What Divino, Gavilanes, and Tanner have in common, they also share with many of their students: none of them planned on a career in research. Gavilanes is a first-generation immigrant and college student. She lacked the contacts and experience young Americans with college-educated parents tend to take for granted. Divino goes so far as to describe himself as “clueless” in undergrad, and Tanner spent his 20s teaching school in Gujarat, India, living with a family in a palace, and developing a phobia of dogs.

The three created this class because it is the one they wish they had had as undergraduates. It fills a need that many students only realize late in their undergraduate careers. If you left college more than 15 years ago, it can



be hard to understand how competitive medical and graduate school admissions have become — and how absolutely necessary lab experience is.

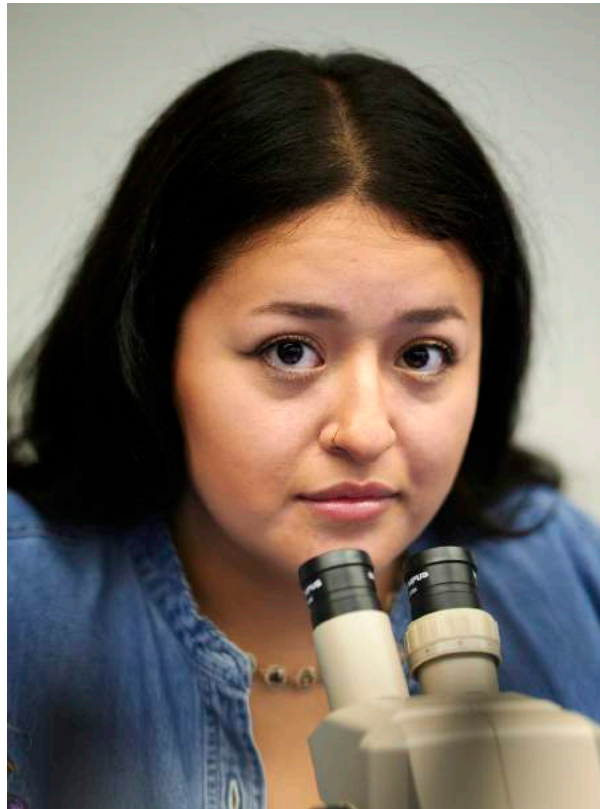
The three instructors span this cultural divide: Tanner, who graduated from Yale in the 1990s, recalls how if you had good grades (or sometimes even if you didn't), you could just write to professors whose work you admired, apply to graduate programs at their school, and reliably get in somewhere.

Divino graduated from Gordon College in Massachusetts in 2002 with a bachelor's in biology. He liked fishing, so he applied for a graduate program in fish evolutionary ecology and received a master's after multiple years of fieldwork, but no training in molecular analysis or genetics. Acutely aware of his lack of experience, he followed his wife to Iowa and took a job in a lab at her medical school. It was there that he finally learned basic biological molecular wet lab techniques, such as using a pipette to extract genetic material, a centrifuge to spin it, and a polymerase chain reaction to read the DNA. Despite his master's degree, he considers the lab to have taken a chance on him. And finally learning those wet lab skills allowed him to pursue, and earn, a UConn Ph.D. in ecology and evolutionary biology in 2016.

Gavilanes was born in Ecuador and grew up in Stratford, Connecticut. Her plan was always to go to medical school. She took Tanner's Enhanced Human Physiology & Anatomy class sophomore year, sitting in the front row both because she is hard of hearing and because it was at 8 a.m.

"Occasionally I would fall asleep. And inevitably, when I woke up we were making eye contact," she recalls. It was embarrassing. (Tanner claims no memory of this: The class has 400 students, a certain percentage were always going to be asleep, he explains.) Gavilanes' pre-med advisor told her she'd need to do research, and ideally shadow a doctor, to get into medical

The Surgeon — Kate Gavilanes



school. And then COVID hit in the middle of that year. Unable to shadow a doctor or meet professors in person, she logged onto the undergrad research website and saw Tanner had an opening. Four years later, she's working on her master's in his lab, teaching this undergraduate class, and still plans to go to medical school.

"Just squeeze 'em out. Those ovaries should be nice and plump!" Gavilanes exhorts the students to be firm yet careful. Those forceps have tips just 3/100 of a millimeter thick but they are sharp, and will slice human skin as easily as insect carapace.

Some groups of students are excising ovaries while others have only just started sorting their fruit flies into groups of males and females. They

use paintbrushes to gently pick up and move the flies. Quiet discussion between students sorting and dissecting can be heard, reminding each other to be careful. Flies are resilient, one student comments. Not when you're squishing them with a plug, another retorts.

Many of the students are exactly the demographic the researchers hoped to get into the class. **Michael Degloria '24 (CLAS)** is a PNB senior who wants to go to medical school and has never worked in a lab before. When it comes to bench research, "I always thought I don't want to do that, it's boring," he says. But not this class. He's actually considered going into research now. Another PNB student, **Sravani Prekki '24 (CLAS)**, is currently applying to graduate school for neuroscience and had no wet lab research experience before this.

"I've always been interested in unknowns," Prekki says.

The Method Master — Geoffrey Tanner



Down the hallway from this lab is one that studies ovulation in fruit flies and new avenues for birth control. Just beyond is Tanner's lab, which uses flies to study how diet can ameliorate traumatic brain injury. Other researchers in the building study how molecular mechanisms control the size of organs and tumors in fruit flies, or how genetic differences between flies can influence how a fly responds to different odors. Across the University, fruit flies are used to study aging and Parkinson's disease; how diet can influence longevity; metabolic disorders; RNA splicing and protein functions; how DNA folds into chromosomes; how genes are silenced; and why for stem cells, location is destiny. And this list is by no means exhaustive.

Tanner and Divino cultivate relationships with researchers across UConn who are willing to take undergraduates into their labs. Many, but not all, use

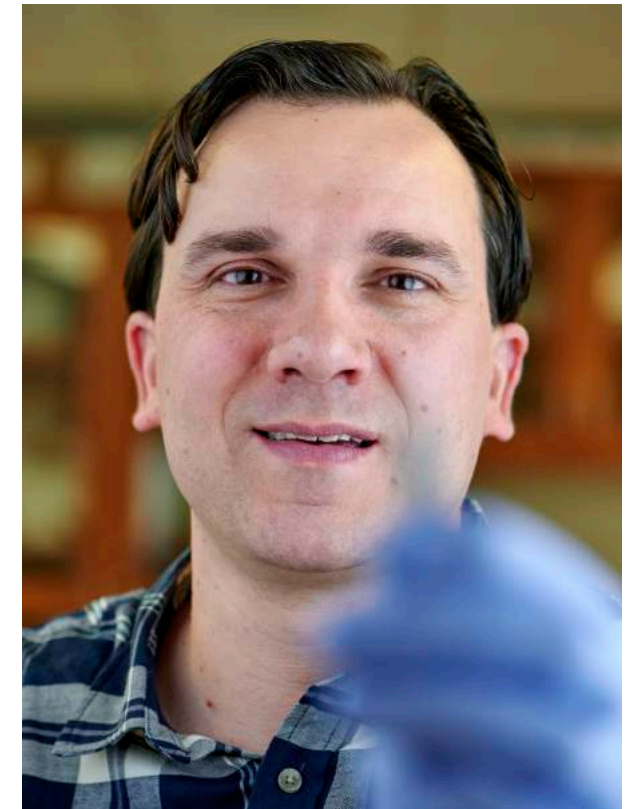
fruit flies in their research. But they don't have to — the skills translate. And that's half the point.

The other half is to get students to enjoy research. The process is part of the pleasure. And it seems the professors are successful.

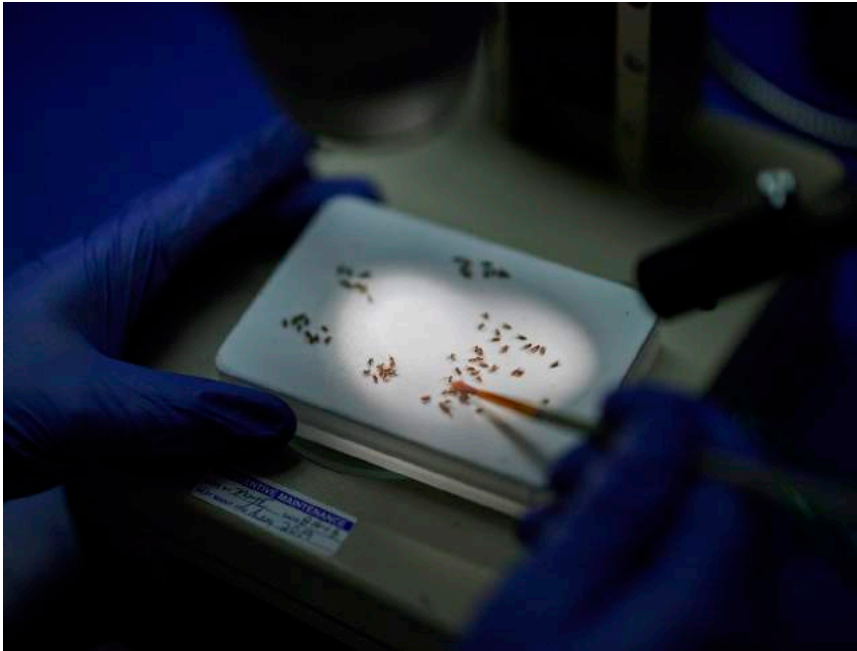
"I love my lab group. It's fun and light hearted," says **Falyne Driver '23 (CLAS)**. "Working in a lab can be stressful," continues the December grad, noting that even though this class does real research on traumatic brain injury in flies, the professors are very understanding when it comes to data. "They understand that what you get is what you get," she says.

One lab bench over sits a wooden contraption with a large spring attached. It has a certain degree of violent, Looney Tunes whimsy about it. Divino made it so the students could give the flies concussions with a known amount of force. Divino makes, modifies, or

The Devil's Advocate — Jeff Divino



"The tiny insects continue to surprise with the immense insights they give"



Students, such as senior Michael Degloria at left, study fruit flies in this class to determine whether diet can help animals recover from concussions.

borrowed much of the lab's equipment, and his skill at stretching the class's slim budget is much appreciated, as is his good humor when instructing others how to use the equipment.

This playfulness does not mean the class lacks rigor. After taking a break from ovary extraction, the class is back at the blackboard, and Tanner is lecturing them on data analysis. Divino interrupts. Doesn't averaging the data points to make the initial calculation easier mess up the analysis later on? "Asking for a friend," he jokes. Tanner does a quick calculation on the blackboard to show his method gets the same result and is mathematically equivalent either way. Divino says he has to make a phone call and dashes out of the room.

Five minutes later, he's back, hauling a statistics tome. He quotes a paragraph to Tanner explaining that the averaging technique is no good. And then a student pipes up who has been hitherto silent.

"The R-values are different. I just ran it in the computer," she says.

"Ha!" Divino says exultantly.

Tanner admits he stands corrected. Then he asks if anyone else has any questions. And then another student,

previously quiet, asks a question. And then a follow-up.

Tanner asks if it's clear. No, the same student replies, and asks another question. And another. And another. Everyone listens, and weighs his words, and Tanner diligently explains, and you realize that this is true pedagogy and research in action. Everyone has equal rights to question, to answer, to work out truth empirically.

"It's supposed to be veridically scientific experience. Here, we don't know the expected outcome," Tanner says. And that's true for their fruit fly research. The tiny insects continue to surprise with the immense insights they give. So, too, do the students, who surprise themselves with what they can learn and do. Even the professors learn new things, because this class is not like a cake recipe that comes out the same every time. This class teaches the scientific method, a way to look at the world and find truth. And whether a student ends up going to medical school or becoming a biological researcher or doing something else entirely, that student will always have this method and these skills, thanks to their semester working with the fruit fly. ☺

WHY THE FRUIT FLY?

Ever since Thomas Hunt Morgan discovered sex-linked inheritance and genetic recombination using fruit flies raised in milk bottles, *Drosophila melanogaster* has been the model lab animal of choice. Here are just a few of the many reasons:

- Fruit flies are easy and cheap to raise.
- They have a short life cycle of only 60-120 days.
- Fruit flies grow from egg to adult in 14 days or less and lay large numbers of eggs, making it easy to study genetics and behavior over multiple generations.
- However, if you need to delay your experiments for some reason, you can lower the temperature and the flies may take up to twice as long to mature.
- Female fruit flies lay as many as 100 eggs a day, making them useful models for studies of reproduction.
- Fruit flies have only four pairs of chromosomes, which made it relatively easy to analyze their genes in the early days of genetics.
- Despite the small size of their genome, fruit flies share many important genes with mice and humans. About 60% of all human genes, and 75% of the disease-causing genes, have equivalents in fruit flies. This is even reflected in their names. For example, the important gene "Notch," which controls cell differentiation in humans (and mice and flies), is named for the notched pattern that a mutation of the gene causes on fly wings.

It may seem impossible to work on something barely 3 mm long, much less on the smallest part of something this small, but all you need are the right tools — and a steady hand.



PRINCE

MARVIN

By
Kenneth Best

Photos by
Peter Morenus

The morning after UConn Magazine visited “The Dan Patrick Show” studio for a story about associate producer and board operator Marvin Prince, the zingers begin to fly on the air.

“Marvin wants to change his name. He would like to be known as Prince Marvin instead of Marvin Prince,” says Patrick, the award-winning sportscaster who helped make ESPN’s “SportsCenter” appointment viewing. He also hosted NBC’s “Football Night in America” and now helms this nationally syndicated

sports talk show played on nearly 400 radio stations and streamed on NBC’s Peacock for three hours every weekday morning. “I said OK. If you want to be known as Prince Marvin, we can do that. I thought it was a little bold on your part.”

Seton O’Connor, director of operations — and, like Prince, one of Patrick’s four on-air sidekicks, dubbed “The Danettes” by Basketball Hall of Famer Reggie Miller — quickly chimes in: “Maybe the First Prince of Dan’s Air; like Fresh Prince of Bel Air. Just rolled that right off the top

of my head.”

“It was really hard getting my head through the door this morning,” says Prince, a UConn alum and mega-fan who often wears Huskies apparel to the studio and keeps a UConn basketball jersey on the back of his chair, shown every time the camera sweeps through the studio during the televised simulcast.

Patrick snaps back: “I thought you’d come in with sunglasses on, maybe a limo.”

Prince’s wasn’t quite a from-the-mailroom rise, but close.

While performing freelance technical work for televised events in New York City and Connecticut, Prince learned about the construction of Patrick’s new studio in Milford, not far from his home in Bridgeport, where he lives with his wife Jillian (DeMasi) Prince ’07 (CLAS) and their son, Lorenzo. Having gained production experience as an ESPN intern, he was hired in 2019 to help on the build and stayed on as sound engineer, one of several

“back-room guys” working on the show known for its incisive, raucous interviews with A-list figures in sports, media, and pop culture — as well as the witty banter among the on-air talent and with listeners and interviewees.

Even as he made his first on-camera appearance in the show’s video spoof of the 2021 Sports Emmy Awards, wearing a white tuxedo jacket and holding a microphone for a mock celebrity red carpet interview of Patrick, Prince didn’t anticipate becoming a Danette.



▶ In his role, Prince guides the program's sound and selects music, a popular topic of on-air discussion. Friday show soundtrack themes have ranged from "yacht rock" to "pump-up tunes" to "songs by artists who died in the month of December." Dan and the Danettes suggest songs to include, and the guys guess who submitted which one. "He has gotten us all to be extra creative about what we're thinking," says Todd Fritz, the booking producer who often bursts into song mid-show. "I get so excited about it, as soon as he announces the theme on the air, I'm already sending links."

"We've got the Hall of Famer, the boss, the man who hasn't fired me yet — Mr. Dan Patrick. Man, you're looking clean. Who are you wearing?" he said.

"Actually, this is when you know you've made it," Patrick replied, opening his jacket, pointing to the inside pocket. "When they put your name inside the jacket."

Eight months later, after traveling to Los Angeles with the cast to run the sound during the show's coverage of the Super Bowl, Prince was asked to move to the on-air studio, where he spends two hours preparing audio clips from the previous day's major sports events before the show airs. Initially reluctant to step up to the mic, Prince said he knew he could rely on advice from the other Danettes and on lessons learned as an undergrad.

"I learned critical thinking at UConn," says Prince, who left the University just before completing his degree in 2007, when a family emergency required him to suspend

his studies and go to work full-time. "You want to make a point and make sure you have some facts to go with it. You



He knew us and we knew him. We just didn't know that version of him."

- Dan Patrick

would be challenged to give your opinion." Like he is in the sometimes-ruthless show conversations.

"I just try to make the best points possible and be clear and precise on what I want to say. I took a lot of that from being in Storrs, especially in my history and philosophy classes."

"The more you're around him, you understand that he's knowledgeable," Patrick says. Prior to Prince transitioning to his on-air role, "he knew us and we knew him. We just didn't know that version of him."

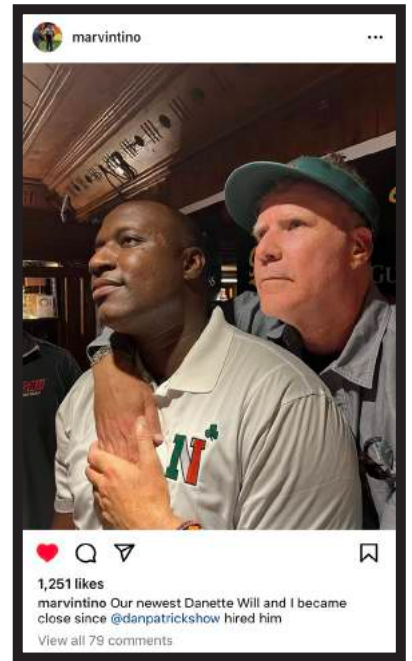
"He blended in right away. He has that ability to compartmentalize when he needs to, but also has the bandwidth to listen to everything that's going on. His NBA basketball knowledge is really good. Being able to play to each other's strengths is important," says Patrick. "The bottom line has always been, he brings a sense of humor to the show."

He doesn't have a suit jacket with his name in it — yet. For Prince, that "made-it" moment as a bona fide "Dan Patrick Show" personality looked a little different.

Executive producer Paul Pabst says Prince truly became a Danette — that is, he proved he can withstand the teasing that occurs in Patrick's "man cave" — during a discussion of the 2022 NFL combine, where college players are tested for their athleticism and measured physically. When the Pittsburgh Steelers drafted quarterback Kenny Pickett, it was reported his hands were small compared to others playing that position. Patrick and the Danettes measured their hands and determined that Prince's were the smallest, which quickly spurred frequent references to hand size among callers, guests, and online commenters. When the show crew did a listener meet-and-greet last year while in Arizona for the Super Bowl broadcast, fans approached Prince holding their hands up.

"I was ready to give them a high five," Prince says, laughing. "They were like, No, I want to see how big your hands are." ☺

COMEDY BUDDY



HEIR TO THE THRONE



PREGAME SHOW





"She's the best teacher in the world/multiverse," said one of Foster-Mauro's fifth graders.

Connecticut's Top Teacher

➔ Three years into her dream career as an educator, **Kiana Foster-Mauro '20 (ED), '21 MA** is Connecticut's 2024 Teacher of the Year. "I've always known that this was the profession that I wanted to be in," says Foster-Mauro, a fourth-grade teacher at New London's Nathan Hale Arts Magnet School whose professor mom raised her in an environment where learning was celebrated. Now in the running for National Teacher of the Year, Foster-Mauro came out on top among 100 district-level teachers. Honing her leadership skills in organizations including Leadership in Diversity, Foster-Mauro credits the Neag School of Education for helping her find her path to education and introducing her to role models such as then-Connecticut Teacher of the Year, now U.S. Rep. Jahana Hayes. "Being passionate and celebrating the community" are the most important qualities a good teacher possesses, says Foster-Mauro. "I love that every day is a new adventure; I don't go to work expecting the same thing as the previous day. I love connecting with new students each year and being part of their lives." —*SHAWN KORNEGAY*

CLASS NOTES

1950s

➔ **David W. Brown '53 (CAHNR)**, of Middletown, Rhode Island, reports that U.S. Sen. Jack Reed honored him for his role in environmental cleanups of former U.S. Navy sites near Newport, Rhode Island, during a special ceremony at Brown's senior living community. Brown, a former agricultural economics professor, uses his expertise in soil chemistry and groundwater flows as an active member of the Naval Station Newport Restoration Advisory Board. The board advises the Navy and other agencies on environmental remediation projects. Brown says his UConn experience built a strong foundation for his career. "I very much value the strong start that UConn gave me — not just the classes and personalized advising — but the experience of working part time and during one summer on agronomy research projects," he says. "Although I became an agriculture and rural development economics professor, I still blend a lot with those applied plant and soil sciences." *Photo with U.S. Sen. Jack Reed (left) below.*



1960s

➔ **Raymond Gagné '61 (CLAS)** was the distinguished speaker at the 8th International Plant Gall Symposium in Chico, California, in July. He was a research entomologist with the USDA in Washington, D.C., until 1996 and is now a research associate with the Smithsonian Institution. He has written



➔ Historians **Mary Mahoney '18 Ph.D.** and **Allison Horrocks '16 Ph.D.** have turned their popular "Dolls of Our Lives," formerly "American Girls," podcast — loved for its irreverent blend of '90s nostalgia, deep-cut pop culture references, and astute historical analysis — into a book. "Dolls of Our Lives: Why We Can't Quit American Girl" dives deep into the doll brand and its lore, exploring the authors' many musings on its relevance, its history, and its place in Millennials' hearts.

Read "Our American Girls," Spring 2021, at s.uconn.edu/AmericanGirls

234 scientific papers, and several books, about flies. ➔ **Holley Hewitt Ulbrich '63 (CLAS), '64 MA, '69 Ph.D.**, a retired graduate economics professor at Clemson University, just published her 12th book. It combines economics with virtue ethics to revive moderation as a philosophy of governing in a polarized world. ➔ **Jason Traiger '67 MA** writes that he has retired from careers in technical documentation and technical publications management and now lives in Sarasota, Florida. He says he keeps busy through his involvement with the Manatee Concert Band and the Venice Camera Club. He also visits the Selby Botanical Gardens and attends performances at the Florida Studio Theater and jazz concerts at the Sarasota Art Museum.

1970s

➔ **Mary (Shine) Burns '72 (CLAS, CAHNR)** received the Brown University Alumni Award at the 50th Master of Arts in Teaching Reunion in June. She's been a professor of English with the Connecticut State College system since 1973. ➔ Congratulations to **Paul Martel '74 (ED, CLAS)**, the president and founder of YHB Investment Advisors in West Hartford, Connecticut, for winning a lifetime achievement award from the Invest in Others Charitable Foundation. Martel founded Partners for Andean Community Health, an organization that provides

free medical care for thousands of people in Central and South America. He invested more than \$1 million to develop and equip a clinic in Riobamba, Ecuador, so it can best serve local patients.



➔ **Steve Gillen '74 (BUS)** and his wife, Karen, have four grandchildren, including Hailey Mae, who he says could be a future Husky STEM student someday. ➔ **Eva M. (Steinberger) Ogens '75 (CLAS)** shared an update. She recently wrote a textbook, "Social Context of Education," for the class she teaches at Ramapo College of New Jersey. She also won a legacy essay contest sponsored by Essex County, New Jersey, for her piece, "Paying It Forward," about the high school science teachers who influenced her to become a science educator. In addition, she wrote a guest editorial for The Star-Ledger newspaper in New Jersey advocating for more science education at the elementary school level. As a result, she was invited to be on the advisory board of the Princeton Einstein Museum of Science. Kudos! ➔ **Arnold Menchel '75 JD**, a health care lawyer at Halloran Sage, made the 2024 Best Lawyers in America list.

➔ **Bob Lorentson '77 MS**,

of East Haddam, Connecticut, writes that he has released his second collection of humorous, thought-provoking essays and stories titled "You Only Go Extinct Once (Stuck in the Anthropocene with the Pleistocene Blues Again)." He adds, "Sometimes when you find yourself at an evolutionary dead-end, all you can do is laugh." ➔ **Michael Zizka '78 MS, '82 JD**, an environmental lawyer at Halloran Sage, was named to the 2024 Best Lawyers in America list. ➔ **Paul DelGREGO '78 (BUS)**, who recently moved to North Haverhill, New Hampshire, with his wife, Barbara, caught us up with his life. He worked for Burroughs/Unisys and then Eastman Kodak before starting DEL Imaging/Fastcam Replay in 1996. He created the first successful tennis line "cam," which was used by CBS Sports at the U.S. Open Tennis Championships and dubbed the "MacCam" by the announcer, former tennis star John McEnroe. When DelGREGO retires "in two or three years," he plans to split his time between skiing in Colorado and enjoying the lakes in New Hampshire. He has long been involved in sports. When he was at UConn, he worked as an assistant to sports information director Joe Soltys and wrote several articles for The Daily Campus.

1980s

➔ **Olivia White '80 MBA** was named interim executive director (continued on p. 42)



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DESIGNING A TAKE-2 CAREER

Any interior designer would be ecstatic to be one of 15 finalists for the HGTV 2023 Designer of the Year award. But for **Jeanne Collins '05 MBA**, the honor is particularly meaningful, as she is only three years into a design career.

"If you'd asked me 10 years ago if I would be an entrepreneur, I would have said, 'No! Not me,'" says the founder of JerMar Designs of New Canaan, Connecticut, and the author of "Two Feet In: Lessons from an All-in Life."

Collins had spent 11 years at a large corporation, working her way up to vice president of East Coast sales, when

she was abruptly laid off. "I was burned out from quarterly goals, unrealistic expectations, and travel," she says. "I was exhausted from the lifestyle, the lack of creativity, and values that didn't align with mine. I realized I might be dead if I kept doing this. I knew this was a time for change, that I had another 20 years to work, and the chance to make a significant change wasn't going to come around again."

She'd liked doing interior design work for herself and for family, so she went back to school online to earn two certificates in interior design. But she had

"I had a passion for interior design, and a willingness to learn and be challenged. I knew if I worked hard and smart, I could succeed," says Collins.

no portfolio to demonstrate her style — which uses design to create a sense of serenity and wellness in a home. So she posted to a local mothers' group in town and offered to redesign a room for free. In 10 minutes, she had 35 people requesting her services.

Today her work is in such demand that she can choose the projects she wants to work on. "One of the reasons people hire me is that I will push the boundary of what they think they like." The Executive MBA alum shared some lessons and tips with us in late 2023, in hopes of a serene and healthy 2024.

5 Things I Learned From Reinventing my Career:

- ❶ After you've been in a career for a while you tend to pigeonhole yourself, based on the degree you earned and the title you hold. I'm in sales, I thought. But I had so many more talents and skills than I realized!
- ❷ Don't think you have to know everything. Ask for help. Say: I'm new to this. I don't know how it works. Can you help?
- ❸ Networking is essential. Tell your story to everyone. You might meet someone in a field completely unrelated to yours, but her sister might be the fabulous accountant your team needs.
- ❹ Hire a bookkeeper. That's the first thing everyone needs to manage their entrepreneurial business. There is so much you need to know, and you won't have the time to figure it out yourself.
- ❺ Don't give up! If you feel like you're failing, hire a business coach who can evaluate what you're doing wrong.

4 Tips for Making Your Home a Sanctuary:

- ❶ Make your bedroom a haven. When you open your eyes, do you want to see a pile of laundry or beautiful artwork? When your feet hit the ground, do they feel a cold floor or a warm rug? Are your lights dim and comforting, or bright and obnoxious? Think about your senses.
- ❷ Every home should have a quiet place

Cerused wood tables have rims large enough to rest your feet; the glass keeps them light in the space.

The vibe is a zen space with big splashes of color and patterns in the fabrics and artwork.

All the furniture sits on the rug to visually separate the sitting area from the dining area.



The dining nook allows for sitting and reading as well as eating.

This is a pool house designed to feel like a vacation at home with bright white walls, wide plank oak floors, and lots of windows.

to read. Whether it is a chair in the office, a cozy nook, or a floor cushion, you need a quiet place, with an imaginary Do Not Disturb sign, to allow your brain a moment of calm away from the noise and stress of a busy household.

❸ Pay attention to how colors make you feel. I did a family room project early on. There was wood everywhere and a lot of yellow. We changed the colors to white, black, and soft gray. It was such a zen space. When you walked in you could feel yourself breathing more calmly. One of the homeowners said, "I never knew how much the yellow and brown combination made me anxious. I didn't realize it until it was gone."

❹ Where will the shoes go? The kids' coats? Where will you put your purse? Clutter causes stress. I like to add furniture that offers storage, especially at the entrance and exit of the home.

3 Things Every Homeowner Struggles With:

- ❶ The end vision. Most homeowners can't see the potential of a room or the advantage of taking a wall down, because they live there and see their homes as they've always been. I create a

cohesive flow from a design perspective, while keeping the rooms unique.

❷ Clutter. Thankfully the days of open shelves are gone. Today's homeowners want everything clean and clear. I recommend people do a deep de-clutter at least once a year and get rid of what they don't want. Do you have too many dishes? Donate them to people who need them!

❸ Emotional attachment. The older we get the more furniture and accessories we accumulate that have emotional meaning. We have souvenirs from college, beloved items from our children, gifts from our parents, and cherished pieces from our grandparents. When those things don't work in your home, I can recommend reupholstering the chair or adding a marble top to a dresser to give it a new life or a new purpose.

2 Lessons I Learned, and Used, From the EMBA Program:

- ❶ It takes a team to be successful. Find people with different strengths, skills, and ways of working. Becoming a team and learning to trust one another is the ticket to success.
- ❷ Don't quit when things get hard — 13

months into my EMBA, I wanted to quit. It was painful. I couldn't imagine one more Friday night or Saturday spent in class. I was so tired of homework, and that statistics course was grueling. But I didn't give up. It was important to me that I saw that commitment through, from start to finish. I use that lesson all the time in my life when something is challenging. I'm proud to have earned that EMBA! And when I recruited and hired people, I looked for that type of commitment and dedication. That ability to persevere and do hard things says a great deal about a person.

1 Best Thing About Being Your Own Boss:

Controlling my life on a daily basis is powerful and inspiring. As my own boss, I can control my level of stress, what I take on, who I work with, and what I'll do. If I work Saturday, it is my choice. Controlling my own stress impacts everything else in my life. I've met so many people over the last three years I would never have met otherwise, and that has been exciting and energizing. Being your own boss is just amazing.

—CLAIRE HALL

of the Connecticut Forum in Hartford, which hosts conversations among experts to encourage open exchanges of thoughts and ideas. Previously, she was a development officer, executive director, and interim executive director of The Amistad Center for Art & Culture at the Wadsworth Atheneum. She also serves as a board member and volunteer for several organizations including the Edward C. and Ann T. Roberts Foundation, CT Explored, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights State Advisory Committee, and the Brother Carl Hardrick Institute. ➔ Author **Barbara Josselson '83 MA**, who grew up in Syosset, New York, released her seventh novel, "The Lost Gift to the Italian Island," described by her editors as an "unputdownable and heart-wrenching WWII historical fiction novel." Josselson returned to her roots to write the book, some of which is set in Long Island.



➔ Congrats to **Lisa Davis '83 (NUR)**, who received a lifetime achievement award from the National Black Nurses Association. She serves as public health chief of staff for the South Carolina Department of Public Health and Environmental Control, responsible for leading and supervising the state's public health laboratory, community nutrition services, and maternal and child health bureaus. Previously, she worked at the Connecticut Department of Public Health, most recently serving as deputy commissioner. ➔ **James Perito**



➔ **Dan Wilson '02 (CLAS)** wants to sell you on a career in sales. A vice president of InMode, a med-tech device company, Wilson says undergraduates typically don't consider going into sales, but — if they want to get out and connect with people rather than sitting in a cubicle — he thinks they should. "The great thing about sales is it's

one of the few careers where you can truly get out of it what you put in," he says. "The more you sell, the more you make."

Wilson, who lives in Southport, Connecticut, didn't start out in sales. A five-time All-American track and field athlete at UConn, he spent several years after graduation traveling to track meets all over the world. When he finally stopped competing, he had to figure out a new career path.

"I looked back on the classes I enjoyed and the areas where I did well. In school, it always involved presenting in front of a group, being on the stage where the spotlight was on me." A little networking indicated he should try sales.

"If you're someone who likes making connections, you can typically do very well in sales. It's not about convincing someone to buy something. It's about building rapport, getting on the same side of the table as them, being able to figure out what their problem is, and solving it. In essence, it's a riddle we get to solve every day." —GRACE MERRITT

'83 JD, a real estate lawyer at Halloran Sage, made the 2024 Best Lawyers in America list. ➔ **Daniel Waxler '85 (BUS)** and his wife, Donna Waxler, shared the news that their daughter, **Hannah Waxler DiPanfilo '19 (CAHNR)**, '21 MS, was married to Michael DiPanfilo on a beautiful evening at Jonathan Edwards Winery in North Stonington, Connecticut, in August. Congrats all around!

➔ **Kimberly St. John-Stevenson '86 (CLAS)** shared that she has been promoted to associate director of grants and strategic partnerships for YWCA Greater Cleveland. She brings with her years of experience developing and implementing fundraising, marketing, and communications solutions for nonprofit organizations and Fortune 500 companies. "I actually also proudly have a UCONN86 Ohio license plate, so I am a tried-and-true Husky," she says. ➔ The Goldberg Segalla law firm added **Paul S. Tagatac '87 (CLAS)**,

'90 JD to its employment and labor group in Hartford. Tagatac was previously with Michelson, Kane, Royster, and Barger. ➔ **James Maher '87 JD**, a real estate lawyer at Halloran Sage, made the 2024 Best Lawyers in America list. ➔ **Matthew Willis '88 JD**, a land use lawyer at Halloran Sage, made the 2024 Best Lawyers in America list.

➔ **Lisa A. McGowan '89 (CAHNR)**, of Niantic, Connecticut, became executive vice president of a new organization called the Blue Door Foundation, which supplies free medical equipment to those in need in the New London County area.

1990s

➔ Kudos to **Tino Rovero '90 (BUS)** of West Hartford, Connecticut, who was promoted to chief operations officer of Connecticut Food-

share. Rovera had been the organization's senior director of operations and served on its board of directors from 2011 to 2022. Previously, he worked for Rite Aid Corp. and Stop & Shop Supermarkets in various roles. ➔ **Kathryn Luria '91 BGS** was named first executive director of the Harold Webster Smith Foundation. ➔ **Kenneth Slater '91 JD**, a land use lawyer at Halloran Sage, made the 2024 Best Lawyers in America list.



➔ **Chuck McCullagh '92 MBA** retired as chief financial officer of the Williston Northampton School in Easthampton, Massachusetts, after 24 years. The National Business Officers Association honored him with the Ken White Distinguished Business Officer Award, the association's highest honor, for outstanding contributions to independent schools as a leader and role model over several years. He was also presented with Williston's Distinguished Service Award for exceptional devotion to the school.

➔ The Bank of Idaho appointed **Kevin Ahern '92 MBA**, a managing partner at Brush Creek Parkers, to its board of directors. Ahern, a Colorado native, has been married to his wife, Annie, for 37 years, and has two children and two grandchildren. ➔ **Peter M. Graham '92 (BUS)** was named chief financial officer of Sallie Mae, responsible for finance, accounting, and treasury activities, as well as equity and fixed-income investor relations. ➔ **S. Peter Sachner Jr. '92 JD**, a health care lawyer at Halloran Sage,

made the 2024 Best Lawyers in America list.



➔ **Lawrence P. Ward '92 (BUS)** was elected chair of the NCAA Division III Management Council and will serve as an ex-officio member of the board of governors. He currently is vice president and dean of campus life at Babson College in Wellesley, Massachusetts. ➔ **Nicole Hughey '93 (BUS)** was elected chair of the board of directors of the Urban League of Greater Hartford. She is senior vice president of diversity, equity, inclusion, and social impact at SiriusXM/Pandora. ➔ **Traci Cipriano '93 (CLAS)**, '97 JD, '05 MA, '07 Ph.D. writes that she has published a book with Routledge Publishing in July titled "The Thriving Lawyer: A Multidimensional Model of Well-Being for a Sustainable Legal Profession." She also was elected to "fellow" status in the American Psychological Association. ➔ **Nicole J. Tung '94 JD**, an insurance lawyer at Halloran Sage, made the 2024 Best Lawyers in America list.



➔ Congrats to **Jennifer Aldworth '95 (CLAS)** on

being recognized as the Boys & Girls Clubs of America's 2023 National Alliance Professional of the Year. Aldworth, a "club kid" since 1981, is the first woman and person of color in the executive director role at the Massachusetts Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs. She was recognized for leading the alliance and securing \$20 million in revenue, the most in the organization's 23-year history.

➔ **Michael R. McPherson '95 (BUS)**, an insurance lawyer at Halloran Sage, made the Best Lawyers in America list for 2024. ➔ After owning and operating the iconic A.W. Brown's Pet and Garden store in East Longmeadow, Massachusetts, for nearly 40 years, **Tom Wheeler '96 MBA** is retiring. He says his employees will become the new owners — his way of rewarding their hard work and loyalty. ➔ **Jonathan Couch '96 MBA** joined Clearwave Fiber as chief financial officer overseeing the company's finance, accounting, corporate development, and administrative functions. ➔ **Stephen Nelson '96 Ph.D.** writes that he recently had the good fortune of publishing his eighth book, "Searching the Soul of the College and University in America — Religious and Democratic Covenants and Controversies." He's a professor of education and educational leadership at Bridgewater State University and a senior scholar in the Leadership Alliance at Brown University. ➔ **Laura Pascale Zaino '96 JD**, an appellate lawyer at Halloran Sage, made the 2024 Best Lawyers in America list.

➔ **Brad Malicki '97 (CLAS)**, a real estate lawyer at Halloran Sage, made the Best Lawyers in America list for 2024. ➔ **Erica Jorgensen '97 (CLAS)** writes that she recently published a book called "Strategic Content Design: Tools and Research Techniques for Better User Experience." Jorgensen,

➔ **Constance Chamberlain '08 (CLAS)** had planned to go to law school after graduation, but that all changed when she was "bitten by the wine bug" during a study abroad trip to Greece. Now she is celebrating 10 years of running Wine & Co., her communications and marketing company that promotes wine, beer, and spirits for wine regions in Austria and Franciacorta in Italy.



"I went into wine marketing after a study abroad in Greece, which changed my life. It was in Rhodes, Greece, that I learned the importance of wine from the sociological side of things. We ate dinner every night at the taverna owned by the program director's sister in the village of Soroni, where he grew up. The wine itself was unremarkable, but the experience was so special."

Her successful business has taken her to wine regions from the Finger Lakes and Long Island in New York to Austria, Italy, Greece, and Chile. "You never know where life will take you," she says. —GRACE MERRITT

who was an English major and a reporter and editor for The Daily Campus, says she has presented workshops around the world on digital content, web design, and user experience. ➔ Multi-talented **Susan Mangiero '97 Ph.D.** writes that her first short documentary film, "Make a Mark," debuted at the Mystic Film Festival in October. The film, which she wrote and directed, is about a former dentist who, in his 70s, launches

a successful second career as a watercolor artist. She also recently published an article, "The Doctoral Difference Sets Executives Apart," for AACSB International. ➔ **Areej Duval '98 MBA** joined the leadership team of EFG Companies, of Dallas, Texas, as vice president of reinsurance. Previously, she was senior vice president and U.S. controller of Aspen Insurance Holdings. ➔ **Charles York '99 (BUS)**, (continued on p. 46)

TRAJECTORY

McMAHON ON A MISSION

Matt McMahon's office walls prominently feature a Team USA pennant, a baseball card of Masanori Murakami (Major League Baseball's first Asian player), and the front page of the Boston Globe after the Red Sox won the 2018 World Series. Appropriate decor, for a man who helps run the State Department's Sports Diplomacy Division.

As the department's deputy director in its Office of Citizen Exchanges, McMahon '89 (CLAS), '94 MA facilitates international meetings, events, and mentorship programs between Americans and foreigners in five primary areas: sports, culture, technology, youth programs, and global leadership.

"I've burned through four or five diplomatic passports over the years," he laughs, listing nations he's visited including Australia, China, and Egypt.

Go Huskies

The Vernon, Connecticut, native keeps up with his Watson Hall roommates to this day. During the Huskies' men's basketball national championship game in April, "we had a text message chain going during commercial breaks."

Sports has been a throughline of their friendship across the decades. "We used to go out on the quad and play tackle football during the first snowfall of the school year." In 2017, they reunited for the UConn-Boston College football game at Fenway.

A political science major, McMahon says it was study abroad in Granada, Spain, his junior year that spurred his desire to work in international education and exchanges professionally.

After graduation, he spent a few years working for non-governmental organizations focused on international education and exchanges, which is where he met his wife. Although she graduated from William & Mary, McMahon brags that he converted her to UConn sports fandom.



Study abroad in Spain his junior year led to Matt McMahon's job running the Sports Diplomacy Division at the U.S. State Department.

After returning to Storrs for a master's in international affairs, McMahon moved to Washington, D.C., for a job at the Asia Foundation and eventually landed at the State Department ... the month after 9/11. "It was just surreal, but you definitely had a sense of purpose," he says of that tension-filled autumn. "It was very meaningful. And [Secretary of State] Colin Powell was a great leader for that time." He had a knack for making every employee feel needed, McMahon says. "I recall him talking about the custodian who looks beyond the menial tasks of a job description to see how their work can create the environment and conditions for others in the organization to succeed. At a time when I was just starting out at the State Department, he made me feel that even I had an important role to play in accomplishing U.S. foreign policy goals, and it's stuck with me ever since."

What Is Sports Diplomacy?

What do the five divisions under McMahon do?

1 The sports division has deployed women's soccer superstar Alex Morgan to Tanzania and Baseball Hall of Famer Cal Ripken Jr. to the Czech Republic, teaching children how to play their

respective games.

2 The tech division enlists American private sector Silicon Valley leaders to help foreign journalists, civil society advocates, and NGOs use technology to better coordinate, spread their messages, and improve lives on the ground.

3 The cultural division recently sent musical icon Herbie Hancock to conduct jazz workshops in Jordan.

4 The "global leaders" division pairs foreign government leaders, like mayors, with top Americans in relevant fields like education and law.

5 The youth division sends thousands of American high school students to other nations for a summer or year, and brings foreign teenagers here to live with host families.

These programs can pose logistical problems, particularly with every violent geopolitical development. Last year, McMahon worked with Ukrainian students who were on a one-year exchange program, attending a public high school and living with host families. In many cases, the students were not able to go back. His team worked to extend their stays, even partnering with the American Camp Association to fill the time between school years with summer camp opportunities.

Whether Russia can compete at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris is up to the International Olympic Committee, but McMahon's office has made its position known. "International sporting competitions should not be platforms for Russia to rally domestic and international support for its brutal war against Ukraine."

Study Abroad

Most of his foreign visits involve bilateral meetings in white-walled conference rooms, with little chance to soak in local culture. McMahon does recall a few notable exceptions, though.

In Argentina for a meeting about the Fulbright international educational exchange program, McMahon was on a horse riding excursion with some American participants, when his horse brushed up against an electrified fence. "All of a sudden it bucked and threw me off," he remembers. "Somehow I landed without breaking a bone." (His prior horseback riding experience consisted solely of a childhood pony ride at The Big E, the Eastern States Exposition in western Massachusetts.)

After a 2011 summit in Indonesia, he stayed for an extra day after the planned meetings were over, and he and a colleague rented mopeds and cruised all around Bali. "Stopping at a temple, overlooking rice paddies," McMahon reminisces, "just hanging out and meeting people."

Wherever he goes, McMahon is reminded that America has soft-power influence at a level other countries cannot approach. "People all over the world listen to American music and watch American sports," McMahon says. He argues that the person-to-person contacts he facilitates foster mutual understanding across borders in a way that foreign visits by senior officials like the President, Vice President, or Secretary of State never quite could.

"With their talents and their experiences," he chuckles, "the people we use are often better representatives of the United States than we in the government would be!" —JESSE RIFKIN '14 (CLAS)



➤ After helping to create BrewConn, the inaugural UConn student-crafted beer, Jordan Aeschlimann '24 (CAHNR), of Simsbury, Connecticut, is one step closer to her goal of opening her own brewery. More than 350 alumni, faculty, and friends celebrated the beer's debut, at the Kinsmen Brewing Co. in Southington in November, raising their glasses to the students' hard work.

"It's really good!" Aeschlimann said that night about the double dry hopped hazy IPA. "There's a good amount of hops, but it isn't too bitter. I was nervous to try it, but I'm happy with the way it came out."

For the past three years, engineering professor Jennifer Pascal (pictured above, center, with students Riquelmy Torres '25 (ENG, CLAS), left, and Hailey Tam '24 (ENG), right, has offered a senior capstone course, allowing chemical engineering majors to apply their knowledge to making beer. They gained hands-on experience by using homebrew scale equipment and kits. She aspired to make the course a true farm-to-pint experience.

That happened last fall with the help of partners Peter Menard, director of engineering technical services and an avid homebrewer, and Jennifer Mathieu, an entrepreneurship expert and executive director of the School of Business' Connecticut Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

In addition to their classroom lessons, the nine-student cohort visited Smokedown Hops Farm in Sharon, Connecticut, and Thrall Family Malt in Windsor, Connecticut, and traveled to Kinsmen twice to learn from its brewmaster. "Many chemical engineers work in the food and beverage industry," Pascal says. "Chemical engineers are 'process engineers' and brewing beer involves optimizing processes and the ways to improve them, all relevant skills in an assortment of industries."

The celebration at the Kinsmen also kicked off a new initiative called UConn Brewing Innovation. Capitalizing on the expertise of UConn's business, engineering, and agriculture faculty, it will expand to support the 130 Connecticut craft-brewing businesses.

Organizers plan to expand academic courses on the brewing process, provide scholarships and mentorship to cultivate talent in the industry, conduct research that will serve local breweries and farms, and provide collaboration for small brewing companies.

BrewConn was a limited-edition beverage and has already sold out. But for Kanisha Desai '24 (ENG) of Rocky Hill, Connecticut, who took the brewing course because she wants to help small breweries create non-alcoholic beer, its impact offers numerous career advantages. "How many people can say they worked on a beer-brewing process in college?" —CLAIRE HALL



▶▶ **Kayla Murphy '09 (CAHNR)** and her husband, **Tim Murphy '09 (CLAS), '10 MA**, of Austin, Texas, have been visiting UConn with their children, Charlie and Connor, since they were babies in hopes of raising them to be future Huskies.

the chief operating and financial officer at Day One Biopharmaceuticals, was named a Top 25 Healthcare Technology Leader of Austin for 2023. ▶▶ **Daniel Krisch '99 JD**, an appellate and insurance law attorney at Halloran Sage, was named to the 2024 Best Lawyers in America list.

2000s

▶▶ Construction lawyer **Steven Lapp '03 (CLAS)** joined the Shipman & Goodwin law firm as a partner in its construction and renewable energy practice group.

TOM'S TRIVIA ANSWERS

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



▶▶ Middle school history teacher **Sean Passan '03 (CLAS), '04 MA**, pictured with Samantha Tondreau, director of curriculum and instruction for the Mohegan Tribe, was one of five Connecticut teachers awarded a Mohegan Tribe Challenge Grant for 2023. Passan, who teaches social studies at King Philip Middle School in West Hartford, Connecticut, won the grant based on his plans to integrate Native American history into his curriculum. ▶▶ **Jennifer Mullen '03 JD**, an insurance and medical malpractice lawyer at Hallo-

ran Sage, made the 2024 Best Lawyers in America list. ▶▶ Following a career focused on marketing research, **Craig Smith '05 (BUS)** writes that he has been hired at TIAA as head of marketing research and insights. Congrats! ▶▶ Kudos to **Tom Feige '05 (CLAS)**, a biology and forensic science teacher at Woodland Regional High School in Beacon Falls, Connecticut. He was named Regional School District #16 Teacher of the Year for 2024. He was also a semi-finalist for Connecticut Teacher of the Year. ▶▶ Congrats to **Amy Begué '06 MA** on being promoted to principal of Bacon Academy in Colchester, Connecticut, after nine years as a math educator and seven years as an assistant principal. "UConn provided me with a strong start into my second career and I've been more successful than I ever could have imagined, so thank you!" she

says. ▶▶ **Stephen P. Barry '07 (CLAS)**, a partner in the Lathan & Watkins law firm in Washington, D.C., reports that Bloomberg Law, an online legal research service, named him as an honoree in its "40 Under 40" list for 2023. ▶▶ **Alyssa Lynch '09 (CLAS)**, a workers' compensation lawyer at Halloran Sage, is listed in the Best Lawyers in America for 2024.

2010s

▶▶ Congratulations to **Ashley Dunne '10 (SFA)** on being named a 2023-24 national Milken Educator Award recipient, an award that comes with a \$25,000 cash prize. Dunne, a music teacher at Gainfield Elementary School in Southbury, Connecticut, was caught by surprise when Connecticut Education Commissioner Charlene M.



▶▶ Photographer **Aliza Eliazarov '95 (CAHNR)** says she chose the title of her new book, "The Best Dog: Hilarious to Heartwarming Portraits of the Pups We Love," because, "when we started this project everyone said, 'You have to photograph my dog – I have the best dog!'" Eliazarov, the humane education manager for the New Hampshire SPCA, took portraits of nearly 100 good dogs, including Jonathan XIV (above) and several dogs rescued by Oliver's House Rescue in Lebanon, Connecticut.

SHARE YOUR NEWS!

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

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Alumni News & Notes
UConn Foundation
2384 Alumni Drive,
Unit 3053
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➔ To submit an obituary, email: contactus@foundation.uconn.edu

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

Submissions may be edited for clarity and/or length.

Russel-Tucker and a Milken official presented her with the award before an all-school assembly of cheering students, colleagues, dignitaries, and the media.
 ➔ **Geena Russo '14 (CLAS)**, of Bristol, Connecticut, reports that she recently published a children's book, "Sydney's Adventure in New Mexico." The book, told from the perspective of a two-year-old adopted puppy, is about tackling emotional skills. "Sydney is majority Siberian Husky!" she adds.



➔ **Kevin Peterson '15 (ENG)** and **Shannon Carr '16 (BUS)** were married in July before a small army of fellow Huskies. Congratulations!



➔ **Kenny De Leon '15 (CLAS)** and **Jennifer Roginski '16 (BUS)** tied the knot, surrounded by Huskies.
 ➔ **Ashley LaPane '16 (ED)**, '17 MA was named the Canton Public Schools Teacher of the Year. Way to go!
 ➔ **Julia Winer '16 MBA**, of West Hartford, Connecticut, was named chief financial and operations officer of the Watkinson School, an independent day school. She had been vice president of operations for MD Ally and, prior to that, chief corporate officer and chief of staff at Hartford's Silver Fern Healthcare. She's also been an adjunct professor at UConn's School of Business, teaching business communications and statistics in business.
 ➔ **Francesco Mioli '17 JD** was elected to serve a two-year term as president of the Connecticut Italian American Bar Association. Mioli is a member of Robinson & Cole LLP's Real Estate and Development Group and works out of the Stamford, Connecticut, office.



➔ **Kyle Perry '17 (ENG, BUS)** and **Sarah Knapp '17 (BUS)**, '21 MS tied the knot at Lounsbury House in Ridgefield, Connecticut, with more than 40 UConn students and alums ranging from the class of 1960 to the class of 2024. Perry is an engineering manager with Verogy, and Knapp works in Human Resources at Kaman Corp. The couple resides in Simsbury, Connecticut.



➔ Brothers can both say "ball." Now we are working on "Huskies!" report parents **Chris Hall '08 (CLAS)** and **Meghan Hall '08 (CLAS)**

cut. ➔ The National Council of Teachers of English honored **Konatsu Sonokawa '18 (ED)**, '19 MA with a 2023 Early Career Educator of Color Award. She teaches at Martin Elementary School in Manchester, Connecticut, and was the 2022 Manchester Teacher of the Year. ➔ **Claudia Bachmann-Bouchard '19 MA**, of Waterford, Connecticut, a teacher at Norwich Free Academy, was selected from a nationwide search of teacher leaders to participate in a weeklong climate and equity institute at the Schoodic Institute in Acadia National Park. The institute was designed to help build a growing network of teachers who are pioneering ways to help students see the science of climate change in its human context.

2020s

➔ **Emily A. Piergustavo '22 (ED)**, who was a member of UConn's softball team as an

undergraduate, is still knocking it out of the park. She was hired as an assistant softball coach at Tufts University.
 ➔ **Amy E. Rizzo '22 6th Year** was appointed principal of John F. Kennedy Elementary in Milford, Connecticut. She most recently served as the teacher leader for instructional technology for the district.
 ➔ **Ilona Bastiaansen '23 Ph.D.** successfully defended her dissertation, "Bankruptcy Spillovers in Firm Payout Policy," and has accepted a position as an assistant professor at the University of Notre Dame. ➔ **Daniel D. Burkey '23 MA** is the co-recipient of the David Himmelblau Award for outstanding innovations in computer-based, chemical engineering education from the American Institute of Chemical Engineers' computing and system technology division. He's the associate dean of undergraduate education and diversity and the Castleman Term Professor in Engineering Innovation at UConn's College of Engineering.



Peter Morenus

JOB ENVY

Paper Work

As the university archivist and head of archives and special collections at Eastern Connecticut State University, just down the road from UConn, **Tara Ludlow Hurt '94 (CLAS)** does the dirty work of rescuing and maintaining decades- and centuries-old documents for posterity. Since her hiring in 2001, she has helped the town of Windham rescue countless treasured records and artifacts from the trash bin.

"People come into museums, people come into libraries, people come into town halls and they think, all the records are just here. But it takes so much to get them there, to have them be cleaned, preserved, and made accessible," Hurt says. "I kind of like that behind-the-scenes mystery of it — it was dirty in a box and now it's here for you to research with. And as we digitize, it's not just available for local people, now everyone in the world can see all of it."

For researchers and historians, something as mundane as a tax document can tell a whole story. But Hurt loves the variety, especially discovering things that would stop anyone in their tracks. While processing one collection at Eastern, Hurt found a letter written by Mary Todd Lincoln.

"She had come to Willimantic. It was only a thank-you, but still — Mary Todd Lincoln wrote that!" Hurt says. "In and of itself, it's just a little note. But if you think about the time she did it, she was here. Those are the ones that really get me."

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

"I love the documents that connect people to a place," says Tara Ludlow Hurt. "We need to understand our past to move forward as well-educated human beings."

CHALLENGE YOURSELF TO TOM'S TRIVIA!

Go to s.uconn.edu/spring24 or p. 46 to see if you know as much as King of UConn Trivia Tom Breen '00 (CLAS).

- 1. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, a rock and roll band consisting of UConn faculty members could be found playing concerts in the area, usually benefits for local charities. What was the name of this band?**

A: Off Yer Rockers
B: The Add/Drop Experience
C: Gentleman's C
D: Jamtopia

- 2. Jane Weber '51 was the national intercollegiate champion in her sport from 1949–51, part of a dynasty that saw UConn students claim 15 championships in the 1940s and 1950s. At what sport did she excel?**

A: Tennis
B: Golf
C: Archery
D: Javelin

- 3. The stretch of Route 195 from Exit 68 in Tolland to UConn Storrs was named UConn Husky Way in 2005. Whose idea was this lasting tribute to the University?**

A: Wendell Holcomb
B: Amarjit Buttar
C: Lowell Weicker
D: Francesca Candreva



Basketball season 1988-89

- 4. In addition to the canine Jonathan, a human (usually a student) wearing a distinctive costume and going by the same name is a feature at UConn events. But the human version wasn't always known as Jonathan. What name did he have originally?**

A: Wilbur B: Homer C: Albert D: Augie