

ENGINEERS HAVE BIG
PROBLEMS TO SOLVE.
IN URI'S NEWEST BUILDING,
GLASS WALLS AND OPEN
SPACE SET THE STAGE FOR
REVOLUTIONARY SOLUTIONS.

ENGINEERING UNBOUND

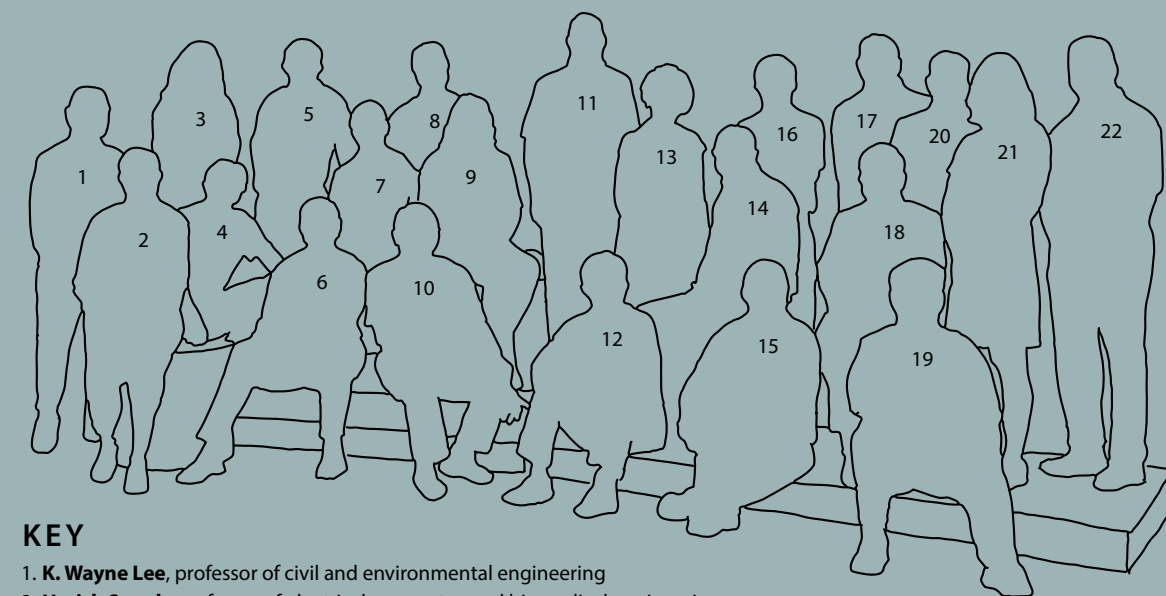


Aperture

COLLECTIVE PURPOSE

Just before classes began this fall, a group of engineering professors gathered in The Fascitelli Center for Advanced Engineering. Representing the full engineering faculty, this group comprises 22 of the college's 74 faculty members, whose research and teaching will be shaped by the open space, transparent walls, and bridge-like architecture of the new facility.

Engineers are unique. Equal parts creative visionaries and doers, they are able to imagine technologies that will advance human potential, and construct the framework that will transform their ideas into reality. These engineers are also teachers, mentors, and guides—showing the next generation, who will be faced with some of the biggest problems the world has ever known, how to engineer solutions.



KEY

1. **K. Wayne Lee**, professor of civil and environmental engineering
2. **Harish Sunak**, professor of electrical, computer, and biomedical engineering
3. **Vinka Oyanedel-Craver**, assistant professor of civil and environmental engineering
4. **Zongqin Zhang**, professor of mechanical and industrial systems
5. **Ken Yang**, professor of electrical, computer, and biomedical engineering
6. **Daniel Roxbury**, assistant professor of chemical engineering
7. **Walt Besio**, professor of electrical, computer, and biomedical engineering
8. **Philip Datseris**, professor of mechanical engineering
9. **Valerie Maier-Sperdelozzi**, associate professor of industrial and systems engineering
10. **Jyh-Hone (Jay) Wang**, professor of industrial and systems engineering
11. **Otto Gregory**, distinguished professor of chemical engineering
12. **Haibo He**, professor of electrical, computer, and biomedical engineering
13. **Mercedes Rivero-Hudec**, associate professor of chemical engineering
14. **Peter Swaszek**, professor of electrical, computer, and biomedical engineering, and associate dean of academic affairs for the College of Engineering
15. **Bin Li**, assistant professor of electrical, computer, and biomedical engineering
16. **Kunal Mankodiya**, associate professor of electrical, computer, and biomedical engineering
17. **David Taggart**, professor of mechanical engineering
18. **Augustus (Gus) Uht**, professor-in-residence of electrical, computer, and biomedical engineering
19. **Chengzhi Yuan**, assistant professor of mechanical, industrial, and systems engineering
20. **Manbir Sodhi**, professor of industrial and systems engineering
21. **Yan (Lindsay) Sun**, professor of electrical, computer, and biomedical engineering
22. **Richard Vaccaro**, professor of electrical, computer, and biomedical engineering

“When the engineering disciplines combine, the sum is greater than its parts.

URI engineering is building the future.”

— Dean Raymond M. Wright
College of Engineering

College of Engineering at a Glance

The Fascitelli Center for Advanced Engineering not only supports the college's advanced research and innovative teaching, but also its continued growth and achievement.

1,663
Current enrollment in the College of Engineering, up from 900 ten years ago

First
URI's flagship, dual-degree, International Engineering Program (IEP) was the first such program in the country when it launched 32 years ago.

26%
of URI engineering undergrads are in the IEP program.

85%
of undergrads graduate having completed one or more paid internships.

240%
minority enrollment increase since 2004

Over 90%
of URI's engineering grads are employed or in graduate school within six months of graduation.

11.5-to-1
student/faculty ratio

8
accredited undergraduate degree programs: biomedical, civil, electrical, computer, ocean, industrial and systems, mechanical, and chemical engineering

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URI alumni are amazing! Catch up with your classmates and get to know the newest and longest-standing members of the Rhody family.

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Caption This

Stroll down Memory Lane, check out last issue's winners, and send your best caption for this issue!

Winter Blooms

This beautiful white poinsettia was grown by URI Cooperative Extension's Master Gardener Program. Their poinsettia sale kicks off the holidays in Kingston each year, with sales benefiting Master Gardener educational services, including the gardening and environmental hotline, soil pH testing, and public programs and presentations. The poinsettias the Master Gardeners grow and sell are part of the North American Poinsettia Trials; they report data back to the growers that send the plant plugs. The growers use that data to help their breeding trials. uri.edu/mastergardener



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Blue Minds

2019 marine biology grad Gyasi Alexander loves the ocean and believes diversity is the best thing about life.

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The Good Life

Urban homesteaders Evan P. Schneider, M.A. '07, and his wife, Judith Edwards, are living intentionally, frugally, and sustainably—and sharing their story in real time.



Transformation

On the threshold of a new decade, our University is poised for greatness.

HOW FORTUNATE I FEEL TO BE president at a time of such incredible growth and change! Working together with the state, we have made more than \$1 billion in capital investments in our campuses since 2010. We've hired 350 new faculty and dramatically increased opportunities for internships and research for our students—all across the world—so that now more than 8,000 students are involved every year. This would not be

teaching capabilities, and elevating the student experience to levels we could only imagine when this decade began.

Tom shares his story with us in this final 2019 issue of *URI Magazine*, explaining why he and his wife, Cathy Ryan, have so generously supported URI. Their most recent gift of \$35 million is the largest private contribution in our history, and brings their cumulative giving to more than \$56 million. The gift will

strengthen the George & Anne Ryan Institute for Neuroscience with \$24 million to explore new treatments, therapies, and strategies for addressing disorders like Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and ALS. Another \$1 million establishes a challenge to inspire community support for a men's and women's basketball training facility. And \$10 million establishes an endowment for the Thomas M. Ryan Scholars program, providing full scholarships and

fees for four years for exceptional students, as well as access to URI's Honors Program, Leadership Institute, and global Winter J-Term. The first Ryan Scholars will be enrolled next fall.

URI also celebrated other amazing gifts this year, including \$4 million from Richard J. Harrington '73, Hon. '02, and Jean Harrington to the Harrington School of Communication and Media, bringing their cumulative support for the school to more than \$12 million. Their support and engagement assures our communications students will benefit from a 21st century curriculum and learn in facilities

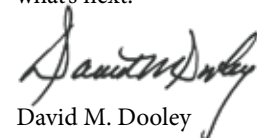
furnished with state-of-the-art equipment, like the new Broadcast Center we unveiled this fall.

Speaking of state-of-the-art facilities, our cover story is the stunning new Fascitelli Center for Advanced Engineering, which opened this fall to great acclaim. We're proud that Rhode Islanders supported the project with \$150 million in bond issues. And we are grateful to Michael and Elizabeth Fascitelli for their \$10 million gift, which will fund lab and research equipment and establish an endowed fund for the dean's priorities.

Not only is The Fascitelli Center our largest academic building, it is also our most innovative and forward-thinking, organized around interdisciplinary research themes to stimulate the kinds of collaboration that will lead to discoveries today's engineers can only dream of.

Even as we focus on science and engineering, we also recognize the intrinsic value and essential role of the arts. Our Fine Arts Center is undergoing a renovation as I write. And we are proud to share that music therapy is another new academic offering at URI. I hope you will read the story of VOICES 21C in these pages. A choir with a cause that includes four URI alumni, they are raising their voices, combining song, dance, and poetry to bring to life messages touting the transformational power of social justice.

Transformation is the word that best describes the past decade at URI. Momentum from that transformation will carry us forward into 2020. I can't wait to see what's next.



David M. Dooley
President, University of Rhode Island



Nathan Ankomah-Mensah '19 graduated with two majors, computer and electrical engineering, and two minors, computer science and math. Here, he works with a robotic arm in engineering professor Kunal Mankodiya's biosensing lab. Ankomah-Mensah was awarded a highly competitive GEM Fellowship, which will pay for his first year of graduate school.

possible without the increases we've made in financial aid. Today, we award more than \$100 million in undergraduate merit- and need-based assistance. To stay competitive, keep URI affordable, and attract the most talented students, we are determined to grow that pool of aid.

During the past 10 years, the leadership and vision of extraordinary alumni like Thomas M. Ryan '75, Hon. '99, and Michael D. Fascitelli '78, Hon. '08, to name just two, have helped catalyze exceptional growth, transforming the built environment of our campus while bolstering our scholarship, research, and



ON A ROLL

A new 2-mile bike path spur connects the Kingston Campus directly to the William C. O'Neill Bike Path, which runs from Kingston to Narragansett. The new section opened this fall, giving students, faculty, and staff a new way to get to and from campus. The bike path connector is a key part of URI's Transportation and Parking Master Plan, which aims to improve walking and cycling accessibility.

Feedback

Write to us: urimag@uri.edu
Visit us and comment at uri.edu/magazine

From the Editor

I BECOME INVESTED IN THE STORIES you read in *URI Magazine* the same way I do when reading a good novel—the more I read, the more I connect with the characters.

There are lots of great stories to tell about URI. Just take a look at Class Notes—URI alumni are out there working, creating, learning, living—changing the world. And there’s so much to say about the research, teaching, and outreach born in our labs, classrooms, and offices.

What’s at the center of all these stories? Extraordinary characters—the people doing the work, coming up with new ideas, solving problems, and inspiring others.

Take Tom Ryan, for example. You’ve probably heard his name and you might know he was the longtime CEO of CVS who’s given generously to URI over the years. When you read his story in this issue, you may also discover something new about the person behind the public persona. Everyone—a former professor, his family, his colleagues—says, in their own way, the same thing: He listens, he cares about people, he rolls up his sleeves, he never gives up. That kind of integrity is

rare and remarkable. We are fortunate to have a strong character like Tom Ryan in our URI story; and, as is the case with strong characters, we are enriched and inspired by reading his story.

The same is true of house mother Deborah Lambrecht, ocean scientist/advocate Gyasi Alexander, activist/clinician Nicolle Potvin, writer Evan Schneider—and all the other characters who come to life in the pages of this issue. I hope you will enjoy their stories as much as I have.

— Barbara Caron, Editor-in-Chief

Did you play a club sport at URI? We'd love to hear from you! Tell us why you played, what you remember most, or how the experience impacted your life after URI. Whatever your stories, please share them with us at urimag@uri.edu.

EXTRAORDINARY CHARACTERS



“Self Portrait” by Barbara DeCesare ’58. Read about artist DeCesare—and lots of other extraordinary URI alumni—in Class Notes on page 44.

SOCIAL SNAPS | INSTAGRAM



#rhodyrhodyrhody
Rhody’s 2019–2020 women’s tennis team—strong on the court and in the classroom!
[@rhodytennis](https://www.instagram.com/rhodytennis)



Give Peace a Chance
URI celebrated its annual Peace Day on September 17, 2019.
[@nonviolenceuri](https://www.instagram.com/nonviolenceuri)



Religion in America
URI’s Fall 2019 Honors Colloquium series addresses the expansive topic of religion in America.
[@urihonors](https://www.instagram.com/urihonors)



Shoo!
Professor Rebecca Brown is testing a laser scarecrow—with much success so far!
[@uri_cels](https://www.instagram.com/uri_cels)



Hazard Rock, Narragansett

Rhody Blue Minds

THE ARTICLE BY LAUREN POIRIER, “Got Blue Mind,” in the summer issue put into words everything that I feel whenever I am at the ocean, either on the East or the West Coast. Having grown up in Rhode Island and spent summers in Narragansett, as well as living in San Diego for 20 years, I have spent a large part of my life near the water. Now after living in Arizona for 20 years that part of my life is definitely missing. When I am able to get to the ocean, I treasure every minute of the peace, joy, and calm it brings. It was a great article. I really enjoyed this edition of the magazine.

— Sherry Gardner Cameron ’66

AS ALWAYS, THE RECENT ISSUE OF *URI Magazine* made me proud and fondly brought me back to my alma mater and home state.

Got Blue Mind? Absolutely! I grew up playing and quahogging with dad on Greenwich Bay and spent many summer days “Down the Line” at those beautiful southern beaches. There must be something in the water in Rhody ... and I believe it’s all good!

— Kathy Perry Ojeda ’81

CORRECTIONS

In “Prescription: Empathy,” on page 11 of the summer issue, Erica Estus was introduced as clinical associate professor of pharmacy. In fact, she was promoted to clinical full professor on July 1, 2019. Congratulations Professor Estus!

In the story “Blue Minds,” on page 24, we should have introduced Brian Caccioppoli ’11 as Brian Caccioppoli ’11, M.S. ’15.

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Email: urimag@uri.edu Online: uri.edu/magazine
Phone: 401.874.5895

Executive Editor: Michele A. Nota ’87, M.S. ’06,
Vice President, URI Foundation & Alumni Engagement
Editor-in-Chief: Barbara Caron

Art Director: Kim Robertson

Contributing Editors: Annie Babineau, Dina M. Dionizio ’91,
Shane Donaldson ’99, Dave Lavallee ’79, M.P.A. ’87,
Leslie Lowenstein, Kate O’Malley, Marybeth Reilly-McGreen

Contributing Designer: Cynthia McMillen

Photographer: Nora Lewis

Illustrations: Anthony Russo ’74

Digital Design: John Pennypacker, Bo Pickard

Editorial Board: Kelly Mahoney ’03, Executive Director,
External Relations and Communications; Linda A. Acciardo ’77,
Director, Communications and Marketing; Austen Farrell,
Chief Marketing Officer, URI Foundation & Alumni Engagement

All in the Family

The 1965 photo of engineers Foster Middleton and Gil Fain, which ran in the spring issue of the magazine, and again with winning photo captions in the summer issue, elicited some nice notes from members of both men’s families. Made our day to read these notes:

THANK YOU FOR SHARING THAT NEVER-seen-before photo of my cousin, Gil. His dad and my dad were brothers.

— Richard Fain ’69

I WANTED TO COMMENT ON THE LAST photo caption contest—the photo of the two ocean engineers. Dr. Middleton was my father, and it was just sweet to see this picture of him with Gil pop up in the magazine. I have shared it with my three other siblings. Just thank you is all.

— Amy (Middleton) Brown ’04



TAIL WAGGERS

David Middleton ’83 and Patricia (Zeoli) Middleton ’80 were kind enough to bring their fur kids—Levi, Kona, and Wile E.—to campus for a photo shoot. You’ll find their tails illustrating “Heads or Tails?” on page 15.

Embracing Global Education

I READ WITH INTEREST AND delight in the recent issue of the alumni magazine the feature about the impact of international education and influence on students and their whole educational experience at URI. I am so glad that the University sees the impact and value of cross-cultural studies, interdisciplinary cooperation, and experiences outside the confines of campus opportunities.

This summer, I look back exactly 50 years to my own experience of returning to Kingston after extended travel through Europe, a junior year of study at the University of Madrid, and a work/study opportunity in Switzerland. My return was made difficult by the lack of proper policies

and very little flexibility in the educational requirements. It was a bitter experience, although it led me to change my whole college plan and put me on a trajectory for a fantastic experience in the Peace Corps (which laid a grand foundation for future endeavors). I have always felt that I and other students in similar situations were “penalized” for stretching the edges of possibilities in our college education. So it was gratifying to see just how much policies have changed, how cross-cultural and interdisciplinary opportunities are embraced, and how the international experiences and backgrounds of students are encouraged and enhanced.

— Rev. Carol Snow-Asher ’70

Currents

Get more news at today.uri.edu

= IN BRIEF =



Disturbing Discovery

URI scientists discovered an abundance of plastics in sea ice cores collected from floes in the Arctic's Northwest Passage. The team, led by URI's Graduate School of Oceanography, was traveling aboard the Swedish icebreaker, *Oden*, with the NSF-funded Northwest Passage Project. "Even knowing what we knew about the occurrence of plastics across the globe," said Brice Loose, associate professor of oceanography and chief expedition scientist, "for us, it was kind of a punch to the stomach to see what looked like a normal sea ice core taken in such a beautiful, pristine environment just chock full of this material that is so completely foreign."



The Power of Music

The College of Arts and Sciences rolls out its new music therapy program beginning in fall 2020. The Bachelor of Music in Music Therapy will be the first of its kind at a public New England institution. The five-year health-based program is grounded in neuroscience. "This will be one of the premier programs at the University," says Mark Conley, chair of the music department. "It will not just change the Department of Music; ultimately it will change the University's understanding of the arts and its place in other professions."



Groundbreaking study about newborn weight loss after birth.

Breastfeeding Study Earns National Award

College of Nursing Professor Diane DiTomasso received the 2019 Best Research Award from the *Journal of Human Lactation* for her groundbreaking study about newborn weight loss after birth. It is normal for newborns to lose weight after birth; health-care professionals have generally agreed that it shouldn't be more than 7 percent during the first two weeks. DiTomasso's study found that the average breastfed baby loses 8 percent of birth weight during the first two weeks, but then gains weight at a similar pace afterward. DiTomasso says, "We want parents to be aware that a drop in birth weight is to be expected and that there are many health benefits of breastfeeding."

= NEWS TICKER =

Forecasting Tsunamis

Ocean engineering professor Stephan Grilli and his team have shown that modeling can accurately forecast tsunamis from volcanic events. Their research could lead to life-saving early-warning systems.

Getting to Graduation

URI was named a national finalist for the Association for Public Land Grant Universities 2019 Degree Completion Award. URI was recognized for its innovative approaches to improving degree completion rates.

Talking Fish

A team of researchers led by assistant professor of ocean engineering Brennan Phillips observed flashlight fish in the South Pacific using bioluminescent flashes to communicate and facilitate "schooling." This is the first time this behavior has been observed and documented.

Infant HIV Exposure

Barbara Lohman-Payne, an associate research professor at URI's Institute for Immunology and Informatics, and an interscholastic, global team of scientists established a link between prenatal HIV exposure and decreased infant immunity despite HIV-negative status at birth.

Confronting the Opioid Epidemic

A team from URI's Colleges of Pharmacy, Nursing, and Environment and Life Sciences received a \$1 million grant from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to provide opioid education and outreach, and distribute naloxone to rural Rhode Island communities.



Top left: Students at work in the Harrington School's new, state-of-the art Broadcast Center; Top middle and right: Christiane Amanpour '83, Hon. '95 delivered a lecture, "Truthful, Not Neutral," to a capacity crowd this fall; Bottom: Harrington School director Adam Roth, URI President David M. Dooley, Christiane Amanpour, Jean Harrington, and Richard Harrington '73, Hon. '02 celebrate the official opening of the Broadcast Center.

Superb September for Harrington School

"Our job [as journalists] is not to be liked and not to take the easy route. Our job is actually to do the really hard things because we've been given this extraordinary responsibility, this extraordinary platform."

— Christiane Amanpour '83, Hon. '95

In early September, the Harrington School of Communication and Media announced a \$4 million gift commitment from Richard J. Harrington '73, Hon. '02, and Jean Harrington, for further renovations to Ranger Hall, the Harrington School's home. Later in the month, CNN chief international anchor Christiane Amanpour '83, Hon. '95, delivered a lecture, "Truthful, Not Neutral," to a packed house in Edwards Hall. The next morning, Amanpour and the Harringtons helped unveil a new, state-of-the art, \$1.25 million Broadcast Center, housed in Chafee Social Science Center, which gives students opportunities to use equipment they'll encounter in a professional broadcast facility. The center "is the only academic facility of its kind and magnitude in the state," said Adam Roth, director of the Harrington School and associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.



= QUAD ANGLES =

Why I Ride

By Dave Lavallee

Want to help combat climate change? Stop driving to work and start riding your bicycle. Dave Lavallee shares why he rides in all seasons and in almost any weather. Spoiler alert: Your bicycle commute might be as good for your health and happiness as it is for the environment.

WHEN I RIDE MY BICYCLE TO WORK, I look like a cross between Miss Almira Gulch—the cranky old lady in *The Wizard of Oz* who speeds off on her bike with Toto in her basket—and a crossing guard. That's because my modified Bianchi Cortina hybrid has high handlebars to prevent wear and tear on my back and neck, a rearview mirror, and a carrier rack—not unlike Miss Gulch's ride. And my bright orange, reflective vest, which helps make me visible to cars, is unmistakably crossing guard-like. When fully tricked out for night riding, I look like a carnival ride—a rear red light on my helmet, reflective Velcro straps across my ankles, spoke lights, and my Tru headlight.

I've been making the 5-mile trip to URI and back just about every day for at least 20 years. I ride in snow, rain, wind, frigid cold, and, on a few occasions, when the forecasts have failed me, I've even braved the ride in thunderstorms. But still, a bad day on my bike is better than a good day in a car.

Why? Because I'm generating my own power, which makes me feel great and helps keep me relatively fit, notwithstanding my stomach bulge from eating too many chips and drinking too much soda. And when I blast down a hill, the sensation of speed and the wind in my face make for a wonderful rush. I can also smell, feel, see, and hear the seasons changing. Each season offers its own treats for the senses; but autumn—which offers bright foliage, the pungent aroma of decaying leaves, crisp air, and the rustle of deer in rutting season—is one of my favorite times to ride.

I also bike to church (a perfect time to examine my conscience and get ready for worship), the library, URI football and

soccer games, and Scarborough State Beach. I'll even put my bike on a Rhode Island Public Transit Authority bus to get to Newport and Providence.

And, like Almira, I get cranky about:

1. Drivers who speed by when there is barely any room, almost taking the hair off my arms, and those who pull in front of me by just a few feet to make a right turn. Really?
2. Cyclists—especially the super-competitive folks—who don't signal or obey traffic laws. Also cyclists who ride through intersections without stopping or ride against traffic and on sidewalks. And cyclists who wear earbuds—do you want to die!?
3. Shortsighted state and municipal officials who fail to incorporate bike lanes and wider shoulders in their road planning.

But this is what keeps me going: getting the best parking on campus, keeping a car off the road (my little effort to combat climate change), and knowing I can still crank out 20-, 30- and even 75-mile rides on a hybrid bike at 62 years old. •

Dave Lavallee '79, M.P.A. '87, is assistant director of communications for the University of Rhode Island. He has worked at URI since 1994 and has been a bicycle commuter for the better part of his tenure here.

Read about Dave's participation in Bike MS and his thoughts about how bicycle commuting could help ease parking and traffic woes on URI's Kingston Campus at uri.edu/magazine.



= WHY I TEACH =

Successful Scholars, Better Humans

JESSICA ADAMS

Lecturer, Department of Biological Sciences

ON THE FIRST DAY OF A NEW SEMESTER, Jessica Adams opens her classes with the game Three Truths and a Lie, which asks players to suss out the lie in one of four statements.

Adams, a lecturer in the Department of Biological Sciences in the College of the Environment and Life Sciences, teaches anatomy and biology. Her three truths and a lie:

- I didn't have a flushing toilet growing up.
- On my first date with my husband, we went skydiving.
- I ate bacon this morning.
- I failed college bio.

The lie: bacon.

Yes, Adams failed college biology. And she shares her experience with students to underscore what's not going to happen in her classes—if she has her way. “It lets

them know I've been there,” she says. “I'm telling them, you can overcome and be successful.”

Adams is looking to build a “creative community of learners.” To do that, the required text for the class has a free online version, so there is no economic barrier to student learning. Adams also uses Top Hat, a game-like, real-time question-and-answer app, to assess students' comprehension of a topic in the moment.

There are “cultural competency assignments,” reflective writing prompts that have “nothing to do with the curriculum and everything to do with being a better human,” Adams says. “It wakes them up to their implicit biases.”

In Adams' BIO 101 class, should a student fail their first exam, they have the option of completing special assignments on learning and study strategies and then taking a makeup exam to get their grade to a 70. Also, Adams doesn't give exams

back to students in class. Students must make an appointment to meet and discuss the exam during her office hours. In this way, Adams, who teaches large classes, is able to work with students one-on-one. “My college biology course had only two high-stakes assessments: a midterm and a final,” Adams recalls. “You didn't know you were in trouble until it was too late.” Sometimes it's in the stumbling that real learning happens.

“Having students say, ‘I never thought of it that way,’ or, ‘That makes total sense, I get it now!’ is very rewarding. As a lifelong learner, I want to inspire my students to learn how to think and how to problem-solve,” Adams says. “I want my students to become self-directed learners who gain the confidence and skills needed to succeed beyond my classroom.” •

— Marybeth Reilly-McGreen

= GO RHODY =

Saturday Night Lights

8,511 fans packed Meade Stadium on September 7 for the first night game played there in more than 40 years. The Rams fell to Delaware 44-36 in a triple-overtime thriller, but the atmosphere was electric thanks to a \$4.2 million renovation that included new turf and permanent lights. The new turf and lights create options for night games and increased use of the field for club and intramural sports and other University and community events.





= RHODE TAKEN =

From Despair to Dedication

NICOLLE POTVIN '17

RHODE TO A DEGREE

Original Life Goal

Fashion designer—which drew raised eyebrows from her parents

Revised Life Goal

Mental health professional focused on eating disorders

Key Turning Point

In a J-Term class focused on eating disorders, she learned her struggle could empower others

Mentor

Lindsey Anderson, director of the URI Psychological Consultation Center

Internship

Warwick, R.I., public schools. The internship “was really important because it helped show me I was on the right track.”

URI Degree

B.A. '17 psychology, summa cum laude; minor in justice, law, and society



NICOLLE POTVIN ENTERED URI IN FALL 2015, anorexic and desperately seeking support. She found it here, and with it, she made her way up from rock bottom. Now she's found her place providing critical support for others.

“URI not only saved my life, but put me on a path that was meant for me,” Potvin says.

The Rhode Island native's initial attempt at college out of state was marred by weight loss and a sense of isolation. She returned home to be treated for anorexia, then transferred to URI to be closer to home—and because URI friends assured her this was a supportive community.

Her first fall at URI passed and Potvin grew stronger. During Winter J-Term, she took a psychology course on eating disorders taught by Lindsey Anderson, director of URI's Psychological Consultation Center.

As she learned more about her own disease, she spread the word. She helped organize the University's first National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA) Walk. She participated in the Body Project, a national initiative helping young people confront unrealistic beauty ideals. Her URI career ended on a high note when she was selected to be student speaker for the College of Health Sciences' inaugural commencement. In her speech, she implored her peers to help others in times of need. And she notes that the college's merging of disciplines—from nutrition to kinesiology—permits better inquiry into complex issues like anorexia.

Two years later, she has a master's degree in counseling from Northeastern and is a clinician for Rhode Island's Key Program, where she helps young adults in state care prepare to live independently. In addition, she gave back to URI by assembling a list of University resources for students being treated at URI's Counseling Center.

“To make and sustain mental health progress, you need a whole team,” Potvin says, pointing out that her tight-knit college taught her this lesson through an internship at a local school district.

Today, she brings that message to URI classes and sports teams as a guest speaker. President David M. Dooley appointed her—along with some of her former professors—to a committee tasked with supporting student well-being and mental health.

Beyond URI, she persuaded the Rhode Island Senate to pass a resolution recognizing National Eating Disorder Awareness Week.

“Let me stay at URI forever,” Potvin said during a recent visit to campus. “URI led me to the most incredible parts of my life.” •

— Chris Barrett '08

= BIG IDEAS =

Heads or Tails?

Dogs wag their tails. It's how we know they're happy. But does that behavior separate your best friend from a wolf? Kate Fish thinks it might. And she spent her summer at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City gathering data to test her theory.

KATE FISH '20 WAS WORKING AS A research assistant for URI anthropology professor Holly Dunsworth a couple years ago when crews cleaning the Ranger Hall attic uncovered a cache of animal skeletons. Fish's job was to clean the skeletons, identify them, and prepare them for storage. But many of the skeletons were postcranial—meaning they were missing their skulls.

The easiest way to identify an animal skeleton is by the skull. “If you have the head of a dog, you know you have a dog. If you have the head of wolf, you know you have a wolf—or a pig, or whatever,” says Dunsworth.

Among the postcranial skeletons was a canid. Lacking a skull, it was nearly impossible to determine if it was a wild or a domesticated canid. That got Dunsworth and Fish thinking: How else would you identify canid skeletons? What distinguishes wolves and coyotes from domestic dogs?

“I started thinking about tail-wagging,” says Fish, who's majoring in biology and anthropology. “While wolves do wag their tails, it is not a habitual behavior as it is for domestic dogs, who constantly communicate this way with humans. Habitual

tail-wagging could influence the development of the skeleton, just as habitual tennis-playing influences the morphology of the racket-wielding arm.”

Fish identified the muscles involved in tail posture and wagging and where those muscles attach to the skeleton. She designed measurements to compare differences between domestic and wild canids.

Last summer at the American Museum of Natural History, with support from a URI College of Arts and Sciences Fellowship, Fish measured the bones of 87 skeletons from seven canid species; she did similar work the previous summer at the Harvard Museum of Comparative Zoology. She's looked at skeletons large and small—multiple dog breeds and wild canids from wolves to foxes—to make allowances for size. She's also examined skeletons for signs of osteoarthritis, testing an assumption that domestic dogs could be prone to arthritis from habitual tail wagging.

She is doing preliminary analysis of the data she's gathered over the past two summers, using Excel to run statistics and create graphs. This fall, she will take a high-level statistics course to learn how to analyze the data using a coding language.

If her theory plays out, Fish, whose



Kate Fish works with specimens at the Harvard Museum of Comparative Zoology, where she had an internship in the summer of 2018.

interest in skeletons was sparked by the TV series *Bones*, plans to write a research paper and submit it for publication. “I still have a lot of data to analyze,” says Fish, “but with what I have done so far, I am seeing marginal differences in the bone anatomy that could verify my hypothesis about tail-wagging.”

Fish's study on postcranial identification could add a new tool for researchers at archaeological sites who find canid skeletons without skulls.

“According to the published literature,” says Dunsworth, “Kate's the first person to investigate a link to tail behavior.” •

— Tony LaRoche '95

Meet volunteer tail waggors Levi, Kona, and Wile E. (tails pictured above) on page 7.

VISIONARY

For decades, he was the face of CVS and the CVS Golf Charity Classic. Though he retired as CEO and president of CVS Health Corporation in 2011, he's not done yet. He's busier than ever, striving to ignite transformative change through results-oriented philanthropy, including a record-breaking \$35 million gift to URI this summer.

By Diane Sterrett





“I HAVE A SAYING—IF YOU’RE THROUGH CHANGING, YOU’RE THROUGH—NO MATTER WHAT AGE.”

Dressed casually in khakis and blue linen that sets off laughing blue eyes and an affable demeanor, Tom Ryan ’75, Hon. ’99, relaxes on the stone patio of his Narragansett home and reflects on career, family, leadership, and giving back.

After a successful 37-year career at CVS, Ryan could surely trade in the spreadsheets for golf clubs. But he’s not built to be idle. “I have a saying—if you’re through changing, you’re through—no matter what age,” he says.

He radiates high energy, perhaps a result of his high-intensity training and Peloton workouts. “I tell my friends he’s my Energizer bunny, because he never runs out of energy,” says Cathy Ryan, his wife of 33 years. “When one thing’s done, he’s right on to the next.”

Right now, that next thing is starting a venture company with two friends, investing in young entrepreneurs, companies, and ideas. “These are just incredibly talented people who are trying to do incredibly hard work,” says Ryan. “It’s overwhelming how bright, how energetic they are.”

One of them is NexImmune, a biopharmaceutical company that’s trying to crack the code for some forms of cancer using the body’s own immune system to orchestrate a targeted T cell response. Their first product is expected to enter clinical trials this year. “They can actually turn on and off the gene that’s causing the problem. It’s fascinating,” Ryan says. Of NexImmune, he contends, “We’re focused on really big breakthroughs; we’re not looking for incremental change. We want to do something that’s going to have a dramatic societal impact.”

That desire to create transformative change played a part in his family foundation’s original gift that established the George & Anne Ryan Institute for Neuroscience at URI in 2013. That gift combines with the newest record-breaking \$35 million gift, and others over the intervening years, to bring the Ryans’ lifetime giving to URI to more than \$56 million. This total enters rarefied company for public universities.

Of the institute’s origin and his family’s contribution that created it, Ryan says, “I wanted to do something on a transformational level at the University. After talking to [URI President] Dave Dooley, my wife Cathy, and our kids, we came to the conclusion that Alzheimer’s and neurodegen-

erative diseases were where we wanted to focus. Alzheimer’s killed my dad and my mom—my dad from the disease, my mom from taking care of him. Alzheimer’s is a health-care tsunami coming at us. It’s going to be a trillion dollars in health-care costs each year, plus the impact on families. The fact that we were putting our family foundation money in, I wanted something meaningful that would also produce results. Results matter!”

Ryan says the institute is doing some incredible things already, recruiting and retaining top-notch scientists and researchers and being awarded millions in grant money from the National Institutes of Health. “For an embryonic stage institute, they’ve done incredibly well. I am so proud of them. The institute changes things exponentially: It’s good for the University and raises our visibility around research. In recent years, we’ve expanded our research capabilities in important ways under President Dooley’s leadership.” The Ryans’ most recent gift will help the institute continue to do the kind of groundbreaking research it is already engaging in.

President David M. Dooley says he and Ryan share a strong commitment to finding ways for URI to advance both the science and the practice of healing and health, and he says Ryan inspires him with every conversation they have.

“He’s relentless in his push for excellence; when Tom takes on a project, he’s all in until it’s accomplished successfully. With the institute, for example, Tom didn’t just give a gift; he was involved in its founding and development. We all aspire for it to become one of the leading research centers for neurodegenerative diseases in the country, and Tom remains engaged with that goal.”

SEEDS OF SUCCESS

Ryan grew up in northern New Jersey and was the first college graduate in his middle-class working family. Family and sports, baseball and basketball in particular, had the biggest impact on forming his character.

“Sports taught me a lot about teamwork, overall social development, how to work with others. Many times I was the unofficial leader on the team. I think sports help kids learn how to influence people who don’t ‘work for you.’”

In school he had a penchant for math and science. He was inquisitive, always

curious to learn more, a side of him you still see. “My parents let us be pretty independent; I think that helped me follow my interests.”

He also admits to being a bit of a prankster, but just enough to push the envelope. “Nothing really bad. For example, in high school there was a teacher who drove a little MG. We took the mold-ing off the exterior doors of the school, and put the MG between the doors—harmless,” laughs Ryan. “I tell you though, it took a lot of people to pick up that car!”

His parents instilled a deep work ethic, as well, and one summer job changed his life trajectory. “In high school I worked at Jay’s Pharmacy in Oradell, New Jersey, as a delivery boy and I thought, ‘This is a pretty good career. It combined health care and retail; I have a fairly outgoing personality and I didn’t want to be stuck in a research lab—I wanted to deal with people. So I picked pharmacy as a major when I was 16.’”

As an example of Ryan’s characteristic loyalty, Jay’s Pharmacy would be the one independent that, later in his career, he’d declare off-limits for CVS acquisition and for building a CVS nearby.

For college, he knew he wanted more than just a pharmacy school in case he changed majors. He visited URI on a bright sunny spring day and was seduced by the campus, the energetic people on the Quad, and the beach—and his choice was made. “Plus, URI had a great pharmacy reputation.”

A self-described OK student (“organic chemistry was the bane of my existence”), but a quick study, he credits a great deal of his success to URI—relationships formed with fellow students and professors, and lessons learned in and out of the classroom. He knew he couldn’t study in the fraternity house he lived in, so he’d “lock in” at the library for several hours each night.

Rather than the typical drug research track, Ryan gravitated toward classes focused on the business side of pharmacy taught by College of Pharmacy Professor Emeritus Norman Campbell.

Campbell says he taught Ryan in management, pharmacy law, and ethics courses. For a student in the heavily science-oriented pharmacy program, it was a different viewpoint about the profession at a time when independent community pharmacists still had a strong influence.



Tom and Cathy Ryan and URI President David Dooley celebrate the opening of the George & Anne Ryan Institute for Neuroscience in November 2013.

As Ryan neared graduation, Campbell encouraged him to take a job at a company like CVS, learn what makes it tick, then go out on his own. He took Campbell’s advice, landing an entry-level job at CVS. He worked hard, worked his way up—and never left.

“I think his personality had an influence on his success,” Campbell says. “To know Tom Ryan is to like him. He’s very personable, outgoing, treats everybody with respect. He learns and processes information in such a way that he takes everybody’s view and synthesizes the position. He’s not a pushy, top-to-bottom leader. He’s a person who encourages feedback from his subordinates and colleagues, considers everybody’s view, and processes that information before synthesizing a decision. He’s very much a ‘small-d’ democratic-type leader.”

BUILDING A COMPANY, TRANSFORMING A CULTURE

Ryan credits his natural curiosity as part of what drove his success and longevity at CVS—he stayed, rising through the ranks. “There was always something new, and I loved the business. The company was changing around me—or I was changing the company with the help of a lot of good people—so I was not looking ahead to the next job. I was happy with the job I was



Left: Growing up, Ryan (in front row, right) says sports and family had the biggest impact on forming his character.

Above: In high school, Ryan worked at Jay's Pharmacy in Oradell, New Jersey. That's why he decided to major in pharmacy. Later in his career, Jay's was the one independent pharmacy he declared off-limits for CVS acquisition.

in. I was fortunate, we were a young company, growing.”

Ryan was 42 when he became CEO in 1994. Two years later the company went public, which, he says, “scared the hell out of me. But you can’t try to be whatever you think people think a CEO should be. You have to just be yourself.”

That was a seminal moment in the pharmacy industry with a lot of consolidation on the horizon. As a public company, acquisitions were a big part of CVS’ growth from 1997 through 2005. He admits acquisitions took a lot of hard work to blend cultures, systems, and technology. “We had a lot on our plates. It was always changing—new stores, new technology, new people. I always felt challenged and I really loved the people I worked with. I loved seeing them succeed.”

Ryan made leading a public company look easy, though he credits CVS founder Stan Goldstein with creating a great team culture that he inherited, and predecessor Harvey Rosenthal for being a great mentor. “We had fantastic people all around us. I had a great board of directors, we had a good cadre of leaders, and good culture—which is why I love the company. I think culture doesn’t get enough credit. It’s the soft stuff that makes hard results.”

Beyond his vision for growth, Ryan wanted a cultural vision for the company as a whole. Under his leadership, CVS instituted six values of success: respect, integrity, teamwork, urgency, openness, and willingness to embrace change. Those core values grew out of strategy sessions. “We talked about who we wanted to be as a company, what values we had. It really comes back to the leadership issue, and

we wanted to lead as a corporate citizen. There’s a compass, things that are not negotiable: how you treat people, honesty, and respect.”

When it comes to ethics, Ryan’s inner compass never wavers, and people remark on his frankness and honesty. “Whatever views he shares with you in a face-to-face or phone call, those are exactly the same views he will articulate in a public setting. I admire that consistency in him, and it reinforces how much you can rely on him,” Dooley observes.

For most of his CVS career, the team culture topped all and they tended not to recognize individuals. Even getting the CEO job was a surprise—he didn’t know he was being considered.

“I thought to myself, ‘We need to make sure people know they are valued and how they’re going to develop.’ We put in a development plan, where people knew they were in line for more responsibility and felt it. Selecting a few key potential players is always a big risk: What about the other people—how do they feel? That’s a real tricky line to walk, but if you’re going to grow a company, you need it. So my last five to seven years at CVS, I started publicly recognizing people for their contributions, and it was meaningful. I only wish I’d done more of that sooner.”

PAYING IT FORWARD

Ryan, who serves as chair of the URI Foundation & Alumni Engagement Board of Directors, has been a philanthropist his entire life, with URI tops on his list. Over the years, in addition to establishing the institute, the Ryans have generously contributed to the College of Pharmacy and

URI Athletics, including instrumentally supporting the construction of the 7,600-seat Ryan Center.

The Ryans’ most recent gift will provide ongoing support for the neuroscience institute through endowment and operating resources to further their cutting-edge research. In addition, it will establish the Thomas M. Ryan Scholars program and create a challenge gift for men’s and women’s basketball.

The Ryan Scholars program will give the highest performing high school students a new incentive to apply to URI and vie for four-year scholarships that provide leadership training and unmatched learning opportunities.

The athletic gift is a matching challenge issued by the Ryans—their goal is to drive support for renovations to Tootell West Gymnasium, which will serve as a new men’s and women’s basketball training facility, bringing URI in line with other top-tier programs and providing a competitive edge for recruitment and play.

“If not for URI, I might not be in pharmacy,” Ryan says. “I owe a lot to URI. I’m fortunate I’m in a position to help. State schools are in a budget crunch: We get less than 10 percent of our operating budget from the state. What better way to spend your money than helping students get an education that will last the rest of their lives? Then they’ll give back and contribute. I don’t care what people give, but I would like alumni to make URI one of their top three or four philanthropic choices.”

Dooley says Ryan is the kind of alumnus every institute wishes for. “He wants to see URI meet all the potential it has; he wants to facilitate its growth and tra-

jectory toward international prominence. His wealth of knowledge and experience, his commitment and generosity to the institution, his devotion to the University—all of those things are manifested in Tom in a way that is very rare.”

Shortly after Lil O’Rourke arrived at the URI Foundation (now the URI Foundation & Alumni Engagement) as president, she was tasked with recruiting Ryan to be the board’s chair. It wasn’t too hard a sell, she says, but he did give it careful consideration. She appreciates his directness and accessibility, as well as his leadership.

“Every time I’m with Tom or interact with him,” says O’Rourke, “I gain new perspective on leadership. He sets aggressive goals and he’s gotten us to stretch in our fundraising. He’s a quick thinker and is so experienced—he’s seen it all. When you think of his international business reputation, the Ryan Center, the Ryan Institute, and his influence in the state of Rhode Island, he has a deep impact that benefits the University immensely. Through his interaction with other donors and prospects, he gets people involved. The value of that kind of influence and leadership is difficult to calculate.”

Michael D. Fascitelli ’78, Hon. ’08, founder and managing partner of MDF Capital and Imperial Companies, has worked side by side with Ryan on URI matters for more than a dozen years, united by a common passion for helping the school. He says Ryan approaches his work in ways that elevate the University—

with vision, leadership, analytics, and a focused and disciplined approach to establishing goals and following up.

“With Tom you know meetings are going to be well-run and well-planned. You know you’re not going to punt on difficult issues. He’s demanding, but inclusive and collaborative.”

Dooley appreciates Ryan bringing his corporate experience to the URI Foundation & Alumni Engagement board. “If we’re going to do something, we’re going to do it right and it’s going to be the best. He has recruited fantastic people to join him in the endeavor who are willing to do it because Tom is there.”

Many who know Ryan say leading by example is part of the secret sauce that makes him successful.

“Tom’s a winner,” Fascitelli says. “Winners win, and he inspires confidence in others that a goal can be met, that something can be done, even if it’s hard. He inspires others to believe in a common goal, to participate in getting it established and executed. He’s a very team-oriented guy, but he pushes people for individual levels of excellence so the team can do better. And that’s a skill. That’s a winner, somebody who can get others across the finish line.”

The two alums also golf together, and Fascitelli says Ryan is very competitive, but incredibly honest and fun to play with. Ryan brought his passion for golf and helping others together in the CVS Health Charity Classic. He was instrumental in launching the tournament in 1999 with pros Brad Faxon and Billy Andrade, but in trademark fashion, he sidesteps praise.

“Our success was due to Billy and Brad; they got the pros to come, and we were fortunate to get some of the



Ryan with fellow URI alumnus, philanthropist, and golf partner, Mike Fascitelli, whose \$10 million contribution to the College of Engineering helped complete URI’s biggest construction project ever this fall. Ryan and Fascitelli share a commitment to making URI a better place by generously contributing to the University, not just financially, but also with their time, talent, and leadership.

best players in the game, many of them Hall of Famers. I’ve always said there are givers and takers in life, and they are all givers. They could have made more money elsewhere, but they came here to help our charities.”

Two decades later, he’s proud of the amount of money the tournament gives back. Just two days long, the CVS Classic is one of the top golf tournaments in terms of the amount of money given to charity—over \$20 million to date. And gifts benefit a diverse group of charities, with causes ranging from children’s services to homelessness to the environment.

A 10-handicapper, Ryan’s inner athlete is modest, too, even though he and Brad Faxon won the AT&T Pro-Am in 2003, and his name is etched on “the rock” at Pebble Beach. “Standing on the 18th green and receiving the trophy from Clint Eastwood was surreal. But note: I’ve never won any golf tournament alone. It’s always with a good partner, just like in life.”



Ryan partnered with PGA golfers Brad Faxon (left) and Billy Andrade (right) to launch the CVS Health Charity Classic in 1999. Ryan gives Faxon and Andrade credit for the tournament’s success. For Ryan, who asserts that success is never won alone, sharing credit seems not simple modesty, but instinctive strategy—helping others meet goals is, to Ryan, a significant measure of his own success.

“I’VE NEVER WON ANY GOLF TOURNAMENT ALONE. IT’S ALWAYS WITH A GOOD PARTNER, JUST LIKE IN LIFE.”

Ryan also worked with a nonprofit called Year Up, which gives at-risk young men and women “a hand up, not a hand-out. It’s where capitalism meets education: We pay young adults to go to school. Show up, they get paid; don’t show up, they don’t get paid; show up late, they get docked. We teach them things you and I take for granted: Shake hands, look people in the eye, keep your head up. To me, 90 percent of life is showing up.”

Community College of Rhode Island President Meghan Hughes worked with Ryan in her role as Year Up executive director from 2009–2015. “The two words that come to mind for Tom are: ‘in it.’ We’d been told Rhode Island was too small to grow the program. Tom rolled up his sleeves and helped me build a strategy

that had an enormous impact on our young adults. Here was someone with that title, frankly that looked like he does, a 60-year-old white guy in a suit and tie, who was willing to sit down and give them that kind of time.”

IT’S NOT RETIREMENT. IT’S PHASE 2.

People ask how retirement is going. Ryan says, “I can never retire. I call it phase 2.”

He estimates 20 percent of his time is spent on his venture firm; 30 percent on two boards he serves on; then the institute, URI, and the URI Foundation & Alumni Engagement. “The rest of my time is spent with family and friends. It’s nice to hang around with people you want to be with.”

mothers. They are fantastic and just good people, which means the world to me.”

His children say the same of him—and add that he is generous with his time and insights, leading by example.

“He worked extraordinarily hard and instilled that ethic in us,” says son Tim Ryan, CFO at Kate Spade. “We always had a job, and spent at least one summer working for CVS—but in the distribution center, not the typical intern in an office. I think he was trying to show us that whether you’re stacking boxes or the CEO, your job is no less or more important. I learned the value of putting my full self into whatever task I was doing. That’s something he’s always done.”

Now a father of three, Tim is amazed at all his father accomplished while still being fully present.

“He has an ability to step outside himself and relate to each of his children in a different way, make each one of us feel special and drive us in a unique way. If I’m talking to him about fashion, or my stepbrother is talking about his beer company, he’s trying to understand it. He’s an immensely curious person who asks a lot of questions, which is why he has an amazing ability to be relevant to everyone. He has a genuine interest in what people are doing, his mind never stops moving and that’s part of the reason he always has something interesting to say. He’s very infectious to follow, a tremendously charismatic person.”

Daughter Heather Leonard, an emergency department physician at Hartford Hospital, agrees. She describes her father as driven and hardworking, but with a gift for being able to make everyone around him feel comfortable.

“BE THE HARDEST WORKING PERSON IN THE ROOM AND LIFE WILL WORK OUT.”

“He gives me perspective on life and what’s important. For example, when you’re young and all you want is to make a certain team, and you don’t, you think your life is over. He’d tell us, ‘When you fail or hit a roadblock, just pick yourself up and keep going. You can pick another avenue and still get where you want to go.’ Whether it was sports or med school, he’d

say, ‘If you want to go for something in life that is hard to attain, you’re going to have to sacrifice. Be the hardest working person in the room and life will work out.’”

Now a mom of two, she says her kids call Ryan “Poppy.” A bright smile lights up his face when he talks about spending time with his eight grandchildren.

“When they come to visit, one of our rituals is that I take them to Dunkin’ Donuts and ask them, ‘What don’t I know about you that I should know about you?’ They’ve come to anticipate it, and prepare

for it. One will say, ‘I was in a play.’ Another will tell me math is his favorite subject. They learn from each other, too, and we just have the best time.”

When asked what he worries about now, his answer is thoughtful. “The lack of leadership in our country. Some say leaders don’t matter, but I think they really do, they set the tone at the top. Having said that, I have full confidence in our country and our people that we can withstand some poor leadership for a while. Other than that, I am bullish

on this country, I’m bullish on young people. I think our country is in good hands for the young generation that’s coming up.”

By any measure, Ryan’s is an exceedingly accomplished life. But he’s not comfortable with accolades, Cathy says. “He thinks he’s just a regular guy.”

This benefactor, grandfather, and influencer still has his sleeves rolled up and his sights set on big breakthroughs. It’s a safe bet that Tom Ryan, phase 2, will continue to be anything but regular. •

TOM RYAN ON HEALTH CARE

Having spent nearly four decades in the pharmacy world, Tom Ryan ’75, Hon. ’99, is still passionate about the industry and sees an increasing role for pharmacists in health care.

“When you look at the value of pharmacy and what it does to reduce hospitalizations, reduce surgeries, and keep people at work, there’s nothing like it. Drugs are our most cost-effective tool. Whether it’s for high cholesterol or high blood pressure or diabetes, think about it: Without pharmaceuticals, where would we be? It’s going to happen with cancer, we’re beginning to see it. And pharmacists are the most accessible health-care provider we have.”

While at CVS, Ryan oversaw the introduction of Minute Clinic, which brought registered nurses and physician assistants into the drugstore setting to increase access to care. At the time, people wondered why. Ryan pointed to the shortage of primary care physicians and people visiting the ER for minor issues. “You can have that same visit at Minute Clinic for \$60, while in a hospital setting it costs \$250. We have to get smarter. We can’t afford the system we have.”

Taking that idea a step further, Ryan sees a role for pharmacists being involved in health and wellness programs and therapy compliance. For example, if someone is diabetic, part of their care requirement might be to stop in at a Minute Clinic once a month to review their drug therapies and/or diet to see what they’re doing right or where they can improve.

“Patients are going to have to own more of their health. I believe people who don’t will have to pay more for coverage. For example, if you’re a smoker, you’re costing the system money; I think you should pay more for insurance. There are certain lifestyle changes people need to be responsible for. This is not Big Brother, this is just common sense: Bad drivers pay more auto insurance.”

Ryan has a passion for similar innovations that can help make people’s lives better, says his daughter, Dr. Heather Ryan Leonard, an emergency department physician at Hartford Hospital. Issues on her front burner are wait times and patient volume, and they often bounce ideas off each other.

Of these conversations with her dad, Leonard says, “He has so much experience in business and the pharmacy world, and I’m on the other end of things. He’s very interested in how we can help people, make things easier. We talk about the future of medicine or inventions, what could help people have a better quality of life in the future. If he hears about a new innovation or medicine, something up-and-coming, he’ll talk to me about it. He’s very non-judgmental—if someone approaches him with an idea, he’s willing to listen and explore it.”

When it comes to the health-care industry as a whole, Ryan feels the biggest issues are access, cost, and quality, but believes in a smaller, slower approach, rather than a total overhaul.

“We’re not going to fix it overnight. I don’t believe Medicare for All is the answer. My belief is, first, we should take care of the children. All children should always have access to health care. Second, we should take care of catastrophic coverage for all Americans—there should be no family in this country that gets wiped out because of a catastrophic illness. The government can backstop it, it just takes leadership and political will. Third, insurance coverage for families or individuals below a certain income threshold. Let’s start there and see where the market and results go.”

Finally, Ryan sees an investment in technology as a large part of how health care can be improved. “We’re so far behind other industries with use of technology. I don’t mean devices; I’m talking about medical records, sharing of information that could be improved. I think there’s redundancy of cost and misuse of systems, and I think tech can help eliminate that.” •

—Diane Sterrett



Tom and Cathy Ryan (center) with their children and grandchildren at a recent family gathering. Family is important to Ryan. His pride in them is reflected back when they talk about him. In spite of his demanding career, they say, he listened to them, made them each feel special, and helped motivate and inspire each in different ways.

to persuade national leadership that we would double, successfully. He has a curious intellect, almost an engineering mind, so he was really interested in the question of, ‘How do you grow a nonprofit business in Rhode Island’s economy?’ He gave very frank feedback, which quickly allowed me to trust him. I knew he stood behind what he was telling me, and that allowed me to go further faster.”

Ryan also made it a point to get to know the students and their stories, sharing his own story of success through hard work to inspire them about what’s possible.

“He was really in it to make sure the organization would be successful, and

Cathy says when they get a chance to escape, they love Europe or anyplace new. “We both enjoy traveling, and when it comes time to take two weeks off, we do. But before, when he was at CVS? Never,” she laughs.

His business personality does seep into family life a bit, says Cathy. “He always wants something to do, so he expects the whole family to rally and stay busy. When we’re all together, we’re on a schedule and he wants to know what we are doing next.”

Ryan is proud of his family—wife Cathy and four children. “I’m proud of all of them, of how they are as fathers and

They're Here

Studying marine invasive species is complicated. To begin with, not all invasive species are bad for the areas they invade. Others damage or destroy the habitats they migrate to. These URI scientists are working to monitor, understand, and manage these species.

By Marybeth Reilly-McGreen

Millions have come by boat, tucked away in holds, shedding babies through ballast water. Swimming, scuttling, drifting, they deploy under cover of night or in broad daylight. It makes no difference. Covert operations aren't necessary. And while there will be combat and casualties, maybe even annihilation, the campaign is waged quietly, often underfoot and, while not necessarily out of sight, nonetheless undetected by most.

Save for scientists such as Carol Thornber, Niels-Viggo Hobbs, Ph.D '16, and Lindsay Green-Gavrielidis, who've made it their work to research invasive species and to train new generations of scientists in monitoring and mitigating them. Because the effects of invasive species can range from nuisance to deadly.

Invasive species are nonindigenous plants or animals whose arrival often adversely affects habitats—economically or ecologically. Management of invasive species varies. In some cases, physical or mechanical control, i.e. removing the invasive species from the habitat through traps or barriers or, in the case of plants, mowing, is possible. In some instances, chemical (pesticides) and biological



Hemigrapsus sanguineus
(Asian shore crab)

controls (introducing predators, parasites, or pathogens) have been employed. Still another option is cultural management: manipulation of the habitat that makes it less hospitable to the invader.

Sound troubling? It can be. Books on the subject bear ominous titles reminiscent of H.G. Wells' *War of the Worlds* or virtually anything written by homegrown horror author H.P. Lovecraft. Examples: *Killer Algae: The True Tale of a Biological Invasion*; *The Aliens Among Us: How Invasive Species are Transforming the Planet — And Ourselves*; *Inheritors of the Earth: How Nature is Thriving in an Age of Extinction*; and *A Plague of Rats and Rubber Vines: The Growing Threat of Species Invasions*.

Once they arrive, the invaders' strategy follows a predictable, four-pronged plan: eat, reproduce, fight, endure. Trouble is, things are often out of hand by the time human beings catch on. Case in point: the red Asian seaweed *Grateloupia turuturu* that was first discovered in Narragansett Bay in 1996. Twelve years after this species was introduced through ballast water from trans-Atlantic ships, it had spread across more than 400 miles of New England coastline from Maine south. It is a nuisance for fishers, gumming up lobster traps and pots, and it blankets beaches. It also smells when dried. Not great for a state whose primary industry is tourism.

And that's just one invasive species. Scientists estimate at least 25 new fish and invertebrate species have arrived in New England over the past couple of decades. Some have substantial ecological impact, says Hobbs. Scientists like Hobbs are quick to note, though, that invasive species aren't all bad. They'll tell you the term "invasive" is generally pejorative and, so, a seriously problematic word to use when classifying a species new to town. "Invasive" is likely both incorrect and very troublesome, Hobbs says.



Grateloupia turuturu
Asian red seaweed
Invasive seaweed

Tricellaria inopinata
Tufted-buff bryozoan
Invasive aquatic animal

Botrylloides violaceus
Orange sheath tunicate
Invasive aquatic animal

Mytilus edulis
Blue mussel
Native animal

Codium fragile
Green sea finger
Invasive seaweed

Bugula neritina
Brown bryozoan
Invasive aquatic animal

Aquatic Invaders

These seaweeds and aquatic animals, except for the native blue mussel, are among Southern New England's aquatic invaders.

Details at uri.edu/magazine.

"You have to
admire what
a species is
capable of."

Niels-Viggo Hobbs



PHOTOS: AYLA FOX '20; NORA LEWIS

It's a sunny day in June. Hobbs and a group of students are in Newport, drawing up submerged slate plates tethered to docks and weighted with bricks to see what's growing underneath, on, and around them. Docks are considered disturbed habitats, and boats are vectors for invasive species. A marina, then, is the first line for the introduction and propagation of an invasion.

A side conversation about an invasive jellyfish has Hobbs excited. There have been reports of a new-to-the-area type of jellyfish that has been attaching itself to eelgrass. Hobbs warns those present not to touch the jellyfish should they see them, as the jellyfish produce hallucinogenic effects—and "not in a pleasant way," Hobbs quips.

Back to the invasive species at hand. Hobbs is looking at a dark, bushy growth. It's actually a group of organisms, colonial creatures, with the scientific name bryozoa. Hobbs notes that three years ago, they wouldn't have encountered this, but it's proved a hardy creature (remember that four-pronged plan: reproduces faster, better able to adapt, fast grower, not a picky eater). "Pretty much everything on this plate is invasive," Hobbs says, looking at its occupants. "Ninety-nine percent of what we're seeing is invasive species."

In 2018, Hobbs became the first winner of the part-time faculty excellence award given by URI's Office of the Provost. Hobbs, an adjunct instructor in the College of the Environment and Life Sciences, began teaching in 2003. He is an expert on invertebrates and marine communities in New England and is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Environmental Protection Agency. He studies crustaceans and has "heavily dabbled" in other species.

Hobbs notes the various creatures present on the slate to his students, who fill out pre-printed data sheets. "They're a crash course on how to ID this stuff," says Megan Major '20, an undergraduate studying animal and veterinary sciences and wildlife conservation. Hobbs and his

students check the plates every month. Some plates are left in the water for the whole season.

Up close, the plate's residents collectively resemble a forgotten sandwich in a bagged lunch that has been sitting in a backpack all summer. Think slime in varying shades of rust, upon which sit squishy colonies of beetle-sized tunicates, or sea squirts, aptly named as they squirt seawater when pressed. "They're actually closely related to us," Hobbs says.

Hobbs picks up a bug-ish looking invertebrate from the slate and holds it in his hand—a tiny, many-legged crustacean you'd freak out to find in your bathing

An invasive species of crab may push out native species, but also be a huge food source for commercially important fish.

suit. "Isopods are adorable," one student enthuses. "They're so cute."

"You have to admire what a species is capable of," Hobbs says.

The conversation turns to how invasive species can be a boon for the environment. That's why some would prefer the term "introduced," saving "invasive" for those species causing ecological or economic damage. An invasive species of crab, for instance, may push out native species, but also be a huge food source for commercially important fish.

"Some species have so much value that people look past it," Hobbs says. "Once an invasive species is introduced, though, it's hard to eradicate it."



PHOTOS: AYLA FOX; NORA LEWIS

One way to mitigate an invasive species' impact: Eat it.

To say Lindsay Green-Gavrielidis studies seaweed is certainly true, but that just doesn't begin to cover it. A seaweed enthusiast, she'll tell you it's a foundation species, providing habitat and structure for innumerable organisms. It is the base of many food webs. It serves its ecosystem through the extraction of excess nutrients from coastal waters.

And it's great in lemon cake.

Green-Gavrielidis has her Ph.D. in plant biology and is at URI as a postdoctoral researcher. She studies sustainable aquaculture, the ecology of seaweed blooms, and the impact of introduced non-native species on native faunas and floras, among other things. She and Hobbs regularly dive 24 sites around the state, monitoring seaweed activity.

Seaweed blooms can smother other things living in an area. Microbial decay reduces available oxygen. Seaweed blooms are encouraged by excess nutrients in the coastal environment, Green-Gavrielidis says.

"We're putting too much nitrogen into the water," she says. Like Hobbs, Green-Gavrielidis is hesitant to categorize a species as good or bad for the environment. "We don't know enough to determine whether something is of benefit or not. That takes time and research," she says.

Green-Gavrielidis is working with local oyster fishers on kelp farming. She's studying whether this type of brown seaweed might be a food source as well as examining quantitative data on changes in the local habitat over the past 30 years. It is a great field for students to get into, she says. And URI's proximity to the ocean

Seaweed blooms can smother other things living in an area and are encouraged by excess nutrients in the coastal environment.

"I always wanted to be a marine biologist," Green-Gavrielidis says. "I wanted to study dolphins and whales."

Green-Gavrielidis grew up in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, nowhere near the ocean. "My mother said my first word was 'whale,'" she recalls. As a girl, she sat and read encyclopedias and typed up little profiles of whales. College introduced Green-Gavrielidis to other compelling things that lived in the ocean, such as seaweed blooms and excess nitrogen.

makes for unparalleled learning opportunities.

"I'm a proponent of getting your hands wet and observing the things that you study in their natural environment," Green-Gavrielidis says. "It gives us a good sense of what's happening in essential habitats."

"Narragansett Bay is one of the best-studied estuaries in the country. It's easily accessible, well-populated, and has a good collection of vigorous research universities in the area, as well."

Green-Gavrielidis is also interested in seaweed as a food source. The invasive species *Grateloupia turuturu*, for instance, is a commercially important food source in East Asia, its native habitat. "Marine life factors into toothpaste, ice cream, and powdery non-dairy creamer. It's a clarifier in beer brewing," she says. "The vast majority of seaweeds are edible."

For Green-Gavrielidis' lemon cake recipe (with seaweed!) and for her tips on where to buy seaweed, go to uri.edu/magazine.



Asian red seaweed

"I'm a proponent of getting your hands wet."

Lindsay Green-Gavrielidis



"Species are
changing due
to human
action."

Carol Thornber

When Carol Thornber was six years old and vacationing in Oregon, she picked up a book about whales and dolphins at the public library. The New Jersey native, now a professor of natural resources science and associate dean of research in the College of the Environment and Life Sciences, fell in love with the ocean and its creatures in that moment.

As an undergraduate studying biology at Stanford University, she learned how to scuba dive in Monterey Bay. "And I saw all this life there: fish, seaweeds, crabs scuttling around—the whole bit."

She gravitated to marine biology and ecology as she studied the rocky shores and tide pools of California. "There were lots of scientific studies done on crabs but little was known on the basic biology of some species of seaweed."

Further investigation raised questions. "Seaweeds don't live in isolation," Thornber says. "As I've gone along in my career, I've seen things start to change and wondered why. Species disappear or new species come into the mix."

In graduate school, Thornber studied invasive seaweeds that had become established in Southern California. "If you lie down on a floating dock, there's all sorts of stuff there, primarily because of boat traffic."

Invasive seaweeds are a tricky thing to manage. Harvesting some types actually triggers reproduction. Eradicating other types is an expensive and disruptive process. Thornber maintains a lab and has an active research program. She is particularly interested in another species of red seaweed, *Dasysiphonia japonica*, which reproduces with disruption.

"It's a good invader because it can fragment easily. A piece breaks off and starts to grow," Thornber says. "This species is appearing on both sides of Cape Cod. South of the Cape the water is warmer than the north because of currents. This one quickly spread around."

"We see huge piles of it washing up on beaches. It's an eyesore for coastal communities: little red puffballs in the water," she notes. It's become a dominant seaweed on the Eastern Seaboard.

So what's to be done? This is not a field of quick fixes or simple answers. In monitoring the spread of invasive species, scientists can make recommendations ranging from containment to eradication, as well as prevention of future invasions. What is certain is that international trade and travel are not going to cease—so these issues will amplify over time.

And, not all introduced species survive in their new habitats. The Chinese mitten

"As I've gone along in my career, I've seen things start to change and wondered why. Species disappear or new species come into the mix."

crab, *Eriocheir sinensis*, for instance, which has done millions of dollars' worth of damage on the West Coast, started showing up in New York. It didn't fare well, though, and ended up failing to establish itself. And a species of European shrimp that showed up in Narragansett Bay appears to have recently disappeared in Salem Sound, where it was first introduced. Nature's version of game over.

"It's important for us to understand our natural environment because species are changing due to human action," Thornber says. "We track these populations and see what happens to them."

"Sometimes species just disappear," Thornber adds. "That kind of ebb and flow happens in nature."

Homo sapiens: Take note. •



ENGINEERING FOR A NEW WORLD



“Working in robotics is like the Wild West in terms of the opportunities it presents.”

— Robin Hall '20

Robin Hall '20 adjusts the wall-traversing drone he's developing with an independent research grant.

The largest construction project in University history, The Fascitelli Center for Advanced Engineering opened its doors this fall, bringing all the engineering disciplines together in a space that actively supports hands-on, interdisciplinary research and defies departmental silos. The center features state-of-the-art research labs, student-oriented open space, and bold, modern design—transparent, airy, and centered around common work areas.

By Janine Liberty

From the smartphone to the Large Hadron Collider to France's Millau Viaduct, some of the world's greatest engineering marvels have been created in the last 20 years. Rapid advances in technology and material sciences have changed not just what's possible in engineering, but what's imaginable. Engineers are at the center of an era defined by unprecedented technological capabilities, and their creative and practical achievements are shaping the world in entirely new ways.

A New Space for a New Era of Research

URI's College of Engineering is positioned to push the rapidly expanding boundaries of science and technology, and its new home, The Fascitelli Center for Advanced Engineering, is designed for this new era. “With the opening of The Fascitelli Center for Advanced Engineering this fall,” says College of Engineering Dean Raymond M. Wright, “students can be educated differently, and researchers can collaborate more easily across disciplines.”

During preliminary meetings with the project's principal architect, Terry Steelman, of the firm Ballinger of Philadelphia, Wright explained that he wanted to bring faculty together through research areas,



The Fascitelli Center for Advanced Engineering celebrated its official opening on October 7. Left to right: Michael F. Brandmeier, president and CEO, Toray Plastics (America) Inc.; Congressman David Cicilline; Timothy DelGiudice, chair, R.I. Council on Postsecondary Education; Barbara Cottam, chair, R.I. Board of Education; guests of honor Elizabeth Fascitelli and Michael Fascitelli '78, Hon. '08; and Raymond Wright, dean of the College of Engineering.

not departments or disciplines. “One thing we know for sure is when we bring people together to solve challenges, it gets done,” says Wright.

The college will be organized around critical interdisciplinary research themes that address some of the biggest challenges the world faces: alternative energy, nanotechnology, robotics, cybersecurity, water for the world, biomedical technology, advanced materials and structures, and sensors and instrumentation.

The Fascitelli Center will support and encourage this interdisciplinary research by physically locating faculty from different disciplines near one another and adjacent to common research and meeting spaces. “Almost nothing in engineering anymore exists solely within a single discipline,” says Steelman. “This building is designed not just to advocate for, but to stimulate interdisciplinary discovery, so students can be educated differently, and researchers can collaborate across disciplines.”

“This new facility will stimulate collaborative, multidisciplinary learning and research. It will lead to discoveries that we cannot even imagine today.”

—URI President David M. Dooley

“Our faculty are designing and building the infrastructure modern society relies on; finding innovative ways to

harness energy from our sun, ocean, and even highways; building new medical diagnostic methods and devices; and racing to ensure every man, woman, and child has access to clean, safe water,” says Wright.

“Increasingly, our engineering students and faculty are not only working in interdisciplinary teams within the college, but with students and faculty from across the University in oceanography, health, pharmacy, chemistry, computer science, and business as well as companies and corporations around the state, region, and the world,” URI President David M. Dooley says.

“This new facility will stimulate collaborative, multidisciplinary learning and research. It will lead to discoveries that we cannot even imagine today,” Dooley adds.

The new building was funded by two Rhode Island voter-approved bond issues, as well as private gift commitments from corporations including Toray Plastics (America), Inc.; FM Global; Taco; Hexagon; and Shimadzu; and from individual donors, including a \$10 million gift from College of Engineering alumnus Michael D. Fascitelli '78, Hon. '08, and his wife, Elizabeth Fascitelli.

Learning Through Hands-On Research and Fieldwork

“The glass of the building is both a metaphor and a physical manifestation of transparency and collaboration.”

—Dean Raymond M. Wright

Working in robotics is like the Wild West in terms of the opportunities it presents,” says engineering student Robin Hall ’20. “It’s always innovative, always changing, and there is always something new to work on.” Hall sits in the Intelligent Control and Robotics Lab surrounded by unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), robots, spare wires, and computers.

Situated on the fourth floor of the new engineering building, the robotics lab opens up to an expanse of glass that encloses the exterior hallway. From inside, you can look out over the northern edge of the Kingston Campus to the woodlands beyond. Hawks soar above the distant treetops, in effortless flight, while research teams inside devise robotic systems capable of agile, aerial movement.

This year, Hall has an independent research grant to develop a wall-traversing drone. “My idea employs a four-propeller UAV surrounded by an external cage that can rotate independently from the internal body of the robot. The cage will protect the vehicle and maintain stability.” Working with existing drone and cage designs, Hall’s innovation is to fix two axes and add a motor to the third axis to control the movement. “The quadcopter will behave like a wheel, rolling laterally against a wall surface.”

He’ll work with Paolo Stegagno, assistant professor of electrical, computer, and biomedical engineering, as his grant adviser. “As he designs and tests his UAV, Robin will gain advanced knowledge of control systems,” says Stegagno.

More research involvement—such as Hall’s—at the undergraduate level is important to the college; it means higher-quality senior projects, better internships, and more opportunities for students at all levels to learn from one another. Senior capstone projects are team-oriented and industry-driven, focusing on real-world challenges companies bring in for senior-year students to work on over the course of the academic year.

In the new building, capstones will be a significant and highly visible part of the activity. More importantly, points out Wright, students from different research themes will be working in the same space.

“You’ll have civil engineering and mechanical and biomedical capstone projects happening side by side.”

Making the capstone projects highly visible is meant not only to benefit students, but to attract industry. The projects are already an important point of entry for industry partners, having reliably translated to employment for graduates as well as research and economic partnerships with the University.

College of Engineering alumnus W. Lewis Collier, M.S. ’86, Ph.D. ’14, rapid engineering and prototype systems engineering manager for the MIL Corporation, and former technical director at Navmar Applied Sciences Corporation, supervised URI engineering students doing capstone projects at SRI International. He says URI’s capstone program “offers a valuable opportunity for students to apply and hone their engineering skills and learn about real-world problems and how engineers operate in the field.” Adds Collier, the program “is also important to the University’s mission to provide educated workers for Rhode Island businesses.”

Design With Purpose

Great design is achieved through a balance of opposites. This 190,000-square-foot, five-story engineering building is a tour de force of design.

During the day, light streams through-out the enormous expanses of open space, constantly shifting in color, shadow, and intensity as it passes through surfaces of varying opacity. This effect is balanced by the density and stability of the building’s metal truss support system—which eliminates the need for interior support columns and allows for uninterrupted, open interiors—and sleek concrete floors.

The trusses, which span more than 150 feet of open space inside and are visible from the exterior of the building, are like those used for bridges, giving the building a bridge-like appearance, which emphasizes its physical siting between the older, humanities-focused buildings in the center of the Kingston Campus and the newer, science and technology-focused buildings on the north edge of campus.



Michael Fascitelli '78, Hon. '08, at the October 7 opening. “Much of the space in the new building is devoted to research that brings different disciplines together,” says Fascitelli, “which will promote a different kind of learning.”

In the building’s design, the Ballinger team combined the majority of the teaching environments on the first floors, so that students will be exposed to the interdisciplinary nature of the building.

“The quad level is a remarkable place,” says Wright. “We want our students to recognize that it’s their home. There are no faculty offices or research offices on that floor. It’s all about showcasing the hands-on aspects of engineering and building a creative atmosphere for students.”

Great architecture must also balance the experience of the individual with a collective purpose. Fascitelli credits Wright’s vision of bringing the college’s departments together as the driving force behind the building design. “Science as a whole has become so much more interactive, and the world is changing at such a rapid pace,” says Fascitelli. “You really need that

cooperation between disciplines.”

Says Wright, “The glass of the building is both a metaphor and a physical manifestation of transparency and collaboration.”

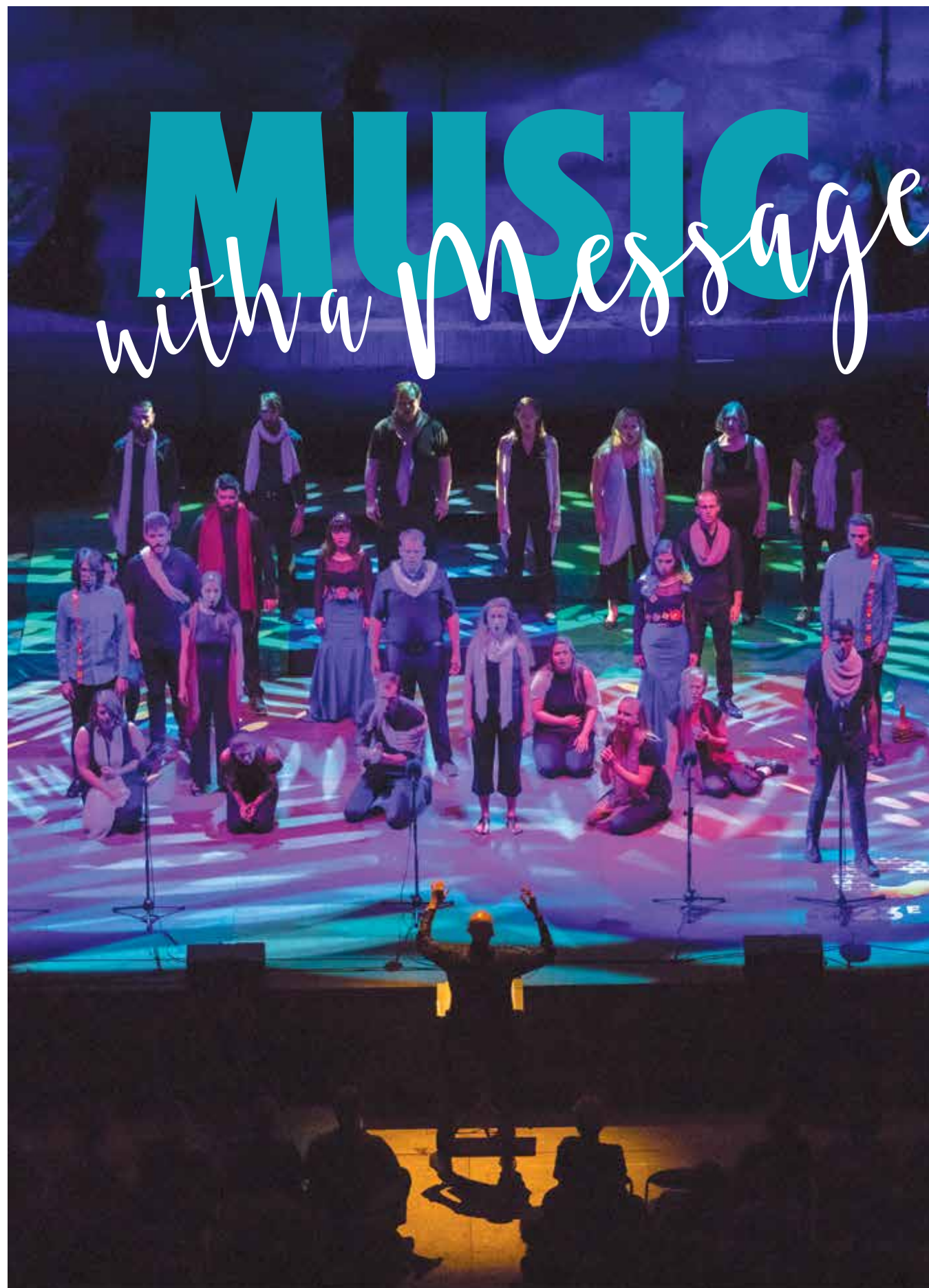
“There’s nothing like this building in our portfolio. It’s unique to URI and I’m really proud of that,” says Steelman, adding that the center is “one of the most provocative and technologically advanced engineering buildings in the country.”

Hall is inspired by the new engineering space. “Being able to work in this space is an amazing upgrade,” he says. “It’s like a temple. It feels like you have the opportunity to do anything here.”•

More at uri.edu/magazine

- Meet engineering student Vanessa Kamara '21.
- Photo Gallery: The Fascitelli Center for Advanced Engineering

A view from the fourth floor of The Fascitelli Center for Advanced Engineering, facing west: Chafee, Woodward, and Rodman Hall, and a corner of the Beupre Center for Chemical and Forensic Sciences, reflected in the north-facing exterior glass of the building.



VOICES 21C is a choir with a cause. Raising their voices to bring important ideas and messages to life through music, the choir members, including four URI alumni, are transforming themselves and their audiences through the power of song.

By Marybeth Reilly-McGreen

If you turned 6 around the turn of the century, your birthday wish list might have included a Razor Scooter, Tamagotchi, Furby, Pokémon, or maybe a Barbie princess.

Ashley Frezza '16 asked for a queen. The Queen of Soul. "I really wanted an Aretha Franklin CD," Frezza says. "I loved the soulfulness that she brought to everything. Everyone has a different genre that speaks to their soul."

What the 6-year-old Frezza couldn't have known was that Franklin was a diva with an agenda. She was, in effect, speaking to the souls of her fans about heavy issues, weaving calls for social justice into lyrics. Beyond the feminist anthem "Respect," songs like "A Change is Gonna Come," "People Get Ready," "Think," and "Young, Gifted, and Black" underscored issues of civil rights, freedom, empowerment, and equity.

Now nearly 20 years later, Frezza is following Franklin's lead, singing to advance social justice with VOICES 21C, a Massachusetts-based chamber choir, which, for the past four years, has been engaging in activism through music, selecting a different social justice theme to explore each year. In August, the choir represented the United States at the Choralies music festival in Vaison-la-Romaine, France, performing in front of an audience of more than 6,000. Its 2019 program, "Half the Sky: Voices, Struggles, Resilience and the Power of the Feminine Spirit," features musical compositions written mostly by female-identifying composers that incorporate text by women poets and activists.

"Music has been a form of activism all over the world," Frezza says. "It is a tool of expression and a universal language. Even if you are unable to understand the text being sung, you can hear it in the music and voices—the joy or anguish that is being portrayed."

People have been raising their voices in protest for a long, long time. In fact, songs and political movements often go hand in hand. Abolitionists, suffragettes, unionists, human and civil rights advocates, war protestors, gay rights proponents, environmentalists, pacifists—even vegetarians—have turned to song to advance their causes.

Frezza, an alto, is one of four URI alumni in the 22-member choir, singing alongside Michael Genese '16, a founding member; Mallory Leonard '18; and Nicolette Mingels '16, also a founding member. Frezza, who works for URI as an event assistant, joined VOICES 21C earlier this year. "I got involved through my friends and former classmates, two of whom are founding members of the group. I saw their first concert in 2016 and really enjoyed how different the choir was," Frezza says. "It's a group of strong, creative individuals."

“In our stitching together of every piece in the performance, the audience finds themselves understanding the bigger, interconnected picture of social change that is desperately being asked of today’s population.”

—Michael Genese ’16



Mallory Leonard '18, Michael Genese '16, Nicolette Mingels '16, and Ashley Frezza '16 at Choralies.

VOICES 21C’s performances are immersive experiences. Song is accompanied by movement, improvisation, storytelling, and text. A performance comprises eight to 10 songs. Genese, a tenor, says music inspired by the words of impassioned activists can have a profound effect on both performer and audience.

“Each text source used in a piece of choral music has a different context, denotation, connotation, and inspiration,” Genese says. “When you set a poem to music, you’re adding new factors such as harmony, tonality, and emotional breadth, which is honestly the thing people connect to the most.”

“Music is a phenomenal gateway into the vulnerable,” Genese continues.

“And all of these varying factors in music can be used to color messages of activism in ways you don’t see in more traditional forms of rallying and social change.”

“Half the Sky’s” set list is organized into two parts. The first group of songs is inspired by Elvira Arellano, a Mexican-born activist who fights for undocumented immigrants. She is the founder of La Familia Latina Unida, an advocacy group for the undocumented, and the co-chair of Centro Sin Fronteras, a nonprofit serving the same group. Composer Nicholas Cline’s “She Took His Hands” recounts a 2007 statement Arellano made when she was arrested and separated from her young son: “They can’t hurt us. God is protecting us. You just have to have faith, and I will be fine and with you soon.”

The second set’s compositions take their inspiration from poet Audre Lorde, a self-described black, lesbian, mother, warrior poet, and 1960s-era civil rights activist, who, near the end of her life, took the name Gamba Adisa (translation: she who makes her meaning clear) in an African naming ceremony. Her poetry reflects the fear, rage, anguish, and resolve that are elicited by racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia. In the Joan Szymko composition “She Who Makes Her Meaning Clear,” VOICES 21C gives voice to the Lorde quote: “When I dare to be powerful, to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid.”

“We put so much into it physically and emotionally,” Frezza says. “It’s a little bit draining, but also exciting to tell these stories. We’re bringing life to the work of amazing activists and poets, and I’m becoming a better person for being exposed to them. I’m just so grateful.”

VOICES 21C has traveled to Israel, Palestine, Mexico, and now France. That the group is attracting international attention certainly reflects the talent of its

members, but it could also have something to do with their process. Themes are discussed, input is valued, collaboration is essential, and innovation is prized.

“With only four years under our belts, I think we’re slowly making visible how the untraditional can be the most rewarding,” Genese says. “Our work isn’t based on any particular group or school of thought. We are simply going forward with the ideas we have, and while, of course, not every idea is a great idea, discussing them at length and altering them renders us more informed about our choices. There is this complete surrender of tradition and convention, and the ground we are breaking is completely new—to every one of us.”

Soprano Leonard agrees.

“I had not given much thought to music being utilized as a form of activism. I had thought of music as a therapeutic instrument,” Leonard says. “Now, I believe that music is a powerful tool to open up peoples’ minds to social justice issues happening worldwide. I feel like it is way more personal and poignant to sing and act out songs about social justice issues than to just have conversations about them.”

Genese calls the choir’s work intersectional, with concerts structured as musical narratives. “And in our stitching together of every piece in the performance, the audience finds themselves understanding the bigger, interconnected picture of social change that is desperately being asked of today’s population,” he says. “This year, our entire program is about lifting up the feminine.”

“We sing music about mothers separated from their children, about racial inequality, and about the #MeToo movement—and we create a space for discussion and contemplation. It is heavy, dynamic, and fragile material that has been receiving phenomenal feedback.”

The choir wants its audience to engage with the issues about which it is singing. “Music and art are important gateways to discussing difficult subjects,” Leonard says. We challenge stereotypes through song in the hopes that music makes people receptive to our messages. That is the only way that we can fix our social justice issues.”

Put another way—and as Aretha Franklin would say—“You better think.” •

“We’re bringing life to the work of amazing activists and poets, and I’m becoming a better person for being exposed to them.”

—Ashley Frezza '16

Below and on page 36, VOICES 21C performs for a crowd of 6,000 at the Roman Theater during the Choralies festival in Vaison-la-Romaine, France, last August. Facing page, bottom, VOICES 21C’s other performances at Choralies included this one, for a more intimate crowd at a local gymnasium in Vaison-la-Romaine.





BUILDING A HIVE OF INDUSTRY

Evan P. Schneider, M.A. '07, is the editor of *The Best of Boneshaker: A Bicycling Almanac*; author of the novel, *A Simple Machine, Like the Lever*; and co-creator of *Hive of Industry*, a blog he maintains with his wife, Judith Edwards. *Hive of Industry* chronicles the pair's efforts to live frugally and sustainably. Here, Schneider shares the ideas and values that inform the lifestyle they've chosen, along with a selection of photos depicting their urban homestead, the food they produce there, and the Pacific Northwest landscape that inspires them.

By Marybeth Reilly-McGreen



WHY WE DO IT

We are committed to subtly encouraging and exploring a slower, more intentional, earth-based lifestyle. There are a multitude of benefits for local and global communities when people are more directly involved in their own subsistence.

“There is a steep learning curve in growing food, and in living frugally.”



HOMESTEADING IN THE MODERN WORLD



We wanted to find a piece of property outside of Portland, Oregon, where we could dive headlong into our dream of having a mini-farm and producing our own food. We found a house on a moderately-sized lot within the city—in the Montavilla neighborhood of southeast Portland—and promptly dug up almost every inch of lawn for garden space. Now that we’ve been through a few years of prolific urban gardening, we’re grateful we eased into self-supporting on a smaller scale. There is a steep learning curve in growing food, and in living frugally, and it’s often overwhelming—at least for beginners like us.

“Our most consistent source of inspiration is being outside.”



FRUGALITY FOR FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE

It was driven by necessity. Being real about our finances and giving ourselves permission to live with less, pay off our debt, and rethink a money-driven existence felt incredibly freeing. What we keep returning to is the joy we experience by doing things ourselves and living with less.



INSPIRATION

Helen and Scott Nearing, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Barbara Kingsolver, Wendell Berry, Dolly Freed—and others like them who have worked diligently over the last century or two to remind humankind how we might live in tandem with the planet, more like our ancestors did, rather than perpetuating the belief that the Earth is ours to do with as we please. Our most consistent source of inspiration is being outside—hiking, camping, and backpacking—as well as ambling through the countryside and seeing farms and open landscapes.



WHAT WE’VE LEARNED

It sounds precious, but even the process of planting a seed and watching it sprout—then seeing it thrive or struggle—teaches you so much about the Earth’s patterns, pressures, and complexities. We’re pleased that, on the whole, people have reacted very positively to our experiment. We hope that our work will speak for itself and draw people in and make them wonder if they’re capable of doing something similar (hint—they are!). It’s encouraging to see people look at their lives a little differently after seeing what we’re up to.



“We wanted to hear from others and be part of a useful and inspiring discussion.”



THE VALUE OF MY URI EDUCATION

At URI, I worked very closely with Department of English faculty, including J. Jennifer Jones, Marty Rojas, and Carolyn Betensky, each of whom in their own way helped shape the person, the writer, and the professional I am today. I am grateful for their insights, instruction, and encouragement. In addition, Stephen Barber’s passion for theory and his ability to take tightly tangled philosophical texts and give them life made him one of the highlights of my time at URI.



WHAT MAY COME

We started our blog and Instagram account in June of 2014. More than just sharing information and photographs, we wanted to hear from others and be part of a useful and inspiring discussion—and social media allows us to achieve that in ways traditional print media doesn’t. We don’t know how the story ends yet—we’re still very much in the midst of trying things out and laying the groundwork for how to move forward. One of the most intriguing aspects of storytelling via blogs and social media, we think, is that they are stories being told in real time by real people living them. In *The Good Life*, Helen and Scott Nearing’s aim was “to present a technical, economic, sociological, and psychological report on what we tried to do, how we did it, and how well or ill we succeeded in achieving our purposes.” That, for us, was a noble experiment, and one that we wanted to try in a different century with different challenges. The Nearings gave it more than 50 years. So get back to us in 45. •

Follow Evan and Judith on Instagram: @hiveofindustry



= CLASS NOTES =



Let your classmates know what you're up to. Reunions, gatherings, career or academic updates, weddings and birth announcements, retirements, exhibition openings, travel, or your favorite URI memories. Submit notes and photos: email: urimag@uri.edu, online: alumni.uri.edu.

1941
Margaret "Johnny" Thackeray Stone celebrated her centennial birthday on September 18, 2019. She was the first female member of the URI sailing team and a real-life Rosie the Riveter, joining the wartime workforce during World War II at Naval Air Station Quonset Point in North Kingstown, where she inspected warplane engines. Her husband was the late Leslie Stone '40, M.S. '49, who was a URI physics professor. Johnny's birthday celebration was hosted by her granddaughter, Sarah Gaines, a coastal research associate at the Coastal Resources Center, and was attended by her daughter, Jennifer Stone Gaines '69, and son-in-law, Arthur Gaines, Ph.D. '75, as well as many other family members and friends. Johnny is the ninth generation of her family to live in South County. She lived in Wakefield her whole life, until age 91, when she moved in with her daughter in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, where she still resides.



Margaret "Johnny" Thackeray Stone '41 was the first female member of the URI sailing team. Here, she is pictured at a regatta with Boston University.

1956
Etta Rae Blazar writes, "I recently visited roommates from Eleanor Roosevelt Hall: Ruth Kananack Rutchik and Sandra (Cookie) Salzman

Sadow, who currently reside in Delray and Boyton Beach, Florida, near Jog Road. We laughed together at old antics and classes we took and friends we made together and trips to our marriages in NYC. (Etta Rae married in Providence, R.I.) While waiting in line at dinner-time (in Florida), we met a man who overheard our conversation and was wearing a shirt that alerted us to his connection to the East Coast, and lo and

behold he graduated from URI (after us). We laughed and I think I squealed louder than my roommates so we entertained the rest of the waiting dinner line. What a small world! It was good to be together with roommates, and the years faded away when we talked about olden days. Giving out a big hello to all the friends we lost touch with and wishing them good health first and good cheer."



1958
Barbara DeCesare
"Since retiring as CEO of American Red Cross, R.I., I have become interested in photography. I am currently a juried member of Wickford Art Association and member of Center for the Arts, Warwick. From September through October 2019, I had a show of my works at the Bunny Fain Gallery, Temple Habonim."

1962
Paul Rideout, who now calls himself Palul, graduated with a B.S. in zoology/chemistry, then worked as a chemist at the University of Hawaii Marine Lab and later at Dr. Thorn's Endocrinology Lab in Boston. Years later, he cruised the Hawaiian waters as a research scientist for the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries. He has also logged over 35 years as a clinical lab scientist. Palul simultaneously became a well-known ceramic artist in Northern California. Retired from lab work, he teaches ceramics at Shasta College in Redding, California. Over the past year he has been restoring a 6.5-foot terracotta warrior, a replica of Chinese Emperor Qin Shi Huang Di's terracotta army (206 B.C.). Palul is the author of several books, including an autobiography, *VisionQuest, A Saga of the 1960s*, chronicling a decade of adventures after graduating from URI. He says, "I'm fortunate to be quite right-brain, left-brain balanced. Science and art blended together perfectly for me in ceramics." Especially well-known among his works are the two pyramids by the Sundial Bridge in Redding. Visit Palul.com for a sampling of his art and links to his books.

1964
Peter Van Dyke, page 54
1965
Tom Dombrowsky, page 54



Paul (Palul) Rideout '62 is restoring a 6.5-foot terracotta warrior.

1966
Charles Russell Bengtson was at URI's 133rd Commencement to see his granddaughter, Emma Bengtson '19, graduate. Son Jon Bengtson '94 (Emma's father) was also in attendance. (Photo, page 48)

1967
David Burns, page 54
Rick Chandler, page 54
David Cordeiro, page 54

1974
Thomas Lamb of East Greenwich, R.I., has retired as chairman and CEO of Centreville Bank. Lamb will remain on the board of trustees, serve on the compensation committee, and chair the governance committee. Lamb joined Centreville Bank in 2014. He previously ran Wickford Consulting LLC and held positions with Fleet Financial Group and Old Stone Bank.

Thomas R. Zorabedian '74, M.A. '76 has retired from his position as assistant dean of URI's College of Arts and Sciences after 28 years of work-

ing at the University. Tom will continue as a member of the film/media faculty and will teach film courses through the Honors Program. He serves on the board, and as a judge, for the Rhode Island International Film Festival and is on the South County Hospital Development Committee. In his partial retirement, Tom plans to work on the book he's writing about memorable dialogue in films; "to spend more time with my wife, Nancy, my family, and friends; travel more; get in some additional bodysurfing; and, of course, to see as many movies as I possibly can." He'd enjoy hearing from classmates, including those from the "Project '70" days.



Thomas R. Zorabedian '74, M.A. '76

1975
James B. Bowen, chief warrant officer 2, U.S. Army, retired, was presented with a Silver Star, along with other military decorations, by Congressman James Langevin on May 18. Bowen was a Cobra Gunship pilot during the Vietnam War. He became a veterinarian, and retired in 2015. The Silver Star is the U.S. military's third-highest decoration for valor.

Thomas M. Ryan '75, Hon. '99, page 16
F. Randy Vogenberg published three trade e-books in late 2018 and early 2019: *Benefits Coverage for Specialty*



SIGMA PI REUNION
Joe D'Ambra '66 attended a Sigma Pi reunion in East Greenwich, R.I., on September 5 with **Howie Cohen '67**, **Pat (Callard) Cohen '68**, **Tom Conboy '66**, **Ray Conforti '66**, **John Panagako '66**, **Janice (Kapos) Panagako '68**, **Doug Simpson '65**, and **Ron Whittemore '66**.

Pharmaceuticals: Access and Management; Pharmacy Benefits for Nonspecialty Drugs: Access and Management; and Glossary of Common Drug-Related Benefit Terms & Acronyms.

1978
Michael D. Fascitelli '78, Hon. '08, pages 21 and 35

Ann Hood has a new book, *Kitchen Yarns: Notes on Life, Love, and Food*, coming out in December 2019. In this memoir, Ann describes how various meals connect to something deeper in her life—loss, family, confusion, growing up, grief, joy, and yes, love. Ann is the author of nine other books, including the best-selling memoir *Comfort: A Journey Through Grief* and best-selling novels *The Book That Matters Most* and *The Knitting Circle*. She lives in Providence, R.I.

1979
Dave Lavalley '79, M.P.A. '87, page 10

1980
Scott Bill Hirst serves as vice president of the Hopkinton, R.I., Town Council and chairs the Hopkinton Republican Town Committee. In June 2019 he was elected commander of

Narragansett Commandery No. 27, Knights Templar, a Masonic organization in Westerly, R.I. He received a Golden Sheaf for 50 years of continuous Grange membership in North Stonington, Conn., in 2018. His mother, Ruth B. Hirst, who worked for many years in dining services at URI and was also a Golden Sheaf member, died on August 11, 2016, a month before her 91st birthday.

Mark Morse of Johnston, R.I., has been elected 2019–2020 secretary of the Rhode Island Bar Association. Mark lectures on a variety of legal issues, including ERISA litigation, evidence, subrogation liens, expert testimony, civil trial practice, the Rhode Island Rules of Civil Procedure, and Rhode Island domestic law. Mark served as editor-in-chief of the *Rhode Island Bar Journal*, and is a member of the Animal Law Committee, the Family Court Bench Bar Committee, and the Superior Court Bench Bar Committee. In 2011, Mark was awarded the Dorothy Lohmann Public Service Award for his work with Defenders of Animals. Mark is married with three children, and resides in Johnston.



Debra Boelkes '81 published her first book, *The WOW Factor Workplace: How to Create a 'Best Place to Work' Culture*.

1981

Debra Boelkes of Amelia Island, Florida, founded Business World Rising in 2009 following a leadership career in Fortune 100 technology companies, including AT&T, IBM, and Arrow Electronics. Her first book, *The WOW Factor Workplace: How to Create a 'Best Place to Work' Culture* is chock full of candid interviews, proven career tips, and invaluable lessons learned by Deb and a cadre of successful executives from across corporate America, the military, and beyond.

1982

Harold Horvat of Cranston, R.I., has been elected chairman and CEO of Centreville Bank. Horvat was elected president and COO of Centreville Bank in 2018, having held positions

of increasing responsibility since joining the bank in 2014. Horvat has over 30 years of experience in the banking industry, starting his career at Old Stone Bank and serving in leadership positions at a number of community banks including as executive vice president and COO at Mansfield Bank, headquartered in Mansfield, Mass. Horvat serves as treasurer of the board of directors for FRIENDS WAY, the only family bereavement center in Rhode Island, and is a recipient of the organization's Michael E. Wiggins Leadership Award in honor of his more than 10 years of volunteer service as a group facilitator.

Paula Wolferseder Yabar has joined American Rivers as senior vice president of

advancement. Ms. Yabar has more than 30 years of fundraising and marketing experience at major institutions including the Council on Foundations, The Wilderness Society, the Pew Charitable Trusts, Smithsonian Institution, and The Nature Conservancy. Most recently, she was vice president for development at Resources for the Future. She joins American Rivers as it launches a new strategic plan that prioritizes improving water security for people and the environment, strengthening communities in the face of climate impacts, and ensuring diversity, equity and inclusion in river conservation nationwide. In addition to her B.A. in geography and marine affairs from URI, Ms. Yabar also holds an M.B.A. from George Washington University.

1984

Maureen Chlebek, P.E., PTOE, was promoted to vice president and regional manager of New England at McMahon Associates Inc., a transportation engineering and planning firm. In her role on the executive committee, Maureen will help guide the vision and future goals of the firm, while maintaining her active project management duties and daily leadership of the firm's New England region.

1986

Charles A. Flynn was promoted on June 27, 2019, to the rank of lieutenant general. Lt. Gen. Flynn is currently serving in Washington, D.C., at the headquarters, Department of the Army Staff, as the deputy chief of staff, G-3/5/7 (Operations, Planning, and Training). Lt. Gen. Flynn is a member of the URI ROTC Alumni Hall of Fame.

1987

Lydia Main, M.L.I.S. '87 retired from the East Lyme Public Library on Dec. 31, 2018, at age 81. She was employed for 33 years and 10 months as the head of technical services. On May 29, 2019, Lydia received a plaque from the Connecticut Library Association as Outstanding Librarian for 2018. On July 8, 2019, the East Lyme Public Library presented her with an official citation from the state of Connecticut General Assembly for her dedication and commitment of 33 years to the staff and residents of East Lyme.



Bahman Behzadi '90

1990

Bahman Behzadi has joined the Orlando, Fla., professional services firm Dewberry as a senior project manager in the transportation design group. Prior to joining the firm, Bahman, a URI electrical engineering major, spent 30 years specializing in design and management of projects related to transportation; commercial, industrial, and institutional development; renewable energy; and wastewater.



1992

Francine Jackson, M.A. '92 of Lincoln, R.I., was awarded a Distinguished Service Award at a recent joint meeting of the Middle Atlantic Planetarium Society and the Southeast Planetarium Association in Columbia, S.C. for outstanding, long-term service and dedication to the planetarium field, demonstrating leadership, inspiration, vision, commitment to excellence, and a passion for the planetarium community. With a bachelor's degree in astronomy from the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, and a master's in adult education from URI, Jackson, a NASA Solar System Ambassador, has been associated with planetariums from Rhode Island to Virginia since the 1970s, including the New York Hayden Planetarium (now the

Rose Center), where she taught astronomy classes for over 20 years. She also was cited for her decades in college, university and museum education. Jackson is a prolific writer, with a weekly email note from Brown University's Ladd Observatory, where she is a staff astronomer, and a monthly column for the amateur astronomy journal, *The Skyscraper*, and has written articles for other publications. She is also a professional proofreader and a volunteer at INSIGHT, the Rhode Island Association for the Blind, and is on the board of the Blackstone Valley Historical Society.

Daniel Schweizer has finished building a fifth house for impoverished families in the Dominican Republic. The foundation (zapato) has been laid for the sixth house.



Daniel Schweizer '92 has built five houses for impoverished families in the Dominican Republic.



1995 Michael Dunlap

"In October 2018, I was able to meet up and race with one of my URI professors, Richard C. Rhodes III, at Chattajack 2018 in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Chattajack is a 31-mile paddle race down the Tennessee River. Rick was in a tandem canoe, and I was on a stand-up paddleboard (SUP). 2018 was a monumental year for Rick as this was his fifth Chattajack, which is commemorated with a custom silver belt buckle. Rick has finished on the prone board and canoe in past years. This was my first Chattajack (and first race ever) on an SUP. I was amped up for the race already, but when I got to see my favorite professor, the bar was raised that much higher. We actually passed them on the way down to Tennessee, which was amazing in itself. We both finished the race and celebrated our accomplishment and our friendship into the night. We're both signed up to do it again this year. Go Rhody!!!!"



Dunlap (left) and Rhodes





Scott Macomber '93

1993

Scott Macomber has been promoted to vice president and principal at SMC (formerly Stormwater Maintenance and Consulting) in Baltimore, Md. Scott has been responsible for the oversight of all self-performing and general contracting construction activities, above-ground maintenance, and below-ground pipeline service operations at SMC. He has been instrumental in growing SMC's stream restoration practice with successful business development efforts combined with attracting experienced stream restoration professionals. Scott is a past president and current member of the Maryland Stream Restoration Association.

1994

Kimberly Nash Kelly of Killingworth, Conn., was elected chairman of the board at Thames River Innovation. She is also operating director of BioCT Innovation Commons, a science and technology incubator located in Groton, Conn.

1997

Kim Arcand published a research paper, "Touching the Stars: Improving NASA 3D Printed Data Sets with Blind and Visually Impaired Audiences" in the *Journal of Science Communication*. This is the latest journal publication from



FAMILY PRIDE

Jon Bengtson '94 (left) and Charles Russell Bengtson '66 (right) attended URI's 133rd Commencement to celebrate the graduation of daughter/granddaughter, Emma Bengtson '19.

who own or operate small business manufacturing companies for profit that have been in operation for a minimum of three years and have received SBA assistance.

1999

Heather (Bates) Fenix has been a senior aquarist of ARCC operations at the Monterey Bay Aquarium offsite Animal Research and Care Center in Monterey, California, since 2010. She oversees the daily operations of the aquatic animals in holding and quarantine. Last October, aquarist Christy Varga '12 joined the Monterey Bay Aquarium staff. Heather says, "Christy and I didn't know each other and had never met until we were on a collection trip together, and she had on a URI sweat-shirt and I had on a URI

COMMENCEMENT A-TEAM

Michelle Curreri, M.A. '00, and Shana Greene '95, M.S. '97, were two of the six inaugural graduates of the North American Association of Commencement Officers (NAACO) Certificate Program in Academic Ceremonies. They were honored at a ceremony in Reno, Nevada, in February 2019. The certification program consists of two years of study concentrating on the symbols, meaning, and traditions of academic ceremonies. Curreri is the chief of staff in URI's Office of the President and Greene is URI's director of University Events. Curreri, who oversees URI's annual Commencement ceremonies, has been part of the URI Commencement team since 2000, and Greene, who chairs URI's Commencement Committee, has been part of the team since 2015.



T-shirt...we started chatting and found out we both went to URI and played rugby there, too! Even though we graduated 13 years apart, we each found our way across the country to work at the same facility in the same job field!"

2004

Jacqueline Hermesen, M.A. '04, of Hamilton, Mass., received the 2019 Varsity Club Award from Worcester Academy. Jacquie is a leading advocate of the New England fishing industry, having started at URI's Marine Affairs Department. After college, Jacquie worked as a graduate assistant in the Marine Affairs Department at URI and earned a Master of Arts degree in Marine Affairs from URI in 2004. The "hook had been set" and a career in marine life and best practices for the commercial fishing industry had begun.

2007

Evan P. Schneider, M.A. '07, page 40

2008

Tom Barek '08, M.S. '09, page 55

John Cuoco, page 55

Matt Gallagher, page 55

2009

Adam Karwiell, page 55

Kim Wilkey, page 55

2010

Frank Marinaccio of Narragansett, R.I., received the 2019 Young Engineer of the Year award from the Rhode Island Society of Professional Engineers. Marinaccio has worked at BETA Group Inc. since 2017, is actively involved in various industry associations including APWA, RIPWA, and ASCE, and has served as a young leader, role model, and mentor to those entering the profession. At URI, Marinaccio was involved with Engineers Without Borders, traveling to Guatemala to work on a rain-water runoff system. He still frequently works with the College of Engineering and volunteers often with URI spirit groups.

Nate Ruchames, page 55

Mike Vieira, page 55

2011

Elisha Hall '11, M.B.A. '17, of Wakefield, R.I., was recognized for becoming a licensed CPA at the Rhode Island Society of CPAs annual meeting and recognition reception on April 23, 2019. Elisha is a senior accountant for Piccerelli Gilstein & Co. LLP, and provides auditing and accounting services to non-profit organizations and for-profit companies alike. Elisha also participates with the firm's college recruiting program.



Derek Gardella '16

2013

Ryan Thompson of Cranston, R.I., was a finalist in the International TEFL Academy's Teach Abroad Film Festival on April 4, 2019. His film, *Mountain Man Awoken*, made it through to the final 12 in the competition. Thompson has been teaching middle school English in Jinhae, South Korea, since December 2015.

2016

Ashley Frezza, page 37

Derek Gardella of East Walpole, Mass., has joined the Bullfinch Group as a financial representative. The Bullfinch Group is a wealth management firm headquartered in Needham, Mass. Derek is finishing his M.B.A. from Ashland University and is planning a February 2020 wedding.

Michael Genese, page 37

Angela Gonzalez, now known as AGONZA, painted a mural on the Providence National Bank facade as part of the Avenue Concept's revolving mural project. The program was launched in 2016 in partnership with Paolino Properties, which owns the building. Every year, the organization has commissioned an artist to paint a new work at the site, which remains on display for one year. AGONZA's work "Dear Urban Females" is based on feminism, socialism, and issues

within urban communities, and is a tribute to the strong, urban female in a state with 32,000 more women than men. AGONZA has displayed work at shows in New York, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island, and won 2017 and 2018 People's Choice Awards at the Salem Mural Slam.

Nicolette Mingels, page 37

2017

Lauren Buchholz, back cover

Nicolle Potvin, page 14

2018

Mallory Leonard, page 37

2019

Gyasi Alexander, page 52

Adriana Mendieta is a doctoral candidate in organic chemistry at Columbia University in New York City, where she is pursuing her passion for the discipline of neural chemistry.



Angela Gonzalez (AGONZA) '16



BIRTHS AND ADOPTIONS

Jessica Avizinis '05, M.S. '16, and **Edward Avizinis '09, M.S. '12**, welcomed a wonderful 3-year-old child into their family on March 25, 2019.



= IN MEMORIAM =

David Warren '38
Walter Eddy '40
Anthony Chiulli '42
Harry Hunter '43
Minerva Madden Laporte '44
Dorothy Klemer Schwartz '46
Mary Klanian '47
John Schroeder '47
Barbara Pendell Smith '47
Celeste Wolf '47
Florence Hetu Dagata '48
Christopher Murray '48
John Ruggiero '48
Alice Wallander Russell '48, M.S. '74
Ursula L. Zannini Salerno '48
Gloria Depastina Stafford '48
Sylvia Bloom Stock '48
Donald Andrews '49
John Colarusso '49
Margaret English Curran '49
Robert Egan '49
Eugene Errico '49
Virginia Cregan Geisser '49
Jack Henesian '49
Joyce Lother Mabey '49
William Adamo '50
Edward Asprinio '50
Erwin Bentlage '50
Charlotte Evans '50
Olive Turner Holland '50
Phyllis Maguire Martin '50
Alvin Stallman '50
John Stedman '50
Harold Whalley '50
Maryanne Zannini Grandolfi '51
Catherine Jacob, M.A. '51
Michael Reo '51
H. Alan Frank '52
Robert Kjellman '52
Shirley Peters Krasnigor '52
John Helfrich '53
Hobart Spring '53
Joseph Cipriano '54
F. Curtis Johnston '54
Charles Lyons '54
Victor Nerses '54

William Shields '54
Anthony Sisco '54
James Macksoud '55
Merah Pratt Peabody '55
Raymond Searles '55
Helen Mitson Shields '55
Alfred Factor '56
Richard Friedemann '56
John Giornelli '57
Raymond Lombardi '57
John Mullaney '57
D'Ann Frechette Sullivan '57
Leon Taylor '57
Alfred Alvarez '58
Charlotte Johnson Atamian '58
Robert Connolly '58
John Depasquale '58
Mary Williams Jawor '58, M.A. '60
Alan Perry '58
Arthur Boulet '59
James Feehan '59
David Lea '59
Gerald Brenner '60
Nicholas Johnson '60
Jean Moon Maloney '60
Robert Davis '61
Lawrence Leach '61
Frederick Dinapoli '62, M.S. '65, Ph.D. '69
Nancy Wilcox Ashworth '63
Sandra Rie Valentine '63, M.S. '83
Norman Westgate '63
Brian Edmond '64
George Reed '65
Sylvia Roberts '65
John Ashjian '66
Joseph Charbonneau '67, M.S. '69
Marion Reed Lundin, M.A. '67
Marilyn Serra '67
Ferilyn Berman Kaplan '68
Blanche Deckey Mussali, M.B.A. '68
Wendell Small, M.L.I.S. '68
Anthony Alessandro '69
James Cofone, M.A. '69
Donald Despres '69

Frank Hale, M.B.A. '69
John Polak '69
Edward Wardyga '69
Louis Andreano '70
David Bernstein '70
Walter Demers '70, M.S. '72
Henry Grenier '70
Beau Kimball '70
Richard Jocelyn '71
Jeanne McGrath '71
William Metz, M.A. '71
Raymond Tomasso '71, M.B.A. '75
Patricia Lovett Fethiere '72
Ronald Letourneau '72
Gerard Moran, M.B.A. '72
Marsha Toney '72
John Foley '73
George Geisser '73
Eileen Kenney '73
Anna Viti '73
Alan Cote '74
Stephen Croughan '74
Mary Hourihan Hughes, M.A. '74
Alfred Pedro '74
Allen Southwick '74
Anthony Harrison '75
Shirley Frazier Payne '75, M.L.I.S. '81
James Savas, M.A. '75
Thomas Goodrich, M.A. '76
Gerald Foley, M.L.I.S. '77
Abbie Sikes Perlsweig, M.L.I.S. '78
Joseph Reis '78
Robert Olsen M.A. '79
Ann Campbell '80
Gregory Beam '81
John Reposa '81
Olga Zadrozny Vitello '82
Renee Grenier Allen '89
Diane Goldman '90
Judith Hurley '90
Joulien Osko '90
Jason Clement '92
Kristine Ziegler Fritts '93
Phyllis Dutwin, M.A. '95
Stephen Jones '97

Evangelos Giannopoulos, Ph.D. '99
James Joseph '07
Matthew Humbyrd '08
Aaron Stark '14
Annette Massa '19

Faculty and Staff

Rodger Dowdell, professor emeritus of mechanical engineering

James Fox, former housekeeper

Frank Furtado, former GSO staff

Andreas Holmsen, professor emeritus of environment and natural resource economics

Catherine Inglese, former women's basketball coach

Tadeusz Kowalski, professor emeritus of ocean engineering

Robert MacMillan '52, professor emeritus of education

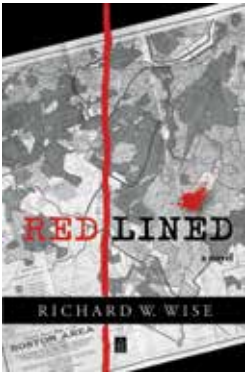
Thomas Needham '65, M.S. '67, Ph.D. '70, professor emeritus of biomedical and pharmaceutical science

Jan Northby, professor emeritus of physics

Rosanne Sherry '77, former master gardener coordinator

Thomas Theisen, former network technician

Correction
Lester LeBlanc '62, M.S. '63, Ph.D. '66, who was a professor of ocean engineering at URI until 1990, passed away in April 2019. Professor LeBlanc was listed as alumni in the summer issue "In Memoriam," but should have been included in the faculty and staff listing. Our sincere apologies to Professor LeBlanc's family and colleagues, and thanks to his daughter, Paula Rekos '90, M.S. '04, for letting us know.



Richard W. Wise '70
Redlined (2019)



Isaac Mamaysky '05
Letter to a One L Friend: A Little Guide to Seeing the Big Picture and Succeeding in Law School (2019)



Christine Francis '13
Breakthrough featuring Christine Francis (2019)

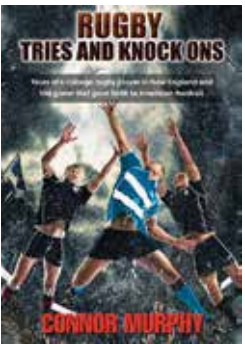


Jean Kelly '75
Secrets of the Orchard (2018)

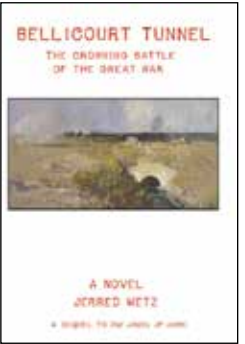


= BOOKSHELF =

Check out the latest books by alumni authors—and share your recently published book at uri.edu/magazine. Or send a cover image, along with author, URI grad year, book title, and year published, to urimag@uri.edu.



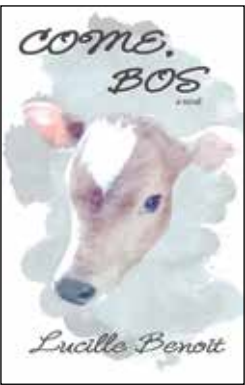
Kevin Cronan '77 (pen name Connor Murphy) *Rugby Tries and Knock Ons: Tales of a College Rugby Player in New England and the Game That Gave Birth to American Football* (2018)



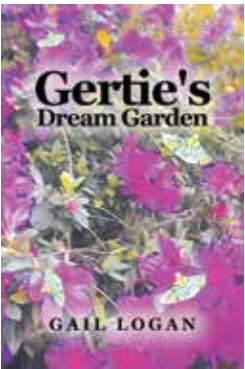
Gerald (Jerred) Metz '65, M.A. '67
Bellicourt Tunnel: The Crowning Battle of the Great War (2019)



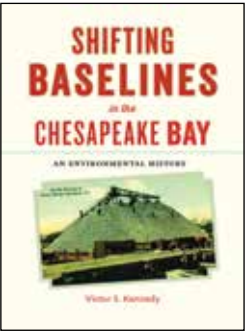
Jean Harrington '74, M.A. '76
Murder on Moon Mountain (2018)



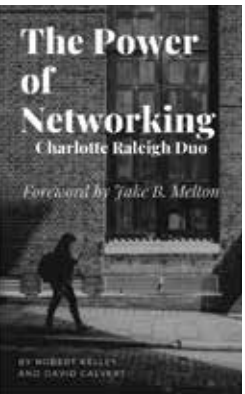
Lucille (Mandeville) Benoit '87
Come, Bos (2018)



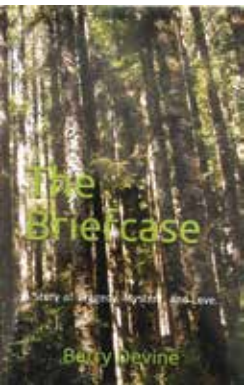
Gail Logan '66, M.A. '68
Gertie's Dream Garden (2019)



Vic Kennedy, Ph.D. '70
Shifting Baselines in the Chesapeake Bay: An Environmental History (2018)



Robert Kelley '89
The Power of Networking: Charlotte Raleigh Duo (2019)



Barry Devine, M.S. '79, Ph.D. '99
The Briefcase: A Story of Mystery, Tragedy and Love (2019)



Gyasi Alexander spent last summer in Hawaii doing research on endangered coral reefs. He's pictured here on a dive to collect colonies for an experiment he worked on as part of his internship with the Gates Lab.

= BLUE MINDS =

Another Calling

Marine biologist Gyasi Alexander feels at home on the ocean. At URI, he learned to feel at home in the STEM disciplines. The Gates Scholar isn't sure what his next academic step will be, but he knows he's committed to creating a sense of belonging for underrepresented students in STEM.

AS A KID GROWING UP ON MILITARY bases all over the United States, Gyasi Alexander '19 connected to his Trinidadian identity through the water. "The most Caribbean thing about me has always been my love of the ocean, and from a young age my family cultivated that in me with movies and books, and by telling me that one day I could go back to Trinidad and see it all for myself," says Alexander, who immigrated to the states when he was 2 years old.

That passion led him to URI's College of the Environment and Life Sciences (CELS). He graduated with a B.S. in marine biology last spring and is now considering pursuing a doctorate in the field. Studying the ocean unexpectedly helped him discover another calling, perhaps one with an even stronger pull:

uplifting students, like himself, from backgrounds that are underrepresented in STEM, in particular, and on college campuses in general.

Despite Alexander's academic success—he was awarded a prestigious Gates Millennium Scholarship, which funds up to 10 years of higher education—he says he struggled to find his footing when he first arrived at URI as a transfer student in 2016. "I was kind of in a bad place," he says. His off-campus housing had fallen through, and he wasn't aware of the many on-campus resources that were available to him. Alexander's parents, in Hagerstown, Maryland, hadn't had traditional college experiences themselves, so "I kind of felt like I had to figure it out for myself," he says.

Thankfully, he quickly found support

from mentors including CELS assistant dean Michelle Fontes '96, M.A. '11, and biology professor Bryan Dewsbury. "The biggest thing was that they made me feel entitled to the resources that were here," Alexander says. "They made me feel that I deserved them and could actually use them."

But he realized that not all other students who are minorities or the first in their families to attend college receive the help they need, or even know how to access it. Simultaneously, he started thinking more about why there weren't more students who looked like him in his science labs.

Wanting to do his part to inspire others, rather than carry "all those chips on my shoulder," Alexander got involved in projects related to diversity and inclusion. He served as president of Seeds of Success,

a student-run organization that helps underrepresented CELS students succeed academically, professionally, and socially, and worked with journalism and film media professor Kendall Moore to produce the documentary film *Can We Talk*, featuring students of color discussing their sense of belonging in STEM fields.

"A lot of STEM students are very introverted, and you really have to draw out their confidence," says Fontes. "But there are select students that are outgoing and able to open themselves up. Gyasi was one of those few. He connected with students and was open about his struggles, so he could help them with theirs."

In that spirit, Alexander is currently finishing production on a podcast, *The Hidden Curriculum*, featuring interviews with dozens of first-generation college students. He started the project as a fellow in Dewsbury's lab. "What he's doing is a

bit unique," Dewsbury says. "He's not just interviewing people. He's transcribing the interviews and then connecting parts of the podcast to research on social belonging, stereotyping, and things like that."

After spending the summer in the Pacific Ocean, doing research on endangered coral reefs as an intern in the Gates Lab, Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology at the University of Hawaii, Alexander returned home to Maryland, where he's now working as an aquarium maintenance technician and contemplating his next steps academically. He may steer his career toward science communications or continue studying marine biology in a graduate program. Either way, he'll be thinking about fostering diversity—both in the ocean and on land. "Diversity is the best thing about life in all its forms," Alexander says. "It's how we create new ideas, and how life keeps going and getting better." •

— Jenna Pelletier



Above, Gyasi Alexander with mentor Michelle Fontes '96, M.A. '11, CELS assistant dean of diversity, recruitment, and retention, who presented him with the William Gould Award for All-Around Outstanding Achievement at URI's 2019 Black Scholar Awards.



Gyasi Alexander inspects a fish during URI's 2018 Summer Shark Camp for high school students, which he helped coordinate. "The point of the camp wasn't to create junior scientists, it was exposure," he says. "In STEM, especially in marine sciences, there's a huge lack of people of color. It's good for them to see through hands-on experience that people who look like them can do these types of things."

= LOOKING BACK =

Remembering Mrs. Lambrecht

In the 1960s on college campuses, house mothers still functioned as stand-in parents, enforcing rules and curfews, keeping the peace, and looking out for their students' well-being. A group of Browning Hall RAs share their memories of one very special house mother whose dedication inspired a lifelong fellowship, which they honor to this day with regular gatherings to remember "Mrs. L."

"Mrs. Lambrecht was—to nervous, insecure college freshmen like me—like chicken soup to a cold: an unexplainable comfort."

— David Cordeiro '67

DEBORAH WHIPPLE LAMBRECHT came to URI in 1960, after her husband passed away. A widowed woman in her late 50s with no children, the house mother job offered her a place to live, a steady income, and, in many ways, a family.

It was 1963 when David Burns '67, an ex-Marine and avid outdoorsman, began a job as head RA in Browning Hall. The Browning RA staff included Tom Dombrowsky '65; Rick Chandler '67; the late Tom Rylands '66; Peter Van Dyke '64; and David Cordeiro '67. Many of them were in URI's Army Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) and came from military families or, like Burns, had already spent time in the military.

"Mrs. Lambrecht treated all of her boys with affection and listened when they talked," Burns recalls. "Each evening we gathered in her apartment. She reveled in having us there and laughed at our hijinks. We were the boys she never had."

"I remember being in her apartment with a group of RAs watching the Beatles arrive for their first U.S. tour and appearance on *The Ed Sullivan Show*," says Van Dyke. "Her apartment was a home away from home for us."

"She was—to nervous, insecure college freshmen like me—like chicken soup to a cold: an unexplainable comfort," says Cordeiro. "All the dorm residents admired and respected her, especially her RAs. She was a great cook, and she was conscientious about running a tight dorm."

Lambrecht, whose husband had run a bait shop, was no stranger to hunting and fishing. During trout season, she and her RAs, many of whom hunted and fished, would share pan-fried trout for breakfast. During hunting season she cooked game dinners. And if an RA found time for a hunt between classes, but didn't have time to clean their game, they'd leave the catch in her refrigerator, and she would clean it for them.



Deborah Whipple Lambrecht

Later that year, Lambrecht was hit by a car, suffering major injuries and requiring a series of surgeries. Burns and the other RAs persuaded the director of housing to allow them to run the dorm in her absence. They took turns staffing the office between classes. And, as a group, they continued to gather in her apartment in the evening.

After a long recovery, she returned, using a wheelchair and a walker to get around and do her work. "I believe that knowing she had us to return to helped her in her recovery," says Burns. "Regardless of what she'd been through, she never lost her cheerfulness, and we never lost the friendship we had with her and with each other."

After graduation, many of Lambrecht's RAs served in Vietnam. Before they left, Lambrecht asked them to check in with her once they returned. She needed to know they were OK. Thankfully, they all returned, and, tellingly, they all checked in as she'd asked. •

— Dawn Bergantino '94



Mrs. Lambrecht passed away in 1995, but the group's family-like bond has remained. The former RAs still get together every couple of years. Their last reunion was in September 2019 in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Left to right: David Cordeiro '67, Sandra (Tierney) Cordeiro '68, Joan (Bottino) McMillan '66, Tom Dombrowsky '65, David Burns '67, Nancy (Banas) Burns, Rick Chandler '67, and Jane (Teague) Chandler '66.

= YOUR STORIES =

The Experience of a Lifetime

John Cuoco '08 wrote to tell us about former URI cross-country teammate, Nate Ruchames '10, who thru-hiked the Appalachian Trail. What's more, John said, many of Nate's former teammates and classmates showed up to hike sections of the trail with him—their Rhody bond still strong. Nate graciously agreed to share the story of his hike.

ON MARCH 10, 2019, I started a northbound thru-hike of the Appalachian Trail, which stretches 2,192 miles through 14 states, from Springer Mountain, Georgia, to Mount Katahdin in Maine's Baxter State Park. Thru-hikers typically take four to six months to complete the trail. Only 18% of the 6,000 people who start the thru-hike each year end up finishing. Fortunately I was able to take a six-month leave from my job as a Newport schools social worker—and keep the health insurance. It was the perfect opportunity for a thru-hike.

I wanted a minimalist experience away from life's everyday routines to push me out of my comfort zone. I carried no more than 30 pounds on my back—which included food, tent, sleeping bag, water filter, small cook stove, and a few items of clothing.

Calories, hydration, sleep,

and going to the bathroom were my only concerns. Much of the time, I had no idea what day or time it was—I just walked. It was a primal and simple way of living. I hiked 10–20 miles per day, depending on terrain and weather. Every three to seven days, I hitchhiked into local towns to resupply food, do laundry, and enjoy a local brewery.

I have so many incredible memories of the experience. Max Patch in North Carolina, wild ponies in Virginia's Grayson Highlands, sunrise and sunset atop McAfee Knob (also Virginia), relentless rock piles in Pennsylvania, and the 4,000-foot peaks of New Hampshire and Maine are a few of my favorites. I particularly enjoyed when the trail cut through the rolling hills and farms, with cows sitting right next to you. Overall, the best thing about the hike was being in a constant state of

forward motion. It brought a pure sense of freedom to the experience. There were some low points, too, like hiking through freezing cold rain and in scorching temperatures.

Many URI friends came to visit me on-trail—some hiked with me for a day, others a few nights. Big shout-out to URI friends Mike Vieira '10, Matt Gallagher '08, John Cuoco '08, Adam Karwiel '09, Kimly May, Derek Peterson, Kim Wilkey '09, and Tom Barek '08, M.S. '09.

It was an incredible feeling summiting Katahdin on Sept. 19. Sharing that moment and sense of accomplishment with friends I met on-trail is something I will cherish forever. It was the experience of a lifetime.

If you are considering thru-hiking or section-hiking part of the trail, don't wait. Get out there and do it. •

— Nate Ruchames '10

Trail Name

Thru-hikers are often given trail names by fellow hikers: mine's Derby. There's always a quirky little story behind the names. My story is, last year, I was hiking the Long Trail in Vermont. I always carry a foam roller on my pack to help with sore muscles after a day of hiking. One day, hiking down a slippery section of wet rocks, I stumbled. My foam roller ended up underneath me, and instead of scraping my back, I essentially bounced off the rocks and landed on my feet. My buddy laughed, "It's like you're at a roller derby!" And my trail name was born.

Trail Magic

Along the trail, hikers stumble upon random acts of kindness called "trail magic." For example, someone might show up at a road crossing cooking burgers and handing out soda, beer, and snacks. This was happening the entire way up the trail—it's something hikers greatly appreciate!



John Cuoco '08 (left) and Matt Gallagher '08 (right) hiked Mount Cube in New Hampshire to meet Nate Ruchames '10 at the top.



= CAPTION THIS =

Photo Caption Contest

Do you have a funny idea for a caption for this photo from the URI Archives? Email your caption to urimag@uri.edu or respond at uri.edu/magazine.

**Submit entries by
January 15, 2020**

SUMMER WINNERS: FREAKY FASHION, 1956



Winning Caption

"When the fire alarm went off, we dressed as fast as we could!"
—Bruce Zimmerman '51

Runner-Up

"These 8 a.m. classes don't give us enough time to coordinate our clothes."
—Ronald J. Rabczak '75

Honorable Mention

"Early morning power outage creates collective wardrobe malfunction."
—Jill S. Mason '82

THIS PHOTO—FRESHMAN FREAK DAY, 1956—elicited all kinds of silly and creative entries. A few themes emerged: mostly fire drills, fashion faux pas, and sorority pledging. There were also two entries, apparently from observant geeky types—referencing UX, or user experience. We didn't even notice that book cover partially tucked under the towel! Did you?

Definitive history about Freak Day was hard to find. The 1947 *Grist* described that year's Freak Day as "the biggest the campus has ever seen," with over 200 "first year coeds ... costumed in everything from a football suit to a barrel." What we know is that Freak Day lasted for many years and involved first-year women students dressing as outrageously as possible.

These days, URI's Greek organizations sponsor Freek Day, giving first-year students a chance to learn about fraternities and sororities. Is there a connection between Freek Day and Freak Day? Please write in and share your stories if you can help fill in the missing history!

In the meantime, thanks for the captions, and please keep sending them! •



A season of thanks and of giving

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- Enhanced programs and facilities for academics and athletics
- Ensured flexible resources for student success and faculty excellence

Your involvement

- Provided encouragement, guidance, and enriching experiences for students
- Broadened the reach and awareness of URI's excellence
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During this season, consider making a gift by December 31, 2019 to maintain our momentum now and into the new year.

In so many ways, you make the difference at URI!

Frozen in Time

LAUREN BUCHHOLZ '17

Lauren studied Mandarin Chinese at Beijing Union University as part of URI's Chinese Flagship Program. She'd seen pictures of the Harbin Ice and Snow Festival in her first-year Chinese textbook and was excited to see it in real life. When this photo was taken, it was -9 degrees Fahrenheit; her camera and phone both succumbed to the cold, so she borrowed a friend's phone, which also gave out, and then another, which she kept warm under her coat until it was time to snap the photo. She loves this shot for many reasons, but mostly because it's a reminder of her time in China. Buchholz says,

"Studying in China completely changed my world view, and gave me some of the biggest challenges and joys of my life."

Lauren Buchholz '17 at the 2017 Harbin Ice and Snow Festival in Heilongjiang Province, China.

PHOTO: COURTESY LAUREN BUCHHOLZ

