Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.
Ben Anderson is an associate professor of three-dimensional art and sculpture in URI's Department of Art and Art History. An award-winning artist, he has taught at colleges and universities throughout the United States. Initially reluctant to teach, Anderson ultimately found it uniquely satisfying. “What I find stimulating,” he says, “is the constant experimentation that can occur—where one student tries something and then another builds upon that, it’s an infectious state of creativity.”

In his own work, Anderson is interested in materials and object-making. He draws inspiration from the natural world and is building his library of ceramic molds representing local sea life, developing new glaze formulas, and exploring alternate firing techniques through an NSF EPSCoR grant.

This piece, *Baptismal*, was not a planned project; rather, says Anderson, “It grew spontaneously from a mound of freshly processed clay.” He was showing some of his molds to his students to explain how they worked. Together, they ended up building this piece from those molds, working collaboratively on what became the finished piece.

—Barbara Caron

Detail from *Baptismal*, By Ben Anderson, hand built and press molded stoneware, 23” x 14” x 17”, 2009.
UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND MAGAZINE • VOL. 2, NO. 2 • SPRING 2020

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49 Looking Back
Journalism Professor Emerita Linda Levin taught and was loved by countless URI students. Years later, she remains a mentor, example, and inspiration.

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14 Annotations
A visual guide to the Inner Space Center’s Production Control Room and the team that keeps the show going, no matter what. Here, team member Jessica Kaelblein shoots video on location in the Canadian Arctic Archipelago.

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Like other 21st-century universities,
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That’s a testament to the university we are,
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Onward and upward,

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President, University of Rhode Island

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Signs of Spring
President Dooley on next-generation food producers, a new
governing board, freedom of expression, and the Class of 2024.
And even if you don’t buy into that research, the author continues, other studies have shown that reading is simply good for readers—putting them into a meditation-like state and leading to better sleep, lower stress and depression levels, and higher self-esteem.

Besides validating my own lifelong bookworm habits, the piece shores up my feelings about what we do in the University of Rhode Island Magazine: We tell stories that connect readers to fellow members of the URI community. While the stories you read here are rarely fiction, we aim to tell them in a way that invites you to understand and empathize with the characters.

So, in the interest of happiness, empathy, a better world, and a better night’s sleep, lower stress and depression levels, meditation-like state and leading to better sleep, let’s read more books. 

—Barbara Caron, Editor-in-Chief

Plastics are a problem for the Earth, its oceans and waterways, and ultimately for all of us. But we’ve become dependent on plastic. Do you have an idea—big or small—for tackling the problem? Are you making a difference in your daily life or in your business or research?

Do you know fellow Rhody alumni who are taking on the plastics problem? Please let us know: urimag@uri.edu.

Consider Goldenseal

In response to a story in our spring 2019 issue, we received this message:

GOLDENSEAL HAS MEDICINAL properties similar to barberry, and its native range includes Rhode Island, although there are no known native populations. So you can tell people to harvest wild barberry, but if they want to grow their own medicine, plant goldenseal, but buy the planting stock from a cultivated source, not wild harvested. It is easy to grow but requires shade. There are a few other plants that also contain berberine.

—Dan Lawton ’88

Elizabeth Liebovitz, coordinator of URI’s College of Pharmacy Medicinal Garden, emphasizes our reader’s point about planting and not wild harvesting:

“Wild goldenseal populations are vulnerable to overharvesting, so don’t harvest wild goldenseal! Plant it!” Same goes for American ginseng, going, so don’t harvest wild ginseng, to wild harvest. It is easy to grow but requires shade. There are a few other plants that also contain berberine.

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A Decade Green

For the 10th year running, URI made The Princeton Review’s Guide to 375 Green Colleges, for its commitment to sustainability, academic offerings and career prep, policies, and initiatives.

Neuroscience Degree

URI has a new undergraduate academic program in neuroscience. Students can choose from three areas of focus within the major, distinguishing it among neuroscience programs in New England.

What You Said Says

Matthew Ramsey, assistant professor of cell and molecular biology, received a $2.2 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to identify which organisms promote healthy bacteria in the mouth.

Centerfielder Tyler Brosius 20

arrived at URI one year after All-Conference and All-Region centerfielder Jordan Powell. After seeing no playing time as a redshirt freshman, Brosius was honest with himself about how the next few years would likely play out.

“I was playing behind a really talented veteran player and I knew I wasn’t going to get my spot,” Brosius says. “I felt I was going to contribute to the team, it would have to be in some other way. So I asked the coaches to give me a chance on the mound.”

Brosius made just one pitching appearance in high school, but Rams baseball head coach Raphael Cerrato agreed to give him a shot.

“Tyler’s a great kid, and I respected his willingness to take on a new role,” Cerrato says. “Right from the beginning, he was coachable and willing to work. He kept at it, kept making adjustments. Once he figured it out, the confidence came. From that point on, he was our go-to arm out of the bullpen.”

When Cerrato had to choose a 2020 Ciancola Scholarship recipient, he took a moment to reflect.

“The scholarship honors the memory of Rams pitcher Joey Ciancola, who passed away in 2011 during his redshirt freshman season. It is awarded to the player who best embodies Ciancola’s spirit and character, takes pride in representing URI, displays a strong work ethic and commitment to his teammates, represents himself well in the community, and is a leader on and off the field. It had to be Brosius. It was a no-brainer.

“Tyler has come such a long way,” Cerrato says. “He’s gone from a non-scholarship outfielder to one of the best relievers in the country, with a realistic chance to pitch professionally.”

It’s not just his performance on the mound that demands respect, though. “He’s an excellent student, a guy you want representing your program, and someone the Ciancola family can be proud to have carrying on Joey’s legacy,” says Cerrato.

The gravity of that responsibility is not lost on Brosius.

“It’s an incredible honor,” Brosius says. “You play every day for your team, and your teammates, and your university. But to play for someone else, who didn’t have the chance to fulfill his own dreams? That’s something that will be in the back of my mind every time I step out on the field this season.”

— Jodi Pontebrand
SEA URCHIN RANCHING? Yes. You read that right. Atlantic purple sea urchins are common in coastal waters along the East Coast, and URI scientist Coleen Suckling thinks the ocean State could become the home of a new industry to raise the spiny marine creatures for consumption in Japan and elsewhere around the world.

She has teamed with a company called Urchinomics, which is pioneering urchin ranching around the world. Suckling is testing a sea urchin feed the company developed in Norway to see if Rhode Island could become the home of a new industry to raise the spiny sea urchin. Their work could predict whether sea urchins could be Rhode Island’s next climate-resilient crop.

“Sea urchins are generally good at coping with climate change,” said Suckling, URI assistant professor of sustainable aquaculture. “So they’re a good species to turn to for commercial harvest. And you can get a good return on your investment from them.”

The global sea urchin market is valued at about $750 million per year, with about 65 to 70 percent of the harvest being sold to Japan. Urchins are primarily used for sushi, though they are also used in a variety of other recipes. The edible part of the sea urchin is its gonad tissue—which chefs refer to as roe or uni. Suckling says it tastes “like when you imagine a clean ocean smells like”—but the tissue must be firm and bright yellow or orange to get the best prices.

“At the Narragansett Bay Campus, URI seniors Max Zarev, Anna Byczynski, and Ali McKenna are conducting a three-month trial on purple urchins caught in Rhode Island waters. The urchins are being fed a variety of foods to see how well they grow and if they become marketable. The students monitor water quality and regularly weigh and measure the urchins. They expect to have preliminary results this spring.

“If they become marketable, then it opens up a whole interesting range of potential options,” Suckling said. “Under future climate conditions, there may be a need to diversify what we produce in the seafood sector. And since urchins are good at coping with acidification, this could be a good opportunity here in Rhode Island to explore sea urchins.”

Even if the formulated diet works as expected, many additional questions remain before urchins could be raised commercially in the state.

“It’s a local species, so we can potentially grow them here, but is it something that the Coastal Resources Management Council and the Department of Environmental Management would be interested in?” Suckling asked. “Are there aquaculture farmers interested in growing them? Can we ranch them reliably? We’re just taking the first step to see if it’s worth the effort to answer these other questions.

“Part of my role is to try to understand what we need to do to turn in a sustainable manner so we can maintain food security and economic security in the future,” she added.

— Todd McLeish

SEA URCHIN RANCHING?

 имеют как преимущество гибкость в изменении климата, — сказала Суклинг, ассистент профессора Университета Род-Айленд по управлению водными культурами. “Почему бы не попробовать выращивать их в Род-Айленде?”

В глобальной отрасли маргаритац оценивается в $750 млн в год, из которых около 65-70% поступает на рынок Японии. Основное использование морских ежей — в суши, но они также используются в других блюдах.

В Наррагансетт-Бейском кампусе Университета Род-Айленд студенты Макс Царев, Анна Бичинский и Али Маккенна проводят трехмесячный эксперимент с маргаритами, выловленными в Род-Айлендских водах. Они кормят их различными продуктами питания и регулярно взвешивают и измеряют urchins. Ожидается, что первые результаты будут получены в этом году.

“Если они станут маркетабельными, это откроет новые возможности,” сказал Суклинг. “Под будущими климатическими условиями может возникнуть необходимость в диверсификации производства продукта, который мы производим в отрасли рыбоводства. И поскольку маргариты хорошо адаптируются к кислотности, это может быть хорошим шансом для Род-Айленда.”

— Тодд Маклейш
The ISC Production Control Room Crew, left to right: Andrea Gingras ’01, producer; Ben Woods ’22, intern/editor; Alex DeCiccio ’10, director; Jessica Kaelblein ’18, switcher; Derek Sutcliffe ’11, engineer; Ryan Campos, audio engineer.

Video at uri.edu/magazine

URIS ONE-OF-A-KIND, INTERNATIONALLY known Inner Space Center delivers science, in real time, to the public and to other scientists. Using telepresence—the ability to interact with what’s going on in one place while you’re somewhere else—the center links scientists on research vessels at sea with other scientists, the media, and schools.

The production control room is the heart of the operation, turning all the incoming and outgoing feeds into seamless broadcasts. Producer Andrea Gingras ’01 says, “Live production is like a puzzle. I try to put the pieces together before we even start so that when we say, ‘That’s a wrap’, the audience sees the full picture.”

In October 2019, for example, the center used ship-to-shore telepresence in a pilot project funded by the National Science Foundation. The production control room crew put its telepresence chops to the test, connecting scientists on the R/V Lawrence M. Gould in the Western Antarctic with classrooms around the country, giving students an incredible opportunity to interact in real time with scientists conducting critical research.

Sound as easy as turning on a livestream? It’s not. It takes a lot of equipment and a multitasking crew with technical know-how, science background, creative learnings, and communication skills—real communication skills—knowing how people listen and communicate, articulate and translate the information more digestible. “It’s my responsibility to articulate and translate using sound, making the information more digestible,” says production switcher Jess Kaelblein ’18. “Technical directing is like editing in real time. It’s my job to switch between available video and live cameras to create a dynamic and engaging show.”

Audio. “Audio is critical,” says production director Alex DeCiccio ’10. “And it is the most complex thing we deal with in our work. If audio fails, it creates the worst kind of awkward silence.” Audio engineer Ryan Campos adds, “Most people don’t listen with the intent to understand. It’s my responsibility to articulate and translate using sound, making the information more digestible.”

Creativity Required. The book, Creativity, Inc.: Overcoming the Unseen Forces that Stand in the Way of True Inspiration, by Ed Catmull, president of Pixar and Disney Animation, is a model the team uses to inspire their workplace culture. They strive to cultivate a creative vibe and root out productions that can cramp their creativity and problem-solving. DeCiccio says, “Our success is tied to how well we can creatively think of solutions to problems.”

Lighting. You won’t find standard-issue office lighting here. The crew favors softer task lighting that helps their creative environment after the best out there,” says DeCiccio. “We may stumble on a few interesting ideas.” And, he adds, “It doesn’t hurt that we work with the smartest people in ocean science. Big ideas for the big blue!”

Asset Library. Ten years’ worth of video and growing. The production control room library includes ocean content, both deep-sea and topside in the field. The crew uses these videos assets on every project. And with each new project, the library grows. Engineer Derek Sutcliffe ’11 says, “During the live broadcasts, I watch and troubleshoot the computers handling the live stream and broadcast. I also maintain the production equipment, and later, archive the show recordings.”

Core Crew. The brainchild of URI professor of Oceanography and legendary ocean explorer Robert Ballard, the Inner Space Center is directed by marine research scientist Dwight Coleman. Coleman and his team are the multitalented, multitasking core crew of the center’s production control room.

Remote Science Within Reach. In July 2019, an international team of scientists studied the rapidly changing Arctic Ocean aboard the Swedish icebreaker Oden. The ISC shared the expedition in real time, moving deftly between researchers, audiences, and pre-produced video segments. The crew had to be ready to keep the broadcast going, even if the extreme Arctic environment disrupted their satellite signal with the research team.

Headset. Production control room staff direct broadcasts, quickly shifting from one site to another, injecting expert commentary, ancillary video, and more. There is a little like the crew that broadcasts a football game like an editor in real time. It’s my job to switch between available video and live cameras to create a dynamic and engaging show.”

Switcher. The switcher is one of the most important pieces of equipment in the ISC. Jess Kaelblein ’18 says, “Technical directing is like editing in real time. It’s my job to switch between available video and live cameras to create a dynamic and engaging show.”

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MakeSelf-Discovery Your Major—No Matter What Your Degree Says

Ka Ki ‘Kay’ Tse ’19

WHEN KA KI ‘KAY’ TSE ’19 moved from Hong Kong to the United States with her family in 2012, her parents wanted her to have a better life. As a first-year URI student in 2015, Tse had only been speaking English for a few years and wasn’t entirely comfortable making friends. “For a while I felt lost,” she says. “I thought I needed to have everything all figured out and I wasn’t sure what I wanted to do.”

What she knew about herself was that she always enjoyed physical activity, so she chose a kinesiology major, thinking physical therapy might be her career path. She dove into her studies and soon discovered something all figured out and she wasn’t sure what she wanted to do. In class, she says, “My students come to class thinking of these people as anomalies,” she says. Not true. Historical figures are, generally, ordinary people who felt called to act, Ferguson says. “But that wasn’t the only thing that defined their lives,” she says. “These people weren’t that different from my students’ parents. We’re all struggling to figure out how we fit in. In what ways are we American?”

When Kay Tse solo backpacked in Southeast Asia, a four-day motorbike loop in Ha Giang, Vietnam’s northernmost province, (at left) was a highlight of her trip. She had never ridden a motorbike before, and says it was the experience of a lifetime. She found friends—in her classes, through her job at the Facets Fitness and Wellness Center, and through involvement in campus groups like the URI Sport Corps, where she was as an alternative spring break leader. Her love of travel led to summer adventures in Ghana and Togo with Operation Groundswell, and a backpacking trip through Southeast Asia. Last summer, Kay Tse solo backpacked in Southeast Asia, a four-day motorbike loop in Ha Giang, Vietnam’s northernmost province, (at left) was a highlight of her trip. She had never ridden a motorbike before, and says it was the experience of a lifetime.

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By Marybeth Reilly-McGreen

This year, URI kicks off the Taricani Lecture Series on First Amendment Rights, in honor of the late Jim Taricani, Hon. ’18. Taricani was a champion of First Amendment rights, and his wife, Laurie White ’81, has made it her mission to keep his legacy alive. We asked other members of the URI community to share their stories about why the First Amendment matters. The result is a powerful collection of testaments to the importance of the freedoms protected by the amendment—religion, speech, press, and peaceful assembly.
Because Truth Matters

Bosnia was a different war. “It was a different animal,” CNN chief international anchor and host of PBS’s Amanpour & Company Christiane Amanpour ’83, Hon. ’95, told a packed Edwards Auditorium last September at the annual lecture series bearing her name. An animal hell-bent on annihilation. Six months after the first Gulf War, Amanpour was covering the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia. “This was a civil war that was building to a genocide,” Amanpour said. “This was something that affected me personally.” Journalists are taught that objectivity is fairness, and that their reporting should reflect all viewpoints. But, in the case of the Bosnian genocide, practicing objectivity wasn’t necessarily getting to the truth, Amanpour discovered. “Be truthful, not neutral. I learned that in Sarajevo,” she said. It’s become her tagline. “And it came about because we were telling the truth. Stories of civilians—men, women, and children being brutalized, besieged by the Bosnian Serbs, and then patrons, the Serbs, who had the armor, the personnel, the agenda—and who wanted to ethnically cleanse parts of Bosnia to create a white, nationalist, Serb entity to carve off and attach as a greater Serbia. They thought this was their opportunity.”

World leaders did nothing, Amanpour said. “Not the president of the United States, not the prime minister of Great Britain, nor the president of France. None of our democratic leaders wanted to follow their international duty under the Geneva Convention, which says when you see ethnic cleansing, genocide, deep violations of the most important international laws, you actually have to respond,” Amanpour said. But because the war happened in the era of 24/7 news, the world watched. “We didn’t just do one story. We did all the important stories for years,” Amanpour said. “Bosnia was the leading story around the world—in the United States, in Europe, and in Muslim countries—because it was Muslim civilians, European Muslims, who were being slaughtered like animals.”

CNN and Amanpour were accused of bias. “I was upset and I had to re-examine our golden rule, objectivity,” Amanpour told the audience. “It made me examine what I was doing and what we had to do as journalists. What I had done was tell the truth. When you get all sides of the story, you’re being objective. But when you then mistakenly believe that objectivity is neutrality, you create a false factual and false moral equivalence. In these situations, if you do that, you are an accomplice.”

Such situations underscore the value of the Fourth Estate, and, by association, the First Amendment, Amanpour said. “We like to call ourselves the Fourth Estate. That’s just a throwaway title. That means we are fundamental pillars of what creates and maintains a strong and robust democracy,” Amanpour said. “In countries where there is a strong journalistic profession, the countries are healthier.”

“And in this world where information is one of the most important and valuable commodities, those who are the purveyors of the information, i.e., the journalists, have to continue to do that in an environment that is safe and free.”
right to speak

“We leave ourselves uneducable if we strip people of the right to speak on that basis. We can’t have freedom from speech. If we don’t protect everyone’s right to speak their mind, the First Amendment is null and void.”
—Sam Feer ’20, philosophy major

Bah now lives in South Providence with his wife and two young sons. He will earn his Ph.D. in June. Having grown up in a mud hut in a village where women carried water in jars on their heads and the village ambulance was a donkey cart, Bah is intent on teaching his children that opportunity is possible in his adopted country. “They know they are lucky to live in a country where they are not afraid to speak up and enjoy freedoms of every kind,” he says.

“I want to live a life of example to them—one in which education is highly valued.”

Bah’s younger boy is interested in social justice. “When we’re in the car, my son makes me stop when he sees a homeless person. He gives all of his money to the homeless,” Bah says. “Those actions make me cherish freedom even more. It is a gift and an opportunity to make a difference.”

Bah is quiet for a moment. It’s not easy to put into words such a turnaround of fortune. “That first day I set foot in the United States, I could look forward to what I would do in my life,” Bah says. “America permitted me freedom, opportunity, and a chance for a second life.”

“People should use their rights as a catalyst for upward movement. They should exercise those rights in a civil way. They can be interpreted in many ways—but it’s the journalist’s job to interpret it in a responsible way.”

—Ian Weiner ’20, past editor, The Good Five Cent Cigar

Because People Should be Remembered

On a spring evening in Nigeria in April 2014, 276 Chibok schoolgirls were kidnapped by the terrorist group Boko Haram. The world wanted the girls returned; the Nigerian government felt the pressure. At a Nigerian Ministry of Defence press briefing on the kidnappings, a government official threw a crumpled piece of paper at then-CNN correspondent Vladimir Duthiers ’91, Hon. ’17. In Nigeria, reporting the government unfavorably was tantamount to sedition.

“The official said, ‘Vlad, stop being disrespectful. Stop propagandizing Nigeria,’” Duthiers recalls. “They believed the reporting we were doing was making them out to be bad guys. It was the first time I had heard charges of unfair or fake news.”

In that moment, Duthiers, now a CBS News correspondent and CNN anchor, realized that wadded paper lobbed in your direction can be a threat. It wasn’t the first time Duthiers risked retribution for his reporting. It wasn’t even the first time that year. In January of 2014, CNN reported on the first gay Nigerian to come out on television. That year Nigeria signed the Same-Sex Marriage Prohibition Act into law. Duthiers’ job put him at great risk.

“I could be thrown in jail for 10 years for myself. But Duthiers was of the Amanpour school of journalism. ‘Nigeria has freedom of the press. Its journalists can be outspoken and critical, but they face harassment and violence. As an American journalist, what was horrific to see in Nigeria was people being rounded up on the suspicion of LGBTQ activity,”

Duthiers says. “People with no access to lawyers. It was very clear to the American journalists that this was not America.”

“The First Amendment was something we dealt with every single day,” Duthiers says. “You had to be very careful with what you wrote and what you said on the air. Governments monitor CNN and BBC. They were watching what we said and did.”

Duthiers’ reminiscing called to mind another anecdote. When covering former president of Liberia and convicted war criminal Charles Taylor’s trial, a government official said to Duthiers and his producer, “Journalists. Your AK-47 is your pen.”

It underscored the responsibility Duthiers carries and the risk he bears.

“Your life could be in danger whether you’re in the United States or abroad,” Duthiers says. “I tell young people that the role journalism plays in society places you under constant threat. You need to be aware that your life is at risk. “The crowd could turn against you and the next thing you know, you’re running for your life. You need to take responsibility and strive mightily.”

The walls of Duthiers’ office are covered with photos of people he’s reported on. The photos bear witness to the subjects’ suffering and tragedy—and joy. “I am honored that they allowed me to share their stories with others,” Duthiers says. In some cases, speaking their truth is a thing his subjects can’t do for themselves.

In 2016, in Haiti, in the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew, Duthiers was in a village totally flattened. He and his crew had finished filming and were packing up. A woman approached asking if Duthiers would write her name in his notebook. Others followed suit. “In writing their names down, I think they knew I would take their stories with me. They would not be forgotten,” Duthiers says. “I still take that notebook out from time to time and read their names.”

“It’s a small thing I can do.”
It was 1984 on a hot July afternoon in Providence, when, at the wake of legendary New England mafia crime boss Raymond Loreda Salvatore Patriarca Sr., two men exchanged a greeting and a rose. The gesture conveyed a profound respect that stunned the law enforcement officers observing it. It’s not every day that you see mob bosses treating journalists with deference.

What witnesses saw was an exchange between New England crime boss Raymond Patriarca Jr. and investigative broadcast journalist Jim Taricani, Hon. ’18, at Patriarca Jr. was known, had invited Taricani to his father’s wake and presented him with the rose. It was a mark of his father’s respect, Patriarca Jr. said.

“People understood Jim had a job to do, and they knew if he was covering the story, they would be treated fairly,” says his widow Laurie White ’81, who is president of the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce. “But to have the mob boss’s son actually invite him to the wake? The FBI and the State Police and other law enforcement were watching the funeral home to see who went in, and they saw him go in there, they said, ‘How the hell did you get in? Tell us who went in when they saw him go in there, they said, ‘How the hell did you get in? Tell us who they trust.’”

Taricani declined. His ethics wouldn’t allow it. Twenty years later, Taricani would deny law enforcement a second time, refusing to reveal a source who leaked him an FBI surveillance tape. For this, Taricani was held in civil contempt of court by a federal judge and sentenced to six months’ home confinement. The case turned Taricani, already a legend among journalists, into the face of the free press. He traveled the country lecturing on the First Amendment, the federal shield law, and the Free Flow of Information Act, even arguing against the release. That ruling was a win for freedom of the press and for the victims—and a sea change for journalists, into the face of the free press.

“After Jim’s passing, this concept of how to keep his work as a professional journalist alive revolved around the notion of how do we, during this particularly troubling time in our history, understand and appreciate the importance of the First Amendment and the freedoms afforded under it, particularly the rights of the press,” White says. “We want to keep that alive and inspire the next generation of ethical and responsible journalists—to continue to do that in a way that reflects our belief in our institutions and our democracy and our belief that journalists serve an essential role in our society. We are facing a real existential threat—the threat of powerful institutions to suppress the news,” White says. “The role of the journalist is to speak the truth and perform a watchdog function for the public. There is a need for the professional journalist to be protected.”

Because Sometimes You Have to Take a Stand

Channel 10 reporter Jim Taricani, Hon. ’18, and his wife, Laurie White ’81, leaving federal court in December 2004 after Taricani was sentenced to home confinement for refusing to reveal the source of an undercover tape showing a Providence city official taking a bribe during the FBI’s Pylon Drive corruption investigation.

Because People Have the Right to Know

“People have to be more discerning about who they go to for the truth—and who they trust.”

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The First Amendment is the backbone of what we do. There are public officials who are very careful about what they do, because they know there are people out there, like Spotlight, looking. —Thomas Farragher ’77, Hon. ’17

Thomas Farragher ’77, Hon. ’17, a journalism major at URI who was a reporter for The Providence Journal in 2002, says that even as a student reporter, he took every assignment seriously. A reporter and former editor for The Boston Globe Spotlight Team, Farragher’s belief in the power and impact of journalism is unwavering.

“Obviously it’s a splintered journalistic world now, but you look at the journalism The Globe is doing and there’s no question hard, vigorous journalism is being committed all the time,” Farragher says. “We have protected the nuclear core of what we do, and it is resonating. More people are reading The Globe online than ever in my 42 years of doing this. I am hopeful about what we do, but the journalism world I walked into just doesn’t exist anymore. There’s great journalism being published every day,” Farragher continues. “People have to be more discerning about who they go to and who they trust.”
Because Inequity Persists
Lorén Spears '89, Hon '17, executive director of the Tomaquaq Museum and member of the Narragansett Indian Tribe, possesses a graciousness and patience 400 years in the cultivation when explaining that authors of the First Amendment ignored indigenous people. First, she must dispel misconceptions about indigenous people. Second, augment American history to include indigenous people. First, she must dispel misconceptions about indigenous people. Second, augment American history to include indigenous people. Third, explain what it is to be indigenous in modern society.

The country's formation depended upon the appropriation of indigenous land, a.k.a. theft, which required the vitilication, dehumanization, and victimization of indigenous people, Spears says. “This notion of believing you have the right to do such a thing, to subjugate and dehumanize and victimize other human beings for your own goals” Spears shakes her head. “The First Amendment was not written for those being displaced, dispossessed, or violently (attacked) through genocide, war, and enslavement.” Resistance took many forms. Wars were waged—on battlefields, in classrooms, churches, and courtrooms. The federal government sought to eradicate indigenous people through conversion to Christianity, a European model of indigenous people's history, Spears says. “And there is no such thing as United States history without indigenous people’s history.”

“We’re still reclaiming our rights,” Spears adds. “We still don’t feel we’re heard. We’re not always at the table with the people that have the wealth, the power, and the control. So we’re still pursuing these rights and these freedoms that are guaranteed under the Constitution.”

Because Academic Freedom Matters
A 2017 survey conducted by the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania highlights the need for a nationwide civic lesson: • 37% of American adults surveyed could not name one right guaranteed to them under the First Amendment. • 53% surveyed thought immigrants here illegally have no rights under the U.S. Constitution. • Only 25% could name all three branches of government.

“Second, augment American history to include indigenous people,” Spears says. “And there is no such thing as United States history without indigenous people’s history.”

“Third, explain what it is to be indigenous in modern society.”

Because Discomfort is Part of Learning
Imagine a knock-down-drag-out fight between college roommates conducted via text. While in the same room. Consider a student sending an emergency alert through Wildfire that sets off a campus-wide panic. Picture a controversial speaker invited to campus by one student group whose presence causes members of another to fear for their safety. Such are the situations college administrators face today, says URI’s vice president for student affairs, Kathy Collins.

Complicating things further: the wild west that is social media and the legacy of well-intentioned elementary and secondary schools’ anti-bullying policies and curriculums, argue Erwin Chemerinsky and Howard Gillman in their book, Free Speech on Campus. “Many students associate free speech with bullying and shaming. Another difference is that some students extend the language of ‘harm’ and ‘threat’ to apply not only to traditional examples of so-called hate speech, but also to the expression of any idea they see contrary to their strongly held views of social justice,” Chemerinsky and Gillman write.

“So how do we look at issues that could range from DACA to trans rights to the upcoming election and everything in between?” Collins says. “I want to create the opportunity for students to express all of their opinions.”

The most important thing to me when I consider the First Amendment and students’ rights is that students understand there is a difference between their safety and their level of comfort. I hope students hear things that make them uncomfortable,” Collins says. “I hope they have discomfort for life. I have worked all over the world, and I believe students should go and experience different places and different points of view. That’s part of learning.”

Dean of the Graduate School Nasser Zawia spoke to the press at a November 2015 URI vigil condemning the terrorist attacks in Paris that month, which killed 130 people and injured over 400.

Because Inequity Persists
Lorén Spears ’89, Hon ’17, at the Tomaquaq Museum in Exeter, Rhode Island, where she is the executive director. Spears is also an educator, author, activist, and indigenous artist.

Christiane Amanpour agrees with Collins. Battleground or classroom: Each setting offers the opportunity to take a stand. “The idea that you have to be safe from ideas that conflict with yours is wildly wrong. If not at university, where are you going to have the freedom to explore ideas that you don’t like, even people that you might not naturally gravitate toward?” Amanpour says. “It’s here in this safe space that you can actually operate in areas that you are in conflict with or don’t understand or that you think are offensive—that’s how you grow and that’s how you grow resilience. And that’s how you grow intellectually and find your way in the world.”

Video at uri.edu/magazine
ost of us spend our waking hours feeling overwhelmed. We have too much to do, too much to think about, and too much stuff—our actual physical possessions—weighing us down. Have you ever noticed how many items on our to-do lists are related to managing our stuff? Where did it all come from, and do we really need it?

LET GO AND BREATHE

Enter Marie Kondo, the decluttering guru who started a movement with her first book, *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*, published in the United States in 2014. Kondo’s novel approach did not focus on finding the perfect container, storage unit, or custom-designed closet. She wanted us to let go, to release things that were not serving us well—even if they were “still good” and we “might want them someday.” She wanted us to be able to breathe.

It actually was a life-changing message for Laurie Lindemann, M.A. ’02, who lost her husband, John P. Catto ’81, to cancer in 2010 when their daughter was only 7. When Lindemann read Kondo’s book, she realized in addition to raising her daughter, working, taking classes, and dealing with grief, she was struggling under the burden of all the things her husband left behind. That included “a house and two enormous barns full of old cars without engines, useless farm machinery, soup cans full of nails, and more. So much more. Too mind-boggling to even describe,” she says. “To add to my grief, I had to admit that all these things weighed me down both mentally and physically. I understood that although they made John happy, they had the opposite effect on me.”

Lindemann was inspired by Kondo’s book and followed its guidelines to declutter her home—and she saw something different, something that worked for her. When she learned Kondo would be appearing at New York City’s 92nd Street Y, she hightailed it from her East Greenwich, Rhode Island, home to Manhattan for the event.

By the time the presentation was over, Lindemann was sold—and was the first to put her name on the Kondo mailing list. “That night, on the drive home, I was already thinking about how I could do what Marie Kondo was talking about,” she says. Before Kondo had even mentioned training consultants, Lindemann imagined she was one. She knew she could do it. A natural entrepreneur, she had started a graphic design business when she was still in her 20s, earned a master’s degree in communications at URI, and completed a web design certificate—also at URI. She had worked for years in communications, design, and operations and was running her own web design business. But her interest in Marie Kondo’s approach was based on something deeper and more basic than her entrepreneurial spirit.

“After doing the process myself, I finally felt hopeful again. I felt a renewed sense of energy of myself,” she says. “I wanted to help other people feel like I did.”

Today there are 353 certified KonMari™ consultants in 43 countries worldwide. Lindemann was in the first class of consultants, and formed her business, Declutter Pronto, in 2016.

Now, five years after that trip to New York to see Marie Kondo, Lindemann is a certified master consultant, the highest level of KonMari™ certification, which requires 1,500 hours of client work. Her company’s tagline is “organizing without judgment,” and she works with people throughout New England, and beyond.

“Let’s take a look at our closets. If an item doesn’t spark joy, or wouldn’t get picked up by a stranger, you don’t need it. Get rid of the clutter.”

—Marie Kondo

The Emotional Power of Tidying Up

By Nicki Toler

Her clients call her a wonder, a coach, guide, partner, teacher, motivator, and a force of nature. But Laurie Lindemann, M.A. ’02, just wants to help people simplify their lives.

“It’s really about discovery. In this process you learn, or relearn, what is important to you.”

—Laurie Lindemann

PHOTO: NORA LEWIS
FINDING THE MAGIC

Lindemann says there are plenty of misconceptions about her work. “The Konmari promise of the ‘life-changing magic of tidying up’ is a pretty tall order. And it’s not easy. ‘This is hard work, both physically and emotionally,’ says Lindemann, who adds that all work, it can be tedious.

The goal is not to eliminate your possessions and live a minimalist life—and at its core, it’s not really about organizing.

“When people ask me what I do, I tell them I help people simplify their lives,” she says. “Isn’t that what most of us want? ‘I think we all want to live and work in a space that supports us, that makes our lives easier, better, without spending so much time and energy managing our possessions,’” says Lindemann. “How much of our time, and our lives, do we want to spend managing our objects?”

“In the KonMari method, we touch everything and we work by category instead of location,” says Lindemann. The five categories are: clothing, books, paper, miscellaneous (a huge category that includes kitchen items, electronics, etc.), and sentimental items. Clients start with clothing, the easiest category, and work their way toward the most challenging: sentimental items. Lindemann says completing the earlier, easier categories—and experiencing that success—can create a powerful momentum.

“What’s important to understand is that I don’t tell my clients what to do, what to keep. They choose. It’s really about discovery. In this process you learn, or relax, what is important to you.”

According to Lindemann, the magic is the outcome of the process. “Decluttering is the critical first step,” she says. “Once we declutter, we can actually see the things that have meaning for us. That’s when the magic happens. We can be reacquainted with something we love, something that’s been buried under clutter and life’s responsibilities. We can, in some ways, rediscover ourselves. And that can feel like magic.”

READY FOR CHANGE

People call on Lindemann for many reasons. They are downsizing, moving out, moving in, or moving on after a significant loss—of a loved one, a job, a way of life. What they have in common is a need to change something that is burdening them—and to be successful, they have to be ready to change.

“Change is hard, and change without assistance is harder,” says Kerry Evers, M.A., Ph.D. ’98, co-president and CEO of Pro-Change Behavior Systems, Inc., a leading behavior-change consulting firm, founded 23 years ago by URI psychology professor emeritus James Prochaska, director of the Cancer Prevention Research Center at URI, and developer of the transtheoretical method of behavior change, which integrates stages, processes, and levels of change.

“What Laurie is doing is helping people see the benefit to changing their environment,” says Evers, who is familiar with Lindemann’s work. “When people reach out to her, she can help them through the process. She’s like a coach who can tell what people need and take them through the changes.”

We know letting go of well-established behaviors is difficult. So is letting go of the things that surround us. “People don’t realize why they are holding onto things,” says Evers. “That’s why so much emotion comes with letting go.”

IT’S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS

Lindemann says her ideal client is anyone who calls her and asks for her help.

“A lot of people fit into that category. Many have read KonMari’s book. Some have stacks of books about organizing. They are retired, recent grads, couples, singles, families with children. With families, Lindemann works with each person individually—including the children.”

“This work is about relationships. It’s so personal. Trust—and the absence of judgment—are essential,” says Lindemann. “People are trusting me to be in their homes. I take that very seriously. It’s a privilege to help remove clutter so that they can live more meaningful lives. I’ve experienced this myself and I’ve seen it repeatedly with my clients.”

Kerri Leonard is one of them. She lives with her family outside Boston, runs three businesses, and is a mom of two. Leonard, who discovered she had attention deficit disorder when she was in her late 30s, says her life were defined by chaos. Concern for her children is what brought her to Lindemann. How was growing up in such a disorderly household affecting them?

She had read the KonMari books, but knew she needed help. “Someone Laurie knows knew exactly what I needed. She’s intuitive. There’s a depth there. She understood the emotional impact of the work we were doing,” says Leonard, who stresses Lindemann’s empathy, endless energy, humor, and her ability to know when it’s time to take a break, which is important because, says Leonard, “this is exhausting work.”

Leonard says her children have enjoyed working with Lindemann—and have learned from her. “They see the improvement in their lives. I feel a lightness in them when there is order in the house,” says Leonard. “It has a calming, freeing effect on them.”

As a business person, Leonard says the paper category was most difficult for her. “I had paper from the 1980s. It felt like a hill I was never going to be able to climb. Now that I’m on the other side, I feel less burdened,” she says. “I didn’t realize how much pain and grief it was causing me to be buried in so much paper. That’s where I really learned to let go.”

LIFE LESSONS

The learning goes both ways. “I learn something from every one of my clients. It’s all about listening,” Lindemann says. “People will tell you what you need to know. There are so many stories, so much emotion attached to our things. Working together, we cry, we laugh. It’s all real.”

Lindemann admires her clients, the hard work they do, their commitment to change, to letting go. “I understand them. I’ve walked the walk of loss, of feeling so overwhelmed. I realize this is hard and it takes time,” she says.

“They’re very powerful for me to watch people let things go that have been weighing them down. I love what I do. I’m proud of it,” she says.

“I work alongside my clients. I’m with them every step of the way, and when we’re done, it feels so good to stand back with them, look around, and say ‘Look at what we’ve done!’”
When Marc McGivney ’92 and Deb Harbin ’92 met as nursing students at URI in 1988, they were adults with children of their own. When they married four years later, they blended their families, including their four children, and proceeded to adopt four more. Five of their eight children had special needs. But they were special parents. And they knew they had plenty of the one thing all children need—love.
Marc and Deb were both older students with families, and they met in a study group. "Marc, outspoken and opinionated, rubbed Deb the wrong way. He used to argue that the people who had Medicaid had the same care as people with private insurance. With me being a single parent of a special-needs child, I had to take to a clinic all the time, I knew that wasn’t the case. So at first I thought he was a jerk. “I wasn’t aware then,” Marc says. And Deb adds, “He’s come around.” He learned a bit about health care early on out of necessity. His first wife had Hodgkin’s disease, and he had to learn how to care for her. At the time, Marc owned Island Records in Newport, and one of his customers told him being a male nurse might be a better career option for him—albeit for less-than-artistic reasons. “He said only three percent of nurses are men, so nursing would be a great place to meet chicks,” Marc laughs. “But he also said nursing is recession-proof. That stuck with me.”

Family circumstances forced both Marc and Deb to leave URI for a short time, and when they returned, they gravitated toward one another once again, rekindling their friendship. Their respective marriages had ended in the interim, and they began dating. Marc jokes that they would “steal kisses in the elevator.” They both had small children, loved nursing—and each other. They moved in together in November 1991, graduated a month later, and married the following July. “It went faster than we expected,” Deb says dryly. “We were poor, in debt, with families to raise, and we both got jobs as RNs.”
Rhode Island— for 24 years before becoming senior director of nursing. But it almost didn’t happen at all.

“I almost didn’t hire her. She was very, very outspoken,” says Judy Niedbala ’78, chief operating officer at Perspectives.

“Turns out, she became a loud, outspoken advocate because she needed to for her daughter. Her strength is representing herself as a parent of a disabled child at meetings with other parents. That’s powerful. And she’s constantly challenging us as a provider to make sure we’re doing the right thing.”

“Shes very direct, but you can be direct with her,” Niedbala says. "You can say if she's out of line and she'll accept it.”

Marc spent 27 years in nursing, including 12 in the emergency room at Rhode Island Hospital, where he organized the first nurse’s union; for the last of his ER years, he also worked full time as the school nurse at Chariho Regional High School, where the kids called him the school “murse.” He stayed at Chariho for 20 years, retired in June, and is writing “a novel of suspense, revenge, and coming of age.” He’s also home a lot more to take care of his family, something longtime friend Phil Hoffman ’73 calls “remarkable.”

“They’re amazing, both of them,” says Hoffman, who met Marc in 1972 when he and his wife, Sue, took Marc in as a boarder. “They make a great couple. Debs more realistic and grounded, and Marc’s got this incredible imagination. They mesh well. And taking care of those kids … nothing fazes them.”

In that seemingly chaotic seven-bedroom home, with its adaptable architecture of wide open spaces and wide door frames—specially designed by Deb to accommodate wheelchairs—things run smoothly, thanks in no small part, they say, to URI.

“We learned so much there—professionalism, global leadership, critical thinking,” Deb says.

“And Marc adds, “Everything we have sort of goes back to URI; it really made us able to think of others.”

Which comes in handy in a home like theirs.

“It seems crazy, but that was our normal,” says Emily, a 2007 URI doctor of pharmacy grad, now operations manager for Westerly Hospital’s pharmacy. She credits her upbringing with sparking her career in health care: “As I was growing up, I'd sometimes ask my parents why they kept adding to the family, and they’d say, ‘Every child deserves a family and to be loved.’”

For their part, Marc and Deb don’t see anything at all unusual about having a house full of people; they’ve often opened their doors to friends in need, taking them in, giving them what they need to get back on their feet.

“You can’t leave helping people to others,” Marc says. “Jon, Norman, Luke, Will—they would’ve had different—and worse—lives if not for our adopting them.”

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Our Roots are Showing

By Todd McLeish

An awakening of sorts is underway—at URI and across the globe. There’s growing recognition that the 20th century’s industrial approach to farming and food production is unhealthy for people, animals, soil, and the environment, and is environmentally and economically unsustainable. So what’s to be done? At URI, where agriculture is central to our history and mission as a land grant university, our faculty, students, and alumni are rediscovering our agricultural roots, taking a new, interdisciplinary approach to practical agriculture, and leading the way for a new generation of farmers and food producers.

In late October, a section of the University’s agronomy field is blooming with gorgeous purple saffron flowers. Although 90 percent of the global harvest of saffron—the world’s most expensive spice—comes from Iran, plant sciences professor Rebecca Brown has demonstrated that the Ocean State has the potential to claim a share of the market as demand grows in the United States.

“It’s tolerant of arid conditions, which is why it’s mostly grown in the poor, dry soils of southeastern Iran,” she says. “But until now, no one had tried to grow it in Southern New England’s moist, rich soils.”

With the help of postdoctoral fellow Rahmatallah Gheshm, who grew the spice in Iran for 27 years, last year’s campus saffron yield per acre was about triple that of Iran.

Demand for saffron in the U.S. is growing as more people from the Middle East and South Asia move here, and as appreciation grows for cuisines from those regions.

“It’s an attractive crop because you don’t need sophisticated farm equipment or technology to grow it,” she says. “It’s a lot less work to grow than vegetables, though it’s more labor intensive to harvest, which is why saffron is so expensive. It also doesn’t have insect or disease problems here, and you don’t have to water it. All of that is attractive to farmers.”

The saffron experiment is just one of URI’s many sustainable agriculture initiatives, which include numerous research projects, new faculty members, an academic program, and more.

Below, saffron flowers bring spring to URI’s agronomy fields in October. Above, inset, the stigma of the saffron flower is harvested and dried to produce saffron, the world’s most expensive spice, which sells for about $5,000 per pound, wholesale.

Plant sciences and entomology assistant professor John Taylor studies strategies used by ethnic communities to grow native vegetables in urban settings. One such strategy is polyculture—growing multiple species together to increase the yield of all. Here, amaranth, bitter melon, and sweet potato grow symbiotically at the URI agronomy field.
Envisioning the Future of Food Production

Sustainable agriculture research at URI doesn't focus just on crops in the soil. Department of Fisheries, Animal and Veterinary Sciences faculty members Marta Gomez-Chiarri, Austin Humphries, and Céline Suckling are conducting studies of sustainability in the aquaculture and fishing industries, and Katherine Petersson, also in Fisheries, Animal and Veterinary Sciences, is studying sustainable methods for controlling parasites in sheep. And that's just the food production side of the issue. Still other faculty are examining the topic from the perspective of economic sustainability, health, nutrition, culture, and communication. Such diverse ways of thinking about sustainable agriculture made it ripe for the establishment of a new interdisciplinary major. Launched in 2016, the major in sustainable agriculture and food systems emerged as a result of requests from students for a course of study that combined food production with classes in business, health sciences, nutrition, policy, economics, hunger studies, and more. It also came about because employers and alumni said they want to hire people who have a broad education about food security, sustainability, and climate change and have diverse skills," says Gomez-Chiarri, professor of aquaculture and coordinator of the sustainable agriculture major.

"We had a lot of faculty doing sustainability in many departments, so we just had to package it in a way to provide the right guidance to students. The interdisciplinary nature of the program—requiring broad knowledge in the social sciences and the natural sciences—also means it's a program that can easily be done as a double major with another discipline.

"More than anything, this major is about training students to have a vision of the future for what they want food systems to become and to make them understand the challenges of sustainability and getting big companies to buy into it," she adds.

Students in the program choose one of three focus areas: food production, food and society, or nutrition and food. They are required to complete a capstone project and an internship, many of which are conducted at commercial farms or the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. Graduates might end up working in small- or large-scale food production on land or sea, finding innovative and safe ways to distribute and market food, or developing and enforcing policies that ensure food security and safety.

The first student to enroll in the program was Shyama Kranoff '17, who is now in the Peace Corps in Uganda, where she is an agribusiness advisor, training farmers in record-keeping, financial management, and related topics. She credits the major with providing her with the opportunity to explore what she described as "a budding interest" in sustainable agriculture.

"I’m passionate about supporting small-holder, regional farmers, both domestically and internationally, and helping them to stay ahead of trends in the food system and stay competitive in the market," she says. "Through my Peace Corps service, I have seen the need for the development of supply chains that enable small farmers to easily meet the demand from buyers and receive fair market price for their produce."

An experienced farmer with degrees in horticulture and entomology, URI Cooperative Extension researcher Andrew Radin does outreach and consultation with the local farming community. Here, he shows local farmers a trellis system for growing tomatoes.

ways to improve production of tomatoes—the number one crop in high tunnels—by evaluating container mixes, calibrating nutrient requirements, and monitoring the occurrence of plant diseases and insect pests.

demic major, and several campus measures designed to develop agricultural practices, products, and policies that reduce the environmental impact of food production while also considering economic sustainability and social justice for farming communities. The efforts attest to URI’s long history in agricultural research and education, and its commitment to leading a new generation of growers in an effort to create a sustainable system of food production.

How Can We Grow More Food in Less Space?

Plant sciences and entomology assistant professor John Taylor is looking for ways to produce more food in smaller plots by using different nutrient inputs and tillage strategies and by cultivating several crops in the same space in a practice called polyculture.

"In polyculture, you’re growing multiple species together to get more production from a unit of area compared to growing those crops in monoculture," he says. "It enhances productivity and makes the best use of high tunnels. "It’s like we brought a patch of North Carolina coastal growing conditions to Rhode Island," he says. "It enhances productivity and makes things grow and ripen faster." He is testing
Most of the efforts to make agriculture more sustainable in Rhode Island are guided by Ken Ayars ’83, M.S. ’86, chief of the state Division of Agriculture, who says that the growing interest in sustainable agriculture emerged from the region’s reliance on imported food, the increasing awareness of the ecological benefits provided by healthy farmland, and a growing desire to know where our food comes from.

Many alumni are joining the effort.

From the turf fields to the dining halls, URI is reaching out to showcase its agricultural expertise in a variety of ways, beyond its academic programs and faculty research.

In January, URI’s Business Innovation Center hosted the fourth annual Food System Summit, a gathering of hundreds of government, academic, and business leaders for discussions about how to better support the state’s increasingly important food economy. This year’s event featured conversations about how climate change is affecting the regional food supply.

According to BIC executive director Katharine Flynn, the first Food System Summit generated the idea of establishing a Food Center on campus, a resource center where farmers, growers, producers, distributors, servers, retailers, and others can easily access URI’s agricultural resources, food expertise, researchers, and business support programs. It will also provide students with unique opportunities to network with the sustainable agriculture community and gain practical experience in the food sector.

The Food Center will be housed in the former turfgrass research building on Plains Road beyond the athletic fields and will contain conference rooms, office space, the Cooperative Extension’s Plant Protection Clinic (which helps community members identify pest insects and diseases on their plants), and a vegetable washing station where food grown on campus can be washed to meet food safety standards.

The University’s newest agricultural initiative is the creation of an Agricultural Innovation Campus on 50 acres at Peckham Farm, to include more than 25 acres of greenhouses and a 15,000-square-foot Agriculture Innovation Center, which will be URI’s hub for agricultural innovation, entrepreneurship, internships, and education. The campus will be developed in partnership with Rhode Island Mushroom Co.; American Ag Energy Inc.; Verinomics, Inc.; and Volapi Inc.; with startup funding allocated from a state bond approved by voters in 2016.

URI Dining Services is also doing its part to contribute to the University’s sustainable agriculture efforts. It’s partnering with local farms, fishers, and vendors to make “eat local” more than just a catchphrase, and its food waste is converted to compost through a partnership with the Compost Plant, a Providence business focused on diverting organic waste from landfills to high-quality compost.

URI’s sustainable agriculture program is doing just that. By reflecting on the University’s founding as an agricultural college and recognizing the growing importance of creating a more enlightened food system for the future, it is educating a new breed of agriculturist and developing improved methods of food production to ensure food security for all.

Economic sustainability is equally important to any viable business,” says Gregg, who was named a Small Business Innovator of the Year in 2017 by The Ashby Park Press. “Our strategic geographical location between Philadelphia and New York allows us to sell in those markets with a smaller carbon footprint. Most of that carbon [produced by transporting our oysters to market] is negated through carbon sequestration, a product of growing oysters on mass.”

Oysters, which use carbon to make their shells, permanently remove carbon from the ocean and the atmosphere. Adds Gregg, “Every dollar we make is reinvested in growing more oysters and removing more carbon.”

In Rhode Island, Perry Raso ’02, M.S. ’06, owner of Matunuck Oyster Farm, was a finalist last year for the first New England Leopold Conservation Award for business owners who inspire others with their dedication to ethical land, water, and wildlife habitat management. Raso preaches not only a farm-to-table philosophy, but also pond-to-plate, as he supplies his oysters to his restaurant, Matusnuck Oyster Bar, and grows much of the produce served there.

“As farmers, it’s no longer our job just to come up with innovative ways to grow our product,” he said in a recent speech at Providence’s Business Innovation Factory. “We also must engage in dialogue, education, and even conflict in order to meet our goals and in order to create a more resilient and self-reliant food production system.”

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Network

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

CLASS NOTES


1964 Rich Barron has been a Lions Club International for 48+ years, currently serving as secretary to the Binghamton, N.Y., club. He enjoys volunteering on projects, including children’s vision screening and community improvements. The Lions’ causes include the environment, hunger, childhood cancer, diabetes, and vision. Rich received his B.D. from Andover Newton Theological School (now Andover Newton Seminary at Yale Divinity School) and his D.Min from the Theological School of Drew University. He was a pastor at many churches throughout the Northeast.

1973 Sidonia Dalby wrote to share the sad news that fellow ’73 classmate Jackie Schmidt Blei died in October 2019 after a courageous battle with cancer. She was inducted into the Smith College Athletic Hall of Fame on a Saturday and died the following Tuesday. She was an outstanding field hockey coach at Smith...and a 3-sport athlete at URI...before Title IX. She was an inspiration to students and colleagues!

1979 Catherine Hanrahan became the proud grandmother of Emerson Robert Hanrahan on December 14, 2019 (see Births and Adoptions, page 46).

1980 Donna Russo Morin is thrilled to announce that her ninth book, Gilded Summers, a novel of Newport’s Gilded Age, is officially an international bestseller. She is currently working on its sequel—Gilded Dreams, to be released in June 2020—an homage to the Rhode Island women who brought American women suffrage...a celebration of the 100th anniversary of women’s suffrage coming up on August 18, 2020. Donna will be teaching and mentoring at Island Writers’ Tours in July 2020. She can be reached at donnarrusomorin.com.

1989 Robert (Bob) Kelley was appointed to the Board of the State and Local Government Benefits Association (SLGBA). He works for the North Carolina State and Local Government Benefits Association (SALGBA). Robert (Bob) Kelley was named a regional director for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, was among 15 winners of the inaugural Theodore Roosevelt Government Leadership Awards who were recognized September 19, 2019, at the Washington National Cathedral by the Government Executive Media Group. Wendy is thrilled to announce that her ninth book, Gilded Dreams, to be released in June 2020—an homage to the Rhode Island women who brought American women suffrage...a celebration of the 100th anniversary of women’s suffrage coming up on August 18, 2020. Donna will be teaching and mentoring at Island Writers’ Tours in July 2020. She can be reached at donnarrusomorin.com.

1990 Thursday, Oct. 14, 2010. Donna will be teaching and mentoring at Island Writers’ Tours in July 2020. She can be reached at donnarrusomorin.com.

1992 Vladimir Duthiers ’91, Hon. ’17, see page 23.

1998 Kelly Lockwood-Primus ’84

1998 Duval (Masta Ace) Clear gathered with friends and family for Alumni and Family weekend on the Kingston Campus in October 2019. He was presented with a framed copy of the fall 2018 University of Rhode Island Magazine, which featured Ace as the cover story. Left to right: Corrinne LePore (parent of URI sophomore Angelina LePore ’22), Mark House, Duval (Masta Ace) Clear ’98, Ray Dof ’99, Schua Clear (Ace’s wife), Milan Clear (Ace’s daughter), and Scott Santos, aka DJ finesse, who attended URI from 1987-91.

HAPPENINGS


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welcomed M.B.A. ‘17, relationship started. “We now live out in San Francisco July 2019. Emily writes, “We Dylan Rhodes McGrath in 2016 and welcomed baby Andrew Burnup ‘13 stars on Broadway in The Inheritance. also a core contributor for the parenting blog GoDad, an award-winning screenwriter, and a past entertainment writer for film publications including Fangoria and Starlog magazines. Born and raised in Westerly, Tony lives in nearby Hopkinton with his wife Marabeth and their three children. 2009 Matty Gregg, see page 42 Casey Stockman, Pharm.D. ‘09 was named vice president of pharmacy at Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island. She works closely with Neighborhood’s chief medical officer and senior management staff to oversee and coordinate Pharmacy Department activities. Casey began working for Neighbor- hood in February 2019, and previously served as a specialty drug consultant and vice president of specialty pharmacy. Before that, she held several leadership positions at Magellan Rx Management. Casey lives in Tiverton, Rhode Island. Kellene Young of Kailua, Hawaii, has joined Anthology’s Public Relations Group as a senior account executive. Her responsi- bilities include strategic communica- tions planning, client account service, media relations, and writing for travel and corpo- rate accounts. She brings more than eight years of communica- tions experience to the com- pany, having served as associate director of internal communica- tions for McCann Worldgroup in New York and in various commu- nications positions at IBM. 2010 Omar Bae, see page 21 Alex DeCicco, see page 14 2013 Andrew Burnup is playing Toby Darling on Broadway in The Inheritance. Matthew Lopez’s Inheritance Darling on Broadway in 2014 Corey Confreda, see page 43 Mea Duke, see back cover Joseph Galindo accepted an associate position in the litiga- tion department at the law firm Duffly & Sweeney. Previously, he was a law clerk for Justice Francis Flaherty at the Rhode Island Supreme Court. His experience includes a year-long clerkship for the Rhode Island Supreme Court Trial Court Law Clerk Department, doing research and drafting decisions for Justices Brian Stern and Richard Licht. He serves as a member of the Rhode Island Supreme Court Rules of Evidence Committee, and previously volunteered for the city of Central Falls Law Department. 2017 Shayna Kranell, see page 41 2018 Jessica Kaelblein, see page 15 2019 Kay Tsai, see pages 2 and 16
Meet an Innovative Pharmacist Focused on People

Eugenio Fernandez Jr. ’13, MBA ’13, Pharm.D. ’13, grew up in Providence, the son of Cuban refugees. After amassing an impressive list of degrees, he went back to the neighborhood he grew up in with a big idea: a pharmacy focused on people, in all their complexity.

Eugenio Fernandez Radiates An Infectious Enthusiasm. The founder of Asthenis, a unique community pharmacy grounded in providing reliable health information, his goal is to help as many people as possible, holistically. His URI degrees—biometry, psychology, pharmacy, and business—and his graduate degree in public health from Harvard give him the broad perspective he needs to meet that goal. “My colleagues complained that a 15-minute doctor’s visit wasn’t enough to diagnose and treat. What if someone forgot to ask a question, or didn’t understand? I saw a need for reliable health education outside the doctor’s office.” That’s when the idea for Asthenis was born.

He gave up a job opportunity at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, returned to the Providence neighborhood he grew up in, and poured heart, soul, and savings into launching Asthenis. “I didn’t want to focus on just the clinical side—people are more complex than that,” he explains. “People have trouble eating, sleeping, don’t know where to live.” So Asthenis dispenses not just prescriptions, but also health education and resources. “We don’t turn anyone away. We point them in the right direction. Even if they don’t need a prescription, people can come in and ask questions. It’s an initial triage. We help patients decide whether to go to the ER, or if they can help themselves, or wait for a doctor’s visit. We help them make informed decisions.”

He credits his URI professors in shaping his thinking. “My professors at URI challenged me to think big. This is my interpretation.” •

Linda Levin Didn’t Want to Be a Teacher. She Became a Really Good One.

If you were lucky enough to take a class with journalism professor Linda Levin in the 1980s and ’90s, you surely remember her. Maybe you’re even still in touch with her. Her no-nonsense teaching style, her devotion to her students, and her pure enjoyment of teaching are her unforgettable legacies. And wanted students to be their best.”

Steve Greenlee ’91 was a journalism major in his sophomore year and had not yet met Levin. He knocked on her door to inquire about an internship and found a lifelong mentor. “She had no reason to help me,” says Greenlee. When he landed a job as assignment editor at The Boston Globe nine years after graduating, Levin was the first person he called. Now managing editor at the Portland Press Herald in Maine, Greenlee credits his career to Levin. “She takes a lifelong responsibility for her students,” he says.

Levin thrived as a professor and in 2001 became the chair of the journalism department. She developed expertise in First Amendment issues, media law, and the history of journalism. The recipient of many industry awards, she has been a fellow of the Poynter Institute for Media Studies, the American Press Institute, and the Annenberg Washington Program. Levin is the author of The Making of FDR: The Story of Stephen T. Early, America’s First Modern Press Secretary. She retired from teaching in the classroom in 2012. But those of us who were fortunate enough to study with her continue to consider her lessons on a daily basis. •

—Ann Martini ’90

OPENED IN JULY 2018, ASTHENIS MEANS PATIENT TO GREEK, WHICH SERVES AS FERNANDEZ’S CONSTANT REMINDER TO FOCUS ON PEOPLE, NOT ADMINISTRATION.

PHOTO: NAOMI LEE

LINDA LOTORIDGE LEVIN never wanted to be a teacher. “Don’t be a teacher!” Levin recalls. “I heard this 10,000 times a day from my mother.” Levin recalls. No matter. Levin wanted to go to medical school. But her mother—a driving force in her life—would not send her. It was the 1950s and Levini mother thought the expensive degree would be a waste of money since she believed her daughter would probably get married, have babies, and never work as a doctor. “So I had to choose another major,” Levin says. “I had a typewriter and I didn’t mind writing.”

As a student at Michigan State and later Boston University, Levin was inspired by two professors who “knew so much” and also gave life to the material, and she emulated them. Years later at URI, Levin taught about Joseph Pulitzer by donning a full beard and suit to depict the iconic journalist and publisher. “I wanted it to be fun,” she says. “If you can’t have fun, why go?”

“She was always highly engaged,” recalls Brett Davey ’90, currently the director of marketing at South County Health. “She never mailed it in, not even once. It’s clear how much she loved teaching and her students,” he says. “There’s a reason so many of us have stayed close with her decades after graduating. She’s fun to be around. Always has been.”

But a professorial career was not initially on her radar. After graduating, Levin became a successful health and medicine reporter and enjoyed it immensely. She married Providence Journal reporter Len Levin and together they raised two girls. One day, Levin recalls, she was approached by an administrator at her daughter’s elementary school. Would she be willing to teach an after-school news writing class to fourth-graders? She accepted the challenge. “I hated it! They wouldn’t settle down,” she says. “I was always yelling at the little piers.”

In 1983, Levin was offered a position teaching journalism at the University of Rhode Island. This time, she was smitten. Shied found her niche with college-age students. “I had great students,” she recalls. “I loved them and wanted them to be successful.” “She was one of a kind professor,” remembers Gregg Perry ’88, president at the public relations firm the Perry Group. “She’s sarcastic, funny, no bull. At the same time, she was caring and compassionate. •
Four Years That Changed a Generation

This year, URI’s Class of 1970 celebrates its 50th reunion. In early May 1970, just a month before URI’s graduation exercises, student strikes on college campuses across the United States, including at URI, were organized to protest the expansion of the Vietnam War into Cambodia. At Kent State University, the National Guard shot and killed four students during a protest. What was it like to be a college student during that complicated and uniquely transformative era? Class of 1970 alumni share their stories.

DENNIS LYNCH ’70 GAVE THE student Commencement address in 1970. His address was insightful and powerful. He summarized the changes that defined the years from September 1966—when most of the Class of 1970 arrived at URI as first-year students—to June 7, 1970, when their graduation ceremonies took place.

“In these four years,” Lynch said, “things have changed. Our music has changed, our style of dress has changed, our lifestyle has changed, but more importantly, our minds have changed. These four years past have been the most blinding array of rapid evolution since this tiny sphere in the universe first began forming.”

Members of the Class of 1970 point out that it wasn’t always all about protests and resistance; there were still friendships, exams, football games, walks at the beach, romances, books, and all the other things URI alumni typically point to as hallmarks of their time here. But it was, by all accounts, a time of shockingly fast-paced social and cultural transformation. Lynch’s characterization rings true today for members of the Class of 1970, who recall those years in the stories that follow.

FROM ORDER TO TUMULT In 1966, we lived in a world defined by boundaries—parental and societal. We grew up watching TV shows like Donna Reed and Father Knows Best that reflected family life and the morals and values of the time. When I entered URI that year, we didn’t question authority and we complied with rules. Weeknight curfew was 10 p.m. No men were allowed in the female dorms—but if your dad was helping you carry in luggage, you yelled, “Man on the floor!”

But life began to change. As seniors, we had no curfew, men frequented our dorms. The scent of marijuana escaped from closed doors. Vietnam and Kent State changed us. We weren’t followers anymore. We went on strike. In 1966, the campus was our orderly world. In 1970, the tumultuous world was our campus.

— Marilyn Conti Zaritari ’70

BEST/WORST OF TIMES It was the best of times. Finally free from the cultural restraints of first- and second-generation parents, we were able to explore academic, social, and multicultural opportunities. When we began at URI, we had to wear skirts to the dining halls and even classes. By the time we left, we were wearing jeans or Army surplus clothes every day.

It was also the worst of times. Rallies against the war were regular occurrences on the Quad. Friendships were strained, young men left for Canada, some left for war. Names of those killed were relayed in hushed tones. No one was without an opinion. Finally, the University was shut down just prior to graduation. Sadness, black armbands, and anger permeated among the smiles of our parents. We were ambivalent about our future.

— Janice DiLorenzo ’70

VOICE OF CHANGE They called us “Baby Boomers” because of the upick in births following World War II. Most of us had relatives who had fought in the war. For many, the war formed the basis of our beliefs about our government. During the 1960s, students generally went with the flow. It was a period of perceived “student apathy.” Gradually, students began to question some of the nation’s policies. There was a developing concern about social responsibility. The “silent majority” was in contrast to vocal activists. The voice of reason became clouded by the voice of change. Not everybody understood everything. The correctness of our role in Vietnam was still a point for discussion. URI could never be confused with Berkeley, but Kent State and the Cambodian invasion changed many minds and yielded a focus. URI’s participation in the student strike (unthinkable just a few years earlier) was a result of that focus.

— Allen Divoll ’70

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BOOMING ACTIVITIES
Those days between 1966 and 1970 held many changes. As college students, we seemed destined to participate. In the beginning of my sophomore year as a member of the Student Senate, I was asked to represent URI at the Associated Student Governments’ Conference in San Francisco. The conference was held during Thanksgiving break and the planners thought Thanksgiving dinner for students from across the country should be held at the Playboy Club. During the next two years, conversations and calls and finding the person needed. There was one TV in the downstairs room for the entire dorm, and boys were allowed to visit only in that space. By our graduation in 1970, we were no longer the same students. We became protesters, and defined authority on many levels. The repercussions of the Vietnam War and Kent State had transformed us forever. And beanies were never part of freshman orientation again.
—Victoria Salcone Cataldo ’70

TRANSFORMED FOREVER
As a URI freshman in September 1966, I recall Labor Day weekend being filled with excitement. My parents moved me into Peck Hall with just two suitcases, which held my clothing, sheets, towels, and toiletries. Freshmen were required to wear beanies to distinguish us from upperclassmen. This rule, like many others, was just accepted. We could wear our skirts so short, our fingertips could touch the hems. Pants would have been more conservative. But we complained without question. There was a curfew, after which the dorm doors were locked. There was one pay phone per floor, and anyone walking by was responsible for answering calls and finding the person needed. There was only one TV in the downstairs room for the entire dorm, and boys were allowed to visit only in that space. By our graduation in 1970, we were no longer the same students. We became protesters, and defined authority on many levels. The repercussions of the Vietnam War and Kent State had transformed us forever. And beanies were never part of freshman orientation again.

Dianne “Dede” Davis Berg

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND had never exactly been known as a hotbed of radical politics. But on the morning of Friday, May 1, 1970, readers opened the campus newspaper, The Beacon, to find clear evidence that Bob Dylan’s 1964 anthem, “The Times They Are A-Changin,” still rang true. “49,004 Have Died in Vietnam,” the top headline reported.

The only other headline on the page read, “Student Senate Supports Strike.” That day, student and faculty held an emergency rally on the URI Quad to call for a stoppage of classes the following Monday. The immediate purpose was to protest President Nixon sending troops into Cambodia and the death of four students on the pastoral grounds of the Kent State campus. URI joined a group of 175 universities and colleges from across the U.S., becoming one of the first schools in New England to join the strike.

On Tuesday, May 5, an overflow crowd, primarily students, packed Edwards Auditorium and almost all professors entered the strike. We adopted the slogan, “Close it down to open it up,” referring to our aspirations for the URI strike: opening our minds and hearts and broadening our perspectives through workshops and discussions on a variety of topics, such as how biological warfare affects civilian populations and the health of our planetary home. The faculty senate concluded, after some heated discussion, that no student would be penalized for taking our way back to the bus. Luckily, we were all there. Eyes and lungs burning, we boarded the bus, the then got back in the car and trucked on back to URI. We got back in the early hours of the morning, exhausted and happy.

Did we make a difference? No. Not at all. President Nixon vowed that the protests would not sway his decisions about the war. Later that month, he gave his famous (infamous?) speech praising the “silent majority” who, he claimed, supported the war. But for me it was, and will remain, a high point. For the first time in my young life, I stood up to parents of the “Greatest Generation.”

For more photos from the 1970 Grit, go to uri.edu/magazine

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND MAGAZINE

52 SPRING 2020

PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Professor Stein started teaching at URI in 1965. His former political science colleague, Professor Emeritus John Millett, says, “Art is a gentle and thoughtful man,” who, in the turbulent late 1960s and beyond, earned the respect of colleagues and students alike. In 1999, Stein was one of the co-founders of URI’s Center for Nonviolence and Peace Studies, and his committed approach to active social justice has continued unabated over the past half-century.

CLOSING IT DOWN TO OPEN IT UP

For more photos from the 1970 Grit, go to uri.edu/magazine

ROBERT V. BOLDERSOON

WEAR CHANGED EVERYTHING
Like a tsunami, the anti-war movement engulfed American campuses. In the spring of 1966, I visited URI to inspect my future campus. It was graduation weekend, and President Lyndon Johnson was receiving an honorary degree. Professor Elton Rayack, protesting the Vietnam War, was escorted off the podium by two University officials. Professor Rayack later became my professor.

By our graduation in 1970, we were the Baby Boomers, born to parents of the “Greatest Generation.” Our URI experience taught us to question the misuse of authority and power. Today’s political turmoil reflects past times. Protest, alienation, upheaval—perhaps there is nothing new. I often reflect on what Yogi Berra so eloquently stated. “It’s like déjà vu all over again.”

—Robert Bolderson ’70

part in the strike—or not. Students were permitted to complete the spring term in the way they believed would be most beneficial personally and to the broader community. The principles of equality and freedom of choice prevailed.

—Art Stein, Professor Emeritus of Political Science

CLOSING IT DOWN TO OPEN IT UP

WAR CHANGED EVERYTHING
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By our graduation in 1970, we were the Baby Boomers, born to parents of the “Greatest Generation.” Our URI experience taught us to question the misuse of authority and power. Today’s political turmoil reflects past times. Protest, alienation, upheaval—perhaps there is nothing new. I often reflect on what Yogi Berra so eloquently stated. “It’s like déjà vu all over again.”

—Robert Bolderson ’70

U.S. campuses like a virus. When the strike occurred in the spring of 1970, the protests effectively ended the last couple weeks of school. I was co-captain of the track team and was preparing for the Penn Relays. I remember Coach Russell telling me that “none of the other athletes reported for practice.” I explained to Coach Russell the reasoning for the strike and told him I couldn’t let the anger I felt politically interfere with my relationships or responsibilities. My beliefs over the years have not changed.

Dr. Robert V. Bolderson

PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Professor Stein started teaching at URI in 1965. His former political science colleague, Professor Emeritus John Millett, says, “Art is a gentle and thoughtful man,” who, in the turbulent late 1960s and beyond, earned the respect of colleagues and students alike. In 1999, Stein was one of the co-founders of URI’s Center for Nonviolence and Peace Studies, and his committed approach to active social justice has continued unabated over the past half-century.

CLOSING IT DOWN TO OPEN IT UP

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IN THIS CIRCA 1976 PHOTO FROM THE URI ARCHIVES, PROFESSOR HAROLD BIBB (FAR RIGHT) HELPS SENIOR ZOOLOGY MAJOR WAYNE MOLLOHAN ’76. IN BACK, PROFESSOR CLARENCE GOERTEMILLER (IN LAB COAT) HELPS OTHER STUDENTS IN THE LAB.

WE WERE THRILLED TO HEAR FROM WAYNE’S DAUGHTER, MEGHAN MOLLOHAN FERGUSON ’06, WHO SAID, “THAT’S MY DAD, DR. WAYNE MOLLOHAN, AND PROFESSOR HAROLD BIBB. MY DAD SAYS THIS WAS LIKELY THE CHORDATE ANATOMY AND MORPHOGENESIS FIVE-CREDIT COURSE HE TOOK AS A SOPHOMORE. HE WENT ON TO TUFTS DENTAL SCHOOL. BACK IN 2005, I TOLD MY DAD ABOUT THIS PROFESSOR THAT I HAD, HAROLD BIBB. WHEN HE HEARD HIS NAME, HE INSTANTLY REMEMBERED THAT HE ALSO HAD HIM AS A PROFESSOR.”

WE ALSO HEARD FROM BILL WALTON ’78, WHO SAID, “THE PICTURE BRINGS BACK MEMORIES OF MY DAYS AS A ZOOLOGY MAJOR.”


Submit entries by May 15, 2020
Award-winning artist Mea Duke has a unique perspective. Her paintings, prints, and sculptures often depict marine-related subjects, such as container ships or life jackets.

For many of her paintings, like this one, she references open-source press photos documenting modern maritime disasters to call attention to the operational reality of the global shipping industry. Here, she depicts a sinking barge in the Mississippi River.

“Taking to the water,” says Duke, “is a deeply substantial part of our collective histories and modern existence. It embodies all of the challenges, dangers, triumphs, and absurdities that come with the territory.”

To stay above the pull and run

MEA DUKE ’14
22” x 26”, oil on canvas, 2017
meaduke.com