

UNIVERSITY OF

RHODE ISLAND

SPRING 2021

MAGAZINE



Why Poetry Now?

VOICE.

CONNECTION.

SOLACE.

MEANING.

Aperture

EDWARDS IN BLOOM

Edwards Hall is one of URI's most iconic buildings. Positioned on the Quadrangle at the corner of Upper College Road, Edwards was built in 1928 of the same rough, squared, ashlar granite as some of the earlier buildings on the Quad. Named for URI's third president, Howard Edwards, the building's auditorium has served as a lecture hall, been home to URI Theatre, and hosted movies, concerts, guest speakers, University ceremonies, and lecture series.

The building underwent a \$1.5 million restoration in 2010, which earned URI a 2012 Rhody Award for Historic Preservation. During the restoration, workers uncovered a set of murals by Providence artist Gino Conti as part of the Works Projects Administration program, which provided jobs to boost the economy during the 1930s and 1940s. In near perfect condition, the murals were removed and restored.

In 2018, Edwards was one of 17 structures on the Kingston Campus named to the National Register of Historic Places. This distinction recognizes the URI Historic District for its contributions to the history of education, architecture, and landscape architecture. •

PHOTO: NORA LEWIS

Edwards Hall

Built in 1928

THE UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND

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From the presidential inauguration to the Super Bowl, poetry is everywhere—and URI is no exception.

Left, Nicholas Larghi '09 captured this image of a giant sphinx moth drinking nectar from a ghost orchid in Big Cypress National Preserve in Florida's Everglades. His story and photos were published in *Orchid Digest*. Read Larghi's Class Note on page 50.

Thank You, University of Rhode Island.

David M. Dooley became the University of Rhode Island’s 11th president in 2009. As he prepares to retire this year, President Dooley expresses his gratitude for the people of URI.



“Working with the people of the University of Rhode Island has been the highlight of my career.”

—David M. Dooley

Working with the people of the University of Rhode Island has been the highlight of my career. URI’s students, faculty, staff, alumni, political leaders, and friends have all contributed to the achievements and excellence that now characterize our university. There have been many challenges over the years, but the determination, perseverance, and dedication of the URI community have propelled URI to its current status as a premier public research university.

In these pages, there are many stories that relate to our current experiences as we continue adapting to life during a pandemic. “From Assistant to Expert: Redefining Nursing” brings into focus the importance of nurses in roles ranging from patient care to leadership during times of crisis. As we commemorate the 75th anniversary of URI’s nursing program at a time in history when nurses have become the face of frontline workers, we highlight the URI nurses in communities around the globe and in every facet of health care who are touching—and saving—countless lives.

Throughout the pandemic, URI has continued to expand its commitment to the arts and the cultural experiences that connect us as humans. When Amanda Gorman confidently stepped into the inaugural spotlight to share her poem, “The Hill We Climb,” generations of people were reminded of the power of poetry and its ability to connect us on an emotional level. “Why Poetry Now?” explores this artistic expression and how many of us are finding comfort in reading, writing, and reciting poetry during these difficult times.

Nevertheless, there are many reasons to be hopeful. For example, I’m proud of the new pathways this university continues to create for accessing the best of what higher education has to offer: hope, discovery, and the pursuit of knowledge. URI Online, for example, highlighted in “A New Way—and Good Reasons—to Go Back to School,” represents new opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to access URI’s affordable and high-quality education programs.

I am grateful for all I have experienced during my academic career. In fact, I often note that I went to college in the 1970s—and never left. As I write this final *URI Magazine* message to you, our Rhody community, I want to express my deep appreciation for the care and support you extended to Lynn and me from the day you welcomed us to Kingston. We will never forget the University of Rhode Island and the special community at its heart. Thank you.

David M. Dooley
President, University of Rhode Island



COASTAL COLORS

Kristina Cinquegrana Petrilli '07
“Dusk on the Rocks,” 2021
11” x 14” acrylic on canvas

Visit uri.edu/artsci/fineartsalumni for more about Kristina Petrilli and other URI alumni artists.

Kristina Cinquegrana Petrilli '07 is a self-described lover of color. The sunrises and sunsets along Rhode Island’s coast are among her favorite subjects. “Dusk on the Rocks,” Petrilli says, was created in many layers over several months in her makeshift kitchen-corner studio. Having her studio space “where all the action takes place in our home,” says this busy mom of two, “has given me the opportunity to add color to my paintings in small increments of time, which is so limited these days.” She adds, “I began with multiple washes over the sky, then the water, horizon line, and finally the shapes and shadows of the rocks. I use my palette knife to bring texture and angles—the unexpected streaks of color and texture make me smile.” Petrilli earned her B.F.A. from URI. She is a senior digital content strategist at URI and runs a freelance marketing and design business. •

Feedback

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

From the Editor

Thank you for the many, many comments and letters you shared in response to the last issue. Your feedback matters, not just to us (although it does make our day to hear from you), but to other readers, because it tells us which stories mean the most to you.

Speaking of which, the number of stories out there of URI folks and their incredible lives, work, creativity, and resilience is truly astounding. We can share only a tiny fraction in these pages, but we hope you find something here that inspires you in some way.

One that you might find inspiring—I did—is the short story below of a shared moment around a COVID vaccine. It shows how interconnected we all truly are—an important thing to remember in these days when, for so many of us, human connection is a rare and precious thing.

— Barbara Caron, Editor-in-Chief

Love for URI’s Library Education Program

This past weekend, a granddaughter of one of my cousins asked me about my library career for a class that she is taking involving career planning. When I responded, I referred her to a video that Assumption University (formerly Assumption College) posted this summer. It includes an interview that an employee of the alumni fund office conducted with me in late May. The interview details what my library career has meant to me. The former Graduate Library School at URI played a vital role in launching the wonderful career that I have enjoyed for more than 40 years. If anyone wishes to see it, the video is available here: <https://vimeo.com/423418117>. Thank you so much for everything.

—Larry Spongberg, M.L.S. ’74

Larry Spongberg, aka Larry the Librarian, recently retired after 40 years as a librarian at Assumption University in Worcester, Massachusetts.

Ditching Syringes

I just read the article about plastics (fall 2020). I am a small animal veterinarian in Beverly, Mass. We have switched over to vacutainer use for 90 percent of our blood sampling. This saves so many syringes as well as plastic cases for them. I teach this to anyone that comes through my practice as a student intern, but it is still not widespread at all throughout the field.

—Nancy Crowley ’88



Thank God for Liberals

This (excerpted) note was in response to another reader’s note in the fall 2020 issue of the magazine:

(...) Thank God for political liberals, who still have some ability to care about and empathize with the plights of others. The liberal philosophy of life and education that broadens students’ awareness of the commonalities and needs of humanity needs be enabled to flourish for the benefit of the entire human community. America is not Amerika, nor is it Stepford.

—Cheryl A. Madden ’02

Field Trips

I just finished Stephen Hopkins’ hilarious piece, “Field Ornithology and My Life of Crime,” in the fall 2020 issue. Fortunately, other URI students in the early 1970s had much more positive experiences at the Savannah River Ecology Lab (SREL), which, as I recall, was operated by the University of Georgia. Professors Stan Cobb and Bob Shoop made multiple field trips to the SREL with undergrad and grad students. Much of the terrain and water available for study was in the 310-square-mile property of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), and nuclear materials for bombs were produced in the reactors onsite. Thus, access to the facility was not a given, leading to the attendant “nature sanctuary” feel of the place.

On both of my experiences there, we studied PAR Pond (actually a reservoir), which was part of the cooling waterways for the P and R reactors prior to water release to the Savannah River proper. One of my fellow grad students, Torgny Vigerstad, M.S. ’74, Ph.D. ’80, actually did his dissertation research in PAR Pond. In December 1971, as we checked in at the AEC administration building to pick up our badges for the field trip led by Professor Cobb, many short-haired government employees came out of their offices to behold a couple of the long-haired guys in our group—but I don’t think they ever suspected us of bank robbery.

—Dave Bengtson, M.S. ’74, Ph.D. ’82
Professor Emeritus, URI Department of Fisheries, Animal and Veterinary Sciences

Keeper of Her Culture

Wow, what a great article (“Keeper of Her Culture,” fall 2020) about a real life story. When I was at URI in the early 1960s, I worked for a lady at the Student Union who was from Kenyon. I remember her telling me about Usquepaugh and other Native American areas. After I got out of the Navy in 1966, I worked for two years at the Great Swamp Wildlife Management area in West Kingston. Coming originally from Bristol, I was interested in King Philip and the tragic war. This article brought back these memories, but sadly I learned how little I know of this culture. Thanks for the work of URI and Leah Hopkins ’20.

—Matthew Perry ’63

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The University follows the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Rhode Island Department of Health, and University COVID-19 guidelines; URI photography was taken following the guidance at the time.

Corrections

In the fall 2020 story about Leah Hopkins ’20, “Keeper of Her Culture,” we incorrectly stated that Pocasset Wampanoag sachem Queen Weetamoo was Hopkins’ ancestor. Queen Weetamoo is one of Hopkins’ heroes and a part of her cultural heritage, but not a direct ancestor.

In the Aperture section of the fall 2020 issue, Jon Laustsen’s name was misspelled near the end of the story.

In the fall 2020 story about Chef Bruce Moffett ’87, we erroneously identified the late U.S. Senator John Chafee as “(D-R.I.)” This should have read, “(R-R.I.),” as Senator Chafee’s party affiliation was Republican.

Our sincere apologies for these errors.

“It is amazing knowing that I am helping to bring the world back to ‘normal’—one vaccine at a time.”

—Lauren Eng, Pharm.D. ’22

At right, retired pharmacist Ronald DiMatteo receives his COVID vaccine from URI pharmacy student Lauren Eng.

In February, Clinical Professor of Pharmacy Practice Erica Estus ’96, Pharm.D. ’00, posted to social media: “Happiness is spending a Friday night with my dad (retired pharmacist Ronald DiMatteo) getting his first COVID vaccine. Bonus that he was vaccinated by a URI pharmacy student who took my geriatric pharmacy elective course this past fall. A 75-year-old retired pharmacist and a 22-year-old future pharmacist with a whole lot of stories to share—and a special Queens, N.Y., connection.”

Lauren Eng, Pharm.D. ’22, received her certification to immunize through the URI Pharm.D. curriculum and works as an intern at CVS Caremark. She loves administering vaccines. “So many people,” she says, “have said things to me like, ‘Once I am fully vaccinated, I can’t wait to be reunited with my children and grandchildren!’ It is amazing knowing that I am helping to bring the world back to ‘normal’—one vaccine at a time.”

DiMatteo was Eng’s last vaccination of the day, so they had time to chat. “I’m from Astoria, Queens—born and raised,” says Eng, “and Mr. DiMatteo went to St. John’s University for pharmacy, which is right near my high school. I loved meeting him in person (we met him on Zoom last semester when I took Dr. Estus’ geriatrics elective and he was so sweet!) and hearing about his time in Vietnam and hilarious pharmacy school stories.” •



Civil Rights Activism at URI

The latest issue of URI Magazine suggested that civil rights activism at URI started in 1966. In fact, there was significant activity prior to that, including organizing for voter registration bus rides to the South and sit-ins at the capitol building in Providence for fair housing. Not to mention demonstrations in Wakefield because barber shops would not cut the hair of the African exchange students, read that Black. There was a small but active NSM (Northern Student Movement) group on campus, which morphed into a small but vocal SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) group (SDS represented something quite different at that time). URI should be aware of and proud of this history. In reading the article, it would seem that those earlier efforts were not as lasting as one could hope, but they were very real and should be remembered.

—Nada Chandler ’64

Scout Team Spotlight

I was reading through your recent article about club sports (my roommate was on the sailing team) and loved the article (summer 2020). I regularly read the magazine and love the work you guys put in. I wanted to draw attention to a program I was involved in all four years of my collegiate years at URI. I was a scout team basketball practice player for the women’s basketball program.

Most Division I programs use men to practice against—like UConn, Duke, and BC. We wake up early, practice, get hurt, study plays, and follow other teams so we can better play and prepare our athletes for showtime. Not sure if an article has been written, but I wanted to bring some attention to those dedicated players and the role they play in helping the college athletes prepare for success in the game. Go Rhody!

—Rick Branca ’14



= IN BRIEF =

A Smarter Bandage

By embedding nanosensors in the fibers of a bandage, University of Rhode Island assistant professor Daniel Roxbury and Mohammad Moein Safaee Ph.D. '20, have created a continuous, noninvasive way to detect and monitor an infection in a wound.



The “smart bandage” will be monitored by a wearable device, which will wirelessly (optically) detect the signal from the carbon nanotubes in the bandage. The signal can then be transmitted to a smartphone, or similar device, to automatically alert the patient or a health-care provider.

“The hope is that the device will diagnose an infection at an early stage, necessitating fewer antibiotics and preventing drastic measures, such as limb amputation,” said Roxbury. “We envision this being particularly



Assistant Professor Daniel Roxbury and Mohammed Moein Safaee, Ph.D. '20, demonstrate the smart bandage.

useful in those with diabetes, where the management of chronic wounds is routine.”

Testing has focused on small bandage samples, but the technology can be applied easily to much larger bandages. Roxbury noted the usefulness of the technology in those larger sizes, since larger bandages can be more of a nuisance to remove and reapply. “Our device won’t need to be removed to enable detection,” he said.

Removing and Destroying ‘Forever Chemicals’

URI hydrogeologist Thomas Boving and colleagues at EnChem Engineering Inc. are testing a proprietary new technology for quickly removing and destroying hazardous chemical compounds from soil and groundwater. If proven effective, the technology could soon be applied to cleaning up the abundant per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances—collectively referred to as PFAS and “forever chemicals”—that contaminate drinking water supplies serving about one-third of Americans.



PFAS have been in use for more than 60 years and are found in common household goods like nonstick cookware, stain-proof carpets, and pizza boxes, as well as in firefighting foams and other industrial

products. Because they do not break down easily in the environment, they find their way into human and animal tissues and can lead to many serious diseases.

“Our approach to this problem is in two steps,” said Boving. “First, we flush the compounds out of the ground by pumping in a sugar molecule that has the ability to remove PFAS from the soil and groundwater. Then we pump the solution out of the ground and hit it with a chemical oxidation process to destroy the compounds.” “We likely have the only technology for remediating PFAS that is working at this scale at this time,” said Boving. “There are a lot of other great ideas out there, but most are still being tested in the lab. We’re ahead of the game, and we have high hopes.”

News Ticker



CANNABIS STUDIES

Job growth in the therapeutic cannabis industry is expected to create more than 500,000 jobs by 2022. URI’s new online certificate program is providing the workforce with specialized knowledge to help employees succeed. *(Read more about URI’s online cannabis studies program and other URI Online programs on page 13.)*



ADVISING CONGRESS

URI nursing professor Mary Sullivan has been tapped to be an advisor to the U.S. Congress. In that role, she will share her expertise on the importance of nursing research and research funding.



NEW HIGH-TECH

The Champlin Foundation awarded \$500,000 to URI to enhance student learning through high-tech investments in chemistry, engineering, marine and environmental science, and photography.



NATIONAL EXERCISE STANDARDS

URI’s College of Health Sciences dean, Gary Liguori, was chosen to edit and revise the American College of Sports Medicine’s exercise standards for implementation in the fall of 2021.



OCEAN EXPLORATION

Newly appointed oceanography professor Adam Soule will lead one of the largest research initiatives in URI’s history. The \$94 million Ocean Exploration Cooperative Institute will guide the efforts of five research institutions supporting ocean exploration and responsible resource management.

= GO RHODY =

Writing a Pandemic Playbook

URI’s director of athletics, Thorr Bjorn, looks back on a year of adjusting to day-to-day changes brought on by COVID-19, and looks ahead, determined to return to a more familiar routine for URI’s student-athletes, coaches, and staff.

“Health and well-being for the student-athletes is our number-one priority. But we also promised our student-athletes that we would try to give them opportunities to compete this year.”

—Thorr Bjorn

As he and his wife Cyndy went to dinner in Brooklyn, N.Y., on March 12, 2020, an eerie feeling washed over University of Rhode Island athletics director Thorr Bjorn.

A day earlier, the Atlantic 10 Men’s Basketball Championship was cancelled—a major decision, which Bjorn had been part of as chair of the league’s athletic director’s committee. The restaurant the Bjorns stepped into was sparsely populated, a real-time preview of the months ahead.

Just 24 hours earlier, the couple had gone to dinner at a packed, bustling city restaurant, a scene that, today, feels like a distant memory.

“People were talking about COVID, and you kind of felt it was coming, but there were no masks, and the restaurant we went to was busy,” Bjorn says. “The next night, it was a lot different. The restaurant was very spread out, and there were maybe 10 people inside. It was an eerie feeling, totally eerie. We left to come home that Friday, and everything had changed.”

In the months that followed, the COVID pandemic dominated everything. College athletics became an uncertain landscape wrought with fits and starts. It began with the cancellation of the basketball postseason and bled into the halting of spring sports in 2020. As weeks passed, it became apparent that the fall 2020 season was not to be, at least not everywhere. While the Power 5 conferences proceeded with sports—particularly football—the Atlantic 10 joined the majority of conferences around the country in postponement.

“I ask, ‘Why?’ a lot. ‘Why is that the plan? Why are we doing that?’ I don’t want things done just because it is the easy way,” Bjorn says. “Health and well-being for the student-athletes is our number-one priority. But we also promised our student-athletes that we would try to give them opportunities to compete this year.”

“In many cases, that is the reason they’re here—why they chose Rhode Island over another school,” Bjorn adds. “We have a responsibility to proceed in the safest manner possible while remembering that we promised we would try to provide that opportunity.”

Providing opportunities to compete led the Atlantic 10 to an unprecedented decision. Plans came together for abbreviated seasons for all fall teams to have championship seasons. A similar decision was made by CAA Football, meaning that between January and April 2021, every athletic team at Rhode Island would be in season.

“What’s been amazing is the work our administrative staff and coaches have done to figure out policies and make sure we are following through on everything,” Bjorn says. “The ability to adjust to the curveballs has been incredible. It has been a challenging time that I don’t ever want to go through again, but my level of pride is over the top. Gratitude isn’t a strong enough word for the work that has been done.”

Today—January 19, 2021—Bjorn looks out his office window and sees the women’s track and field team working out. Earlier in the day, he popped out to Meade Stadium to watch the football team practice.

“It feels far more normal going into the spring 2021 semester than it did starting the fall 2020 semester,” Bjorn says. “We have proven we can do it with the basketball season, and now our student-athletes believe we are doing everything we can to deliver on that promised opportunity.”

“This is not the new normal. It is a temporary pain, and it has not been easy. But we can get back to normal. We will get back, and we are doing it.” •

—Shane Donaldson '99



As athletic director Thorr Bjorn cheered on the men’s basketball team against UMass in early February, it was with a mask, from an empty athletic director’s suite, in an arena with empty stands.

= BIG IDEAS. BOLD PLANS. =

Attracting Excellence: Faces of URI



VERRECCHIA SCHOLAR

Jordan Furman '24
Chadwick, N.J.

Background:

Jordan Furman plays the alto sax and competed at nationals for cheerleading. She was a top student at her high school and applied to 10 colleges. Thanks to the Verrecchia Scholarship, she chose URI and is a double major in accounting and communication studies.

What are the benefits of being a Verrecchia Scholar?

"I have access to a personal career coach, internship mentoring and placement, and regular exposure to business leaders. In my first semester I participated in the Leadership Institute, which helped me develop leadership skills and introduced me to people with similar interests. I am very happy about the easy assimilation into the URI community."

What does the future hold?

Furman is excited that a J-Term experience is part of her Verrecchia Scholarship. She is considering South Korea, where she was born, to study business analytics, or Belize to study communications. Once she graduates, she thinks she might pursue a career at one of the big four accounting firms in forensic accounting or auditing.

"I believe there is no better investment than education. When we can provide access through scholarships, we attract outstanding students and we put them in the best position to succeed and contribute to society."

—ALFRED J. VERRECCHIA '67, M.B.A. '72, HON. '04



RYAN SCHOLAR

Carlos Fragoso Uriarte '24
Johnston, R.I.

Background:

Carlos Fragoso Uriarte tutored students in math and volunteered to do science experiments with elementary school children with autism. He captained his high school soccer team and played trumpet in the All-State Band. Thanks to the Ryan Scholarship, he's a double major in chemical engineering and Italian (he's already fluent in Spanish) and is considering a minor in mathematics or physics.

What are the benefits of being a Ryan Scholar?

"While this hasn't been a traditional first semester on campus, the Ryan Scholars are a tight-knit group. Assistant Dean Abdirkin and Dean Libutti have been so helpful and involved. As a group we decided to meet for dinner once a week and did that all semester. We can't wait to get back to campus to see each other."

What does the future hold?

Fragoso looks forward to the various hands-on learning opportunities at URI and is particularly interested in energy research. He's not sure what the future holds but he thinks about earning his doctorate.

"I wanted to ensure that these driven, multitalented students could access the full range of what this University has to offer. We are excited to welcome them to our community and to see them embrace the full URI learning experience. I am confident that they will go on to become tomorrow's leaders." —THOMAS M. RYAN '75, HON. '99

The Ryan Endowed Scholarship and Verrecchia Endowed Scholarship were created to attract top students to URI and offer a unique variety of learning experiences. The first Ryan and Verrecchia scholars enrolled in fall 2020.



= RHODY SCHOLARS =

Redefining Sustainable Fashion

Graduate student Lauren Machado developed an innovative business plan that won a national merchandising contest.

Sometimes an assigned project strikes a chord that resonates deeply. For Lauren Machado, creating a business plan for a national merchandising contest did just that.

As a first-year master's student in textiles, fashion merchandising and design, Machado developed a plan that not only took top honors in the competition, but may one day be the foundation for her own business.

Her business plan for "Co.Lab" beat out 30 other entries—from students at 10 colleges and universities—in the 2020 merchandising competition held by Educators for Socially Responsible Apparel Practices.

"I have a huge feeling of accomplishment," says Machado, who is from the city of Niterói in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and lives in Boston. "It makes me feel I'm on the right track and encourages me to keep up the good work. The company I envisioned represents, to me, a business model that I truly believe in, and I definitely see myself either working for this type of business or opening the business myself."

Growing up in Brazil, Machado became fascinated with fashion and dreamed of owning a business. Her grandfather owned a chain of retail stores where Machado and her sister would spend afternoons hiding in the clothing racks and playing with the cashiers.

With degrees from Escola Superior de Propaganda e Marketing in Rio de Janeiro, and Parsons School of Design in New York City, Lauren Machado chose URI for graduate school.

The sisters progressed to playing dress-up and watching *Project Runway*. At Escola Superior de Propaganda e Marketing in Rio de Janeiro, she earned a bachelor's degree in publicity and advertising, then added an associate's degree in fashion marketing from Parsons School of Design in New York City. When it was time for graduate school, URI caught her eye.

In Machado's first semester at URI last spring, assistant professor Saheli Goswami alerted her to the merchandising contest.

"Co.Lab" is a play on the word "collaborate." Machado envisions a socially responsible retailer selling street-style apparel and handbags made of sustainable materials. The company would collaborate with four emerging student designers each season to keep the store and its merchandise fresh.

It received a nearly perfect score from a panel of merchandising industry judges.

"Lauren's business plan mirrors her innovative ideas to run fashion businesses in new sustainable ways," says Goswami. "When you hear sustainability in fashion, you start thinking of the environment, waste materials, maybe circular fashion. But Lauren started thinking of social sustainability, along with environmental resources. She thought of empowering future generations, building partnerships for economic growth, and promoting entrepreneurship for responsible production and consumption."

"I believe in a different fashion industry from what we see today," Machado says. "I believe fashion is a form of expression, creativity, and therapy—and is essential to us. More than that, I believe the fashion industry has a crucial role of changing our behavior to be more sustainable, in all senses of the word." •

—Tony LaRoche '94

= MEDIA SPOTLIGHT = You Can Quote Me

On the compounded challenges of COVID-19 and substance abuse:

“ [Among] people who are surveyed during the pandemic who use drugs, we’ve seen a 13% increase in the number of people who have increased their use of substances. ”

—Jeffrey Bratberg, clinical professor of pharmacy
Pharmacy Times

On discovering that organisms can survive in unexpectedly severe undersea conditions:

“Water boils on the (Earth’s) surface at 100 degrees Celsius, and we found organisms living in sediments at 120 degrees Celsius.”

—Arthur Spivack, professor of oceanography, who led the geochemistry efforts for Expedition 370 of the International Ocean Discovery Program
SciTechDaily.com

On the Biden administration’s open-door policy for Muslims, after years of not being able to leave the country without fear of being denied reentry:

“I feel like I have been in a cage for four years.”

—Negar Rahmani, a 26-year-old Iranian-born graduate student at URI
The New York Times

On Rome’s “creepiest” emperor, on the occasion of his infamous imperial gardens being opened to the public:

“Caligula was young and had absolutely no relevant experience for the job, which might have seemed like a breath of fresh air at first, but soon turned into a nightmare as he proved to be a cruel and incompetent ruler.”

—Bridget Buxton, associate professor of ancient history and Mediterranean archaeology
Salon

On COVID-19 and its impact on stock prices in the short and long term:

“In the long run, if the impact of COVID turns out to be more long-lasting or if the monetary policy changes unexpectedly, there is a risk of a very big correction.”

—Xiaowei Xu, assistant professor of finance
WalletHub

On the passage of ballot initiatives around the nation last fall:

“In many ways this has sparked a national conversation on race, and I think we’ve seen a lot of people who are more willing to take concrete steps to address racism than they were in the past.”

—Brendan Skip Mark, assistant professor of political science
The Christian Science Monitor

= LESSON PLAN = A New Way—and Good Reasons —to Go Back to School

A new program, URI Online, offers convenient and flexible certificate, graduate degree, and undergraduate degree completion programs to help students advance or shift their careers.



Yes, it’s true that the global pandemic forced most college students into online learning over the past year—and that most of them long for a return to traditional, in-person classes. But a newly launched program, URI Online, was built for students who are working professionals and who prefer or need the convenience and flexibility of online learning.

URI Online offers professional certificate programs geared toward people already in the workforce who want to gain new skills to advance their careers. Certificates in areas including cannabis studies, healthcare management, GIS and geospatial technologies, fisheries science, digital forensics, data science, and others, are geared toward helping students advance or shift their careers. Most certificate programs can be completed within two semesters.

“We offer programs that will equip students with the skills needed to fill high-demand, high-wage jobs,” says Jill Firtell, assistant director of online program development at URI. “Our programs build off of areas of expertise across the University and are aligned with industry sectors showing signs of growth. It is not just about getting a degree or a certificate, but instead about ensuring that our graduates have what they need to make a difference in their chosen field—whatever that may be.”

Students can also complete bachelor’s degrees through URI Online. An offering in communication studies is for students who started but did not finish their

Courses are taught in seven-week sessions, and all URI Online students pay in-state tuition rates regardless of where they are located. Employers often offer tuition benefits that can help pay for degrees and certificates.

undergraduate degree or who are recent community college graduates. And the R.N. to B.S. program provides an opportunity for students to complete a nursing degree. Additional bachelor’s degree completion programs will be added in the future.

Finally, students can pursue master’s degrees in areas with high career growth—such as supply chain management and applied analytics, healthcare management, and cybersecurity—through URI Online, often obtaining certifications along the way that count toward the graduate degree. Additional master’s degree program offerings are planned.

Dana Amore ’91, Pharm.D. ’01, of Warwick, R.I., is a pharmacist for Stop & Shop. For her, URI Online’s certificate program in cannabis studies made sense. “I have a lot of patients who are using medicinal marijuana, CBD oils, and other cannabis products, or who are thinking about it. When they walk in with questions for me, as a pharmacy professional, I need to be able to give them answers,” she says. Amore is halfway through the program and expects to finish in May. She says that as a full-time professional, she appreciates the convenience and the flexibility of being able to, for the most part, set her own pace. •

—Tracey Manni

URI ONLINE

Graduate Programs

- Dietetics, M.S.
- Healthcare Management, M.S.
- Master of Library and Information Studies
- Master of Oceanography
- Professional Sciences Masters in Cyber Security
- Supply Chain Management and Applied Analytics, M.S.
- TESOL/BDL, M.A.

Certificate Program

- Cannabis Studies

Graduate Certificate Programs

- Cyber Security
- Data Science
- Digital Forensics
- Fisheries Science (FIS)
- GIS and Geospatial Technologies
- Healthcare Management
- Natural Resources and the Environment

Undergraduate Programs

- Communications Studies, B.A. Degree Completion
- Nursing, R.N. to B.S.

uri.edu/online



= WHY I TEACH =

Learning is Engagement

KATHLEEN TORRENS

*Professor, Communication Studies, and
Assistant Director, Online Education*

Winner of the 2020 URI Foundation and Alumni Engagement Excellence in Teaching Award, Torrens encourages her students to think critically and engage in civic life.

While working on her dissertation on the 19th-century dress reform movement, Kathleen Torrens developed a deeper appreciation of ways in which we communicate publicly. For example, clothing can function as political statement. The progressive 19th-century woman's rejection of corsets—and petticoats, hoops, chemises, and bustles—intertwined with the public movements for suffrage, abolition, and temperance, Torrens notes.

"The 19th-century dress reform movement involved this intersection of all kinds of activism and the different ways that 19th-century women advocated for themselves," says Torrens. "I have read reports of women who put down the corset and recounted how frightening it was to do so.

"It was clear that wearing bloomers was a form of protest, argument, and advocacy," she says.

"I think my interest in social movements and discourse arose from that. I've worked that into my teaching," Torrens continues. "People suffered so that we don't have to wear things like corsets, which symbolize social control and oppression, and so that we can vote and own property."

On Equity and Online Education

Torrens is one of the faculty at the forefront of URI's online learning initiative. It is a democratic way to deliver a quality education, provided an institution ensures access, affordability, and equity for its students, she says. COVID-19 accelerated the adoption of online instruction at URI while also highlighting inequities.

"I'm hearing students say, 'I work on my phone because the Wi-Fi in the house is bad,' or, 'My house is overcrowded.' While the bulk of students at URI are privileged, there are a great number who are not."

The responsibility for making online learning work must be shared by faculty and students, Torrens says. "Online learning is an amazing tool for getting students involved in their own education, but it requires training students to participate in a way that they're not used to," she explains. A group blog might replace classroom discussion. Oral presentations might require video. "Learning is engagement, and I feel it is incumbent on us as instructors to learn how to best engage our learners."



"I want my students to ask and answer questions, to have an appreciation for education and for community. I want them to be citizen-participants."

—Kathleen Torrens

On Educating an Informed Citizenry

Students in Torrens' classes evaluate sources by looking critically at how they receive information. If their preferred outlet is Twitter, or even TikTok, they'll get no pushback from Torrens. The goal is that students become aware of the rights, responsibilities, and power they have as citizens.

"My students explore their interests so that they exercise their power as critical consumers of culture and become aware that they are being bombarded every second of every day by people wanting to change their minds or behavior," she says. "Over time, my teaching has become less about content and more about critical thinking, problem-solving, and enjoyment in learning.

"I want my students to ask and answer questions, to have an appreciation for education and for community," Torrens explains. "I want them to be citizen-participants.

"If you learn to be a participant, you are more likely to be an advocate." •

—Marybeth Reilly-McGreen

PHOTO: NORA LEWIS



= QUAD ANGLES =

Lessons in Pandemic Survival, or How Shakespeare Became a Superstar

What can the literary arts and the life of William Shakespeare teach us about how to survive—and even find opportunities—in the midst of a pandemic?

By Travis D. Williams

Would William Shakespeare have been "Shakespeare!" (cue the choir of angels) had he not written *As You Like It*, *Hamlet*, or *The Tempest*? It's easy to confuse the ideal we know with the complicated historical person subject to "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," not to mention ordinary daily risks. Elizabethan England was a dangerous place. Poor sanitation, rampant disease, food shortages, and the lack of an organized police force made life hard—survival was a minor miracle.

Several plague outbreaks fell upon England during Shakespeare's 52 years (1564–1616). Like COVID-19, these pandemics were disruptive to commerce and entertainment. They engendered cultures of superstition and magical thinking. Large public gatherings, such as at public playhouses, were prohibited, but church services continued, since, they believed, the plague could not thrive in God's house. But the Elizabethans couldn't be charged with ignoring scientific reality since science as we know it didn't exist yet.

What about the effects of plague on Shakespeare himself? He was at risk, since he resided in London. But he escaped an early death, retiring in about 1613 to Stratford, where he died peacefully. Plague closures limited Shakespeare's income from his theater careers as poet, actor, company shareholder, and theater landlord. But even in that hardscrabble world, plague conditions created opportunities, and Shakespeare deployed his skills strategically in response to changing circumstances.

Theaters were closed for most of the plague outbreak of 1592–94. Shakespeare—an accomplished and promising poet, but not yet securely established in the theater world—used the closure as an opportunity to ingratiate himself with a noble patron.



Shakespeare used language and thought to make a path for himself through the miseries of the plague and the resulting economic depression.

Patronage was a means for ambitious but socially hindered men to secure financial and professional stability. Shakespeare wrote the majority of the sonnets during the closure and also dedicated two long narrative poems to Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton: *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*. Both demonstrate the poet's astonishing talent in the prestigious genre (playwriting was not considered respectable), and by dedicating them to an aristocratic patron, he appealed to upper-rank audiences, which he knew would be important if theaters did not sufficiently recover from plague closures.

Like some businesses today, there were small or unstable theater companies in the early 1590s that simply disappeared due to

plague closures, while others combined; members sought secure places among the survivors. Two companies emerged dominant and stable: the Admiral's Men and the Lord Chamberlain's Men (later renamed the King's Men). Shakespeare remained with the Chamberlain's and King's Men for the rest of his career. Though he could not have known it, the stability of this association allowed him to become the playwright we now know.

Starting in the mid-1590s, Shakespeare produced the characters of his great comedies: Rosalind and Orlando, Beatrice and Benedict, Portia and Shylock; and the titanic battles and personalities of the mature histories: Shrewsbury and Agincourt, Hal, Falstaff, and Hotspur. Then came the tragic period, from *Julius Caesar* through *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *Macbeth*, to *King Lear* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. Finally, Shakespeare remade the genres of comedy and tragedy with the romance, giving us *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*.

Had Shakespeare abandoned his career in the early 1590s, he still would have been assured a place among the first rank of Elizabethan poets, but he would not have become the icon he is.

The word "poet" comes from the Greek "to make." Shakespeare used language and thought to make a path for himself through the miseries of the plague and the resulting economic depression. Dexterity with thought and language can allow us to pivot as circumstances change. It helps us benefit from opportunities to create. We see it in Shakespeare, and it's yet another lesson that literary art teaches us in our own time of peril. •

Travis D. Williams is associate professor and chair in URI's Department of English and a specialist in Shakespeare and early modern literature.

ILLUSTRATION: GETTY IMAGES



“President Dooley has led URI through a process of expanding and building on strengths and innovations that existed in certain parts of the University, and turning them into a core part of our identity. Interdisciplinary connections, experiential learning, and global education are no longer the unique features of a select few illustrious programs, but fundamental parts of the academic experience across the institution.”

—Megan Echevarría, Associate Professor of Spanish and Film Media Studies, and President, URI Faculty Senate

TWELVE YEARS OF TRANSFORMATION

The University of Rhode Island was a substantially different place in 2009 when President David M. Dooley arrived. Twelve years later, as Dooley’s retirement approaches, every aspect of the state’s flagship research institution reflects his influence.

By Diane M. Sterrett

During the tenure of President David M. Dooley, the University of Rhode Island has grown and improved in ways large and small. His leadership has positioned the University for future success and set the stage for the next president.

Upon arrival, Dooley quickly shared his bold vision to grow the University’s stature with four transformational goals:

- 1 | Create a 21st-century, 24/7 learning environment.
- 2 | Increase the magnitude, prominence, and impact of research, scholarship, and creative work.
- 3 | Internationalize and globalize the University of Rhode Island.
- 4 | Build a community at the University of Rhode Island that values and embraces equity and diversity.

Dooley knew URI had what it would take to be a great research-focused public university and sought to capitalize on its unique strengths. He was inspired by the collegiality, cooperation, and motivation he found when he interviewed here. Even now, amid the pandemic, he says URI’s “we-can-do-this-together” spirit is what moves the University forward.

The COVID pandemic has marked the last year of President Dooley’s tenure with exceptional challenges. But URI has rallied, withstanding the strains to every aspect of its operations. This is due to dedication, hard work, creative thinking, and adaptability by all in the community. But one vital piece of the University’s success in the face of COVID is that, through its partnership with the state of Rhode Island administration and legislature, URI was permitted to build up financial reserves for the first time ever—funds that have been critical in URI’s ability to weather the pandemic.

As President Dooley prepares to retire, the University is engaged in a \$250 million comprehensive campaign to make a URI education more accessible to students and more attractive to top scholars, and to improve their learning experience here with innovative programs and strong faculty leadership. *Big Ideas. Bold Plans. The Campaign for the University of Rhode Island* has already raised more than \$200 million and is poised to meet or exceed its goal by the end of the campaign in 2024.

The largest gift of the campaign to date—and in URI’s history—is a \$35 million commitment from Thomas M. Ryan ’75 and his wife, Cathy, for neuroscience research, as well as support for scholarships and athletics. In 2013, the Ryans established the George & Anne Ryan Institute for Neuroscience with a then-record \$15 million gift. The institute is focused on research, teaching, and outreach on neurodegenerative diseases, including Alzheimer’s, and draws on the expertise of scientists from multiple disciplines.

Dooley is known for his collaborative style and emphasis on fostering a community of discovery. And now, on the occasion of his retirement, Dooley resists taking credit for the University’s progress, attributing the advances to the many teams and individuals whose efforts brought about the vision he articulated when he arrived at URI.

In spite of his humility, and in the spirit of recognizing this pivotal moment in URI’s history—as President Dooley retires and a new president takes the helm—we look back at 10 important ways the University has evolved under Dooley’s leadership.



1 | Becoming a Global University

From better preparing students for work in a global world and welcoming international students, to fostering international collaborative research, URI has become a true global citizen.

In his inaugural address, Dooley noted the global challenges humanity faces, and said: “The 21st-century university must be global in its orientation and international with regard to its education, research, service, and partnerships.”

The University’s global presence has grown exponentially, with 28 percent growth in the number of students majoring in foreign languages, even as other universities have seen a decline. URI has also increased study-abroad opportunities in more than 50 countries and boasts significantly more international exchanges. The University’s unique dual-degree language programs enable students to simultaneously earn degrees in a chosen field such as engineering or business, and in a language—including German, French, Spanish, Italian, Japanese, and Chinese. A new International Studies and Diplomacy program launched in 2018 is the newest dual-degree program, allowing students to pair an international studies major with one of five languages.

Other initiatives have expanded the University’s international impact in environmental sustainability, capacity building, cross-cultural understanding, and collaborative problem-solving, which will reap benefits far into the future. Examples include a sustainable fisheries project in Ghana, West Africa, and a collaborative effort researching destructive fishing practices and typhoons impacting the Philippines, one of the world’s largest fish-producing nations.

“A number of students, faculty, staff, and alumni have pushed us to advance social justice, equity, and inclusion in our living, learning, and work environments. Their advocacy and activism have transformed recruitment efforts, the curriculum, co-curricular programs, professional development, policies, retention strategies, and campus culture. We are building on this strong foundation to implement long-lasting, structural changes to ensure all community members can thrive at URI and beyond.”

—Mary Grace Almandrez, Associate Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer

3 | Advancing 24/7 Learning

URI developed groundbreaking learning opportunities and initiatives to support 24/7 learning. The result: more innovation, creativity, and depth of knowledge.

The launch of URI Online expanded programs and course options to deliver a URI education anywhere, anytime. URI Online offers fully online undergraduate, graduate, and certificate programs. Areas of study include graduate programs in cybersecurity, oceanography, and health-care management, and certificate programs in fisheries science, cannabis studies, and more. (Get to know URI Online on page 13.)

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the pace of online learning, as faculty and students pivoted, using new tools, technologies, and practices to teach and learn in a remote world.

Winter J-Term gives students learning opportunities outside the traditional academic semester. The program grew from just over 400 students in 2014 to 1,182 in January 2020.

Experiential learning offerings increased by 57 percent over the last decade, including internships, fieldwork, service learning, clinical rotations, capstone projects, and laboratory research. Undergraduate research opportunities also expanded, providing more opportunities to spark curiosity and deepen knowledge. During the 2019–2020 academic year, nearly 12,000 URI students were engaged in credit-bearing experiential learning, compared to about 4,000 students in 2008–2009.



2 | Embracing Equity and Diversity

Dooley’s leadership set the tone for seeking common ground to build a better future for all. URI’s growing reputation as a safe and inviting place reflects the University’s core values and attracts greater numbers of students and faculty from differing backgrounds.

Collaboration between partners across the University, including with the Office of Community, Equity and Diversity, has led to measures that strengthen and support an inclusive campus climate and culture.

Highlights:

- Opening URI’s Gender and Sexuality Center, the first-in-the-nation freestanding university center built to serve the needs of the LGBTQ community.
- Creating a University Diversity Council (UDC) to advise the chief diversity officer on University priorities and initiatives that advance equity and inclusion.
- Developing a Diversity and Inclusion Badge Program (DIBP), which offers graduate-level professional development workshops to increase cultural competence.
- Implementing proactive, nationally lauded strategies to close the equity gap in graduation rates.
- Creating programs to support veterans and high school graduates from historically disadvantaged backgrounds.

While URI has taken steps toward increased diversity, 2020’s national reckoning of systemic racism and the Black Lives Matter movement demonstrate how much work remains. Dooley continues to inspire and guide. He addressed the University last summer, saying “URI should exemplify a clear and consistent commitment to anti-racism, to equal justice, and to liberty and safety for Black Americans and other marginalized groups.”



“While the new buildings constructed in the last decade-plus made dramatic statements about the University’s commitment to its faculty, students, and research objectives, I am also proud of the improvements made to existing buildings, utility infrastructure, and campus landscapes. Collaborative leadership, innovative approaches, partnerships, and funding strategies led to improvements in safety, energy efficiency, and commitments to renewable energy sources—all of which will benefit the University into the future.”

—J. Vernon Wyman ’75, Former Assistant Vice President for Business Services

4 | Boosting Research

URI faculty and students are conducting more research, scholarship, and creative work. They are publishing more and earning more awards and contracts with higher-profile research.

URI’s commitment to broad-based research advances has led to breakthroughs on some of the world’s most vexing problems. All told, URI faculty were awarded \$117 million in research grants in the 2020 fiscal year, and since 2010, URI has been issued 131 U.S. and foreign patents.

URI students, too, are contributing to the growing quantity and quality of research and scholarly work. The Undergraduate Research and Innovation program, or (URI)², helps students get their projects started, write proposals, find funding and mentors, and promote their work.

To maximize the potential impact of its research, URI is sharing intellectual and academic resources with companies in industries including defense, health care, technology, and agriculture.

Examples of the impact of URI’s research include:

- Expanding statewide research capacity in the biomedical sciences, including cancer, neuroscience, and environmental health sciences.
- Preventing and treating brain diseases, including a clinical trial that may lead to a simple eye exam becoming a standard test to detect Alzheimer’s disease decades earlier than other tests.
- Surveying an estimated 3 billion acres of U.S. ocean territory alongside the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Office of Ocean Exploration and Research.
- Being selected—as part of the East Coast Oceanographic Consortium—by the National Science Foundation (NSF) to operate the new \$125 million oceanographic vessel that will replace R/V *Endeavor* in 2023.

5 | Building Extraordinary Facilities

During Dooley’s tenure, URI has spent more than \$834 million on new facilities to deliver a 21st-century education and support increased enrollment. The commitment heralds the University’s transition to a global research institution. Partnerships with donors, businesses, voters, and the state were key to success.

URI’s \$150 million Fascitelli Center for Advanced Engineering is the largest construction project in University history. The state-of-the-art building is one of the most technologically advanced engineering buildings in the country.

Two new residence halls foster student connections. Brookside Apartments features 500 beds, apartments with full kitchens, and easy access to the new URI bike path spur. Hillside Hall, with 429 beds, boasts 64 solar panels, a green roof, and LEED® Gold certification.

The \$68 million Beaupre Center for Chemical and Forensic Sciences, which also earned LEED® Gold certification, houses the Department of Chemistry and a federal Center of Excellence for Explosives Detection, Mitigation and Response. It tripled the space for teaching labs and nearly doubled the space for research laboratories.

Major improvements to the Fine Arts Center began three years ago with \$12 million from the Rhode Island General Assembly, and with the passing of Question 1 in the state’s special election this spring, Rhode Island voters earmarked an additional \$57.3 million to continue improvements to this important academic and public performance and exhibition space.

At the Narragansett Bay Campus, shoreside construction projects to support the 2023 arrival of a new research vessel is underway: a T-shaped 200-foot-long concrete deck pier and a 12,250-square-foot marine operations building. An ocean technology building will support ocean exploration, research, and enterprise.

Other noteworthy projects include:

- Robert J. Higgins Welcome Center
- Paramaz Avedisian ’54 Hall, College of Pharmacy
- Gender and Sexuality Center
- Anna Fascitelli Fitness and Wellness Center



6 | Energizing Academics

Revitalizing the curriculum and investing in faculty has reshaped the University and its people.

In the past decade URI has introduced new academic programs, such as interdisciplinary neuroscience; reorganized the Colleges of Pharmacy, Nursing, and Health Sciences into the Academic Health Collaborative; and created the Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies. But one of the biggest changes to academics was the completely revamped core curriculum introduced in 2017.

Today, general education at URI prompts students to explore, challenge, and create through interdisciplinary inquiry and critical thinking. Requirements are based on 12 learning outcomes, such as developing critical competencies relating to diversity, inclusion, and global citizenry, building interdisciplinary knowledge and skills, and exercising civic responsibility. Additionally, in Grand Challenge courses, students engage with global topics and pivotal 21st-century issues.

On the faculty side, the University launched a hiring initiative in 2014 to strategically invest in key areas. Developed by Provost Donald H. DeHayes, the plan included adding 63 new faculty positions over four years, with an initial investment of approximately \$7 million. As a result, URI has hired more than half of its full-time faculty in the last 10 years. The investment reinforced URI's standing as a premier learning-centered research university, responded to growing enrollment, and encouraged innovation and excellence.

These academic investments, along with a new financial aid allocation model and a renewed focus on student success, resulted in the highest enrollment, retention, student diversity, graduation rate, and degrees awarded in URI's history. Total annual degrees awarded grew from 2,968 in 2009 to 4,590 in 2020.

"During the past decade, URI has established an upward trajectory of continuous improvement and sustained excellence that will carry our university forward, despite challenges such as the COVID pandemic. As a tuition-dependent institution, we must maintain focus on innovation, strategic investment and partnerships, and sound fiscal management. In so doing, we will continue to be the institution of choice for a dedicated and diverse community of students, staff, and faculty."

—Donald H. DeHayes, Provost

8 | Sparking Economic Growth

URI is contributing to a more vibrant and sustainable Rhode Island economy.

Dooley's vision was bold: With increased research dollars coming into URI, faculty and students would be able to jump-start the state's economic renewal by generating technology and knowledge that would become products and services, while creating jobs and sustainable income.

The results have been just as bold. For example:

- The College of Pharmacy has become a critical part of the state's knowledge-based economy, developing partnerships with biomedical companies, securing more research funding, and attracting start-up biotech companies. It was ranked eighth nationally for total research funding in 2020, and first in New England.
- The Center for Biotechnology and Life Sciences has advanced scientific research and served as a life-sciences job-creation hub.
- The NSF awarded URI a \$19 million grant to establish a statewide

research consortium studying the effects of climate variability on coastal ecosystems, creating technologies to detect those changes, and building computer models to predict and plan for changes in coastal ecology.

- The Rhode Island Small Business Development Center at URI offers training, workshops, and support for Rhode Island entrepreneurs, as well as key connections at the state and national level.
- The Polaris Manufacturing Extension Partnership has helped more than 750 Rhode Island manufacturers through programs that grow the state's manufacturing industry.

7 | Achieving Independence

One accomplishment most sets the stage for URI's future: the change in governance from the Rhode Island Board of Education to a 17-member Board of Trustees, voted on by the General Assembly and signed into law by Governor Gina Raimondo in July 2019.

Under its new Board of Trustees, URI has more autonomy to develop education and research initiatives, greater agility in hiring practices and decisions on academic programs, the ability to make more timely funding and financial aid decisions, and opportunities to streamline processes, such as purchasing.

Dooley and the leadership of the Rhode Island General Assembly had the vision to establish this model of governance to continue the University's transformation, and Raimondo nominated a highly talented group of trustees, the majority of whom are URI alumni, to lead the University. URI now joins its peer institutions that have governing bodies solely dedicated to their missions and to best practices for public research universities.

URI's previous governing body, the Rhode Island Council on Postsecondary Education, oversaw three diverse institutions: URI, Rhode Island College, and the Community College of Rhode Island. Any policies adopted needed to apply to all three. But as a research institution, URI had vastly different needs. The governance change was recommended by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges when it reaccredited the University.



9 | Generating Industry Partnerships

Strong partnerships between industry and education have been important in URI's transformation. Launched in 2013, the Business Engagement Center (BEC) has served as the front door for industry into URI, giving industry access to the University's extensive resources to help them succeed and grow.

The BEC supports innovation, discovery, and growth of businesses. Hundreds of companies have visited the campus and engaged with faculty and students on projects, internships, and professional development. Corporate partners—from entrepreneurial startups to major corporations—have used BEC services to sponsor research, find talent, move ideas to market, develop their workforces, and more.

Recent engagements include:

- A collaboration between R.I. Commerce Corp., R.I. Department of Health, and industry partners, ventilatorproject.org, tapped URI's research and technical skills to refurbish sleep apnea machines as supplementary equipment to hospitals for COVID-19 patients.
- The Rhode Island Textile Innovation Network's first-ever networking event at URI, with more than 200 attendees, brought together industry leaders, designers, academics, and government officials to showcase Rhode Island's advanced textile manufacturing, and to discuss future training and hiring needs.
- The BEC partnered with the Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division Newport to assist in small business development and technology commercialization, and to promote education and workforce and economic development in defense, undersea technology, and marine industries.
- The annual Food System Summit brings together government, academic, business, and community members. This year's summit, held virtually, focused on how the pandemic has impacted food security.



"Getting into research and entrepreneurship seemed daunting to me, but I have been able to confidently lead a research team and start a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization through the help of URI mentors, the Launch Lab, and the (URI)² undergraduate research grant. URI encourages you to think big, and whatever your idea is, there are resources and faculty here that will help bring your idea to life."

—Thomas Bonneau '21, biology major and founder of the nonprofit America's Recoverable Medical Supply, which recycles and donates medical supplies

"URI's Board of Trustees brings a broad range of perspectives and backgrounds to its work of advancing URI's mission and supporting student success, diversity initiatives, and research growth. President Dooley's vision for a governing board solely dedicated to the University's mission has been realized. As chair of the board—and a proud Rhody alumna—I am honored to serve with the inaugural group of dedicated trustees to support our state's flagship research university."

—Margo Cook '86, Chair, URI Board of Trustees

10 | Going Green

Committed to leading efforts to solve the climate crisis, URI has become a national leader by integrating sustainability principles into academics, research, the built environment, culture, and everyday life.

Supported by the President's Council on Sustainability and led by Marsha Garcia and the Office of Sustainability, green initiatives touch every aspect of campus life.

Highlights:

- More than 30 undergraduate and graduate degrees now include sustainability as a learning outcome.
- Over \$50 million in research and project grants received between fiscal years 2013 and 2017 related to energy, sustainability, and/or climate.
- Almost 30 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions over 11 years, in spite of growth in campus building square footage.
- The 267-acre solar farm project will generate over 48,000 megawatt-hours of electricity—equivalent to more than 50 percent of URI's energy needs when complete in spring 2021. The project is a unique collaboration between the University, municipalities, the state, and private partners.

In the built environment, URI has invested in sustainability and energy efficiency initiatives and has 11 LEED-certified buildings, resulting in real utility cost savings. The College of Pharmacy building, Paramaz Avedisian Hall '54 Hall, which opened in 2012, uses about 20 percent less energy than a traditional building of its size.

In the research arena, faculty and students are examining the ecological impacts of plastics through a University-wide strategic initiative led by Peter J. Snyder, vice president for research and economic development and professor of biomedical sciences.

An Avian Affection

Birds are among the easiest wildlife to observe, which may be why birding is one of the nation's most popular hobbies. URI faculty and URI's Kingston Wildlife Research Station have been the starting point for many alumni who've made careers out of their love of birds, and for many others for whom bird observation is a peaceful pastime—or an all-out obsession.

By Todd McLeish



Above: students in Professor Peter Paton's field ornithology class get their first opportunity to hold and release wild birds. Opposite: Paton holds a black-capped chickadee and quizzes students on feather types. Insets: Paton measures the wing of a tufted titmouse and assesses the condition of its flight feathers.

Gently holding a sparrow in his hand as nearly two dozen students stand in a socially distant circle around him, Professor Peter Paton quizzes his field ornithology class members about bird anatomy and identification. After noting feather types, preferred foods, migration routes, and other details about the species, he hands the bird to a student to release into the nearby forest. And then he repeats the process until every student has released a bird.

For most students, it's the first time they have ever held a wild bird, and it's a magical moment. The glittering smiles on their faces suggest it's an experience they won't soon forget.



The class is gathered at the Kingston Wildlife Research Station, where thousands of birds have been captured, banded, and released every fall for more than 60 years, a site that is the highlight of Paton's weekly class field trips. Located less than a mile from campus, the research station is the former home of the late Douglas Kraus, a long-time chemistry professor whose interest in birds occupied as much of his time as did chemistry. Before he died in 2000, he donated his house and 82 acres of land to the Audubon Society of Rhode Island with a stipulation that URI manage the property for wildlife research.

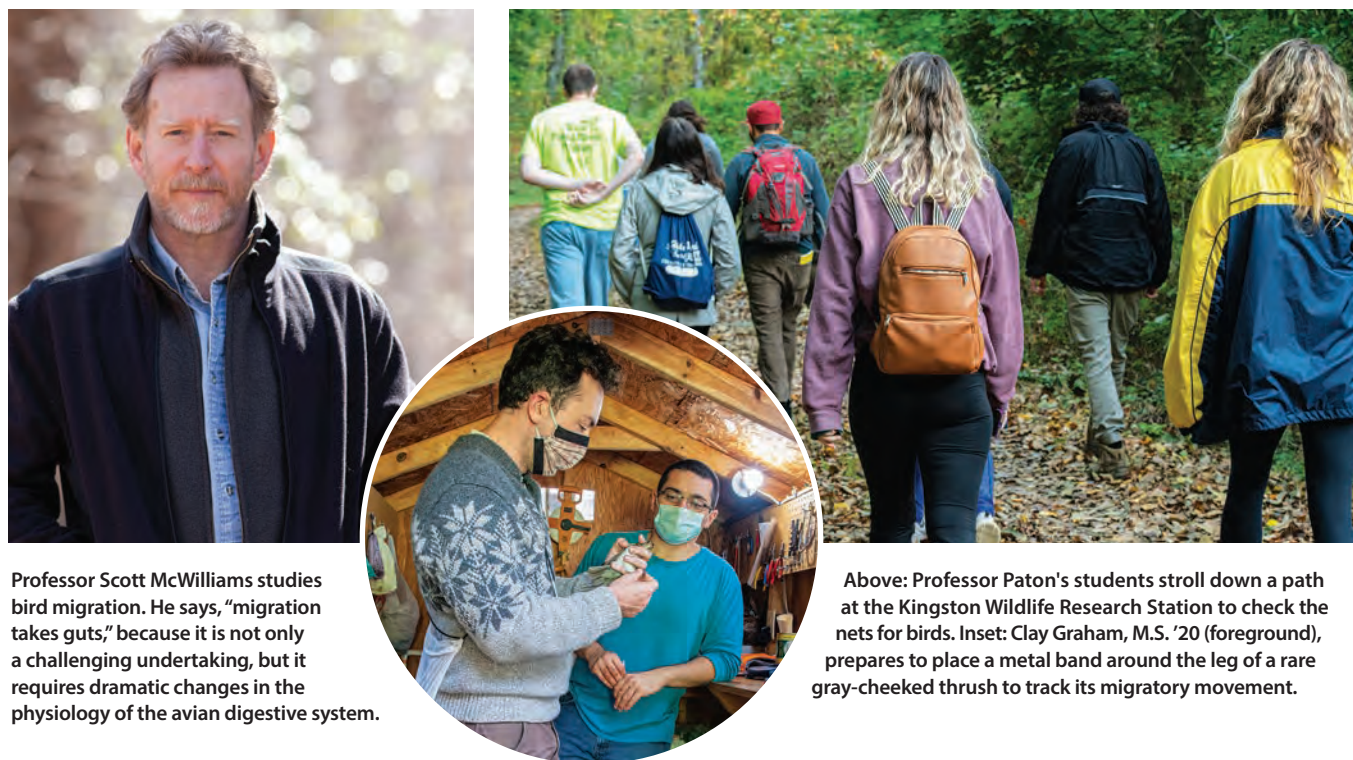
With nearly 60 years of data, the Kingston Wildlife Research Station is one of the nation's longest-running bird-banding stations.

Ever since then, graduate students in the Department of Natural Resources Science have lived and worked at the property and continued to band birds on a daily basis during fall migration to learn about trends in bird populations. They capture birds using a series of nets—like fine-meshed volleyball nets, collect physical measurements about each bird, and place a metal band around one leg so if they are captured again elsewhere, their migratory movements can be determined. With nearly 60 years of data, the field station is one of the nation's longest-running bird-banding stations.

"The number of species we capture each year hasn't really declined over time, but the number of individual birds has seen a major decrease," says Paton, who has managed the research station with Professor Scott McWilliams since 1998. "We're probably down by about 30 percent, which is similar to national figures. On a really good day, they used to capture 150 to 200 birds, and now a good day is 100 birds. That's a substantial decline."

A recent study found that North American bird populations have decreased by about 3 billion birds in the last half-century, due largely to habitat loss. Scientists worry that human-altered landscapes are losing their ability to support birdlife.

Visit uri.edu/magazine for photos and stories from other URI alumni birders.



Professor Scott McWilliams studies bird migration. He says, “migration takes guts,” because it is not only a challenging undertaking, but it requires dramatic changes in the physiology of the avian digestive system.

Above: Professor Paton's students stroll down a path at the Kingston Wildlife Research Station to check the nets for birds. Inset: Clay Graham, M.S. '20 (foreground), prepares to place a metal band around the leg of a rare gray-cheeked thrush to track its migratory movement.

The activity at the Kingston Wildlife Research Station is just one element of a wide variety of bird-related research, education, and outreach undertaken by URI faculty and staff.

Professor Paton had planned a career as a medical doctor, but he got hooked on birds when he was in college, and those plans changed. “I like to be outside, and birds bring you outside,” he says. “You can go anywhere on the planet and see a bird, and because they have wings and can fly, you never know what you’re going to find in a given area.”

In addition to overseeing the bird-banding station, Paton has conducted research on sparrows, seabirds, shorebirds, and other varieties. Some of his current work examines the potential impact of offshore wind turbines on migrating birds.

And McWilliams? He calls himself a physiological ecologist who studies the physiology of bird migration.

“Migration is a fasting and refeeding cycle, which the gut makes possible,” he says. “That’s why we say that migration takes guts. They’re trying to maximize the amount of energy and nutrients they get from what they eat.”

McWilliams and his graduate students have spent two decades studying the physiology of migration by capturing birds in Kingston and on Block Island, and studying those birds and the foods they consume. He also has a long-term research project on the woodcock, an unusual game bird sometimes called the timberdoodle. His project involves studies of their life cycle, and their feeding and breeding behaviors. After years of monitoring these activities, McWilliams is preparing the first woodcock management plan for the region.

Clay Graham, M.S. '20, earned his master’s degree working with McWilliams on the woodcock research, focusing primarily on quantifying the fat and protein in the birds as they prepare for migration. He spent last fall as the lead bird-bander at the Kingston Wildlife Research Station.

Growing up in Ohio, Graham started birding in fourth grade, and he has known since middle school that he wanted to become an ornithologist. “I was always fascinated that just about any bird could drop into my backyard,” he says. “Once I learned to drive, I was birding all over northeast Ohio. Birding allows you to go to different locations that you otherwise wouldn’t go.”

Like Italy.

Graham spent time on Ventotene, a small island in the Tyrrhenian Sea off the coast of Italy, doing bird banding as part of the “Progetto Piccole Isole,” or Small Islands Project. They processed similar numbers of birds as in Kingston, but the birds and the banding culture were very different.

“It was a little more high-class than what I’m used to here,” he says. “We’d be drinking espresso in the field, and we didn’t start



Above left and far right: URI research associate Charles Clarkson leads a bird tour in Panama. Inset: a common tern perches on the head of Kate Iaquinto '05 at a seabird nesting colony at Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge on Cape Cod, where she was monitoring nesting success.

the day until 8 a.m. because we were waiting for birds arriving from Tunisia.”

URI research associate Charles Clarkson has had his share of international birding experience as well, but he is especially drawn to the Tropics. He operates Antbird Tours, a bird-watching tour company that showcases the birds of Panama and elsewhere in Central and South America, as well as occasional tours to Europe and Africa. He was raised in the mountains of Virginia in a farmhouse with no electricity or running water, so he spent most of his time immersed in the natural world and quickly gravitated toward birds.

For the last five years, Clarkson has managed the Rhode Island Breeding Bird Atlas, an exhaustive effort to document the distribution and abundance of birds across the state. Working with 140 volunteers—including URI alumni Christopher Raithe '76, M.S. '07, Dierdre Robinson, M.S. '99, and Cynthia Landers Szymanski '71, M.L.I.S. '73—the project confirmed that 150 bird species breed in the state, a slight decrease from the 155 confirmed during a similar atlas project conducted in the 1980s.

Although fewer bird species were found to be breeding in Rhode Island than previously, the news is not all bad. Rhode Island is now home to breeding bald eagles, common ravens, yellow-bellied sapsuckers, and several other species that were not detected 35 years ago. And some species, especially those from the South, have expanded exponentially in the state, like red-bellied woodpeckers, which increased their distribution in Rhode Island by more than 3,000 percent (yes, 3,000 percent) since the first atlas, probably due to the warming climate.

“The biggest takeaway message is that, for a small state with a high population density, Rhode Island has done an exceptional job of conserving open space, which has allowed us to maintain a large number of breeding species and add a few new ones,” Clarkson says. “If we continue to see the erosion of our forests

from suburban sprawl, that isn’t going to continue to be the case. But right now, Rhode Island is doing an exceptional job at conserving the habitats that these birds require.”



Numerous alumni have also caught the bird bug—many of them introduced to the bird world through Paton’s field ornithology class. Some of them have made careers of birds and bird conservation.

Kate Iaquinto '05, for example, never imagined herself working with birds. She started out as a marine biology major, then switched to wildlife conservation and biology, which led to a research project on piping plovers with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through URI’s Coastal and Environmental Fellows program.

“That’s where it all started,” says Iaquinto, who now serves as the manager of the Bandon Marsh National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon. “I started doing shorebird work and that led to a permanent position at the Monomoy refuge on Cape Cod.”

While at Monomoy, she captured shorebirds to study avian influenza, then investigated endangered red knots to learn about their migration and where they spend the winter. As the refuge manager at Bandon in Oregon, she doesn’t spend nearly as much time focusing on birds as she would like, but she still makes time to help out with surveys of puffins and shorebirds, as well as habitat restoration projects to support marsh birds. It’s a career she largely credits to her time at URI.

“I didn’t grow up knowing any of what I learned in Peter Paton’s field ornithology class,” Iaquinto says, “so I’m really thankful for that experience. It got me the job I have now. You come out of that wildlife program with the coursework you need to qualify for a biologist’s job at Fish and Wildlife. That program served me well.”

Ryan Kleinert '12 had a very similar career trajectory, beginning with monitoring piping plovers for the U.S. Fish and Wild-



"I realized [birds] were these magnificent manifestations of life. Their antics and behaviors spoke to me."

—Ryan Kleinert '12

He had a hiking friend in high school who took him to a refuge near their homes in New Jersey, and "that's when birds first captured my heart," says Kleinert. "That's when I realized they were these magnificent manifestations of life. Their antics and behaviors spoke to me. I especially love waterbirds—their migratory patterns, their breeding behavior, their foraging behavior. A lot of it relates to my love of the water. I'm a surfer, first and foremost, and waterbirds make their homes on the wetlands and on the coast."

He advertises his love of birds every day with six elaborate bird tattoos on various parts of his body, including an albatross, great horned owl, Carolina wren, and wood thrush.

"I think tattooing can be a very aesthetic, interesting, and pleasing art form," he says. "So what better way to honor and represent the critters that bring me joy and put smiles on my face than getting them tattooed on my body?"

Jen Scranton '09 agrees. Although she doesn't watch birds as part of her career, she, too, has a half dozen colorful tattoos illustrating her passion for birds, each of which represents a milestone in her birding life. A certified addictions registered nurse in Providence, Scranton finds bird-watching provides "a calming mindfulness" to her life.

"It's almost a form of meditation," she says. "Recently, it was quiet before it started raining, and all I could hear was the sound

life Service and eventually becoming assistant refuge manager at the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge in Maine. But his interest in birds started a little earlier.

Above left: Ryan Kleinert '12 holds a rare saltmarsh sparrow at Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge in Maine where he is monitoring their breeding. Inset: Detail of one of Kleinert's bird tattoos—a wood thrush. Right: Jen Scranton '09 poses while photographing birds in the Panama Canal Zone in 2019.

of chickadees, like little whispering peeps. Homing in to those different bird sounds really helps ground me. In the high-stress job I have, that's the most important part of birding for me."

Birds also influence where she vacations, from Ecuador and Costa Rica to South Korea, Panama, and Antigua. "I don't usually go just for the birds, but the birds bring me to a new place, and that starts my journey," Scranton says.

Carlos Pedro '76, on the other hand, takes birding to the next level. Recently retired as executive director of a job training and placement program for economically disadvantaged people, he hikes up to 65 miles each week in search of birds around Rhode Island. For the last 10 years, he has consistently been among the top birders in the state, and in 2020 he saw more bird species in Rhode Island in one year (309) than had ever previously been observed.

"When I was young, I was always interested in nature, and then in 2000 I really started looking at what birds could be found in different parts of the state, and I got hooked," says Pedro, who was the captain of the URI soccer team in 1975. "Mostly, I just like to be out in the woods, and birds give you something to pay attention to. It makes you more aware of what's around you."

Pedro has seen about 380 species of birds in Rhode Island, 3,900 worldwide, and he has photographed 1,600 species, including more than 100 of the world's 300 kinds of hummingbirds. He has traveled to 30 countries to watch birds.

Among the close-knit community of competitive birders in Rhode Island, Pedro is always among the leaders. "It's a competition, but it's really not," he says. "It's a challenge to see how many you can see in a year, but mostly it's a self-challenge. We all let



each other know what's where. If you find something rare, you share it. It's really just about having the time to put into it."



Many other former URI students turned to birding as a hobby sometime after graduation as a way of getting exercise, enjoying nature, or reducing stress. And in the age of COVID-19 lockdowns, as people spend more time at home and outside, even more alumni are discovering the joy of birds and bird-watching, whether in their backyards or beyond.

Carlos Pedro '76 hikes up to 65 miles each week in search of birds around Rhode Island.

For Kathy McKiel Faella '80, who spent 38 years working in the URI Academic Computing Center, it was photography that drew her attention to birds. And the pandemic.

"I've always liked photography, and that naturally brings you to nature," says Faella. "And with the pandemic, there's not that many other things you can do, so we've been home watching the birds in our backyard and taking a lot of walks."

While she doesn't claim to be an active birder, she has an affinity for owls, cardinals, and tufted titmice. "It's the details I can see in a photo that really fascinate me—their beaks and eyes and claws," Faella says. "And, of course, we're drawn to the color-

Above left: Debra Cole '78 photographed this great egret while she was kayaking in Ninigret Pond in Charlestown, R.I. She was "reminded that, while I do love to travel, there is so much beauty close to home." Above right: Carlos Pedro '76 in Ushuaia, Argentina, on a self-guided birding and vineyard trip. Behind Pedro are Megallanic penguins. Insets: Pedro has photographed 1,600 species of birds. Left, purple velvet coronet (Ecuador); right, regal sunbird (Uganda).

ful ones and the ones we've never seen before."

The pandemic also boosted a budding interest in birds for Debra Cole '78. She retired from a career in the URI controller's office just two weeks before the pandemic was declared, canceling her many travel plans for the year. As a retirement gift, her hiking friends gave her a pair of binoculars, so she has been spending the year watching the birds in her yard.

"I've always fed the birds, but now that I'm home all the time, I'm splurging on new feeders and different types of food," she says. "Now that I have more time to take in my surroundings, I've been treated to sightings of many birds that I had missed during the rush of my workaday life."

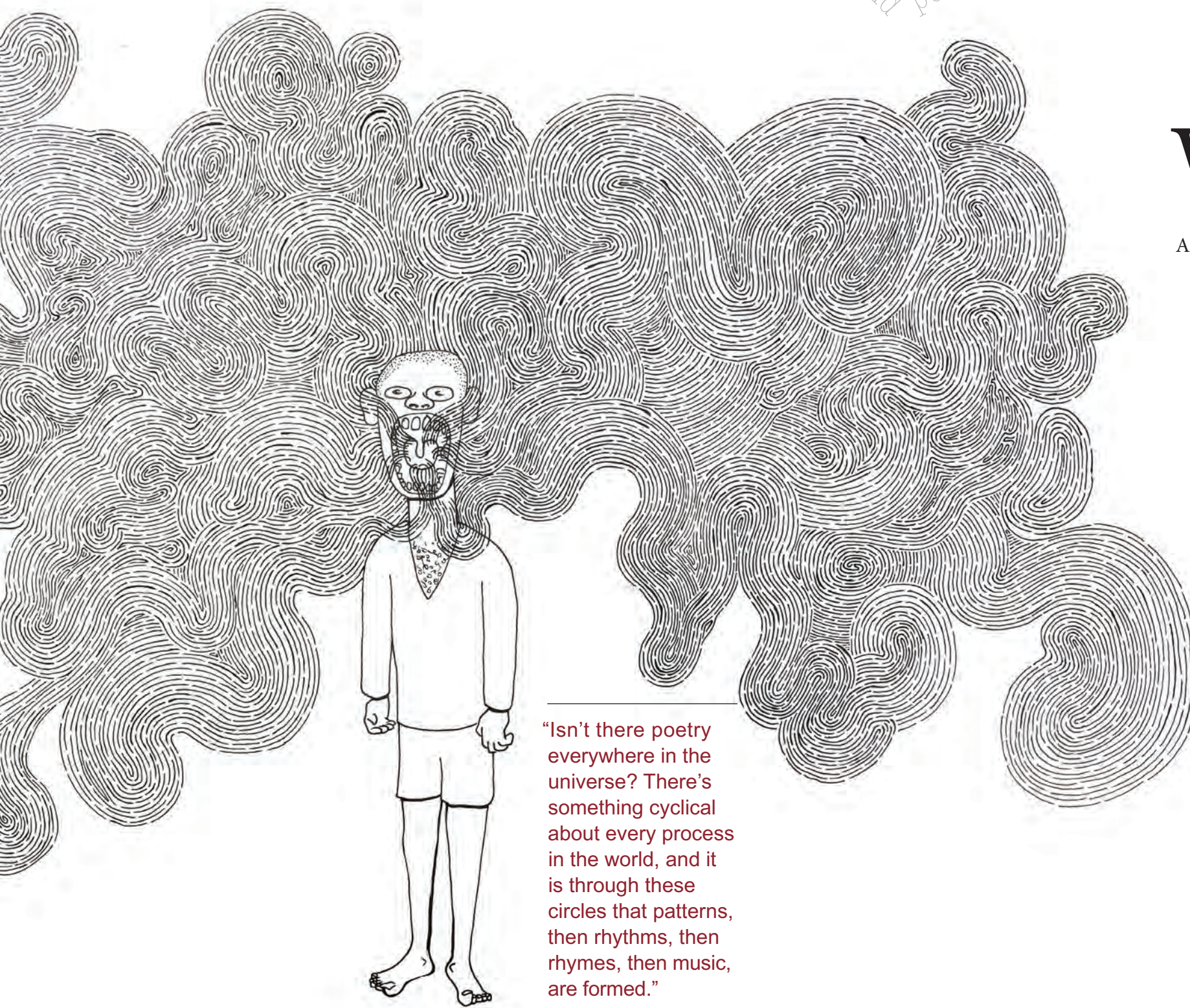
Faella has no desire to look beyond her backyard and nearby hiking trails for birds, though she does occasionally watch an online webcam of nesting bald eagles in Florida.

She isn't the only one. "Bird-watching is increasing in popularity everywhere," says Paton, "especially now, when so many activities are necessarily happening outside rather than inside. When a rare cuckoo from Europe showed up in Rhode Island in October, at least ten of my former students went to see that bird. It's a great feeling to know that I got them hooked."

More than hooked, in fact. Between the field station, faculty research, and ornithology education, URI and its graduates contribute significantly to the growing knowledge base of bird biology and ecology and play a vital role in bird conservation.

Now that's something to tweet about. •

“Expressing yourself and your truth through language and poetry is inherently a political act.”



“Isn’t there poetry everywhere in the universe? There’s something cyclical about every process in the world, and it is through these circles that patterns, then rhythms, then rhymes, then music, are formed.”

—Lila Bovenzi '22

Why Poetry Now?

As a raging global pandemic compelled people to beat a retreat from public life, some in the URI community found consolation, gratification, and inspiration in an ancient practice: the reading, writing, and recitation of poetry.

By Marybeth Reilly-McGreen

To paraphrase Mark Twain, the reports of poetry’s death are exaggerated. The rumors began in 2013 when *The Washington Post* posed the question, “Is poetry dead?” after playwright Gwydion Suilebhan tweeted as much that same year. Two years later, U.S. poet laureate Juan Felipe Herrera told CNN that *The Washington Post* was mistaken, arguing that rap, songs—even greeting cards—contained, at their core, a shared “verbal art,” or poetry. “You could say we live in poetry,” Herrera told the media outlet.

More evidence: In 2016, singer-songwriter and poet Bob Dylan won the Nobel Prize for Literature. In 2018, *The Atlantic* went toe-to-toe with *The Post*, proclaiming, “Poetry is Everywhere,” and declaring poems “viral, vital, and invincible.”

Instagram contributed its verse in the eponymous Instapoetry. Its queen is 28-year-old poet Rupi Kaur, with 4.1 million followers. Kaur’s first two poetry collections, 2014’s *milk and honey* and 2017’s *the sun and her flowers*, sold a combined 8 million copies.

2020? A big year for poetry. Poet Louise Glück was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, and the first Native U.S. poet

laureate, Joy Harjo, began a near-unprecedented third term of service to the Librarian of Congress, only the second poet ever to be so honored. Harjo’s immediate predecessor, Tracey K. Smith, is sharing poetry daily through the popular podcast, *The Slow Down*, and U2’s Sirius XM Radio channel features poets on the weekly show, *Elevation*. On Facebook, former U.S. poet laureate Billy Collins is reading poetry daily to thousands, leading what he, in tongue-in-cheek fashion, terms a movement toward world poetry domination. “The pandemic,” Collins claims, “is slowing everything down to the speed of poetry.”

And in January of this year, 22-year-old Amanda Gorman, the youngest inaugural poet in the nation’s history and its first-ever youth poet laureate, made history reciting her poem, “The Hill We Climb.”

So to poet Briana Gagnon ’20, one of the winners of the English Department’s 2020 Nancy Potter Poetry Contest, the suggestion that poetry is past tense is laughable.

“Why would we still read ‘Beowulf,’ John Keats, or even Robert Frost if poetry didn’t matter?” Gagnon says. “Poetry has gotten us through wars, pandemics, and our own personal grievances in a way that

“poetry is the genre best-suited to offer a road map out of our current cultural trauma.”

“I think poetry is an integral part of prompting societal and political change.”

—Nate Vaccaro '19

nothing else can. Poetry kept me sane during this pandemic.

“A part of my heart and soul,” Gagnon continues, “is left in every poem I’ve ever written. Poetry allows me to share my thoughts and feelings on paper, and that’s one of the coolest things I can think of.”

What is it about poetry that not only endures but prevails over flashier, shallower competition—Twitter, TikTok, unboxing videos, and *Tiger King*, for example? Put another way, what makes poetry cool? For some, like Gagnon, it has been a panacea. For others, like Nate Vaccaro '19, poetry is a rallying cry. “I think poetry is an integral part of prompting societal and political change. Expressing yourself and your truth through language and poetry is inherently a political act. I also consider protest signs, headlines, and slogans to be under the umbrella of poetry, allowing people to create a shared language and a



Nate Vaccaro '19

framework to communicate their needs, demands, and solutions.

“I believe poetry is going to be especially cool for Gen Z and upcoming generations,” Vaccaro says. “Our information-saturated world is becoming increasingly truthless and overwhelming, and I think poetry is the genre best-suited to offer a road map out of our current cultural trauma. It excites me to see poetry emerging as a means to both celebrate and critique popular culture.”



Briana Gagnon '20

“Poetry has gotten us through wars, pandemics, and our own personal grievances in a way that nothing else can.”

—Briana Gagnon '20

■ Read more poems written by URI student poets at uri.edu/magazine.

Internet II

Back in Princeton my father at twenty-five
Spun original digits into green code, easing
Modems into binary webs where they pre-
Exist Zuckerberg. Before I was a nervous spiral

Inside my mother I was a tiny electric prick
Trapped by the only ethernet cable in Kendall Park,
New Jersey. His shoulders hunched against
The 2000s, dad’s hands calloused in numerics

Volumes of printer paper ebbing his fingerprints
Raising up his equations as witness to the wire
Conceiving me. Zapped in Rhode Island

Child of the net at twenty plugging the whole
Radio in my mouth like every college man studying
The marks of Woolf and Plath, tendrils of the canon text
Deflected by the router’s right hand.

—Nate Vaccaro

To Give Voice. To Make Meaning.

This past summer, doctoral student A.H. Jerriod Avant curated a special series of poems for Poem-a-Day on poets.org, the website of the American Academy of Poets. It was one of the most recent honors in a long list of residencies, scholarships, and fellowships awarded to Avant.



Doctoral students A.H. Jerriod Avant (left) and Afua Ansong

position that wants and imagines better.”

Ph.D. student Afua Ansong’s chapbook, *Try Kissing God*, was published this year. In it, Ansong considers identity “and the relationship between the sovereign and man in African diaspora culture.”

The Ghanaian-American poet emigrated to the United States when she



“I think about Martin Luther King Jr.’s speeches and how artful and intentional he was with his language, to tear down these systems of oppression that plagued Black people for decades, for centuries. I’m also influenced by artists such as Jimmy Hendrix, and his 1969 rendition of ‘The Star-Spangled Banner’ at Woodstock,” Avant says. “I’m always in awe of how transgressive it is in light of Hendrix’s relationship to that anthem. So when I go to the page, or when I’m thinking about poems, I’m always trying to tear something down, or I’m punching up from a place of dissatisfaction, grievance, from a place of oppression, or some subjugated

“I thought of poetry as a space to begin again.”

—Afua Ansong

was a child. “I came to poetry with anger. Moving to America, I’d lost my friends, I’d lost my language, I’d lost most of my family, and I had to make a new life. Initially, I didn’t like poetry. I didn’t understand it. But it became the medium through which I could express myself and make meaning of why I was in the United States.

“I thought of poetry as a space to begin again.”

Mother

The moon
—of which
you said
would probably
be cold
to touch
that night
—has risen
above the lake.
The stars
cannot compare:
their lonely
rhythms of shining
are not held
by the waves.
Wherever you may
be, in this moment,
I want you
to know
the sky
has lifted
its curtains
to warm
me with wonder.
I see myself:
a baby
quiet, eyes shut,
in the womb
of this moon.

—Afua Ansong

“There are no rules except the ones I make.”

—Lila Bovenzi '22



Lila Bovenzi '22

COVID-19 derailed Ansong's plans for a writing residency and research for her poetry dissertation collection, but social media provided an outlet for her art. “It allowed me to increase my virtual connections to other writers and readers. I reached out to many of my Ghanaian readers via Twitter, and this has gotten me excited about creating poems for a larger audience.”

Potter Poetry Prize winner Lila Bovenzi '22 understands how poetry excites. “You create your own version of language. Other forms of writing are like building with bricks, whereas writing poetry is like sculpting clay—it's incredibly moldable,” she says. “I also think there is much greater opportunity to use all different forms of figurative language.

“There are no rules except the ones I make.”

M.A.T.E.S.

(My Addiction To Eating Swallowtails)

I saw that its wings were stuck between my teeth
When I leaned in to look in the mirror.
Still soft, still alive, they put a sparkle in my eye,
Which I saw when I peered even nearer.
They fluttered with the exhale of my breath,
A gothic pair of lace curtains,
So I made sure to clamp my mouth shut.
When my lips once more parted,
the wings had both vanished,
But a rumbling began in my gut.
A song or a scream, I couldn't tell which,
Came hammering up through my throat.
My voice gleamed with agony,
Its tone a stream of melody,
Casting spells with each painful new note.
At last, I did laugh,
I did grin; I rejoiced
For I knew I was gifted that day.
That upon the ingestion,
I was granted ascension,
And gravity lifted away.
Now each word I speak shall rise up into space
Until at last it burns up with the stars.
And I'll know when they blink,
Which I'll share with a wink,
That I've planted the sky with new scars.

—Lila Bovenzi



Associate Professor of English J. Jennifer Jones

“One of the things about memorizing a poem is that it never stops being with you, but its meanings will shift and change and reward across time.”

—J. Jennifer Jones

To Find Respite from the Overwhelming

Last fall, URI's Department of English introduced a number of courses as part of its new creative writing option. Associate Professor of English J. Jennifer Jones taught Poetry Out Loud, a spoken-word, online poetry course for majors and non-majors alike, that received high marks from students such as Abigail Dodd '22. “Of all my classes, yours has made me feel most comforted and seen as a student struggling to navigate this year,” Dodd wrote to Jones. “It offered me an anchor to ground myself when things felt overwhelming and absurd.”

From Kristen Karavitch '24: “I truly think that you have helped me find a newfound love of poetry! I registered for this class thinking that it was just another credit requirement that was required for my engineering major; however, this course has taught me so much.”

And Jordan Kalinsky '24 wrote, “I would not have achieved the level of skill in my work without your valuable guidance and feedback. Thank you for being a part of my COVID lemonade. Your class truly helped me make it through my first semester of college with work that felt meaningful and rewarding.”

In addition to the usual benefits a literature class offers—the development of habits of close reading, discernment, and concision; critical thinking and analysis; and, of course, honing of writing and memorization skills—the course rewards

in other ways both profound and enduring, Jones contends. Universities have a two-pronged mission: preparing students for a career and nurturing self-realization and growth, she says. “Those two things are always uneasy with each other and, in the contemporary, hyper-consumerist environment in which we currently exist, preparation for a career can come at the expense of self-realization and social interaction. The work I'm trying to do is to open students up to the relationship between career preparation and self-realization, and the way in which one rationalizes them in one's world, in life.

“A course like this is meant to encourage lifelong self-reflection,” Jones says. “One of the things about memorizing a poem is that it never stops being with you, but its meanings will shift and change and reward across time.”



Abigail Dodd '22

“Poetry offered me an anchor to ground myself when things felt overwhelming and absurd.”

—Abigail Dodd '22



Kristen Karavitch '24



Jordan Kalinsky '24



Charles Kell, Ph.D. '19

Charles Kell, Ph.D. '19, teaches literature and poetry at the Community College of Rhode Island. In response to the Black Lives Matter movement, he introduced students to poems about George Floyd, Tamir Rice, and Freddie Gray. "Students really gravitate towards the poems. They're like, 'Wow, this is what's going on in the news, and here's poetry about it. They're not used to people writing about 'the now.'"

Kell's love of poetry started early, in elementary school, with a Langston Hughes poem. "I ripped the poem out of the book, folded it up, and put it in my pocket," he says. "Hughes was one of the first writers I fell in love with."

Writing poetry came much later. In the fall of 2013, then-Ph.D. student Kell took a creative writing class with poet and URI English professor Peter Covino. Covino introduced Kell to poet Timothy Liu, with whom Kell struck up a friendship after the poet spoke at URI. Both Liu and Covino encouraged Kell's efforts. Kell's

The Other Novel

where the boy sings
for hours in the forest alone.

His aching hand claps bark
for each night spent on the ground.

He went looking for his dead sister.
A circus finds him, feeds the hungry
mouth sweet bread, cool liquid drips
down his chin staining a torn shirt.

Stars are clocks floating above
the clockmaker's skin. The boy runs
away to go looking again. Crickets
click *bildungsroman* to the red leaves.

It was stupid, this idea. The boy
agrees. He thinks I can't see him perched
in a tree with bow & arrow pointed
at my lung. In its golden spit, rusty pins.

I rip each page to fine bits, scatter them
on the forest floor where they will
become loam, swamp fistfisted with insects.

—Charles Kell

prize-winning and first collection of poetry, *Cage of Lit Glass*, was published in 2018.

In his teaching, Kell strives to ignite in his students the same enthusiasm that prompted him to purloin poems once upon a time. It's working. His poetry students have a choice in their final assessment: critical paper or creative assignment. "The majority of them choose to do the creative assignment. And they have the greatest time. I have a lot of non-traditional students—older students who are nurses, for example—and they're writing poems. And it might be the only time they write poems, but they're just having a blast."

To Achieve Connection

Poetry may be the most malleable and mutable literature there is if you believe that prayers, spells, epic tales, plays, musicals, spirituals, protest songs, hip-hop—and even graffiti art—are permutations of the form.

And then there is the poetry that bears witness. Ph.D. student Shanee Stepakoff's



Doctoral student Shanee Stepakoff

"A poem is a form of self-expression that arises when a chord has been struck within."

—Shanee Stepakoff

first poetry collection, *Testimony*, concerns accounts told to a United Nations war crimes tribunal established in the aftermath of a civil war in Sierra Leone that lasted from 1991 to 2002. *Testimony* will be published in July of 2021. "I had lived and worked in the region for several years and was aware that many truths about the war were not reaching an international readership," she says, "because most readers from outside of the West African sub-region were not inclined to spend hours poring through books on subjects such as global history or political science.

"I felt that a collection of poems would reach people who might otherwise not take an interest in the impact of a civil war in a faraway country," she says. "By definition, a poem is a form of self-expression that arises when a chord has been struck within, when a person has been touched in their heart or soul, and when no other language will suffice."

Robin Cosgrove '22, a kinesiology major, knows the feeling of a soul's connecting to poetry. He took first place in a recitation competition in Jones' class for his rendition of William Blake's "Mad Song."

"Poetry is utterly indispensable. I find wrestling meaning out of words is exhilarating."

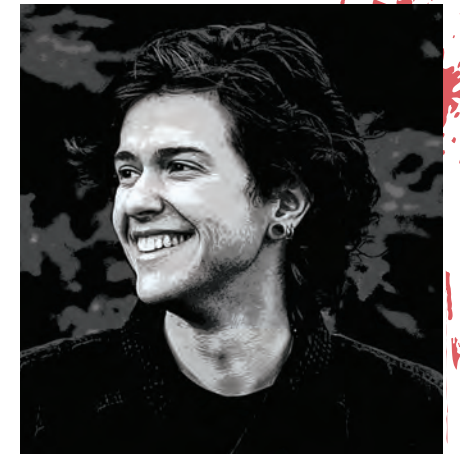
—Robin Cosgrove '22

"For me, poetry is utterly indispensable. I find wrestling meaning out of words is exhilarating. Of course, you can read a poem and get the surface meaning, but you don't really engage that way," Cosgrove says. "But if you dig a little bit deeper, you get a lot more, and that's the reward for me. It's that feeling that I've gotten something extra that not everybody else would see if they're just surface reading.

"Even if I am utterly exhausted and have no attention span to give, I can read a short poem and something catches my attention and I dive in and, suddenly, it's two in the morning."

Poetry is everywhere, Bovenzi says. And it'll likely outlast us.

"Poetry will exist as long as humanity survives," Bovenzi predicts. "And even if



Robin Cosgrove '22

we die, isn't there poetry everywhere in the rest of the universe? If there wasn't, then where could we have gotten it from? There's something cyclical about every process in the world, and it is through these circles that patterns, then rhythms, then rhymes, then music, are formed.

"The way life and death fold into each other in an endless loop must be a form of poetry in and of itself," Bovenzi adds. "So in that way, I think poetry is immortal, even if we aren't." •

April is National Poetry Month. Inspired to Read?

Start with these favorites from some of our URI poetry readers and writers.

J. JENNIFER JONES, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH

■ "The Prelude" by William Wordsworth

In lines 84–180 from Book IV of "The Prelude," Wordsworth creates a quiet, yet startling, poetics of temporality in which "life and afterlife" become inextricable.

■ "To Autumn" by John Keats

In Keats' "To Autumn," the poet involves us in the realm of the in-between, in which a thing—a lamb, or a flower—develops to the point of near-bursting into something else.

■ "Jenny Kiss'd Me" by Leigh Hunt

Hunt wrote this wonderful, short poem about his first visit with friends after surviving the flu during a flu epidemic. I taught it last semester to my ENG 120-Poetry Out Loud students.

ROBIN COSGROVE '22

■ "The Tiger" by William Blake

When I was 12 years old, "The Tiger" was my introduction to poetry recitation, and to Blake, who is my favorite poet. The poem has been important to me ever since.

JORDAN KALINSKY '24

■ "The Wasteland" by T.S. Eliot

A beautifully crafted, sobering commentary on the utter futility and darkness of modern life in the wake of World War I, this poem is packed with allusions that transcend time, national borders, and religious divides. This poem met me at my lowest point, and has inspired my personal work.

AFUA ANSONG, PH.D. STUDENT

■ "Perhaps the World Ends Here" by Joy Harjo

The central metaphor in this poem is a dinner table where beauty and chaos unfold. I am reminded that the simple act of eating dinner can create a sense of community and allow us to enter spaces of revival.

NATE VACCARO '19

■ "I Cannot Be Quiet an Hour" by Mary Ruefle

I return to this poem again and again, particularly during this period of social isolation, and always find new meaning in its simple, devastating march forward.

FROM ASSISTANT TO EXPERT *Redefining Nursing*

For 75 years, URI's College of Nursing
has been at the forefront of a changing profession.

By Michael Blanding



Left, experiential learning and clinical rotations are an important part of the curriculum for URI's student nurses.

For as long as she could remember, Diane Healey Dexter '50 wanted to be a nurse. "I was always so pleased if any of my playmates had a splinter," she chuckles, remembering her South County childhood. "They used to run away because they knew I'd want to practice on them." When Dexter was searching for a registered nursing program after high school, however, all the hospital programs had a minimum age requirement of 18, and she was only 17. She decided to take a chance on a brand-new program at the University of Rhode Island.

In 1945, baccalaureate nursing programs were a novelty. Most nurses were educated at hospitals, focused on teaching routine tasks with a variable curriculum. Not until after World War II did the National Nursing Council call for more rigorous accredited university-based programs. At URI, that charge was led by Louisa White, the school's first dean. "Louisa had the vision and the tenacity to say, 'It's time that nursing is a profession that is educated like a profession,'" says Barbara Wolfe, current dean of URI's College of Nursing. "Women weren't necessarily pursuing higher education opportunities—never mind a whole new career opportunity in a university setting."

Dexter joined a group of eight students moving into Davis Hall for a five-year program of instruction and practical training in pediatrics, communicable diseases, diabetes, and other disciplines at area hospitals. "We had Quonset huts for recreational areas and you had to be in your room by 8:30," she remembers. Despite such humble beginnings, she graduated in January 1950, part of a new generation of nurses confident to take on any challenge. After starting out in a hospital, Dexter spent much of her career working for Washington County, Rhode Island, assessing children born with developmental or cardiac problems.

Over the past 75 years, nurses have risen far beyond the image of women in white caps and aprons changing hospital bedpans. They are now a diverse group

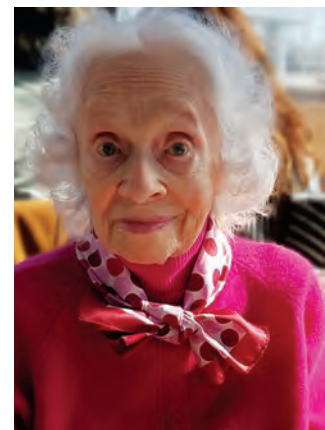
"Decades ago, nursing was more of a support role to physicians. Now it is truly recognized as an independent profession."

—Barbara Wolfe, Dean,
URI College of Nursing

with places in every aspect of the health-care arena—as administrators, research scientists, and bedside and primary-care clinicians. "Decades ago, nursing was more of a support role to physicians," says Wolfe. "Now it is truly recognized as an independent profession."

As doctors have become increasingly specialized, nurses have become the glue holding our medical system together—the only people with a holistic view of the patients they serve. Nothing has demonstrated this fact more than the coronavirus pandemic, which has thrust nurses onto the front lines, keeping patients alive even as they put themselves at risk.

In this age of COVID, as URI's College of Nursing marks its 75th anniversary, its alumni reflect on their decades-long journey, even as they face their greatest challenge.



Diane Healey Dexter '50 was a member of the URI College of Nursing's first graduating class.

Applications for admission to the college have increased during the pandemic. Dean Barbara Wolfe is proud to see a new generation stepping up to pursue "a career built out of helping others and bettering society."



1960s AND 1970s *Out of the Shadows*



Paula Viau '69, is a former College of Nursing dean and associate professor emerita.



Elaine Riley '68 is the founder and owner of HomeCare Advantage, one of R.I.'s largest home nursing companies.



Dayle Joseph is a former College of Nursing dean.

When Paula Viau '69 was looking for a nursing program in 1965, her high school guidance counselor gave her some advice: "If you want to be a nurse, you need to go to college." At that time, URI was one of only two baccalaureate programs in the state. "Going there was the best decision I ever made," says Viau. "When I graduated, everyone immediately found clinical employment." She began working at the state health department, before going on to become a URI professor and associate dean.



By the late 1960s, the school had grown to more than 30 students, but was still a tight-knit group. "We all supported each other," remembers Elaine Riley '68. "Whenever you had difficulties, somebody was always there to help you through it." Under Dean Barbara Tate, URI was on the cutting edge of nursing practice, expanding beyond the hospital setting to increasingly venture into community care. Riley was captivated by the experience of entering patients' homes to provide care in that intimate setting. "In home care, you see the whole thing—how they interact with their families, and their home environment," she says.

Riley formed her own company to provide skilled and non-skilled home care to children and elderly patients—it grew into HomeCare Advantage, one of Rhode Island's largest home nursing companies, with more than 200 employees. In 2011, she established a scholarship at URI for nursing students interested in community care, to pay for their last year of instruction. "You really need a well-

educated nurse to do home care," says Riley, who is semi-retired, running her company with her daughter. "It's not like in a hospital where you can go and ask somebody if you don't know something. Your nursing skills must be top-notch, and URI provides that quality education."

By the mid-1970s, the "writing was on the wall" about the importance of a college nursing degree, says Dayle Joseph, who began teaching at URI in 1973, and was dean of the school from 1995 to 2012. "Everyone was saying you had to go the baccalaureate route." By that time, URI had started a master's program, and moved into its permanent home in White Hall, where it created state-of-the-art simulation labs that offered practice opportunities in hospitals, homes, and psychiatric units.

At the time, recalls Kristen Swanson '75, career opportunities for young women were still limited. "You could be a nurse, a teacher, or an administrative assistant," she says. She recalls an incredibly rigorous program—especially a dreaded anatomy class with Professor Robert DeWolf. "He had a commanding presence that left no room for weakness," she says. "But in the end, what he taught us carried me for the rest of my career."

In those days, Swanson says, nurses were subservient to physicians. "There was a lot of deference given to medicine," she says. Since most doctors were men and nearly all nurses were women, she says, "sexism was a very strong experience." But slowly, times were changing. Determined to grow in her profession, she earned her master's degree at the University of Pennsylvania in 1978 and her Ph.D. at the University of Colorado in 1983, using both quantitative and qualitative methods to study the experience of miscarriage.

At the time, the health-care system often disregarded the emotional repercussions of miscarriage for women. In trying to understand how women wished to be responded to when they experienced early pregnancy loss, Swanson developed what is now known as the five-step Swanson Theory of Caring, consisting of five ways of relating to another human being—

knowing, being with, doing for, enabling, and maintaining belief—that is still held up as the gold standard for care. "What gives me the greatest comfort is to know the work I did on miscarriage and caring has influenced practice and actually improved outcomes," she says.

Later, when Swanson miscarried herself, she experienced firsthand what it was like to be on the other side of the science. "It's a validation I never would have asked for, but after that, I didn't need anyone to tell me I did good science—I could feel it in my heart."

As part of the first generation of nurse-



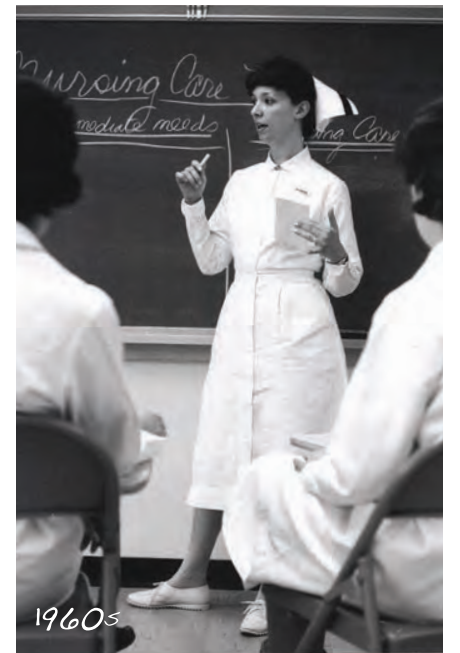
Kristen Swanson '75, dean of the College of Nursing at Seattle University, developed the five-step Swanson Theory of Caring.



Josepha Campinha-Bacote '74 is the founder of Transcultural C.A.R.E. Associates; she developed a model for how health-care professionals can develop cultural competency.

scientists, Swanson's struggles were typical of nurses coming out of the shadow of medicine. "We were at the crossroads of whether we were really a discipline unto itself," she says. "Was nursing truly science, or was it just some psychosocial softness?" Now, of course, the answer to that question is clear, says Swanson, a professor and dean of the College of Nursing at Seattle University, and chair of the Board of Trustees of Swedish Health Services. "I see so many good opportunities to expand clinical knowledge through qualitative work, quality improvement projects, and randomized controlled trials," she says.

Besides sexism, the profession has also struggled with racism. A second-generation Cape Verdean from Cape Cod, Josepha Campinha-Bacote '74 came to URI in 1970, and thrived under the example of Dean Tate and Professor Sylvia Blount,



By the late 1960s URI was on the cutting edge of nursing practice, expanding beyond the hospital setting to increasingly venture into community care.





Daniel Wasnechak '89, M.S. '93, a former Navy Nurse Corps officer, oversees global quality for International SOS, which provides health care to military personnel living outside the U.S.



Inger Magrethe Holter, M.S. '87, Ph.D. '93, was the first nurse with a Ph.D. to serve as a hospital administrator in Norway.

whom she found incredibly caring and knowledgeable. “I was inspired by that blend of humility and competence,” Campinha-Bacote says.

Campinha-Bacote struggled with questions of identity in her nursing career. As the granddaughter of immigrants from the islands of Cabo Verde (Cape Verde), off the coast of Africa, she felt apart from African-American culture. “I didn’t even know I was black at the time,” she says. Early in her life, however, she experienced the tragic consequences of cultural incompetence in the medical profession when her 78-year-old grandfather was prescribed a medication for cardiovascular issues. The medication came with the side effect of slowing the heart rate, and patients are not supposed to take it if their heart rate falls below a certain level. Raised on Cabo Verde without clocks, however, her grandfather was never told how to accurately time his pulse, and he died from complications taking the medicine.

Her personal loss illustrated a larger issue in health care: the failure of health-care professionals to understand the important difference between a language translator and a cultural interpreter. As a master’s student, Campinha-Bacote began developing a model for how health-care professionals can develop cultural competency, which she envisions as an



ongoing process, starting with the humility she learned from her mentors at URI, transformed through cultural desire, awareness, knowledge, and skill. She coined the term “cultural competemility,” a portmanteau of “competence” and “humility,” to describe her own model of transcultural care.

Since developing her model in the early 1990s, she has written numerous books, and through her company, Transcultural C.A.R.E. Associates, has given more than 1,000 presentations to medical institutions, health-care organizations, and corporations such as Proctor & Gamble. Recently she has moved into more explicitly anti-racist work in order to challenge the assumptions that nurses apply to their patients. “People say the first step is cultural awareness, but at this point I think we are all aware that racial issues exist. It’s more about, ‘What actions are we taking?’”

1980s AND 1990s *Into Their Own*

The 1980s were a time of dramatic change in the health-care system. Cost pressures led hospitals to shift from a reliance on high-salaried doctors to lower-paid nurses for health-care services. That, in turn, created a higher demand, leading to a nationwide nursing shortage that gave nurses new bargaining power to push for higher wages and more independence. Gone were the caps and aprons—and in came the pantsuits—as nurses increasingly took a place as administrators. “Nurses are the people who really know their patients,” says Joseph, “and increasingly our voices were being heard.”

URI responded with new degree programs for nurse administrators and nurse practitioners, who take on many of the functions of medical doctors in diagnosing patients, prescribing treatments, and referring patients to specialists. “Nurse practitioners are well-educated and highly skilled,” says Joseph. “More importantly, patients have increased access to health care, as nurse practitioners have added significant numbers of health-care providers and have a proven record of successfully caring for patients.”

Some of those trends first started emerging in the military, says Daniel



Professor Emerita Jean Miller at the opening of the Rhode Island Nursing Education Center in 2017. She was dean of the College of Nursing from 1988–1995.

Wasnechak '89, M.S. '93, a New York native who first entered the profession as commissioned Nurse Corps Officer when he was an ensign in the Navy in 1976. “I absolutely loved the human touch, and the satisfaction of seeing the little things you could do to make someone’s life better,” says Wasnechak, who worked in an ICU and a cardiac surgical unit. While on active duty, he watched as nurses ran clinics on their own.

“The profession was evolving at the time, where nurses were no longer the handmaidens of the physicians,” Wasnechak says. As new wellness research emerged to connect physical and mental health, “we were really talking about how you could treat the whole patient, not just passing bedpans and changing bandages.” Enrolling at URI to advance his career, he was able to share his experiences in the military and learn about advancements in the civilian world. “URI allowed me to develop my own curriculum,” he says. “I already had many of the skillsets, but I needed more experience in leadership and administration.”

He continued on to earn a master’s degree in nursing at URI, followed by a master’s in health care administration at Baylor University. After working in a series of administrative positions, Wasnechak now oversees global quality with International SOS, the TRICARE Overseas Program, a government contractor providing health care to military person-



nel, their families, and retirees serving outside the United States. “I have regional quality managers who are nurses, and being able to talk the talk with them allows me to get buy-in much more quickly.”

In the '80s, URI’s College of Nursing also launched a Ph.D. program and expanded its own research under the leadership of Hesook “Suzie” Kim, who was dean from 1983 to 1988. A researcher in the areas of nursing theory and collaborative decision-making, Kim encouraged faculty to increase their own research programs. These scholarly efforts were further enhanced by Dean Jean Miller, drawing on her experience as an associate dean for research at the University of Utah, where she served prior to her arrival at URI.

By 1990, only 11 percent of nurses were people of color, compared to some 30 percent of the population—the result of a long history of segregation and discrimination in health care.

During this time, the school expanded its reach internationally, as well. Inger Magrethe Holter, M.S. '87, Ph.D. '93, was working as a nurse in Norway when Tate visited the country as a Fulbright scholar. Norway didn’t then have any nursing master’s programs, and Tate encouraged her to come to URI to earn her advanced

degree. Holter came to Kingston for two years to earn her master’s, and returned again a few years later to earn her Ph.D., as well. She focused her efforts on “action research,” a new method involving collaboration between academics and practitioners to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Holter wrote an influential paper on the topic in 1993.

Returning to Norway, she taught as a professor at the University of Oslo, and became chief nurse at the university-affiliated hospital, the first nurse with a Ph.D. to serve as a hospital administrator in Norway. The collaboration between URI and Norway continued as Kim became a visiting professor at the University of Oslo, sharing research data and increasing cross-cultural exchange between the two campuses. When Holter became dean at

Buskerud University College in Drammen, Norway, she asked Kim to come help her launch a master’s program. “She did so much to build up nursing master’s and Ph.D. programs in Norway,” Holter says. “URI has been so important for Norway in establishing the higher education we have today.”



Laitan Silifat Mustapha '97 is vice president of nursing for Unity Health Care in Washington, D.C.

“Nurses have a lot of say in the care of their patients, because we’re with them for a much longer time.”

—Laitan Silifat Mustapha

Nursing continued to struggle with issues of diversity in a profession that was traditionally young, female, and white. By 1990, only 11 percent of nurses were people of color, compared to some 30 percent of the population—the result of a long history of segregation and discrimination in health care. It wasn’t easy for those looking to reverse those trends, says Laitan Silifat Mustapha ’97, a Providence native born of first-generation Nigerian parents. “Nursing school was very difficult for me,” says Mustapha, who was recruited to URI through Talent Development, a program for high school students from underserved populations. While the program provided an advisor and tutoring to get into college, once at URI, she felt adrift among the nursing school’s largely white student body and faculty.

“I didn’t have any professor who understood where I was coming from and could relate to me,” says Mustapha, who had to repeat classes, and was in danger of failing. “I think white people don’t understand that, since they are so used to seeing people who look like them.” She persevered, however, and when she started working at Rhode Island Hospital after graduation, an African-American nurse on her floor took her under her wing and helped her succeed. “She was a great mentor—she told me specifically she did not want me to fail.” Later, she moved to Maryland, where she not only regularly saw nurses of color, but saw them in high-level positions.

Mustapha earned a master’s at Benedictine University and is currently studying for her Ph.D. at Catholic University in Washington, D.C. Now, she is vice president of nursing for Unity Health Care, a nonprofit network of community health centers in Washington, D.C., that serves a high-risk population. “You have to understand not only their physical limitations, but their social needs and mental health needs as well,” Mustapha says. Much of that responsibility falls on nurses, who, more than doctors, follow patients intimately throughout their care. “Nurses have a lot of say in the care of their patients, because we’re with them for a much longer time.”

As health insurance has expanded medical access to a broader population, including more minorities, Mustapha adds that it’s even more important that nursing schools recruit faculty and students who reflect the diversity of the population. While some progress has been made on diversifying nursing ranks, currently only 19 percent of nurses are people of color.

At URI, Wolfe says increasing diversity is a major objective in the nursing school’s current strategic plan. In 2010, the college launched its Pathways to Nursing program, which provides tutoring and social support to students from disadvantaged backgrounds. In her four years as dean, Wolfe has also worked to diversify the faculty, increasing the number of full-time faculty members of color from one to four (out of a total of 36) over that time. “We’re actively recruiting, and starting to make incremental progress,” she says.



The Pathways to Nursing Program was launched in 2010 to recruit, support, retain, and graduate educationally, economically and socially disadvantaged students. Pathways students gathered at the annual Pathways Living Leadership reception in December 2018. Program administrator Professor Mary Cloud in back on left; Associate Dean Mary Leveille in back, second from left; Dean Barbara Wolfe in back, second from right.

2000s AND 2010s In the Spotlight

The turn of the century saw another nursing shortage, as baby boomers began to retire, and the health-care system relied on nurses more than ever. As knowledge and technology have improved, care has increasingly moved out of hospitals and into primary-care and community settings, where nurses are apt to be the patient’s main conduit to health. “Hospitals are not where most people receive care anymore,” says Wolfe.

As knowledge and technology have improved, care has increasingly moved out of hospitals and into primary-care and community settings, where nurses are apt to be the patient’s main conduit to health.

In the early 2000s, she interviewed women who had recently lost their spouses in the 9/11 terrorist attacks, or the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and focused her later research on exploring their stories using qualitative methods. “You are asking people to open up their hearts and minds and souls, to really tell you what their struggles are,” Doherty says, “what it’s really like to go through a pregnancy, labor, and birth without your person.”



Mary-Ellen Doherty, Ph.D. '00, has researched and written two books on the experience of nurses serving in and returning from war zones in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“We need to make sure we have clinicians who are truly able to meet the need for appropriate care in those non-hospital settings.”

In response, the types of degrees nursing schools offer have exploded. URI created a range of specializations in its graduate program, including family, gerontology, and psychiatric mental health nursing. The school has also continued to make its mark in research. In the late 1980s, Professor Margaret McGrath started studying a cohort of babies with low birth weight; more than 20 years later, in 2011, her successor, Professor Mary Sullivan, tied premature birth to a range of health and social struggles in adulthood—as well as pointing to factors to minimize those issues. In 2016, URI professors Judith Mercer and Deb Erickson-Owens were able to show that delaying clamping of the umbilical cords of newborns by even five minutes dramatically improved outcomes, setting a new standard for obstetric practices.

Mary-Ellen Doherty, Ph.D. '00, came to URI as a graduate student after a successful career as a nurse-midwife. Using theories of collaborative decision-making pioneered by Suzie Kim, she examined how nurse-midwives and clients can best formulate a birth plan. Amid that research

War continued to influence her studies as Doherty began teaching at the University of Massachusetts–Lowell, and she saw multiple students in the National Guard or ROTC programs deploy for their first nursing assignment in a war zone. Doherty began interviewing nurses upon their return about their experiences. Now a professor at Western Connecticut State University, she has authored two books with her twin sister, a retired Air Force colonel: *Nurses In War: Voices from Iraq and Afghanistan* in 2012, and *Nurses After War: The Reintegration Experience of Nurses Returning from Iraq and Afghanistan* in 2016.

Not surprisingly, Doherty found many nurses struggling to overcome post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) upon their return. “They were able to manage over there, but then when they got home it hit them like a ton of bricks,” Doherty says. However, she also found a significant number who were transformed in positive ways by the experience. Doherty is now expanding her research to look at the concept of post-traumatic growth in people who have survived traumatic experiences, such as war, abuse, or the loss of a loved one. “There can be some growth and greater appreciation of life—you don’t often read about that.”



An advanced nursing student gains practical experience at a pediatric clinic.



The Nursing Education Center at South Street Landing in Providence is home to the college's graduate programs and to new classrooms, labs, and simulation rooms.

“As the future of medicine seems to be focusing on specialization, nurse practitioners are really stepping up to meet the moment to fulfill that primary care role.”

—Colin Burns '14, D.N.P. '19



Colin Burns '14, D.N.P. '19, is lead nurse practitioner at the Yale New Haven Health Westerly Hospital (R.I.) geriatric psychiatric unit.



URI nursing students get hands-on practice in a simulation lab in the Nursing Education Center.

In 2017, the college opened a new Nursing Education Center, a \$220 million 133,000-square-foot building in Providence with new classrooms, labs, and simulation rooms. “It’s an amazing building that has the same kind of equipment you would see in maternity, pediatric, or medical/surgical units,” says Viau. The building became headquarters for the college’s graduate programs—including a new Doctor of Nursing Practice degree, a terminal to prepare experts in specialized advanced nursing practice.

One of the first recipients, Colin Burns '14, D.N.P. '19 originally planned to be a physician, but realized that he could have more opportunities for developing relationships with patients as a nurse practitioner. “As the future of medicine seems to be focusing on specialization, nurse practitioners are really stepping up to meet the moment to fulfill that primary care role,” says Burns. In pursuing his undergraduate degree at URI, Burns initially focused in pediatrics; but after a rotation in the geriatric ward at Butler Hospital in Providence, he chose the opposite end of the spectrum, specializing in geriatric psychiatry, instead.

“I absolutely fell in love with the popu-

lation,” he says. “They have such great life histories and life lessons.” To better work with the population, he stayed at URI to earn his D.N.P., before helping to open a new inpatient geriatric psychiatric unit at Yale New Haven Health Westerly Hospital as lead nurse practitioner. “The leadership skills I learned at URI really helped in being on the ground floor at the unit’s opening,” he says. “In setting up a practice environment, I was able to focus on how we can do things better and more efficiently.”

Those practices have been put to the test this past year during the coronavirus pandemic, to which elderly patients have been particularly susceptible. “We’re seeing so much of the older population affected by the social isolation,” Burns says. “It’s caused an increase in depression that has just been heartbreaking.” Last March, his unit was at the forefront of requiring mandatory COVID testing for patients before admission—now standard practice at many hospitals—so patients could freely socialize with one another once they were admitted. “Knock on wood, we haven’t had any cases, and I think a lot of that has been due to proactive management,” Burns says.

The pandemic has strained the capacity



Kristen Swanson '75 (center), dean and professor at Seattle University's College of Nursing, is also chair of the Swedish Health Systems Board of Trustees. Here, she is pictured with Father Stephen Sundborg, S.J., president of Seattle University (left), and R. Guy Hudson, M.D., CEO of Swedish Health Systems (right), at the launch of the Swedish@SeattleU COVID vaccination clinic.

of nurses all over the country. “Nurses have been stressed out, worried, and afraid,” says Mustapha. “We’ve really bonded together in this moment.” To keep up morale of those under her care, she has increased site visits to ensure communication, and has implemented weekly meetings over Zoom to check in with managers. “I have been able to empower them to make their own

In December, *Time* magazine readers voted nurses and other frontline workers their “Person of the Year” in a reader’s poll.

decisions in the best interest of themselves and their patients.” That includes a more lenient absence policy for nurses who have needed to take breaks or work remotely, and allowing nurses to determine when it’s safe, for example, to open a mobile tent for testing.

In Rhode Island, nurses have been both on the front lines in the ICUs, and directing the highest levels of the state’s

response. “Years ago, nurses weren’t at the head table making decisions,” says Joseph. Now, she says, URI graduates are regularly on television as the public face of the crisis response, including Cathy Duquette '83, M.S. '96, vice president and chief nursing officer at Lifespan, the state’s largest medical organization, which manages Rhode Island Hospital and has set up a 600-bed field hospital for COVID patients in Providence. Joseph is, herself, a governor at the Miriam Hospital in Providence, where, in January, URI nursing alumna Maria Ducharme, M.S. '95, became president—the first time in that hospital’s 95-year history that it promoted a nurse to its highest leadership position.

At URI’s College of Nursing, faculty and students have also been struggling with the new realities of the pandemic, embracing distance learning to teach students. “That becomes a difficult task when it’s so important to have that one-on-one connection in clinical settings,” says Viau. “I’m sure 10 years from now, faculty will look back and say this was the biggest challenge we’ve ever undergone.” The current situation has already impacted the curriculum, emphasizing the need for nursing students to be fluent

in telehealth, which is apt to outlive coronavirus as an efficient tool for reaching patients.

One perhaps surprising result of the pandemic has been an increase in applications for admission to the College of Nursing, says Wolfe. At a time when nurses are literally risking their lives to treat a deadly infectious disease, she’s been proud to see a new contingent of future nurses eager to do their part in furthering the health of Rhode Island and beyond. “These are people who are truly interested in a career built out of helping others and bettering society,” Wolfe says. “It’s reassuring, quite frankly, to know there are people out there who are willing to put themselves in those situations to help the less fortunate.”

Even before the pandemic, in January 2020, Americans rated nurses as the most trusted profession for the 18th year in a row, with 85 percent ranking their honesty and ethics “very high.” In December, *Time* magazine readers voted nurses and other frontline workers their “Person of the Year” in a reader’s poll. As the country recovers from the pandemic, nurses are bound to become only more prominent as the face of health-care delivery. It will remain up to schools like URI’s College of Nursing to continue preparing them for the next national challenge: adapting to the broad transformation—and the day-to-day challenges—of health care in the coming decades.

Mustapha compares nurses emerging from the pandemic to a scene in an action movie where people walk out of an explosion, disheveled, perhaps, but defiant and alive. “Everyone has the choice about whether to flee or fight,” she says. “Those of us who have stayed in this profession are going to come out of this stronger and more resilient, able to handle anything that comes our way.” •

Network



= 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 by email to urimag@uri.edu or online at alumni.uri.edu.

1950

Diane Healey Dexter, see page 37

1957

Robert Newlander writes, "Still living in Sun City Texas in Georgetown, Texas. My wife passed away a few years ago so I'm living alone. At my age, I don't use the amenities anymore. Stopped tennis and golf a few years ago because of physical restraints. Still use the pool when the urge gets strong enough. Participate in Shriners activities and have many good neighbor friends who visit every day when I walk my dog. Life has been good to me!"

1959

Lloyd Kaplan, professor emeritus at CCRI and a member of the Rhode Island Music Hall of Fame, has co-authored a new book: *In Harmony: Early Vocal Groups Remembered & Celebrated*. This book was recently published by Consortium Publishing of West Greenwich.

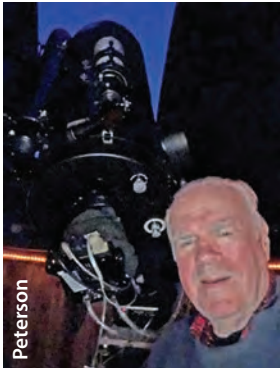
1963

Julien P. Ayotte '63, M.B.A. '69 published his seventh novel in November 2020, *The Treasure*. Several of his best-selling and award-winning books are currently being reviewed by producers for movie or television series consideration. He has begun work on his eighth novel, which is expected to be complete in the fall of 2021. Ayotte is a Rhode Island native and currently lives in Cumberland with his wife of 58 years, Pauline.



1964

Raymond Acciardo Sr. was nominated to Marquis Who's Who® for his dedication to the fields of business, education, and law. Acciardo writes, "I have really fond memories of URI, Class of 1964. One of the fondest was being selected to *Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities, 1963-64*! But the real sterling achievement of my career happened 57 years later. That's when I was nominated and accepted in *Who's Who in America, 2020-21*. This was my refrain when asked what memory meant the most to me in my qualifying interview: I have been fortunate and blessed to have had a lifetime of achievement, but without any hint of braggadocio, I still feel there's gas left in the tank. I hope someday—during my lifetime—to return to my first alma mater and celebrate where it all began!"



Herb Peterson writes, "These days there's very limited contact with my AXA brothers or other URI classmates. I'm still very active with Peterson Engineering and with Wishing Star Observatory. Although

astronomy classes and just about all public stargazing are on hold, I'm still out most clear nights chasing near-earth asteroids in conjunction with the Harvard/Smithsonian Minor Planet Center. Hey y'all, if you'd care to reconnect try pete@petersonengineering.com."

Elaine Riley, see page 38

1969

Paula Viau, see page 38

1970

Larry Davey writes, "Since URI, I have lived in Maine, Louisiana, St. Thomas, and Massachusetts. A wide variety of work including 25 years teaching scuba.

1968

Roberta Mudge Humble '68, M.A. '71 is a retired Community College of Rhode Island professor and is president of Westerly Armory Restoration, Inc. She is the author of many Rhode Island games and books, and says URI is always included in each game and book. She also wrote a book on Rhode Island's historic armories, including Rodman Hall on the URI campus. Roberta's games and books are sold in over 20 stores throughout Rhode Island and are available at westerlyarmory.com.



Made it to retirement!" In 1997 he published *Going After Feta*, a travelogue written in 1988 after his family went on a year-long adventure to a Greek island. He says, "That it ever became a book was something of an accident. At our return to Maine, a local paper asked if I would explain just where we were for the year. After a number of weekly issues, well, it morphed into a book." The book is available from Pine Tree Yarns in Damariscotta, Maine, and a copy is included in the URI library collection.

Larry Grimaldi of North Providence, R.I. has released *50 Shades of Life, Love, and Laughter: Reflections on Gratitude, Joy, Life's Oddities... and a Few Complaints!* published by Stillwater River Publications in Pawtucket. The book is a collection of columns and essays that stress the importance of gratitude for friends and family and ways to find joy, as well as taking a few gentle and humorous jabs at the idiosyncrasies of everyday life. Copies are available at Amazon.com.

1971

Cynthia Landers Szymanski '71, M.L.S. '73, see page 25



1974

Daniel Callahan has been featured in the series #6 edition of the World Football League football cards. He writes, "I was

on the URI football team in 1973 (the team that went to Germany) and set the punting average record (stood for 25 years). I played briefly for the New England Patriots in 1974 and 1976, and for the Washington Redskins in 1974. You can see any URI Football media guide for verification. In 1975, I played for Jacksonville Express of the WFL (World Football League). A company produced a series of WFL football cards and I'm featured in the series #6 edition. They also asked me to take a photo with me holding their card."

Josepha Campinha-Bacote, see page 39

1975

Kristen Swanson, see page 39

1976



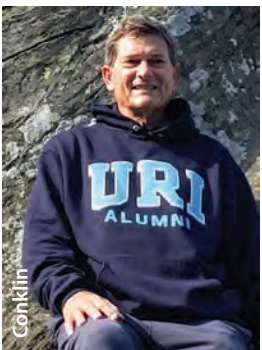
Patsie McCandless M.A. '76 writes, "I am an island girl, born and bred from the treasures of old Jamestown, and I look back with fondness and respect for the lessons of creativity and inventiveness the island life had to share. Writing came into my life when I took a workshop with Madeleine L'Engle. Now, I am thrilled to say that my family classic novel, *Becoming Jesse*, is the winner of the Mom's Choice Award and the Family Choice Award."

Charles Margeson writes, "I just recently retired as senior vice president, property reinsurance underwriting manager

for Sompco International, an international reinsurance company. I spent 42 years in the reinsurance industry, the last 16 years with Endurance Re/Sompco Int'l and commuted to the NYC office from our home in Amityville, Long Island. My wife Janie and I have been married 40 years and enjoy the beaches and sailing on Long Island's south shore. Retirement plans include some extended northeast sailing and visiting our son John in Boston and daughter Kaitlyn in Brooklyn (both married). Kaitlyn is also a URI graduate, class of 2000 and shares my love of Rhode Island from our university days. While the pandemic has put some of our retirement travel plans on hold, my wife and I plan on some extended European travel in the near future. And, of course, our summer sailing will include cruising to Newport!"

Carlos Pedro, see page 27

Christopher Raithe '76, M.S. '07, see page 25



1977

Robert Conklin writes, "After 40 years of service to the YMCA movement, I retired in 2019. My YMCA career began in Newport, R.I., when I was a freshman and I worked continuously for the Y till my recent

retirement. For 10 of those years I was the executive director of the South County YMCA in South Kingstown, R.I., an honor and one of the highlights of my career. My appointments took me to Boston; Providence; Washington, D.C.; Orlando; New York; the Carolinas; and back to Florida, where I currently live with my wife Colleen. My education at URI prepared me for the many challenges of my long career."

1978

Debra Cole, see page 27

Carl Swanson has published a new book: *Chair Yoga: You and One Chair*, which is now available on Amazon. Carl is an experienced registered yoga teacher (E-RYT 200® and YACEP®) with a passion for chair yoga and its benefits for so many people. He has been a teacher of many subjects for over 40 years, but now devotes himself to the teaching of yoga to students, yoga teachers in training, and to other yoga teachers. His 35 years as a public school teacher allowed him to hone his teaching skills. These skills carry over to his yoga classes, where he is known for his concise directions, attention to safe alignment, and differentiation (the practice of tailoring the curriculum to each individual student within the class).

1980

Kathy McKiel Faella, see page 27 and back cover



Falcone

1983

Col. Stephen Falcone received the prestigious AFCEA International's Distinguished Award for Excellence in Engineering for "an illustrious career of service in a broad range of military and senior engineering management positions building a legacy of substantive contributions to national defense in collaboration with industry and academia." He was previously presented with

AFCEA's Leadership Award in 2016. Col. Falcone was honored on November 30, 2020 during a virtual award ceremony held in conjunction with AFCEA's TechNet Cyber Symposium. Falcone is program executive officer (PEO) digital director of engineering for the Air Force's Life Cycle Management Center at Hanscom Airforce Base in Massachusetts.

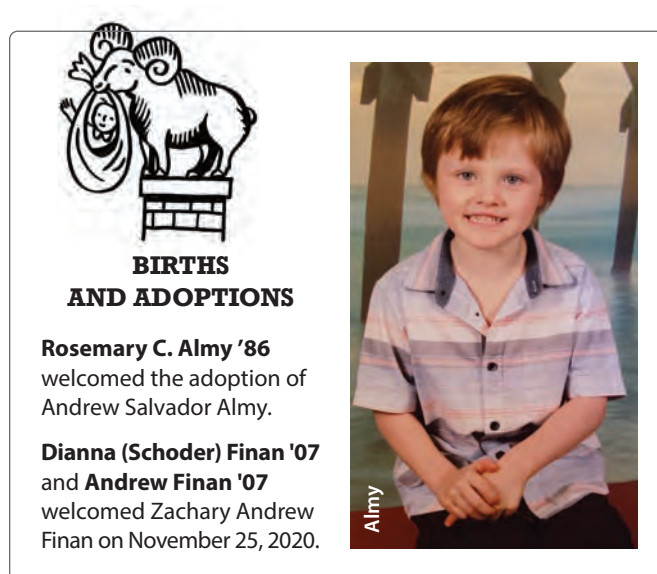
1984

Kelly (Nelligan) Lockwood Primus, formerly the CEO and president of Leading Women, has been appointed to CEO of Leading NOW, the global advisor to organizations and the epicenter of new knowledge for changing mindsets, behaviors, and cultures to be inclusive for all. Kelly's new role encompasses Leading NOW's family of brands, which includes Leading Women, Leading Forward, Center for Diversity & Inclusion (CDI) and the Gender Dynamics Institute (GDI).

1994

Dan Clapp, M.S. '94

Dan's wife, Deb Clapp, writes, "Dan Clapp earned his master's in physical oceanography/ocean engineering at URI. It was a challenging program of studies, for sure. He learned some very valuable critical thinking skills and the ability to think outside the box during that time on the Bay Campus! He went on to work for a few ocean and acoustic engineering firms with other URI grads, then started his own engineering consulting business. But in 2014, he wanted to do something new! He began the 1634 Meadery in Ipswich, Mass., and has become the CFO, CEO, COO, and chief bottler washer there! The skills learned at URI gave him the ability to research, set up a business plan, and learn all there was about starting your own small business. And even the pandemic could not keep him down. He is determined and resilient, models perseverance, and is a problem solver—thanks in part to his education experience at URI." 1634 Meadery has been featured on This Old House, and in other local media. If you're heading to Ipswich, visit the meadery for a tasting or grab a bottle to bring home. Dan and Deb generously offer URI alumni a discount at the Meadery! Visit 1634meadery.com.



BIRTHS AND ADOPTIONS

Rosemary C. Almy '86 welcomed the adoption of Andrew Salvador Almy.

Dianna (Schoder) Finan '07 and **Andrew Finan '07** welcomed Zachary Andrew Finan on November 25, 2020.



Almy

1986

Bob Marsocci wrote and published his book, *You Exhaust Me: A Clueless Guy's Guide to Marriage*, in 2017. He has also written a script for a play that is an "R-rated parody

of The Brady Bunch," which he intends to have produced in the near future.

1987

Inger Magrethe Holter, M.S. '87, Ph.D. '93, see page 40



Dan and Deb Clapp selling 1634 Meadery products



Raymond Riley writes, "Proud to have my personal essay 'Spouse in the House,' a winning selection focusing on the right to marry, Rhode Island upbringings, and North Carolina's 2012 Amendment 1, finally published in a national anthology in 2020. Last October though, the really big scream is that while we were all on lockdown, the publisher asked me to read it myself for his *6-Minute Stories* podcast. It sure brought back my newscasts, overnights, and booth work at our beloved WRIU. You'll find it on Apple Podcasts: *6-Minute Stories* by Randell Jones, Episode 10/7/20, "Spouse in the House" by R. Lee Riley. Hope you enjoy the story, and more importantly, my maturing mannered voice."

1989

Daniel Wasneechak '89, M.S. '93, see page 40

1990

Peter D. Anderson '90, Pharm.D. '98 was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, Medical Service Corps, United States Army Reserve.

1991

Dana Amore '91, Pharm.D. '01, see page 13

1995

Maria Ducharme, M.S. '95 (nursing) was promoted to president at the Miriam Hospital in Providence. It is the first time in that hospital's 95-year history that it promoted a nurse to its highest leadership position.

1996

Erica Estus '96, Pharm.D. '00, see page 6

1997

Laitan Silifat Mustapha, see page 42

1998

Nate Barrington, M.B.A. '98, see page 55



Holterman

1999

Katie (Walsh) Holterman has joined Legacy Healthcare Services as their senior director of clinical programming. Katie earned her degree in speech-language pathology and has practiced as a medical speech-language pathologist and administrator of rehab services for large hospital systems and senior living facilities for over 20 years. In her new role, Katie oversees all clinical programming and education related to rehab for providers of physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech-language pathology, and wellness services across 350 assisted living and skilled nursing facilities in 23 states.

Dierdre Robinson, M.S. '99, see page 25

2000

Mary-Ellen Doherty, Ph.D. '00, see page 43



Brown

2003

Julie (Ferguson) Brown is an associate professor of science education at the University of Florida. She lives in Alachua County, Fla. with her family.



Garcia

Ed Garcia '03, M.L.I.S. '08, director, Cranston Public Library in Cranston, Rhode Island was nominated as a candidate for the 2022–23 presidency of the American Library Association (ALA). Garcia is the current chair of the Rhode Island Library Association Legislative Action Committee (2016–present), a member of the URI Graduate School of Library and Information Studies (GSLIS) Advisory Board (2012–present), and served on the Library Board of Rhode Island for 10 years (2008–2018). He also serves on Congressman Jim Langevin's Education Advisory Committee.

2005

Dave Hudson (URI B.S. Marine Biology 2005, UConn Ph.D. 2011) was admitted as a Fellow National in the New England Chapter of The Explorers Club. The explorers are interested in advancing science and exploration. He has also been a Fulbright Fellow to Colombia and a research scientist at the Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk (Conn.).

Kate Iaquinto, see page 25

Jen Scranton, see page 26

2007

Kristina Cinquegrana Petrilli, see page 5

2009



Brett Azar landed a recurring role as famed pro wrestler, the Iron Sheik, in the NBC sitcom, *Young Rock*, which premiered on Feb. 16. The show is based on the life of Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, who grew up in a wrestling family. A wrestling fan, Azar grew up in Barrington, R.I. He studied kinesiology at URI and got his start acting with URI Theatre—his first role was Abram in *Romeo and Juliet*. The former personal trainer was also a two-time body-double for Arnold Schwarzenegger's Terminator. Read more about Azar at today.uri.edu/news.

Nicole Martucci has joined Duffy & Sweeney business law and litigation.



2009

Nicholas Larghi graduated with a marine biology degree and is now a doctor of physical therapy and photographer in Fort Myers, Fla. He says, “Although life has led me astray from my original intent, I still try to maintain some presence in the scientific world. About two summers ago I conducted a photography research project investigating potential pollinators of Florida’s ghost orchid.” The journal *Orchid Digest* published his photos and findings in the article, “Ghosts, Swamp Angels, and Gators” (April, May, June 2020). Larghi says, “*National Geographic* did a similar project, published in July 2019. I didn’t get to work with *National Geographic*, but so far, it’s the closest I’ve come!” (See one of Larghi’s ghost orchid photos on page 2.)

= ALUMNI HAPPENINGS =

FACULTY
OFFICE HOUR

Big things are happening in classrooms, labs, and workspaces all over campus at the University of Rhode Island. Spend an hour with some of URI’s most innovative faculty to hear about their latest research, and maybe learn something new.

For information on attending, go to alumni.uri.edu/calendar.



April 21, 2021
Kunal Mankodiya, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Electrical, Computer, and Biomedical Engineering



May 12, 2021
Jaime Ross, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Neuroscience

Both events will be held at **noon via Zoom**.

2010



Omar Bah, founder and executive director of The Refugee Dream Center in Providence, R.I., recently received his doctoral degree in organizational and leadership psychology from William James College in Boston, Mass. His dissertation centered on the neuroscience of labeling trauma and its relationship with psychological characteristics and leadership, in which he elaborates on the multitude of links between leadership condition, neurophysiological response to recollection of

trauma, resiliency, and well-being and makes the case that speaking on trauma can be part of the process of healing for survivors.

Erik Brierley, see page 55

2012

Ryan Kleinert, see page 26

2013

Allyson Pinkhover has been accepted into the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) Program in the health equity and social justice concentration track. She will continue focusing on the design, implementation, and evaluation of innovative and accessible substance use and harm reduction public health programming.

2014

Tom Ohanian, M.B.A. ’14, see page 52

2019

Colin Burns, see page 44

Charles Kell, Ph.D. ’19, see page 34

Nate Vaccaro, see page 30

Patrick Warren was hired as manager of regulatory affairs—regenerative and cellular medicine at the Vericel Corporation, Cambridge, Mass. He started his first semester of a graduate program in biotechnology at Harvard University.

2020

Briana Gagnon, see page 30

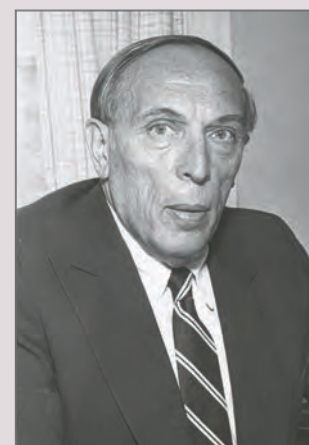
Rachel Gomes, M.E.S.M. ’20, see page 55

Clay Graham, M.S. ’20, see page 24

=YOUR STORIES=

Never Forget the Legacy of Leo DiMaio Jr.

After reading the story, “The Fight for Justice: URI’s History of Student-Led Civil Rights Activism” in the fall 2020 issue of the *University of Rhode Island Magazine*, and, in particular, the sidebar, “The Rev. Arthur L. Hardge and the Origins of Talent Development,” Daniel Price Jr. ’73 shared his reaction to the stories.



The late Leo DiMaio Jr. served as director of Talent Development from 1980–1998. In that role, he encouraged and inspired countless students who remember him as a mentor and role model.

I was a member of the pivotal Talent Development class that entered URI in the summer of 1969, when Reverend Hardge and Mr. Leo DiMaio first joined forces. I was there for the next four years, graduating in 1973. I actively participated in all of the events that took place in 1971. I knew all of the students involved and have a very clear recollection of the events that took place and of those who participated in the 1971 student takeover of the administration building.

One very significant point that needs to be included in any discussion of the events that took place at the administration building in 1971 is what Mr. DiMaio did when the State Police—in full riot gear—smashed down the door to the registrar’s office, which we were barricaded behind. I remember it well, because it was terrifying. We were all lying on the floor with our arms interlocked, and just when the police hit the door with a battering ram (or whatever they used), a photographer’s flash bulb went off. The room we were in was darkened and the effect was like a shotgun blast coming through the door—very scary.

The first person to enter the room was Mr. DiMaio, scurrying over the file cabinets and desks we had used for the barricade, shouting to the State Police captain by name, “Don’t lay a hand on any one of my students in this room!!”

As a result, not one of us was struck by the police, who poured into the room wielding those long batons. It was total chaos, but the TD students came out of it totally unscathed. Unlike the white students who supported our cause and were surrounding the outside of the building in a show of solidarity. Several of them got beaten up pretty badly.

It is important that the facts surrounding this significant event are remembered accurately, and with the passing of Mr. D. in 2014, we need to be sure that his legacy reflects just how much he loved and protected his students from the very beginning. He was a unique individual who had a hugely positive impact on so many TD students, myself included, and his contributions should never be forgotten. Reverend Hardge used to say frequently that he and Leo DiMaio were “joined at the hip; there was not one without the other.” •

—Daniel Price Jr. ’73



The 1971 occupation of the Carlotti Administration Building.

EDITOR’S NOTE:

A number of Talent Development (TD) alumni reached out to express their disappointment that the late Leo DiMaio was not mentioned by name in the sidebar about the founding director of TD, the Rev. Arthur L. Hardge.

Price’s comments (which were excerpted and edited for inclusion here) captured powerfully the spirit of the collective concerns and described powerfully DiMaio’s actions during the Carlotti takeover in 1971. DiMaio, a founding TD staff member, became director of TD in 1980, and led the program until his retirement in 1998. He helped, supported, and inspired countless students during his years at URI. He passed away in 2014.

We were deeply saddened to learn that just weeks after sharing his comments, Daniel Price Jr. ’73 passed away. Price was a proud member of the first graduating Talent Development class at URI.

= NICHE =

Transforming Industries: From Film Editing to the Media Supply Chain

Tom Ohanian, M.B.A. '14, is an Oscar and Emmy Award winner, a techie, inventor, and author. He's given talks on how artificial intelligence and machine learning influence content creation. He is currently an independent consultant and a global business development leader for IBM. Writer Paul Kandarian caught up with Ohanian to learn a little about what makes this Renaissance man tick.

Tom Ohanian's curiosity about how things work has earned him some impressive awards: As co-inventor of the Avid digital nonlinear editing system in the early 1990s, Ohanian and his team won Emmys for ushering the film industry from the cumbersome cut-and-splice editing days into the digital age. He has since focused on digital media supply, developing ways to make the delivery and distribution of digital media faster and more efficient. Along the way, he also earned an Oscar for scientific achievement. Ohanian's fascination with the craft of film editing led him to write *The Making of a Motion Picture Editor* (2019). For the book, he interviewed dozens of film editors who, between them, have won more than 360 Oscars.

Q: Any early inkling of your techie future?

A: When I was young, I was interested in how TV shows and films were made, so I started developing my own black-and-white film with all the smelly chemicals; seeing how images appeared in that soup was fascinating. It was logical to go from still to moving images. I'd always liked seeing how machines were built, and I would take them apart when I was younger. Some were put back together flawlessly—some (he laughs) were not.

Q: How did you move from your work at Avid to where you are now?

A: The most important thing I've learned is always asking myself, "Is there a better way to do this?" I'm interested in helping industries do things better. After Avid, which was all about the transition from film to digital editing, I began to look at how content was sent back and forth—



Tom Ohanian, M.B.A. '14, with a Moviola Model DX manufactured in Hollywood, circa 1924. The Moviola, a film viewer, was used in the editing process. At the time, editors had to physically cut the film and splice it to the next appropriate piece.

using satellites, couriers, and hard drives. I asked, "Is there a better way?" That led to a career transition in which I focused on changing how content was sent from program maker to distributor. Why not move video files over a network and speed the supply chain?

Q: Why the interest in film editing?

A: It is often called "the hidden craft." People think that once a film is out of the camera, that's that. But a film is made of small moments judiciously put together to tell a particular story. With cut-and-splice, it used to take like 40 minutes of

film to produce one minute of finished footage. With digital editing, for feature films it can be like 100- or 200-to-1. Editing is important.

Q: What do you want to do now?

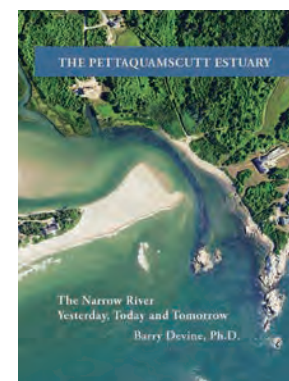
A: Keep learning and moving forward. Every day I ask myself, "What am I going to learn today?" It's not about what I know, it's about what I want to know. •

—Paul Kandarian



= 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.



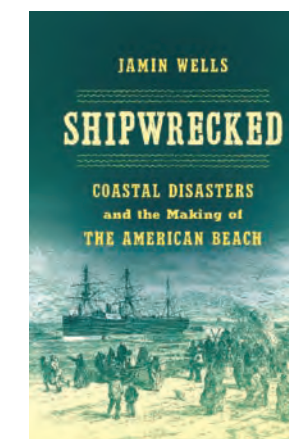
The Pettaquamscutt Estuary: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow
Barry E. Devine, M.S. '78, Ph.D. '00 (2020)



The Making of a Motion Picture Editor
Thomas Ohanian, M.B.A. '14 (2019)



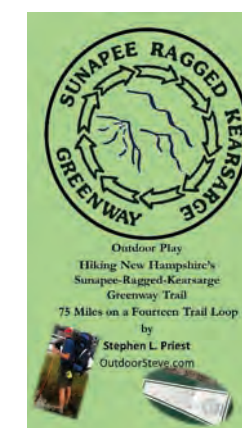
The Treasure
Julien Ayotte '63, M.B.A. '69 (2020)



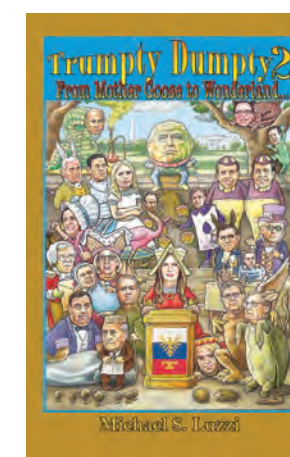
Shipwrecked: Coastal Disasters and the Making of the American Beach
Jamin Wells '04, M.A. '07 (2020)



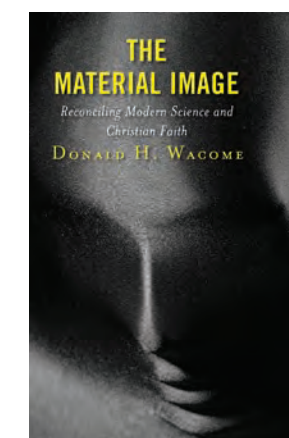
Home, the Farm
Laurence J. Sasso '64, M.S. '67 (2020)



Outdoor Play: Hiking New Hampshire's Sunapee-Ragged-Kearsarge Greenway Trail: 75 Miles on a Fourteen Trail Loop
Stephen L. Priest, M.S. '72 (2020)



Trumpty Dumpty 2: From Mother Goose to Wonderland
Michael S. Luzzi '71 (2020)



The Material Image: Reconciling Modern Science and Christian Faith
Donald Wacome, M.S. '76 (2020)



= IN MEMORIAM =

Howard Butler '40
James Turbitt '40
Florence Horenstein '42
Maria (Ballirano) Ronzio '43
Muriel (Walling) Wagner '43
Lois (Pingree) Thayer '44
Stanley Reed '46
Nancy (Haslam) Shuford '46
Gertrude (Cutler) Cutler '47
Donald Arabian '48
Mary Broome '48
Ellen Buegling '48
Joan (Crook) King '48
Harold Krasner '49
John Denison '51
George Handler '51
Richard Olney '51
Rita Geoghegan) Pilkington '51
Leala (Sayegh) Read '51
Norman Steadman '51, M.S. '60
Elias Trefes '51
Jack Willis '51, M.S. '61
Evelyn (Shea) Barrett '52
Martha (Freeman) Brewer '52
Mark Gifford '52
Carol (Biggsen) Coval '53
John Delselva '53
Thomas Souls '53
Carol (Fletcher) Bender '54
Peter Buckley '54
Salvatore Capozzoli '54
Robert Chapman '54
Sanford Gottlieb '54
Jean (Carlson) O'Neill '54
Lawrence Parente '54
Walter Reilly '54
Beverly (Lewis) Lauterbach '55
Vincent Mattera '55
David Nelson '55
Joseph Pizzo '55
Joan (Turner) Caldwell '56
Robert DiCenso '56, M.P.A. '74
Edward Karp '56
George Reese '56
June (Capalbo) Hartford-Alley '57
Harriet (Kroger) Choi '58
Sheila Coons '58
Domenic DiOrio '58, M.A. '60
Nancy (Rigby) Engelhardt '58
Richard Hamblin '58
Don Mann '58
Leo St. Jean '58
Muriel (Johnson) Williston '58
Allan Cargill '59
Michael Falcone '59

Harold Mackenzie '59
William Mellom '59
Rudolph Pyle, M.A. '59
Joseph Santoro '59, M.A. '68
Stanley Levy '60
William Malkin '60
Joan (Vance) McCollough '60
John Palumbo '60
Paul Pierpaoli '60
Joseph Travisano '60
James Bixby '61, M.S. '71
Wilfred LaRiviere '61
Richard McClure '61
Roland Chiaradio '63
Dorothy Donnelly '63
Carolyn (Crowell) Kee '63
Joseph Latera '63
Sheldon Nassberg '63
Leo O'Donnell '63
Joseph Petrucillo '63
John Salisbury, M.S. '63, Ph.D.'77
Carmine Vallese '63, M.S. '65
Arvind Bhopale, M.S. '65, Ph.D.'75
Louis Bruno '65
David Clarke '65
E. Thomas Patterson '65
Anne (Hennessey) Shackett '65
Joseph Teixeira '65
John Weber '65
Joseph Battey '66
David Greenstein, M.A. '66
Barbara (Wiley) Copeland '67
Richard Donnelly, M.A. '68
Elizabeth Socha, M.A. '68
John Bovi '69
Robert Dahmer '69, M.B.A. '74
Dorothy Klein, M.L.I.S. '69
Roberta (Sabella) Mansfield '69, M.L.I.S. '72
David Midgley '69
Roger Nadeau '69
Dan Blackstone, M.S. '70
Gary Bryson, M.A. '70
Albert Draper '70
Robert Ferry, M.S. '70
Helen Friend '70
Susan Gibson, M.L.I.S. '70
Michael Lapisky '70
Ilona Robertson '70
William Stillman '70
Robert Yantorno '70
Angela (Sherlock) Brousseau '71
Christine (DesRochers) Danieli '71, M.L.I.S. '73

Marion (Jagolinzer) Goldsmith, M.S. '71
Toni Guglielmi '71
Pamela (Paden) Hard '71
James Milbery '71
Ronald Brann, M.A. '72
Marsha Cohen, M.A. '72
Thor Ornberg '72
Jane Owen '72
Alice Sharkey M.S. '72
George Smith '72
Thomas Thurber '72
Denise Allen '73
Myrle Dean '73
William Nelson '73
Daniel Price '73
Siranoush Woods '73
William Brennan '74
Claire Carrere '74
Theresa (Armstrong) Frarey '74
Burness Guidry '74
Eric Holm '74
Paul Listro, M.P.A. '74
V. Paul Migliore '74
Daniel Sousa '74
Randy Hughes '75
John Martin '75
Shirley Wasser '75
Robert Bartash '76
Richard Pavao '76
Alice (Corsair) Reinhardt, M.L.I.S. '76
Joan (Gotwals) Schaefer, M.L.I.S. '76
Patricia (Russo) Stewart '76
William Valentine, M.B.A. '76
Paul Healy '77
Rosemarie Driscoll, M.L.I.S. '78
Edward Martz, M.S. '78
David McMahon '79, M.A. '83
Timothy Watterson '79
Peter Caswell '80
Catherine (Falvey) Connors '80
John Keane '80
William Toscano '80
Anthony Cannata '81
William Cooper, M.S. '81
Elizabeth (Holmes) McClintick '81
John Cantrell '82
Edward Ryan '82
Donna (Shatz) Wisnom '82
Linda Lagasse '83
Douglas Iannucci '84, M.S. '87
Peter Kroeker '84
Michael Canning '85
Maureen Krasnow, M.P.A. '85

Timothy Mills '85
Edythe Finnerty '86
Cheryl Lynch, M.L.I.S. '86
Brent Narkawicz '86
Andrew Gibb '87
Kevin Kempf, M.P.A. '87
John Kringle '87
Brian Lloyd '89
Kevin Kennedy '90
Jason Kornberg '90
James Greene '91
Patricia Degidio '92, M.A. '97
Marc Slippen '92
David Haller '93, M.S. '94
Kenneth Lewis '93
Kimberly Wholean '93
Lori Bono '94
Angelina Borodemos '94
Mabel Hempstead M.S. '94
Brian Smith M.B.A. '94
Justine Wesner '95
F. Christine (Palmer) Dunlap '96
Patrick Westcott '97
Geoffrey Ewenson '99
Michael Schanne '00
Matthew Turco '01
Sandra MacKenzie, M.S. '03
Danielle Kerbe '04
Hannah Cyr '24

FACULTY AND STAFF

Dorothy Donnelly '63, professor emeritus of English
David Gitlitz, professor emeritus of Hispanic studies
Howard Huftalen, former staff/affiliate
Shmuel Mardix, professor emeritus of electrical, computer and biomedical engineering
Thomas Morin, professor emeritus of Spanish
Leo O'Donnell '63, professor emeritus and former dean, human science and services
Bruce Tavares, former staff/affiliate
Jack Willis '51, M.S. '61, professor emeritus of physics

CORRECTION

The fall 2020 issue included a listing for Donald Arabian '70. It should have read, "Donald Arabian '48." Our sincere condolences and apologies to the Arabian family.

= CLOSE UP =

Challenge-Seeking Grad Student Becomes a Trailblazer

Rachel Gomes, M.E.S.M. '20, made history as the first woman to qualify on all apparatus with the Kingston Fire Department.



Student volunteer firefighters Anthony White, left, Robert Davis, center, and Rachel Gomes outside the Kingston Fire Station.



“I had to approach problems differently than my male colleagues. Some people muscle through, but smaller people like me have to strategize.”

—Rachel Gomes, M.E.S.M. '20

When Rachel Gomes, M.E.S.M. '20 came to URI to earn a master's degree in environmental science and management, she had no idea that she would break barriers by becoming the first female firefighter cleared for primary duty at the all-volunteer Kingston Fire Department.

Gomes, who is from Milford, Conn., is athletic and loves helping the community. She never planned to be a firefighter, but while at URI, she realized she needed an additional challenge.

“I felt I needed to gain skills that classic education wasn't going to give me,” Gomes says. “I wanted to challenge myself, learn how to react to stressful situations, and learn practical skills. I saw that the fire district needed student volunteers, thought it was the perfect opportunity, and signed up.”

The department is always seeking volunteers, and training for any level of duty takes hard work. But getting cleared for primary duty, which enables firefighters to drive the fire engines and platform truck, is particularly challenging.

“Rachel is extremely well-trained, adaptive, and can handle stressful situations. She has those innate characteristics that every firefighter has,” Kingston Fire Chief Nate Barrington,

M.B.A. '98, says. “This is a historically male-dominated field, and having people like Rachel who possess those traits and are hardworking is a proud moment for us and the field.”

Volunteer firefighters respond to all kinds of emergencies—including medical and hazardous materials situations. To prepare, they participate in drills with controlled live fire, learn to work the engines, navigate buildings in emergencies, and drive the ladder trucks.

“I had to approach problems differently than my male colleagues,” Gomes says. “Some people muscle through, but smaller people like me have to strategize. For example, to grab the ladder, you would typically go in the middle—where the balance point is—and just take it out. But I start from the back and work it to the middle so I'm not pulling the full portion of the ladder. Little tricks like that help me.”

Kingston Fire Department recruitment coordinator Erik Brierley '10 says: “There are plenty of grown men, adults, and fit guys that don't make it through the training. Rachel has gone through the same training. The weight of the ladders and hoses doesn't change, temperatures don't change. She finds what works for her and makes it work very well.”

“I knew it was going to be a challenge,” Gomes says. “There are female firefighters around, but not here. You definitely have to work harder and find different ways that work for you and ways to complement others here.”

URI student volunteers can live at the fire station rent-free in return for “on-call” volunteer coverage, seven days a week. They are also eligible for tuition reimbursement of up to \$3,000 a semester. Moreover, textbooks and other school expenses are reimbursed when volunteers meet certain benchmarks. Gomes took advantage of all of these benefits and sees her experience as an unparalleled opportunity.

“If you want to be here, you'll feel like you belong here, and I have never been made to feel otherwise,” Gomes says. “I definitely encourage others, especially women, to sign up. It might seem intimidating, but once you get here, you won't feel that way.” •

—Edhaya Thennarasu '21

= 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
May 15, 2021



FALL WINNERS: CONTEMPLATING CROPS

This photo from the URI Archives sparked a lot of funny captions from alumni of all ages. The following themes emerged in many of them: kale, Jimmy Hoffa, cannabis, Cabbage Patch Kids, and "Put a woman in charge."

In fact, our archivists suggest this unlabeled and undated photo may depict an Agricultural Experiment Station contest to see how large the crops could be grown. They held such contests with chickens and other livestock, as well.

It definitely shows our Rhody agricultural roots, and it definitely brought out a comedic bent in many of you. •

WINNING CAPTION

"I don't know...I can't see this kale thing ever catching on."
—Matt Petterson '06, M.S. '07

RUNNER-UP

The original cabbage patch kids.
—Bill Rosenberg '77

HONORABLE MENTIONS

"Gentlemen, it seems as though the construction project for the new Student Center is a little behind schedule. Let's put a WOMAN in charge!"
—Stan Levy '56 and his daughter, Faith Levy

First cannabis harvest is huge success for URI School of Pharmacy!
—Stephen Koch '75

"It had to be a Brown Bear or a group of Huskies that did this."
—David Hiatt, M.S. '79



CLIMBING THE WALLS CORRECTION AND ONGOING MYSTERY

The photo from the summer 2020 caption contest, "Climbing the Walls," was sent in by an alumnus who said it was Heathman Hall, not Fayerweather, as the fall 2020 explanation stated. Apologies for the confusion. The photo appeared in the 1973 yearbook.

We continue to receive notes from alumni who identify the students pictured and the building they're pictured in. The notes identify different people and locations, keeping the mystery going. Whoever it was—and wherever—it looks like it was a lot of fun, and we're glad so many of you have enjoyed trying to identify who's in the picture and where it was taken.

PHOTOS: COURTESY URI DIGITAL ARCHIVES



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= EPILOGUE =

Binge-Watch in the Backyard

Like many people, Katherine McKiel Faella '80 has been spending a lot more time watching birds since the COVID pandemic began. She captured this sweet photo of a pair of eastern bluebirds at her home in South Kingstown, R.I., last year. The "return" of bluebirds is often considered a sign of spring here in the Northeast, although some stay year-round.

Read about URI's birders—expert and amateur alike—in "An Avian Affection" on page 22.

Visit uri.edu/magazine for photos and stories from other URI alumni birders.