Why Poetry Now?

VOICE.
CONNECTION.
SOLACE.
MEANING.
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
CURRENTS
8
IN BRIEF
URI news to keep you in the know.

9
GO RHODY
URI athletic director Thor Bjorn on adapting to college athletics during COVID.

10
BIG IDEAS. BOLD PLANS.
Meet recipients of the Ryan and Verrecchia Scholarships.

11
RHODY SCHOLARS
Grad student Lauren Machado’s winning business plan puts sustainable fashion forward.

12
MEDIA SPOTLIGHT
URI experts are quoted in the media frequently. Here are a few of them that bear repeating.

13
LESSON PLAN
The new URI Online program offers accessible education for working students.

14
WHY I TEACH
Communication studies professor Kathleen Torrens wants her students to become citizen-participants.

15
QUAD ANGLES
English professor Travis Williams on what Shakespeare can teach us about pandemic survival.

NETWORK
46
CLASS NOTES
URI alumni are amazing! Catch up with your classmates and get to know the newest and longest-standing members of the Rhody family.

51
YOUR STORIES
The legacy of the late Leo DiMaio Jr. as told by the late Daniel Price Jr. ’73.

52
NICHE
A Q&A with inventor, author, techie—and Oscar and Emmy Award winner—Tom Ohanian, M.B.A. ’14.

55
CLOSE UP
Meet Rachel Gomes, M.E.S.M. ’20, the Kingston Fire Department’s first female firefighter cleared for primary duty.

56
CAPTION THIS
Stroll down Memory Lane, check out last issue’s winners, and send your best caption for this issue!

FEATURES
36
THE EVOLUTION OF NURSING
As URI’s College of Nursing marks its 75th year and COVID keeps nurses in the spotlight, we look at the changing profession through the stories of URI’s nursing alumni.

16
PRESIDENT DOOLEY’S LEGACY
URI has changed in major ways during the 12 years of David M. Dooley’s presidency. We take a closer look at 10 of the most important changes.

22
SOMETHING TO TWEET ABOUT
Meet some of URI’s student, faculty, staff, and alumni birders—and find out how they got hooked.

28
POETRY’S MOMENT
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.
FROM THE PRESIDENT

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

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

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

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

COASTAL COLORS

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. 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.
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 vaccinatar uses for 90 percent of our blood sampling. This saves so many syringes as well as plastic cases for them. I teach this anyone that comes to 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 to be enlarged for the benefit of the entire human community.

America is not America, nor is it Stepford.

—Cheryl A. Madden ’92

From the Editor

Thank you for the many, many comments and letters you shared in the last response to the fall 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 love, 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 URI.

In February, Clinical Professor of Pharmacy Practice Erica Estus ’96, Pharm.D. ’00, posted to social media: “Happiness is spending a wonderful career that I have enjoyed for more than 40 years. If anyone wishes to see it, the video is available here: https://timeo.com/4234181. 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.

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 graduate 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 a given, leading to the attendant “natural sanctity” feel of the place.

—Matthew Perry ’83

On both of my experiences there, we studied PAR Pond (actually a reservoir), which was part of the cooling waterways for the F and R reactors prior to water release to the Savannah River proper. One of my fellow grad students, Torgny Vigerstedt, 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 Bengston, M.S. ’74, Ph.D. ’82

Professor Emeritus, URI Department of Fisheries, Animal and Veterinary Sciences

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The University thanks the Center for Oceanic Control and Prevention, Rhode Island Department of Health, and URI COVID-19 guidelines. URI’s pharmacy was taken following the guidelines at the time

EXPERIENS

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 whose name was from Kenya. I remember her telling me about Usuphaque 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. Converted 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 ’83

Keeping it real 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 Lausen’s photo was mislabeled near the end of the story.

In the fall 2020 story about Chef Bruce Megaffit ’87, we erroneously identified the late U.S. Senator John Chafee as “J.R. J. B.” This should have read, “J.R. J. B.” as Senator Chafee’s party affiliation was Republican.

Our sincere apologies for these errors.

Civil Rights Activism at URI

The latest issue of URI Magazine suggested that civil rights activism at URI was “no big deal.” A fact is there was significant activity prior to that, including organizing for voter registration bus rides to the South and sit-ins at the capital 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 years of my college 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 Rhodey!

Rick Bronca ’74

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 first COVID vaccine. He is an URI pharmacy student Lauren Eng.

Sprint 2021
A Smarter Bandage

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

“An infection at an early stage, necessitating fewer antibiotics and preventing drastic measures, such as limb amputation,” said Roxbury. “We envision this being particularly useful in those with diabetes, where the management of chronic wounds is routine.”

Removing and Destroying ‘Forever Chemicals’

URI hydrogeologist Thorr Bjorn and Hamad Moein Safaei, Ph.D.,’20, demonstrated the smart bandage. 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.

“A number of conference submissions and other great ideas out there, but most are still presented at this time,” said Boving. “There are a lot of other great ideas out there, but most are still presented in season. 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

“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

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.)

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 Lipani, was chosen to edit and revise the American College of Sports Medicine’s exercise standards for implementation in the fall of 2021.

OCEAN EXPLORATION

As athletic director Thor Bjorn chowed 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.

As athletic director Thor 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

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 baskeball postseason and bled into the halting of spring sports in 2020. As weeks passed, it became apparent that the fall 2020 season would not 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.

“The Power 5 conferences are generally very set in their dates. The Atlantic 10 joined the majority of conferences around the country in postponement. We have a responsibility to proceed in the safest manner possible while remembering that we promised we would try to provide that opportunity,” said Bjorn.

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.

“When’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 season this year than it did starting the fall 2020 season,” Bjorn says. “With our 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.”

“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

“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."
CURRENTS

= BIG IDEAS. BOLD PLANS. =

Attracting Excellence: Faces of URI

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

Background:
Carlos Fragoso Uriarte tutored students in math and volunteered to do science experiments with elementary school children with autism. He captured 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 Abdurkin 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.

VERRECCHIA SCHOLAR
Jordan Furman ’24
Chadwick, N.J.

RYAN SCHOLAR
Carlos Fragoso Uriarte ’24
Johnston, R.I.

= 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.

“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.”

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and we found organisms living in sediments at 120 degrees Celsius. On disc...SPRING 2021...”

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

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.”

—Jeffrey Bratberg, clinical professor of pharmacy, Pharmacy Times

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—Jeffrey Bratberg, clinical professor of pharmacy, Pharmacy Times

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

“In general, people with disabilities face a severe disparity in the cybersecurity solutions available to them.”

—Krishna Venkatasubramanian, assistant professor of computer science, The Boston Globe

On his work in solving technological inequalities for people with disabilities:

“...in general, people with disabilities face a severe disparity in the cybersecurity solutions available to them.”

—Krishna Venkatasubramanian, assistant professor of computer science, The Boston Globe

On the Biden administration’s open-door policy for Muslims, after imperial gardens being opened to Iranian-born graduate student at URI:

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

—Nasir Palmah, 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 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

On NASA’s new moon mission:

“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. Certificate programs 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 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, 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
CURRENTS

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 played a role as political statement. The progressive 19th-century woman’s rejection of corsets—and petticoats, hoop skirts, and bustles—interacted 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, hoops, chemises, and bustles—intertwined with the public progress of 19th-century women’s rejection of corsets—and petti-coats. 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 inequalities.

“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

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

W ould William Shakespeare have been “Shakespearean” (cue the choirs 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 hardcrable 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, the Earl of Southampton:

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 early1590s 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 connected 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 Benedick, 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 Much, Much, to King Lear and Antony and Cleopatra. Finally, Shakespeare remade the genres of comedy and tragedy, ended 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 arts teach us in our own time of peril. • Travis D. Williams is associate professor of English in URI’s Department of English and a specialist in Shakespeare and early modern literature.
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.
A number of students, faculty, and 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

While the new buildings constructed in the last decade—plus more dramatic statements about the University’s commitment to its faculty, students, and research objectives—are 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.

—Vernon Wymann ’78, Former Assistant Vice President for Business Services

### 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.

### 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 services 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 12.)

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 3.0: URI expands virtual learning opportunities outside the traditional academic semester. The program grew from just over 400 students in 2014 to 1,182 in January 2020. Experience 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 6,000 students in 2008–2009.

### 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.

Collaborations 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.

- 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 (DIVB), 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.”

### 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 high-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 $127 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 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 earlier than other tests.
- Surveying an estimated 3 billion acres of U.S. ocean territory along 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.

### 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 $130 million Fasceitli 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. Brooks/ide 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 $88 million Reauper Center for Chemical and Forensic Sciences, which also earned LEED® Gold certification, houses the Department of Chemistry and a federal Center of Excellence for Explosive 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, shoreline construction projects to support the 2023 arrival of a new research vessel are 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 Fasceitli 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 Shrewsberry Institute 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 citizenship; 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, responsive 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.

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 be able to compete globally, 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 bio-tech 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, and 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 governance changes 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 support 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 development in defense, underwater 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(UR) 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 Bournest, 21, biology major and founder of the nonprofit America’s Recoverable Medical Supply, which recycles and donates medical supplies

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 Marsa 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.

“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

—Donald H. DeHayes, Provost

“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 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

PHOTO: NENA LEVIE; MIKE SALAMON
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

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.

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.

Below: 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.

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

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

PHOTOS: NORA LEWIS; ILLUSTRATION: CYNTHIA MCMILLEN
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. The station is home to a founding professor, Dr. Scott McWilliams, who studies the physiology of bird migration.

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-ranker 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 interested in 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 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 Rathel ’76, M.S. ’07, Dierdre Robinson, M.S. ’99, and Cynthia Landers Smyranski ’71, M.I.L.S. ’73—the project confirmed that 150 bird species breed in the state, a slight decrease from the 153 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 sapuckers, 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-headed 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 albatrius, 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 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.”

“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.”

He sees hundreds of species of birds in Rhode Island, 3,900 worldwide, and he has photographed 1,400 species, including more than 100 of the world’s 300 kinds of hummingbirds. He has traveled to 30 countries to watch birds.

“Reminded that, while I do love to travel, there is so much beauty close to home,” says Faella. “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.”

Many other former URI students turned to birds 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—that their beaks and eyes and claws,” Faella says. “And, of course, we’re drawn to the colorful 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 webinar 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. •
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

"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

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.


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..."
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 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.”

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"I think of poetry as a space to begin again."
—Afua Ansong

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. "A part of my heart and soul, “ Gagnon 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.”

"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 ‘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 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 was a child. "I came to poetry with anger. Moving to America, I lost my friends, I lost my language, I 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.”

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"There are no rules except the ones I make."
—Lila Bovenzi ’22

I saw that its wings were stuck between my teeth
Still soft, still alive, they put a sparkle in my eye,
Now each word I speak shall rise up into space
They fluttered with the exhale of my breath,
Casting spells with each painful new note.
Came hammering up through my throat.
So I made sure to clamp my mouth shut.
That I’ve planted the sky with new scars.
A song or a scream, I couldn’t tell which,
Which I saw when I peered even nearer.
(My Addiction To Eating Swallowtails)
When I leaned in to look in the mirror.
Until at last it burns up with the stars.
When my lips once more parted,
But a rumbling began in my gut.
For I knew I was gifted that day.
My voice gleamed with agony,
And gravity lifted away.
I did grin; I rejoiced
At last, I did laugh,

"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

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."

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, discerrtement, and concision, critical thinking and analysis, and, of course, honing of writing and memorization skills—the course rewards in other ways both profound and endearing, 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 re-allocates 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."
The Other Novel

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 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 pursue 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 Shaneen Stepanoff’s 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 connecting to poetry. He took first place in a recitation competition in Jones’ class for his rendition of William Blake’s “Mad Song.”

“A poem is a form of self-expression that arises when a chord has been struck within.”
—Shaneen Stepanoff

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

“T. S. Eliot’s poem ‘The Waste Land’ is 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 left me at my lowest point, and has inspired my personal work.

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.

AFUA ANSIONG, 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

A 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.

For me, poetry is utterly indispensable. I find wrestling meaning out of words is exhilarating.
—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.”
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.”

“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

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.

or 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 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.
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. “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 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.”

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 nurses—

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.

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 home environment, “I say, 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 nurses—

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,
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 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 Wasneechak '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 Wasneechak, 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 handmaiden of the physicians," says Wasneechak. 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," Entroling 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 skills, 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, Wasneechak now oversees global quality with 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 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?’"

By 1990, only 11 percent of nurses were people of color, compared to some 30 percent of the population—the result of cross-cultural exchange between the two communities. When Holter became dean from 1983 to 1988, it was during this time, the school 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.

During this time, the school expanded its reach internationally, as well. 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. She visited the country as a Fulbright scholar. 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.

URI has been so important for Norway, she asks, that 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.”
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 in 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 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.

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.

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 prematurity 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 Mercier 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, has researched and written two books on the experience of nurses serving in and returning from war zones in Iraq and Afghanistan.

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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 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.”

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

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.

“In 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 the same 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.”

—Colin Burns ’14, D.N.P. ’19

In Rhode Island, nurses have been particularly susceptible. “We’ve really 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 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 Lifepoint, the state’s largest medical organization, which manages Rhode Island Hospital and has set up a 606-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.

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.

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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.
Network

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 Collections at CCRI and a member of the Rhode Island Music Hall of Fame, has co-authored a new book: In Harmony: Early Vocal Collections at CCRI.

1963
Julien P. Ayotte ’63, M.B.A. ’69 published his seventh novel in 2021. His novel, "Going After Feta," a travelog 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.

1964
Raymond Acciaro Sr. was nominated to Marquis Who's Who® for his dedication to the fields of business, education, and law. Acciaro 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 bragging, I still feel there's gas left in the tank. I hope someday—during my lifetime—to return to my alma mater and celebrate where it all began!

1966
Roberta Mudge Humble ’68, M.A. ’71 is a retired Commu- nity College of Rhode Island professor and is president of Westernly 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 westernlyarmory.com.

1968
Larry Grimaldi of North Providence, R.I., has released 50 Shades of Life, Love, and Laughter: Reflections on Gratitude, Joy, Uri's Oddities... and a few Complaints! Published by Stillwater River Publi- cations 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.

1969
Paula Viau, see page 38

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Larry Davey writes, "Since URI, I have lived in Manassas, Louisiana, St. Thomas, and Massachusetts. A wide variety of work includ- ing 25 years teaching science, made it to retirement! In 1997 he published Going After Feta, a travelog 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.

1975
Kristen Swanson, see page 39

1976
Patsie McCandless Humble ’75, M.A. ’77, see page 27

1977
Charles Margeson, see page 27

1978
Debra Cola, see page 27

1980
Kathy McKeel Faella, see page 27 and back cover

1981
Patsie McCandless Humble ’75, M.A. ’77, see page 27

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Diane Healey Dexter, see page 37

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Kathy McKeel Faella, see page 27 and back cover

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Patsie McCandless Humble ’75, M.A. ’77, see page 27

2002
Charles Margeson, see page 27

2003
Kathy McKeel Faella, see page 27 and back cover

2004
Patsie McCandless Humble ’75, M.A. ’77, see page 27

2005
Charles Margeson, see page 27

2006
Kathy McKeel Faella, see page 27 and back cover

2007
Patsie McCandless Humble ’75, M.A. ’77, see page 27

2008
Charles Margeson, see page 27

2009
Kathy McKeel Faella, see page 27 and back cover

2010
Patsie McCandless Humble ’75, M.A. ’77, see page 27

2011
Charles Margeson, see page 27
2004

Kelly (Nelligan) Lockwood
Primus, formerly the CEO and
president of Leading Women,
has been appointed to CEO of
Leading NOW, the national
guiding organization and the
epicenter of new knowledge
for changing mindsets, behav-
ior, and cultures to be inclu-
sive 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).

1995

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

1986

Bob Marcacci wrote
and published his book, You
Exhaust Me: A Clueless Guy’s
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 Holte,
M.S., ’87, Ph.D. ’93, see page 40

1988

Raymond Riley writes, “Proud
to have my personal essay
’Spoise in the House,’ a win-
ning 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 lock-
down, 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
WURL. 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 maturering mannered voice.”

1989

Daniel Wannechak ’89, M.S.
’93, see page 40

1990

Peter D. Anderson ’90,
Pharm.D. ’99 was promoted
to Lieutenant Colonel, Medical
Service Corps, United States
Army Reserve.

1991

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

1995

María Ducharme, M.S. ’95
(Intensive Care 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 pro-
moted a nurse to its highest
leadership position.

1996

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

1997

Laitan Siliast Mustapha, see
page 42

1998

Kate Barrington, M.B.A. ’98,
see page 53

1999

Katie (Walsh) Holtemann has joined Legacy Healthcare
Services as their senior director of
clinical programming. Kate
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 program-
ing and education related to
rehab for providers of physical
theraphy, occupational therapy,
speech-language pathology,
and wellness services across
350 assisted living and skilled
nursing facilities in 23 states.

2000

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

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.

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 Bar-
rington, R.I. He studied kinesi-
ology at URI and got his start
acting with URI Theatre—his
first role wasAbram 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.

2005

Dave Hudson (URI B.S. Marine
Biology 2005, UCern 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 explo-
ration. He has also been a Fu-
bright 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 Petrelli,
see page 5

2016

Col. Stephen Falcone received
the prestigious AFCEA Interna-
tional’s Distinguished Award
for Excellence in Engineering
for “an illustrious career of ser-
tific achievement.” Col. Falcone
recently retired as the Execu-
tive officer (PEO) digital direc-
tor of engineering for the Air
Force’s Life Cycle Management
Center at Hanscom Airforce
Base in Massachusetts.

2017

2019

2019

2020

2021
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 ’73
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, 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.

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—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

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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 alumna 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.

Submit entries by May 15, 2021

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.

= CAPTION THIS =

Photo Caption Contest

URIMAG@URI.EDU

PHOTOS: COURTESY URI DIGITAL ARCHIVES

Network
= 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.*