

UNIVERSITY OF

RHODE ISLAND

FALL 2021

MAGAZINE

DAVID CIPOLETTA '14, M.S. '19,

IS A BORN ENGINEER—

A TECHIE WHO GETS

THINGS DONE. WITH

HIS STARTUP, PISON,

HE'S DESIGNING

REVOLUTIONARY

GESTURE-CONTROL AND

BRAIN WAVE-CONTROL

TECH TO HELP THE

U.S. MILITARY, PEOPLE WITH

ALS, AND EVERYDAY

DEVICE USERS.

Aperture

"OUROBOROS OF THE SELF"

Kevin Gilmore '99 is an instructor in URI's Department of Art and Art History. He calls this self-portrait "a glimpse into my process—a collage, a stage, a cycle."

Gilmore says, "The seated figure next to the books (including my URI undergrad art history book) is the thinker, seer, listener, critic. The middle figure is the visual artist and professor—the studio stool is commonly used to teach positive/negative space. The crouched figure is the sound-maker, the performer."

"My role as a teacher," Gilmore says, "is to help each student discover their own creative voice and find ways to link it to real-world situations." At URI, his classes are filled with students from various disciplines, which, he says, "challenges me to learn about each student and change my approach to help each one find their artistic voice."

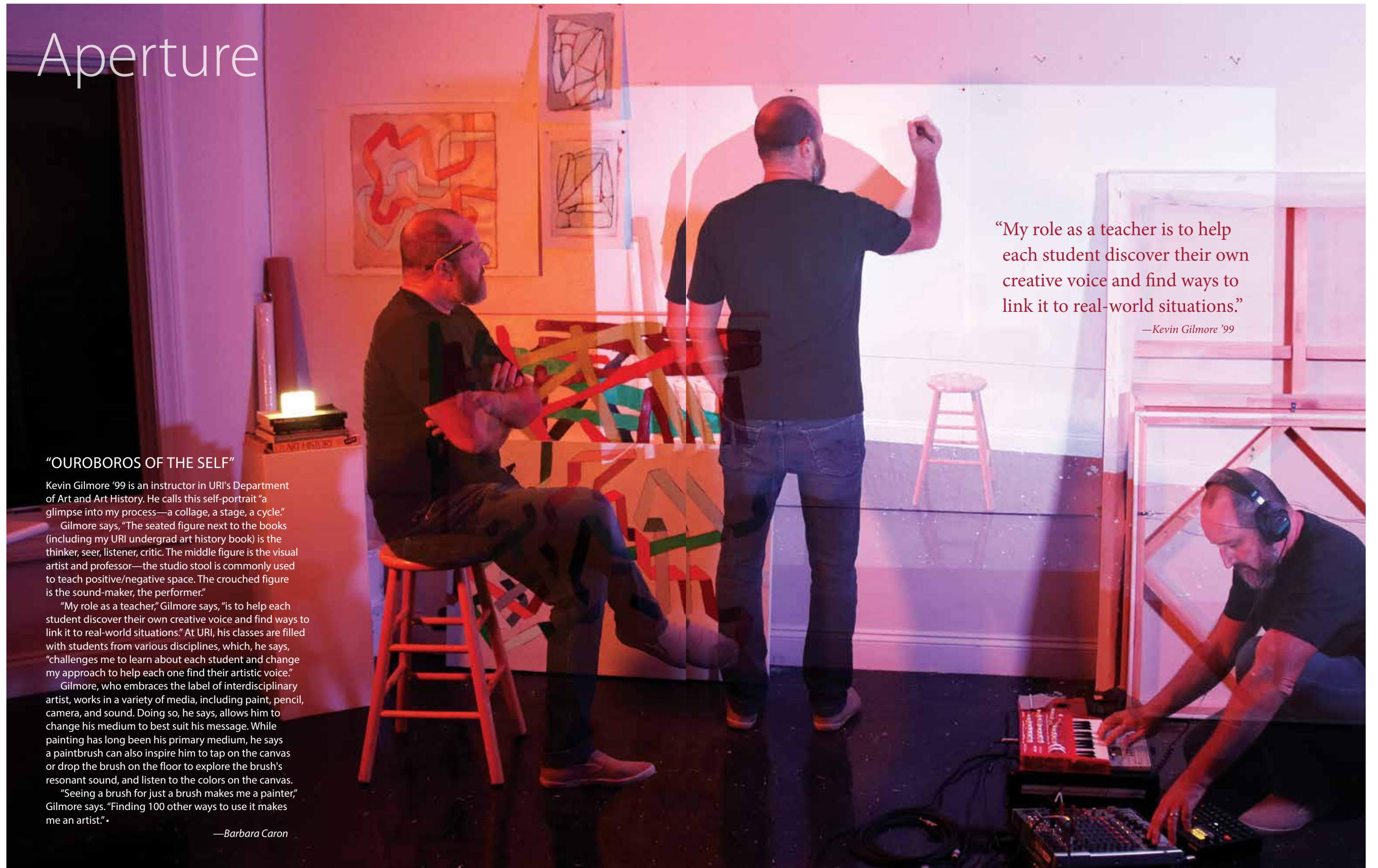
Gilmore, who embraces the label of interdisciplinary artist, works in a variety of media, including paint, pencil, camera, and sound. Doing so, he says, allows him to change his medium to best suit his message. While painting has long been his primary medium, he says a paintbrush can also inspire him to tap on the canvas or drop the brush on the floor to explore the brush's resonant sound, and listen to the colors on the canvas.

"Seeing a brush for just a brush makes me a painter," Gilmore says. "Finding 100 other ways to use it makes me an artist." •

—Barbara Caron

"My role as a teacher is to help each student discover their own creative voice and find ways to link it to real-world situations."

—Kevin Gilmore '99





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Left, winter on the Quad.



Mary Parlange and President Marc B. Parlange

Hello, URI Alumni!

My wife, Mary, and I are energized and enthusiastic as we begin the 2021–22 academic year, our first at URI. We’ve been getting to know the remarkable extended URI community, attending college retreats, music performances, sports events, and the Honors Colloquium; welcoming students and families; and meeting our government partners and our phenomenal faculty, staff, and alumni.

These occasions have led to rich conversations about developing a renewed, shared vision for URI and strengthening our contributions as the state’s flagship university. In the coming months, I look forward to advancing these conversations and to developing a university plan for URI’s future that will build on our distinct assets, reaffirm our commitment to accessible, affordable, and innovative education; rigorous and consequential research; social justice; and a diverse and inclusive community of learners. Among our areas of focus will be enhancing academic excellence by recruiting and supporting our faculty, exploring opportunities to add more graduate and Ph.D. program offerings, and expanding our strategic partnerships locally and globally.

Having been born right here in the Ocean State, I appreciate the distinct and substantial opportunities our location affords us to study such complex and

pressing issues as climate change and environmental sustainability. I envision stronger collaborations with universities, institutes, companies, and NGOs along the Eastern Seaboard to examine how we might preserve and protect the region’s natural resources while also nurturing the state’s potential as a hub for a thriving blue—and green—economy.

Supporting student success and cultivating a safe, vibrant, and inclusive community is fundamental to our mission. This has taken on new meaning in the midst of a pandemic. I met many first-year students on move-in weekend and witnessed firsthand their excitement and optimism about a return to in-person instruction. This is a resilient and fearless generation of students, and I look forward to enhancing their experience at URI with new opportunities for experiential learning, such as the creation of lab spaces on campus that allow budding entrepreneurs to test their ideas. Some students have already taken me up on my invitation to join me on my morning runs, and we’ve had productive exchanges about how the University’s administration, faculty, and staff can support transformational initiatives that enable our students to execute their big ideas.

Finally, I have been so impressed with the level of interest and involvement

Rhody alumni exhibit for their alma mater, and I think you’ll find many points of pride in this issue of the magazine. In “The Night Charlie Lee Made History,” we profile Rhody basketball player Charlie Lee, the first Black player to participate in a college basketball game in the state of Georgia. In our cover story, “Mind Over Matter,” you’ll read about how David Cipoletta ’14, M.S. ’19, and his company, Pison, are creating devices that enable people to control robots and computers using brain waves. Meet some of URI’s Graduate School of Library and Information Studies alumni, who are using their positions—and voices—to create informed communities and to advocate for social justice in “Librarians. Out Loud.”

We have much to celebrate and more to do. I am honored and inspired to begin this journey with you.

Marc Parlange

Marc B. Parlange
President, University of Rhode Island

“This is a resilient and fearless generation of students.”

—Marc B. Parlange



SEPTEMBER SCENES

Above left, Marc and Mary Parlange rolled up their sleeves on move-in day, greeting students and families, unloading cars, and carrying boxes. Above right, President Parlange met with URI Professor of Engineering Arun Shukla, U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Lorin Selby, and U.S. Sen. Jack Reed (R.I.) in Professor Shukla’s Dynamic Photomechanics Laboratory in Kirk Applied Engineering Lab. Below, a group of students joined President Parlange for a morning run on the Kingston Campus.



Feedback

We welcome and encourage letters to the editor.
Write to us: urimag@uri.edu
Visit us and comment online at uri.edu/magazine

Gratitude for ROTC Training

Well written article (“Leaders in Training,” summer 2021). I was a 1965 Distinguished Military Graduate and chose infantry in Hawaii with the 25th Division. I attribute my survival as a 2nd Lt. platoon leader fighting North Vietnamese Army regulars in the Central Highlands of the Republic of Vietnam to my ROTC training at URI. Proud to have served with volunteer Hawaiian soldiers led by heroic noncommissioned officers. And we were young.

—Capt. Peter C. Ewing ’65

Staying Connected

URI Magazine is my favorite piece of mail to receive. The images and stories are captivating, and I love how connected I still feel hundreds of miles and several years after graduating. Can't wait for the next edition!

—Gina Sloman ’13

Making a Difference for Students

Reading “The Justice League of Education” (summer 2021) brought back great memories and shows how academic and personal advising, student organization participation, and caring faculty all make a difference in the lives of our students. Excellent article.

—Tom Dougan, longtime URI vice president of student affairs (retired, 2016)

Toxic Critical Race Theory

Equity? Social justice? “Justice League of Education”? (summer 2021) More duplicitous code words for the divisive Marxist Critical Race Theory that is tearing this country apart. Indeed, academia, business, government, big-tech, and the media are bending over backwards to pander to the corrosive, nonempowering agenda of victimology. These reeducation efforts are beginning to rival those of Communist China.

—Kendall Svengalis, M.L.S. ’75



Galilee Glow? Nope. That’s Jerusalem.

You, Rhody readers, are on your toes! Us? Not so much, it seems. The photo by Rich Epstein ’91 (summer 2021), which we titled, “Galilee Glow,” was from the vantage point of Galilee, but actually shows the sunset over the village of Jerusalem, which is across the breachway from Galilee. Our apologies—especially to Rich Epstein—and thanks to our readers for clarifying this.

I have been thoroughly enjoying all the articles in the summer 2021 issue of URI Magazine! However, I would like to make a correction. The photo on pages 54–55 is actually a picture of Jerusalem, in South Kingstown (not Galilee, and not Narragansett, as the caption said). Only the rocks in the lower left corner are actually in Galilee.

—Judy Everett ’72

The caption is misleading. Although the picture was taken from the vantage point of Galilee, the actual view shown is of the village of Jerusalem, on the opposite side of the breachway.

—Walter T. Burrows III ’76

I was doing a final read of the summer 2021 issue of the *University of Rhode Island Magazine* when the photo on pages 54–55 gave me pause: Is that Galilee, or is it Jerusalem, located on the west side of the breachway? Thank you for a great publication!

—Scott Massoni ’81

FEEDBACK GUIDELINES

University of Rhode Island Magazine welcomes letters to the editor addressing topics covered in the magazine. We do not publish letters containing obscenities, potentially libelous statements, personal attacks, or known false statements. All letters must be signed. Letters may be edited for style, grammar, typographical errors, content, and length. The submission of a letter to the editor does not guarantee its publication. Views expressed by readers in the Feedback section are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the University of Rhode Island or *University of Rhode Island Magazine*. Please send letters via email to urimag@uri.edu.

From the Editor

If you’ve read *The Midnight Library* by Matt Haig, or if you’re intrigued by the idea of the multiverse and parallel universes, you may have pondered the question of whether there’s a parallel you, living life on a slightly different trajectory in a parallel universe. I’ve pondered that idea endlessly. And in one of my lives, I’m sure that I’m a librarian.

Librarians, said novelist Anthony Doerr in a recent *CBS Sunday Morning* interview, are “the caretakers of human knowledge.” That’s why Doerr, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *All the Light We Cannot See*, dedicated his new book, *Cloud Cuckoo Land*, to librarians.

In our feature story about URI’s alumni librarians (page 26), assistant professor of library and information science Mary Moen, M.L.I.S. ’03, Ph.D. ’15, says, “Librarians are unsung heroes. The stereotype that persists is that we’re just the keepers of the books. We’re so much more.”

Doerr would agree. Librarians are keepers, shapers, and caretakers of human knowledge, culture, history, and social consciousness. They are also truth-seekers and fact-seekers. Contrast librarians with another keeper and curator of the culture—social media—which gives users content they will click on, with truth being, at best, a secondary concern, and the importance of librarians shows up in stark relief.

I hope you are inspired by our URI librarians, as well as by student Tyrone Thomas (page 11) whose podcast aims to resurrect the lost arts of listening and civil conversation, and Tim Rosaforte ’77 (page 40), who forged an outrageously successful golf journalism career by leading with integrity and trustworthiness. In this issue, you’ll meet many other equally admirable and inspiring members of the URI community.

We have a lot to be proud of.

—Barbara Caron, Editor-in-Chief



Thank you to Mr. Kraft!

Editor’s note: In October, Patriots owner Robert Kraft surprised the URI football team with a lift to its game against Towson in the Patriots plane. Wide receivers Paul Woods (#10, junior) and Ivory Frimpong (#84, senior) show their team’s excitement on the tarmac at T.F. Green Airport in Warwick, R.I.



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FALL 2021 FEATURE WRITERS

T.J. Auclair graduated from URI in 2002. He has covered professional golf since then, traveling to more than 70 major championships, spending 13 years at Turner Sports as a writer for PGA.com. Currently, he is director of content for *The Caddie Network*.

Michael Blanding has written for *The New York Times*, *WIRED*, *Slate*, and *The Boston Globe*. His book *North by Shakespeare: A Rogue Scholar’s Quest for the Truth Behind the Bard’s Work* recently won the International Book Award for narrative nonfiction.

Bob Herzog retired in 2018 after a 46-year career as a sports journalist. He was an award-winning sportswriter and sports editor at *Newsday* from 1976 until his retirement. He has been teaching sports writing at URI since 2019.

Marybeth Reilly-McGreen is a URI content strategist and frequent contributor to *URI Magazine*. An award-winning writer, she has profiled Dr. Anthony Fauci; poet laureate Billy Collins; Peabody Award-winners Christiane Amanpour ’83, Hon. ’95, and Vlad Duthiers ’91, Hon. ’17; Pulitzer Prize-winner Thomas Farragher ’73, Hon. ’17; and Tony Award-winner Andrew Burnap ’13.

Diane M. Sterrett has been writing in nearly every medium for more than 35 years. Her passion is learning and writing about the ocean, the environment, health care, and education. Based in Tiverton, R.I., when not writing, she can be found sailing Narragansett Bay and beyond.

Currents

= IN BRIEF =

Murals, Old and New

The 1950s-era murals that hung in the Memorial Union depicted a University of Rhode Island that, though accurate to the times during which it was painted and to what enrollment at URI looked like more than six decades ago, looked very different than it does today.

Painted by the late Dr. Arthur Sherman '50—a combat medic in World War II who came to URI on the GI Bill and later served as a coach and taught at URI—the murals depict commencement, marching band, class reunion, and day at the beach scenes featuring mostly white male students. After some questions about the lack of diversity represented, the murals were covered and protected while the issue was looked at more closely.

After months of discussion, meetings, and widely sought-after input from the URI



Memorial Union mural

community and alumni, the Memorial Union Advisory Committee presented its recommendations on the issue, which have been adopted by the University leadership.

The original murals will be preserved and will be displayed, as part of a broader building renovation project. New to the display will be some contextual language about Sherman's service to the country, the University, and the community,

as well as the intent of the murals and the era in which they were created.

And, taking advantage of what the committee identified as a unique opportunity to support reflection on today's diverse URI community, a new installation will be commissioned expressing contemporary campus life. The new mural will be done as part of the major Memorial Union renovations slated to begin in 2022.

Floating a New Idea

Typical offshore wind turbines, like those constructed off Block Island, Rhode Island, have fixed foundations built into the seafloor. Because of that, they are not economical to build in water more than 200 feet deep. A new system of floating turbines is now in development that would allow for electricity generation in deeper water farther offshore where winds are more favorable and where conflict with other ocean users would be reduced.

To optimize the operation of floating offshore wind turbines, a team of University of Rhode Island engineers—along with colleagues at the University of Maine—has been awarded a \$1.245 million grant by the Department of Energy to model and test a system for controlling the motion of the floating structures.

According to Stephan Grilli, the URI professor of ocean engineering who leads the project, the irregularities of ocean waves and other marine factors are major challenges to the development of commercial-scale floating wind turbines. Their operation can lead to unpredictable forces on the structure, leading to fatigue and reduced operational life.

Optimizing control of the turbines requires a method of anticipating the movement of the floating structures, and that requires real-time information about approaching waves. "No one is using that information yet; they just use the past movement of the float," Grilli said. "We've worked for 10 years on sensing ocean waves using a remote sensing method, so we can acquire a lot of information on the position of approaching waves almost instantaneously."

= NEWS TICKER =

NEW ENGINEERING DEAN
Anthony J. Marchese has been named dean of the College of Engineering. Marchese comes to URI from Colorado State University and is expected to begin his duties Jan. 1, 2022.

GSO SHIP NAMED
After a nationwide competition, the National Science Foundation's \$125 million research vessel, which will be based at URI's Bay Campus, has been named *Narragansett Dawn*.

OYSTER RESEARCH
URI scientists have taken the first steps toward understanding the function of oyster microbes, which may have implications for oyster health and the management of oyster reefs.

TOP OF THE CHART
URI classical guitar professor Adam Levin topped Billboard's Traditional Classical Album charts twice this year. His album with Israeli mandolinist Jacob Reuven reached No. 1 in June, and his solo album hit the top spot in September.

DOLLARS AND SENSE
The new Rhody Financial Education Center, supported by the Westerly (R.I.) Community Credit Union, offers students online tools for personal budgeting, building credit, saving, investing, and more.

= WHY I TEACH = The Everyday Philosopher

Assistant Professor of Philosophy Douglass Reed



For assistant professor Douglass Reed '04, philosophy goes beyond reading Plato's *Symposium* or discussing Socratic virtue in a classroom. Instead, Reed sees philosophy as something that can be, and often is, done every day. And that's how he teaches it. "I think we, as humans, are always kind of doing philosophy," he says. "Philosophy comes down to asking human questions, explaining our own answers to those questions, and listening to and scrutinizing other people's answers to those same questions."

For Reed, philosophy is about being curious and questioning long-held—or even short-held—beliefs and asking the question: Why?

Reed teaches a variety of courses, one of which, Philosophy 110G: Love and Sex (PHL110G), aims to make the field relevant to students by linking it to two

very relatable human experiences. "It's not always clear to students how philosophy relates to their lives. You hear all these great names, these great thinkers, and you might think, 'Why should I care about that?'" Reed says. "A lot of times, students will be able to see the connections to their own experiences, and this class draws on their own personal experiences, which is really cool."

Olivia Belitsos '23, a double major in psychology and criminology and criminal justice with a minor in gender and women's studies, took PHL110G-Honors with Reed as a first-year student and wound up tackling on philosophy as a third major because she enjoyed the way Reed taught it.

"It was really engaging," Belitsos says. "Coming into college, topics like love and sex are a part of everybody's lives, so it was really relevant. It's unique material and the way he approached it was thoughtful and captivating."

In the course, Reed encourages students to pose questions like, "Does love at first sight exist?" and "What (if anything) is the value of marriage?" and then grapple with either side of the argument. "The answers to these questions are not straightforward, uncontested," he says. "These kinds of questions are part of our everyday lives, and I hope that philosophy can help us think about them, and other questions, in a more self-conscious way."

Belitsos says Reed is succeeding in this goal. "Instead of just teaching us about philosophy, he helps us engage in it," she says. "I would 100 percent encourage students to take a class with Professor Reed, because he is a phenomenal teacher, and he takes philosophy from being an unapproachable topic to something that everyone can do." •

—Grace Kelly

= BIG IDEAS. BOLD PLANS. =

A Bigger, Bolder Vision for URI's Future

In October, the University announced that it would raise the goal of *Big Ideas. Bold Plans.*

The Campaign for the University of Rhode Island from \$250 million to \$300 million.

The enthusiasm and generosity demonstrated by the URI community—alumni, families, friends, corporations, and foundations—have driven the campaign over \$218 million, just over a year after its public launch. This momentum, combined with the vision of President Marc B. Parlange, will allow the campaign to do more for the University's strategic growth in the years ahead.



Brenton DeBoef, dean of the URI Graduate School

The student access pillar of the campaign has received transformative and generous support, making a URI education a reality for some of our most hardworking and talented students. This area of the campaign also provides an opportunity to bring much-needed focus to graduate students. Their work can be some of the most innovative, with meaningful applications in academic and professional fields. Graduate fellowships provide financial aid and research funding for students pursuing advanced degrees and cutting-edge ideas. They are a crucial deciding factor for the top applicants when it comes to choosing URI. Graduate student research often brings prestige and positive coverage for the University, as well.

This year, Professor Brenton DeBoef was named dean of the URI Graduate School. DeBoef has earned numerous honors, including an early career award from the National Science Foundation, the Pfizer Green Chemistry Award,

and research and teaching excellence awards from the URI Foundation & Alumni Engagement (URIFAE).

DeBoef is working to attract top applicants across all disciplines, and to position them for success at URI and beyond—students like Nick DaSilva '14, Ph.D. '19, who credits the University's fertile research environment as a key factor for his and his partners' decision to launch their new drug development company, Alcinous Pharmaceuticals. In the area of the humanities, A. H. Jerriod Avant is pursuing his Ph.D. in English to better understand familial grief, its impact on the poetry he writes, and how such deep emotions can connect people.

URIFAE will be working closely with DeBoef and University leadership to take URI's graduate programs to the next level through fellowships that will help brilliant emerging scholars bring their biggest ideas to life. •

—Austen Farrell



= QUAD ANGLES =

Resurrecting the Art of Respectful Conversation

These days, there are plenty of topics that can lead to angry disagreement. Can respectful conversation and real listening change the tone of contemporary discourse? The *Good Faith Idea Exchange* podcast says, "Absolutely."

By Tyrone Thomas '22

It started last year, in 2020, such a crazy year for so many of us. COVID. Ahmaud Arbery. George Floyd. And that's just the tip of the iceberg. I had my own thoughts about what I was seeing on the news and social media. And for the first time in as long as I can remember, I saw people actually reaching out; even across social media I heard people having the difficult conversations and listening—really listening—to each other.

It lasted for a while, but then went away.

I wanted that back. I wanted to talk about the difficult conversations again, and for people to listen to different opinions once more. That was how the *Good Faith Idea Exchange* was born.

Good Faith Idea Exchange is a podcast I launched to create an environment where people with differing views on politics, justice, race, or most any other timely topic could express their viewpoints and exchange ideas without the rudeness or judgment often seen on cable news or heard on the radio.

I've noticed that the past 20 years of cable news networks and 12 years of social media dominance have fostered a culture of rudeness and ignorance—a culture of people "debating" by interrupting each other, talking over one another, not communicating to arrive at a better under-

standing, but to "win" the debate at all costs.

The *Good Faith Idea Exchange* isn't about winning, but rather about thinking.

In episode one of the podcast, I had a talk with an old friend from the military. He and I don't see things the same politically. Yet we had a thoughtful, mature conversation where we each made our points while listening to the other without name-calling, yelling, or dismissing other perspectives.

I also interview people who are making a positive impact in our communities, such as Tory Kern '15, M.S. '17—the manager of a youth street outreach team at House of Hope, an agency devoted to fighting homelessness—whom I interviewed in episode two.

In episode seven, I spoke with Rich Norris '09, whose family escaped civil war in Liberia. A URI graduate, he is currently an assistant principal of the 360 High School in Providence where he advocates for young people and has many initiatives to help at-risk youths succeed. We had an honest talk about the education system and community involvement in these uncertain times.

I never would have imagined this podcast would gain such popularity so quickly. It has only inspired me to keep going and do more.

Above all else, the *Good Faith Idea Exchange* delivers a message of fellowship, of communion, with an audience from all walks of life. No matter what listeners' backgrounds may be, no matter the shape of their paradigm, they gain content and information that forces them to take a step back and examine the validity of their beliefs. It is important for people to understand that any issue can be discussed, and perspectives shared in a comfortable, safe environment.

What began as a simple idea has taken on a life of its own.

If you have an idea that you think can make some kind of real impact in this world, I hope this will inspire you to pursue it, as I did. Don't just brush it off and move on. You never know where it may take you. •

Tyrone Thomas '22 is studying writing/rhetoric and education. He is a military veteran who is working on a post-apocalyptic thriller titled, Forged From Fire. Find Good Faith Idea Exchange at goodfaithideaexchange.com or on podcast platforms.

This story was originally published in the URI Feinstein College publication, *Educators & Innovators*, fall 2021 issue.



Fulbright scholar Meg Jones at URI's Gender and Sexuality Center. At URI, Jones has been active in the Graduate School's Diversity and Inclusion Badge Program and facilitated a session on "invisible" sexual orientations, specifically asexuality, bisexuality, and pansexuality. She's also participated in the University's Safe Zone Project, a training program that covers issues affecting the LGBTQ+ community and how best to be an ally.

PHOTO: NORA LEWIS; CHALKBOARD ARTISTS: KATIE RIEDY AND TAYLOR OLIVEIRA

= RHODY SCHOLARS =

Pushing the Boundaries of Inclusion

Doctoral student Meg Jones was awarded a Fulbright grant to study LGBTQ+ inclusive practices in teacher education programs in Finland. She hopes to put what she learns there to work at URI when she returns, to push inclusivity beyond the basic notion of acceptance.

When Meg Jones learned that Danielle Dennis, her major professor at the University of South Florida, was headed to Rhode Island to become director of URI's School of Education, she knew she had to go, too.

Now a URI doctoral student in education, Jones received a prestigious Fulbright grant to conduct research at the University of Helsinki in Finland on global approaches to LGBTQ+ inclusion in teacher preparation programs.

A focus on social justice

"Finland is idealized as having one of the best education systems in the world," says Jones. "Yet when surveyed, queer youths in Finland are facing similar rates of discrimination, mental health issues, and suicide ideation as queer youths in the United States.

"The University of Helsinki has a master's level teacher education program that is focused on social justice and changing education. I will be looking at what is happening in this program to help push the boundaries of what we think of as inclusion," says Jones. "It's such a unique teacher education program—and a unique educational and political system. There's a lot to be learned there."

Jones notes the importance of moving beyond acceptance. "These are integrated lives and cultures and experiences that should be normalized and represented. Not just because you might have queer students in your classroom—but for all students."

In Helsinki, Jones will collect research and work on her dissertation, but she also hopes to collaborate with her colleagues there to publish internationally. Ultimately, her hope is to return to URI and replicate the study.

A unique educational path

A nontraditional, first-generation college student, Jones initially dropped out of high school before obtaining her GED

certificate. After a couple of false starts, she obtained her bachelor's degree from the College of Central Florida and her master's degree at the University of South Florida in Tampa.

Dennis encouraged Jones to apply for the Fulbright. "I met Meg when she was a student in the University of South Florida Master of Arts in Reading Education program. Her ideas, and the way she conveyed them through her writing, stood out to me, so I encouraged her to consider a Ph.D. program. The path she took into higher education provides her with a unique perspective on education, and I believe the Fulbright will propel her work as an advocate for LGBTQ+ youths," says Dennis.

"I dropped out of high school; I dropped out of community college—not because of lack of academic ability. It was just life. It has been a bumpy road, but now I'm sitting here somehow as a doctoral student, I've received a Fulbright award," says Jones. "I'm certainly not a traditional applicant by Fulbright standards."

Giving back to URI

Jones feels strongly that what she learns in Finland can be put into action at URI.

"We are known for our Gender and Sexuality Center and for inclusiveness," she says. "I have felt very supported by the faculty; everybody seems interested in my work. Being a student here, doing this research, and also choosing to be out about my own sexuality and relationships—being unapologetic about it—has put my research on people's radar, and it's been embraced. Yet there is always more work to do and more to learn."

Now, says Jones, "I fully intend to come back to URI and say, 'OK, here's what I know'—to give back. I want URI to become a leader in the conversation And I want other schools in the states to come visit us because this is where it's happening."

—Dawn Bergantino '94

= MEDIA SPOTLIGHT =
You Can Quote Me

The creator of CholeraMap, a mobile app that warns people in developing countries about contaminated water sources, on the potential expanded use of similar apps:

“Just think: what if we had an app like this to alert the public in the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic? It would have helped the public understand high-risk regions, but also list recommendations on how to protect themselves.”

—Ali Shafqat Akanda, URI professor of engineering
The Boston Globe

The co-author of a recent survey about how the public views the legitimacy of Supreme Court decisions on how dissent impacts trust:

“Our research suggests that popular constitutionalists evaluate the court and interpret its actions quite differently than do legal traditionalists. For one group, a dissent is a troubling sign of politicization. For the other, it is a promising signal of representation.”

—Christopher M. Parker, URI assistant professor of political science
The Washington Post

On the impact of the University of Rhode Island on its students:

“(URI is positioned to) make a difference in the lives of so many people, to bring them to campus and watch them succeed, one student at a time.”

—Marc B. Parlange, president, University of Rhode Island
The Providence Journal

On his recently published study that detected PFAS chemicals in the air of kindergarten classrooms, university offices and laboratories, and at home:

“Our study shows that indoor air, including dust, is another source of exposure to potentially harmful forever chemicals. In fact, for children in homes or schools with old PFAS-treated carpets, inhalation may be even more important than dust as an exposure pathway.”

—Rainer Lohmann, URI professor of oceanography
SciTechDaily.com

On the rise of artificial intelligence in the agriculture industry, and concerns about the impact on biodiversity:

“Machines dramatically reduce the diversity of insect life, microbial life, and flora and fauna. That is farming and the agro-ecosystem and the entire cultivation process being shaped to meet the needs of the machine.”

—Patrick Baur, URI assistant professor of food innovation and policy
Wired

On the potential demise of the five-day workweek as the pandemic has employees considering how they can take back more of their time:

“Maybe the life I was leading that seemed inevitable, and never-changing, maybe I don’t want that. (It’s a kind of) spontaneous realization by millions of people that they could do better.”

—Erik Loomis, URI associate professor of labor and U.S. environmental history
Vox

The creator of hurricane forecasting models used by the National Hurricane Center, the U.S. Navy, and others, on how warmer ocean temperatures contribute to more intense hurricanes:

“Hurricanes draw energy from the ocean, and if the ocean temperature is higher, then hurricanes become more intense. We’re also seeing that hurricanes are intensifying more rapidly, going from a Category 1 to a Category 3 or 4 within a day or two.”

—Isaac Ginis, URI professor of oceanography
supercomputingonline.com



= RHODE TAKEN =
Called to Serve
THOMAS BONNEAU '21

Thomas Bonneau’s preferred pace? Lightspeed. Bonneau ’21 postponed college for a semester for Rhode Island Army National Guard basic training. But he graduated early by taking Winter J-Term and summer classes. This fall, he started URI’s one-year M.B.A. program and plans to go to medical school after that. As an undergraduate, Bonneau also started a nonprofit, America’s Recoverable Medical Supply (ARMS), which collects and repurposes medical supplies. Bonneau, a combat medic in the Rhode Island Army National Guard, says the idea for the nonprofit came to him while doing a routine inventory of medical supplies. “We had set aside hundreds of pounds of surplus supplies to be thrown away. We were just going to discard viable medical supplies, and it made me think, ‘This doesn’t seem right.’ “I brought it up with my chain of command. I asked if I could collect and donate the supplies to a local organization for humanitarian aid. They said, ‘Private, do whatever you want.’ That initial haul was several hundred pounds of medical supplies. Finding a local organization ready and able to receive the bounty proved harder than Bonneau imag-

ined. The closest organization willing to take the supplies was in Maine. “It’s actually a common thing in health care: Supplies are thrown away because of federal regulations, institutional protocols, or supply surplus,” Bonneau says. “I recognized the worldwide need for supplies. I also knew the environmental impact of health care in the U.S. One research article I read said that if health care in the U.S. were its own country, it would be seventh in carbon emissions. I knew something had to be done.” Bonneau’s garage is now filled with boxes of supplies—from simple catheters and blood transfusion kits to EKG machines. He and a couple of other URI students have collected 8,000 pounds of supplies thus far. Bonneau has built relationships with clinics and partners who redistribute the supplies to overseas organizations for clinical and educational purposes. Bonneau says the highlight of ARMS since its founding has been reallocating 3,000 pounds of respiratory supplies and personal protective equipment to India through a local third party to alleviate the COVID-19 crisis. Asked how he manages it all, Bonneau smiles. Basic training—which culminates

RHODE TO A DEGREE

Long-Term Goal
A career that combines philanthropy, entrepreneurship, medicine, and sustainability.

Research Experience and Funding
Bonneau was awarded a URI undergraduate research grant and used it to lead a small team in studying the environmental and humanitarian implications of recovering medical supplies.

Best Campus Study Spot
“I’m giving away my secret spot, but the end of the CBLS building wing has great views and a secluded area to work and study with friends.”

Best Campus Lunch Spot
“The Quad!”

Formative J-Term Class
“Ethical Problems in Society and Medicine (PHL314) encourages students to think critically about complicated moral topics and incorporate the diverse perspectives of others.”

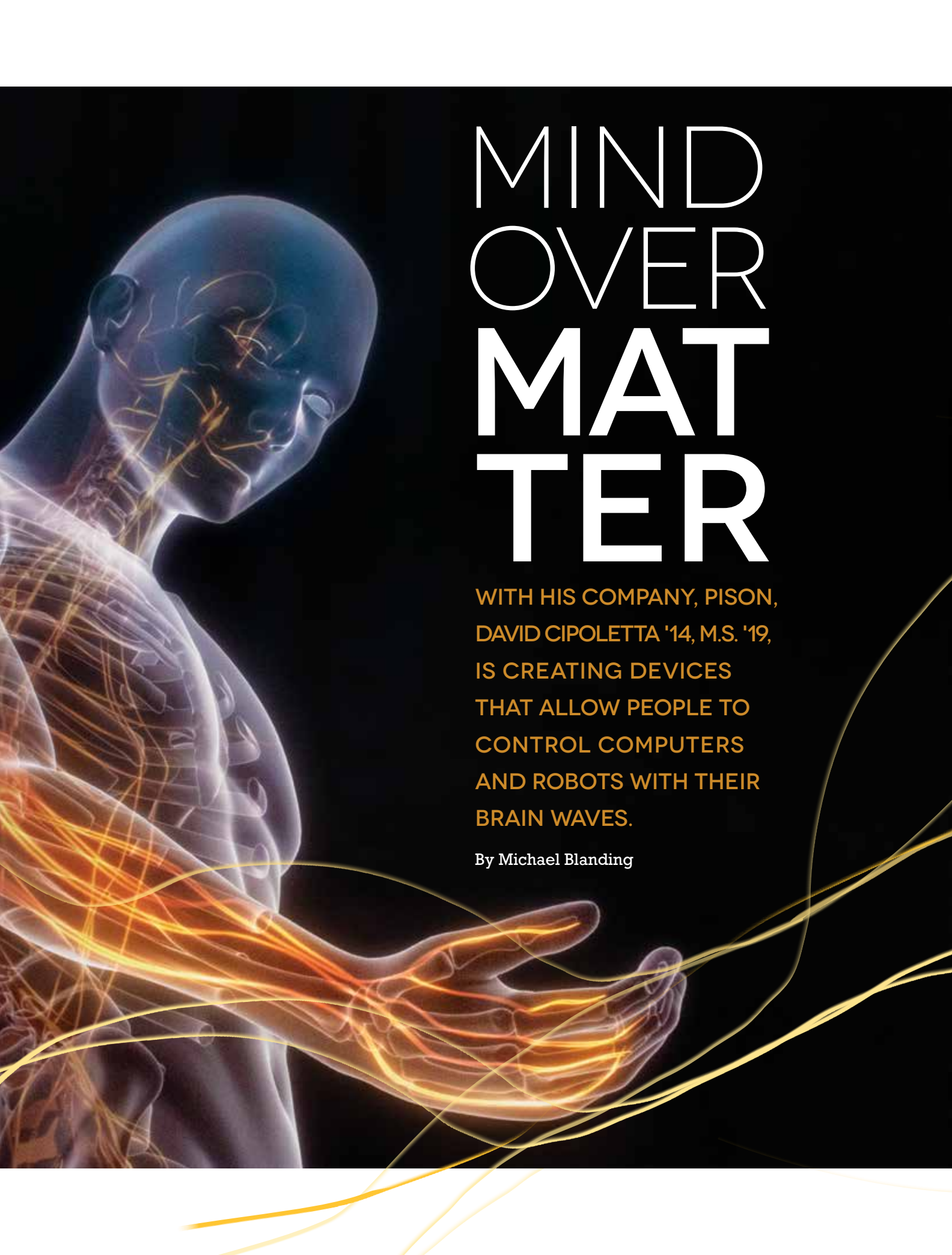
Scholarships
Rhode Island National Guard tuition waiver and URI one-year M.B.A. merit scholarship.

Favorite Professor
“College of Business marketing lecturer Scott Asadorian not only mentored me as I was starting my nonprofit, but also inspired me to find my guiding principles and mission.”

Words of Wisdom
“Make introspective reflection part of your everyday life. And ask yourself what your passion is and how you can use it to serve others.”

URI Degree
B.A. 2021, biology. M.B.A. in progress.

in a 12-mile run with a 50-pound rucksack on your back—alters your perspective on what you can do, he says, adding, “If I can do that, I can do this. “If you’re really passionate about something, you make it work,” Bonneau asserts. “I’ve been able to accomplish a decent amount at URI. And I haven’t had to sacrifice things like my grades to pursue nonprofit work. URI made it possible to combine my interests and to contribute to the common good.” •
—Marybeth Reilly-McGreen



MIND OVER MATTER

WITH HIS COMPANY, PISON, DAVID CIPOLETTA '14, M.S. '19, IS CREATING DEVICES THAT ALLOW PEOPLE TO CONTROL COMPUTERS AND ROBOTS WITH THEIR BRAIN WAVES.

By Michael Blanding

David Cipoletta '14, M.S. '19, sits in a conference room in a downtown Boston office with walls of exposed brick. Around his wrist is a black plastic device that looks like nothing so much as a Casio calculator watch from the 1980s. A grid of shiny electrodes on its underside, he explains, captures tiny electrical pulses on his wrist, responding to movements of his hand. "Every time you lift your finger, you can see the electrical activity changes," he says, pointing to red, orange, and green horizontal lines that jump up and down on his Android screen as he lifts his index finger up and down.

"Now, let's say I want to use a camera app to take a picture," he says, opening the app on the phone. "I can just swipe up." He lifts his finger up and down again, and the phone snaps a picture, as if by magic—but that's only the beginning of what he's able to do. With more gestures, he can switch to video or turn the flash on or off. "So then, how do I apply the same set of gestures to another function?" he continues, switching to a music app. "I can play, pause, raise the volume, and switch to the next song without touching the screen," Cipoletta says, moving his finger in various configurations as the app obediently responds to his gestures like a musician playing to a conductor's baton.

The device is the flagship product of Cipoletta's company, Pison, a startup that could one day revolutionize how we interact with the world around us—allowing us to control our environment with simple hand gestures. While controlling a camera and music player with a flick of the finger may seem like a cool trick, the company has more serious ambitions. Cipoletta founded it five years ago with Massachusetts Institute of Technology grad Dexter Ang to develop technology that might give independence to people with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), otherwise known as Lou Gehrig's disease, a progressive neurodegenerative disease that gradually leads to loss of control over the body's muscular system.

PHOTO: NORA LEWIS





Left, David Cipoletta '14, M.S. '19, co-founder and CEO of Pison, in Pison's Boston, Mass., offices.

A person with ALS could essentially just think of moving their finger, and the electrical pulses in their wrist could translate that intention into action, turning the page of an eBook or opening a webpage without any need for them to actually move their body. As the company has developed the technology, it has found other applications, including new tools for soldiers on the battlefield, for whom it could mean the difference between life and death.

Cipoletta began tinkering with electronics at a young age. He moved to the United States from China at age 12, along with his mother, who holds a doctorate in electrical engineering and got a job designing software for a video camera company. Growing up in Glocester, Rhode Island, Cipoletta was encouraged by his mother and stepfather (who also worked in technology) to explore his interests. Rather than explicitly teaching him, his parents challenged him to find answers to questions himself. "They always said, you are capable to do many things on your own." And they were right. By searching on internet forums, he taught himself to code in Pascal and began designing websites for pay when he was just 16.

While Cipoletta was still in high school, his mother got him an internship at her company doing data entry, removing duplicates in the database and sending emails to clients. Cipoletta wrote a script that allowed him to automate the work and complete it in just a few days. "They thought that was my whole summer," he says. "They said, 'We don't have work for you anymore.'" They transferred him to warehouse management, and again he created software to automate the task. "I was just very focused on how to do my job more effectively."

At URI, he continued to demonstrate

an exceptional work ethic, holding down simultaneous jobs for the school's computer department, at a private security camera company, and cleaning boats on weekends. "I just always wanted to work—it's fun for me," he says. Meanwhile, he rented a two-bedroom apartment, converting one bedroom into a workshop, complete with workbenches, electrical equipment, and 3D printers. "I just always loved tinkering with stuff and building things," he says. In his spare time, he built himself a working clock and experimented with smart plugs and home automation.

Cipoletta began at URI with two majors, electrical engineering and computer science. But due to a computer glitch, he discovered, to his delight, that he was able to pick up a third major, computer

engineering, as well. "My advisor was supposed to block me, but I was never blocked," he says with a mischievous grin. Cipoletta took summer classes to fulfill the requirements for all three majors—giving him a unique understanding of entire systems, from analog electrical signals to software applications. "I was interested in understanding how to make things work from beginning to end," he says. For his capstone project at URI, he created a fully automated system for a company conducting DNA sequencing, enabling technicians to check whether the sequencing had been completed correctly by measuring electrical properties in the resulting fluid and running it through a computer algorithm.

After earning his undergraduate degree, Cipoletta took a job with Cam-

Pison's flagship product, a device that uses electrodes to capture tiny electrical pulses on the wearer's wrist. The device could revolutionize how we interact with the world, allowing people to control their environment with a simple hand gesture, or even the intention of a gesture.



bridge, Massachusetts-based Charles River Analytics (CRA), designing underwater unmanned vehicles. "It was one of the hardest jobs I ever had," he says of the work, which involved piloting underwater robots from boats in Narragansett Bay and San Francisco Bay. "You've got a robot you cannot see or talk to; you just have to hope your algorithm works," he says. At the same time, he pursued a master's degree in electrical and electronics engineering at URI, taking five years to complete the degree. "It really helped me figure out how to solve complex problems," he says, "which helped me directly in my work." His master's thesis advisor, Professor Fred Vetter, remembers him as "one of the stronger students

other things, he wanted to create a way for his mother to independently turn a

page in an e-book. "There are a lot of problems a person

with ALS might have that we could fix," Ang says. "How does she call me when she wakes up and needs to get dressed? How does she open a book or click on a website? The digital world should not be limited by a person's physical capabilities."

Though his mother died in 2015, Ang continued to pursue the idea to help others. He honed in on the idea of using electrical pulses in the skin to help people with ALS perform tasks, essentially allowing them to control objects through brain signals. When Cipoletta's colleague mentioned his work to Ang at a fraternity reunion in early 2016, Ang called him right away to tell him about his idea. Two weeks later, Ang visited Cipoletta at his apartment, where Cipoletta had already built a working prototype for the idea, complete with electrical tape holding wires against the skin. "A lot of people in the world say they are going to do something, but do they actually do it? No," says Ang. "But he had done it. So, I understood right away that he both loves tech, and follows through on his word."

The two joined forces to create Pison (named after Ang's mother's cat, with Ang as chief executive officer and Cipoletta as chief technology officer. Along with a few other engineers, they first pitched the idea to MIT Sandbox, a student-innovation fund, which gave the team \$25,000 to pursue it. The following year, the ALS Association gave the company \$100,000 out of money raised from its famous Ice Bucket Challenge. Cipoletta and Ang

"DAVID IS PRAGMATIC; HE FOCUSES ON WHAT IS POSSIBLE AND WHAT ISN'T, ASKING, 'HOW ARE WE ACTUALLY GOING TO DO IT AND GET IT DONE?'"

—GIUSEPPE STUTO, INVESTOR AND FORMER PISON COO

I've ever worked with. He was so motivated and knowledgeable that I didn't need to 'advise' him much—I sort of stayed out of the way and let him make progress."

It was a class taught by Professor Kunal Mankodiya on wearable technologies that first led Cipoletta to explore devices that could help people with ALS. Initially, he was focused on creating eyeglasses that could help someone control a robotic arm using eye-tracking technology. Having difficulties with the project, however, he showed it to a colleague at CRA, who happened to be in a fraternity with Dexter Ang, an MIT mechanical engineer who was also exploring technology for ALS. Ten years earlier, Ang's mother had been diagnosed with the disease, and Ang quit his job in finance to return to MIT to explore assistive technologies. Among



Left, David Cipoletta demonstrates Pison's wrist device, using it to control a robot with wrist gestures.

worked well together. "Dexter is the quintessential visionary and dreamer who has that relentless desire to push boundaries," says Giuseppe Stuto, an early angel investor who met the duo in 2018, and later joined the company as chief operating officer. "David is pragmatic; he focuses on what is possible and what isn't, asking, 'How are we actually going to do it and get it done?'"

In the conference room at Pison, Cipoletta turns over the device on his wrist to reveal a grid of 16 small metal electrodes, which sit against the device wearer's wrist. As they move their fingers, pulses of electrical energy travel through their nerves as their muscles move. The device measures the difference in electrical potential between electrodes for each gesture. It then uses a machine learning algorithm to identify the unique electrical pattern for each movement to convert it into a specific action performed by a computer app or a robot.

The device works for people with ALS because their brains still send electrical signals through their nerves, even though the muscles don't respond, allowing the device to intercept them and hack them for its own purposes. "The muscle is almost like the output to a speaker, but it's the wire that is sending these pulses," says Cipoletta. "We're just trying to tap into the wire to identify these electrical signals, and then train them to perform a different output."

Cipoletta's unique background has helped him design the device's system

from beginning to end, including capturing the electric signals, digitizing them, and then translating them through software. Making the gestures perform actions, however, is not quite as simple as it sounds. To properly decode the signals, the device must filter out electromagnetic interference in buildings to isolate the relatively weaker signals from the body. In the case of ALS, it's even more difficult since the pulses are so much weaker compared to a person without ALS.

"Our origins are in ALS, so the quality of what goes into designing the device is better than if we had designed it for able-bodied individuals," says Tanya Wang '13, who met Cipoletta while working as a technician in the biomedical engineering lab at URI. "I would suggest that makes it better for all other applications as well." Wang took courses with Cipoletta while he was studying for his master's degree. On the first day of one class, they were competing neck-and-neck on an icebreaker

A PERSON COULD JUST THINK OF MOVING THEIR FINGER, AND THE ELECTRICAL PULSES IN THEIR WRIST COULD TRANSLATE THAT INTENTION INTO ACTION.

activity to see who could build the highest structure out of hard spaghetti strands, and he told her he was going to start his own company one day and hire her.

"In my mind, it was this crazy joke," she says. Nevertheless, he did hire her as an electrical engineer in 2016; her job now is to help design the schematics for



Left, Pison staffers at work in the company's Boston, Mass., offices.

the circuit board to fit all the technology for signal capture, processing, and shielding interference into a small watch-like space. "I really enjoy designing the circuits," she says. "It's like a puzzle to see how intricately I can fit things in."

While Pison was initially focused on developing a device to help people with ALS, Ang and Cipoletta quickly realized that the market for accessibility products wouldn't be big enough to make the company viable in the short-term. "A lot of venture capital companies and investors aren't interested in funding this disability access business because the market is too small," Cipoletta says. On the other hand, developing for the consumer market, for example, risked competition from bigger players, like Google, Microsoft, and even entrepreneur Elon Musk's startup, Neuralink. In searching for other markets, they hit upon one customer in urgent need of the technology, whom they could also serve exclusively—the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD).

"For the general public, this kind of thing is a 'nice-to-have,'" Cipoletta explains. That is, it'd be fun to be able to take a picture or change your music with the flick of a finger, but it's not a necessity. "For a soldier, it's a 'must-have.'" That's because a soldier in the battlefield is weighed down with heavy equipment—a pack, a radio, body armor. In an urban environment, however, they may face incoming fire from a building and need to point out to fellow soldiers where the enemy is shooting from. Typically, that means looking down at a device around their neck and trying to mark a target on a GPS map with a stylus. "A lot of times,

they are wearing gloves, and the stylus doesn't even work," Cipoletta says.

Making those situations even more perilous, looking down at their portable screens while marking the target, increases the chance that they may be shot by an enemy while they are preoccupied. By contrast, with a gesture control device, they could simply point at an enemy and automatically mark the location on a map through Bluetooth, show-

"FOR ME, THE GRATIFICATION COMES FROM HELPING PEOPLE, AND KNOWING THAT PEOPLE FIND A NEED FOR WHAT I MAKE."

—DAVID CIPOLETTA, CO-FOUNDER AND CEO OF PISON

ing their fellow soldiers where to fire without taking their eyes off the target.

Another application Pison is exploring is drone control. For example, at a checkpoint where a drone is used to investigate a suspicious vehicle, a soldier would typically need to look down at a remote to pilot the device. But if an enemy vehicle rammed through the checkpoint, it could take precious time for a soldier to react and bring a weapon to bear. "If you are able to control the drone by pointing, you are ready if something runs the roadblock and comes at you," Cipoletta says.

With this dual strategy of developing an immediate device for the military, as well as a longer-term goal of creating solutions for ALS, Pison was able to raise \$7 million in series-A funding this past spring, bringing its total funding to \$11 million. Even as it works on these ambitious twin goals, the company continues to explore other options, with ongoing

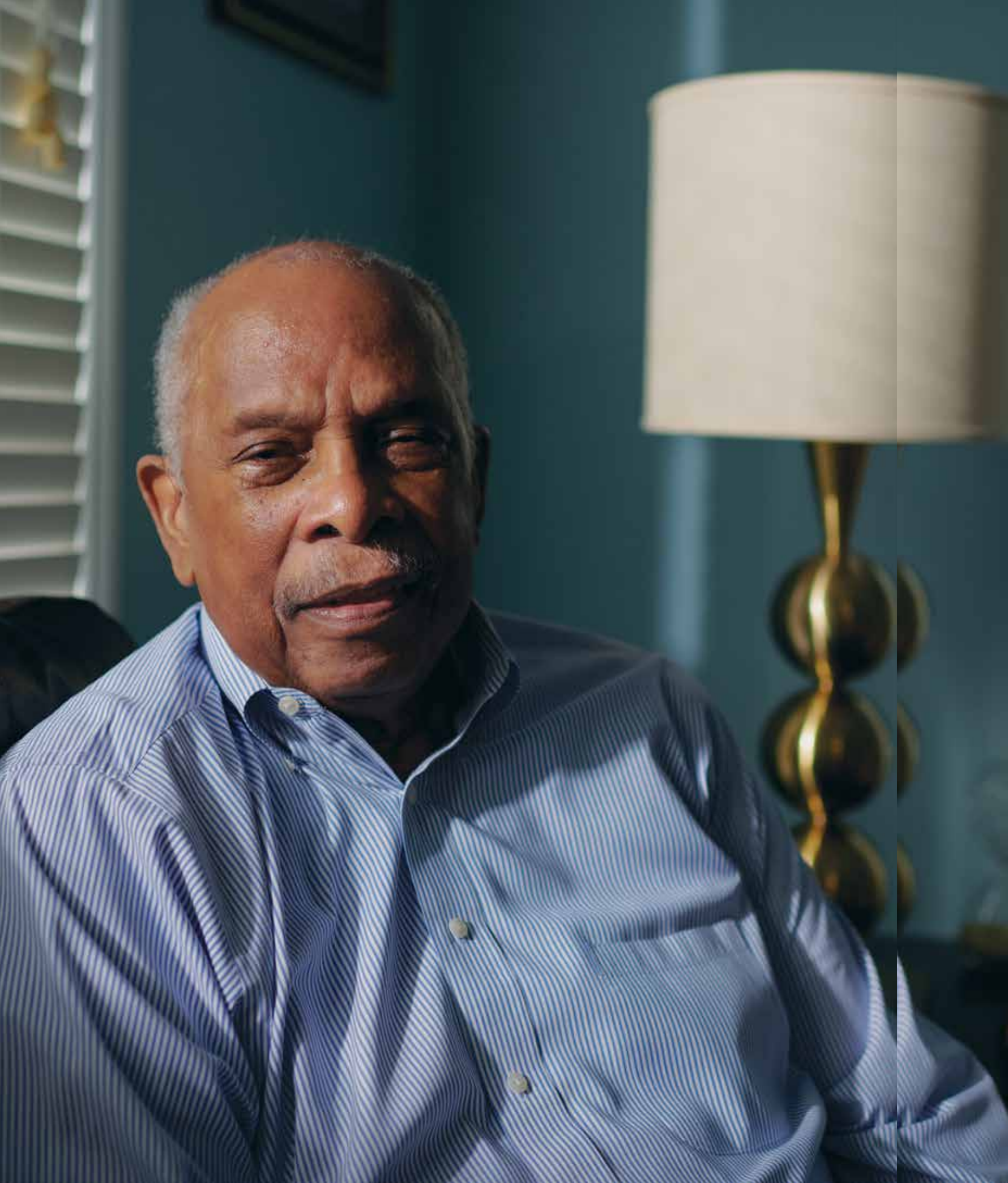
contracts with Google, Samsung, and Mitsubishi to create devices that might ultimately be used in home or business situations. Ultimately, its experience may allow it to compete with those bigger companies in the consumer space.

"A lot of these older equipment manufacturers take longer to develop a product because they're not really focused on the user today," says Stuto, who recently left Pison to launch his own venture capital firm. "A start-up doesn't have that liberty. It needs to be focused on real users." By creating a product today for the military, Pison hopes to gain valuable experience in designing a working product before any competitors. "The DOD space is a good environment for us to build up some cash and develop our technology before we go out to compete more broadly."

Recently, Ang stepped down as CEO to become chief innovation officer, interfacing with external partners to drum up

new business opportunities, while Cipoletta has taken over as interim CEO. He's hoping that within the next five to 10 years, the company will achieve its original dream of creating devices to help people with disabilities such as ALS, at the same time it starts to tackle products for the consumer market.

Whether creating devices to help a person with a disability become more independent, a soldier survive in a war zone, or an average person change the television channel, Cipoletta is motivated by the idea that he can create devices that people can use in the immediate future to make their lives better. "Many engineers spend all their time on research and development for things that are never used," he says. "For me, the gratification comes from helping people, and knowing that people find a need for what I make. That's just the best feeling an engineer can have." •



The Night Charlie Lee Made History

In December 1961, the URI men's basketball team played at Oglethorpe University in Atlanta, Ga. The team's leading scorer, Charlie Lee, didn't know it at the time, but he was making history as the first Black player to participate in a college game in the state of Georgia.

By Bob Herzog

Nearly 60 years later, pioneer Rhody basketball player Charlie Lee remembers the mystery as much as the history.


Lee became the first Black player to participate in a college basketball game in the state of Georgia when he and his University of Rhode Island teammates faced tiny Oglethorpe University in Atlanta before an overflow crowd on Dec. 29, 1961.

Oglethorpe, with an enrollment of only 350, surprisingly defeated the bigger school from up north, 64-47, with Black fans—also attending a college basketball game in Georgia for the first time—among those in the crowd that gave Lee a standing ovation as the Rams walked off the court.

Lee, the team's leading scorer in his junior season but playing that night on a sprained ankle, was held to only 7 points. He appreciated the crowd's gesture but only much later was he able to appreciate his role and the significance of the moment. Why? Because, according to Lee, he didn't know he had just made history.

"I never knew that it was the first time that ever occurred in Georgia. It never entered my mind. No one told me," Lee, 81, says in a telephone interview from his home in Raleigh, N.C. "For some reason the athletic director and the coach never mentioned to me that when we played Oglethorpe in Atlanta, this was going to be a historic event."

Perhaps the University felt the need to protect Lee and his teammates because of the racial conditions that existed in the South in those days and did not want to put undue pressure on the young student-athletes. The reasons for the silence were never made public. But even though Lee said he didn't know he would be breaking a color barrier in the game, he and the other Rams knew of the segregation that existed then. The point was made strongly the night before the game when a friend of some URI players who lived in Atlanta spoke to the team in the Oglethorpe dormitory where they were staying.

 Video at uri.edu/magazine

“We mentioned we were going to catch a bus to go downtown, and he said, ‘You’ll see the white people sitting in the front and the Black people sitting in the back,’” Ron Rothstein ’64 recalls by phone from his home in Miami. Rothstein, 78, was the Rams’ sophomore point guard that season, and eventually coached in the NBA for 22 seasons, including four as a head coach. He earned three NBA championship rings as an assistant with the Miami Heat, for whom he stills works as a TV analyst. “The white people will stand in the front rather than sit in the empty seats in the back.”

For some today, it may be hard to believe that was the case as recently as 1961. In fact, the first URI player to board the bus, Danny Nilsson ’64, seeing that there were no empty seats in the front, calmly walked to the back of the bus and sat down among the Black riders. The other four players followed. “Blond hair, blue eyes, milky white skin. That was Danny,” remembers Rothstein. “You should have seen the looks. But nothing happened. We just got looks.”

Rothstein says the players’ friend also told them about something more sinister than seating arrangements on public transportation. “He said to make sure someone watches the parking lot. If you see buses coming in, it’s the Ku Klux Klan and there’s going to be a problem,” Rothstein says. “We told the last guy on the bench, who never played, that when we were warming up, ‘You’re going to be in the lobby until the game starts. If there are buses coming in, you better let us know.’” There were no buses.

Recalling the Oglethorpe game, Lee says, “There were no incidents before, during, or after the game. No derogatory remarks by the players or the fans, none whatsoever. But I didn’t have the kind of performance that I wanted, and we lost the game.”

Lee says he did not learn of his role as a trailblazer

until his mother sent him an article a month later from *Jet* magazine. “The magazine said it was the first time an intercollegiate sporting event was integrated in the state of Georgia. That was it. That’s how I found out,” Lee says. “So I didn’t think of myself as a pioneer. Being

from the Northeast, it was no big deal playing an integrated basketball game. We did it all the time.”

Lee did not see the *Sports Illustrated* item in the weekly magazine’s Jan. 8, 1962, edition that read, “Before a packed house in Atlanta, Charlie Lee of Rhode Island made history. The Negro Ram star competed in the first non-segregated collegiate athletic contest in Georgia, possibly opening the way for the acceptance of Negro players on southern teams. Oglethorpe, the host team, beat the Yankee Conference champions 64-47.”

“Of course, I feel a sense of pride, but there is a little bit of frustration and anger,” Lee admits. “I was upset that they never told me before or after. Why didn’t they say anything to me? You know something? Nobody made a big deal about that back then.”



Lee (foreground) on the court at Oglethorpe University on Dec. 29, 1961.

But the media once again helped to shine a light on Lee’s accomplishment some years later when *The Providence Journal* published an article about race and college basketball, highlighting the importance of Texas Western (now the University of Texas at El Paso) and its all-Black starting team defeating mighty all-white Kentucky in the 1966 NCAA Tournament championship game. “The paper,



Connie and Charlie Lee at their home in Raleigh, N.C.

says Lee, “told the story of the all-Black team from Texas that made history, and wrote, ‘What about Charlie Lee?’ That’s when it came to the forefront for me.”

With a chuckle, Lee repeats, “What about Charlie Lee! When you’re young and naïve, it doesn’t dawn on you. But as the years pass by, it does. You don’t realize the magnitude of what just happened, and the historical perspective associated with it.”

For the mild-mannered

Lee, a native of Englewood, N.J., who is happily retired after a long career working for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, it took until this past winter to share his place in history with his family. But only after an inquiry from his wife, Connie, whose church, the Church of God of Prophecy in Robbins, N.C., was organizing a project for Black History Month in February.

“The church was doing articles about certain events that occurred in our lifetime. She was asked to think about a significant achievement in Black history, so I said, ‘Tell them about your husband!’” Lee says with a laugh. “I told her the story and she had no idea. I never talked about it.”

Lee, who played for URI from 1960–63 and averaged 16 points and six rebounds per game during his varsity career, still laughing, describes his wife’s reaction. “She was aghast. She said, ‘Oh, wow!’ and she rushed to share the story with the rest of the family. Some of my nieces and nephews said to me, ‘You’re famous!’ I just laughed and said, ‘You know, it happened a long time ago.’”



Ron Rothstein ’64 at work as a TV analyst for the Miami Heat. Right, Rothstein (#10) playing against Providence College in the 1960s.

But the impact and memories linger. “When I told my grandson about it, he got kind of wide-eyed,” Lee says. “He was ecstatic when he heard my story, and he went right out and shared it with his friends. He’s 6 feet, 6 inches tall and played ball at Fayetteville State. He coached a little AAU basketball and he told some of his coaching friends. That made me feel good; gave me a sense of pride.”

The events of that winter

also gave Lee and his teammates some firsthand, eye-opening experiences about race relations in the South in the early 1960s. A week after their game in Atlanta, the Rams flew to Miami for a game against the University of Miami, where Lee recalls spending much of his time soaking his sprained ankle in a whirlpool. They stayed at the Lombardy Inn Hotel in Miami Beach, and were given most of the week off to enjoy themselves. “It turns out that even in Miami, they had racial restrictions back then,” Lee says.

That became quite evident the first night in Florida. “A bunch of us go out to eat, including Charlie,” Rothstein recalls. “We go walking down the street and everybody’s looking at us. Well, we’re a basketball team. Everybody’s 6-foot-3 or bigger—except me (Rothstein is 5-foot-8). So it’s not unusual to get stares. We go out and we’re walking around town.”

The URI contingent was unaware that the stares from locals had little to do with seeing a group of tall basketball players. “Well into the 1980s, there was a law on the books in Miami Beach that Blacks



weren’t allowed on the streets after sundown,” Rothstein says. “We go to a place called Wolfies. It was like a Jewish deli—it was a popular spot. We walk in. All the heads turn. We thought it was because we’re a basketball team, but the truth was, nobody ever saw a Black guy in Wolfies at night. It was different times. Everybody’s looking at Charlie. But we don’t know that. We were very naïve. We had no understanding. We found that out after the fact. But nothing bad happened.”

Lee says he was unaware that his saga had been told by Rothstein during a postgame segment called “Speak the Truth” last season on a Miami Heat TV broadcast. “With all that went on in the nation with the racial strife, they asked each of the broadcasters for a story that concerns racism,” Rothstein says. “That segment on Charlie was part of a postgame show, and it eventually got to YouTube.”

When Lee reflects on those events from 60 years ago, he is touched by the solidarity shown by his teammates on the streets of Atlanta and Miami and by Rothstein’s airing and sharing of those moments. “The thing I remember about that Miami incident is how upset my teammates were,” Lee says. “Of course it makes me feel good that they had my back.”

Lee, choked up, adds, “Probably the most emotional thing for me is the fact that a former teammate [Rothstein] who had a lot of success in the NBA remembered me.”

In fact, Rothstein’s revelation started a serendipitous chain reaction. Lee and his family got to watch the segment on You-

Tube and bask in the afterglow of a slice of history that Lee himself could not enjoy the first time around. And Rothstein got to reconnect with a teammate he had lost touch with years ago and did not even know was still alive. The two shared a long, emotional telephone conversation this summer.

“I didn’t live in Charlie’s skin, so how could I really know how he felt?” Rothstein asks. “We never gave it a real thought—about race. It was basketball. You go out and play. There weren’t that many Black players then, certainly not like today, but it’s not like I never played against Black players ... I don’t know if proud is the right word, but I was always glad I took part. It was constructive history, so to speak.”

It is history that still resonates today.

“There is a mix of emotions that comes with learning about Charlie Lee breaking the color barrier for the state of Georgia,” says Shane Donaldson ’99, URI’s current assistant athletic director, media relations. “On one hand, it is a point of pride for the University to have a direct connection to such a significant moment in Georgia’s history. On the other hand, it was only 60 years ago. Charlie Lee, his URI teammates, and the Oglethorpe community took a significant first step, but given the social unrest we continue to see in the country today, there is clearly still work to be done.”

For Lee, the game against Oglethorpe provides a historical footnote to a successful college basketball career that he now can proudly share with his family and friends. He says he is not an intense college basketball fan, despite living close to blue-bloods Duke and North Carolina, but pays attention during the NCAA Tournament.

It’s when watching March Madness on TV that Lee allows himself to rewind his URI playing days. “You know, I played against some Hall of Famers. I’ll have a conversation with friends and I’ll say, ‘I remember playing against Rick Barry at Miami. I remember playing against Lenny Wilkens at Providence College—and they had a center named John Thompson.’ When I look back, I realize I had a pretty interesting career.”

One that made a little history along the way. •

Librarians. Out Loud.

The stereotype of the stern woman who haunted the library—the one with the bun, the frown, and the finger pressed to her lips—bears little resemblance to today’s librarians. This generation of librarians is leading some of the most important conversations of our times. And they want to get you talking.

By Marybeth
Reilly-McGreen

Ashley Selima, M.L.I.S. '12, M.P.A. '13; Ed Garcia, '03, M.L.I.S. '08; Lisa Villa, M.L.I.S. '95; Colin McCullough, M.L.I.S. '16; GSLIS assistant professor Melissa Villa-Nicholas; and Stephanie Mills '03, '09, M.L.I.S. '07. This group gathered in front of the Robert L. Carothers Library and Learning Commons on URI's Kingston Campus.



“LIBRARIANS ARE UNSUNG HEROES. THE STEREOTYPE THAT PERSISTS IS THAT WE’RE JUST THE KEEPERS OF THE BOOKS. WE’RE SO MUCH MORE.”

—Mary Moen

117 West from I-95 North will get you to the West Warwick Public Library by way of Suited Devils Ink tattoo parlor, AJ’s Restaurant, Valley Fuel, and Henault-Gallogly Funeral Home.

Incorporated in 1913, West Warwick, R.I., is the youngest town in the state, but it has a worn appearance that hints of hardship. The Riverpoint Congregational Church advertises a rummage sale. There are no chic boutiques or tony coffee shops. Jerry’s Supermarket proclaims itself the “King of Meats,” but it’s the old Royal Mill Complex, with its crenelated clock tower overlooking the Pawtuxet River, that ranks first for most imperious structure.

This town doesn’t likely benefit much from the \$1.7 billion haul the Ocean State nets during tourist season. This is a town designed for business, not pleasure.

And if you were driving in the vicinity of the library at around 1 p.m. on Saturday, June 26, you might’ve seen that dilapidated pickup truck flying the Confederate and American flags from the back corners of its bed as it drove past the library. And if that were your destination, it might’ve made you uneasy. Because that day—a hot day for early June, with 89% humidity—the library was celebrating Pride Month by hosting Drag Story Time, a local version of the national Drag Queen Story Hour, in which professional drag queens read aloud to children and their parents at libraries, bookstores, and schools with a view to destigmatizing gender fluidity. And that had some people

upset. In the weeks leading up to the event, two local priests demanded it be canceled. Other residents voiced their anger on social media.

Though committed to holding the event—conceived of and organized by West Warwick Public Library staff members Rashaa Al-Sasah, M.L.I.S. ’17, head of youth services, and Emma Brelsford, ’19, M.L.I.S. ’21, youth services librarian—the library’s director, Colin McCullough, M.L.I.S. ’16, felt compelled to make a formal statement on the library’s website. The drag story hour’s message is that people shouldn’t be bullied or teased for what makes them different, wrote McCullough. “We recognize that not every program we offer matches the interests or the values of every member of our community and patrons may or may not attend at their own discretion.

“We will, however, continue to ensure that issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion inform and enrich everything that we do,” McCullough continued. “Our message is simple—libraries are for everyone.”

It’s a common refrain among librarians, or at least among URI’s Graduate School of Library and Information Studies (GSLIS) alumni. Their career paths are anything but similar, and they hardly personify the stereotypical librarian. URI’s accelerated, online, American Library Association-accredited GSLIS program prepares students for careers in public and school libraries, archival work, and medical and law libraries, among other things. The program trains librarians for the

diverse audiences they’ll serve, say the program’s director, Valerie Karno, and assistant professors Melissa Villa-Nicholas and Mary Moen, M.L.I.S. ’03, Ph.D. ’15. It is nimble and topical, making issues of social justice, equity, and information literacy part of its curriculum and mission.

“Librarians are unsung heroes. The stereotype that persists is that we’re just the keepers of the books. We’re so much more,” Moen says.

“We’re exploring how to bring activism and scholarship into librarianship; we want to go further with social justice in library and information studies,” Villa-Nicholas says.

Karno characterizes librarians as superheroes springing into action against the villainous triumvirate that is COVID-19, racism, and fake news. “Librarians all over the country have pivoted to provide crucial community services during this pandemic. Last spring, we had the speaker series, ‘Voices of Information Equity,’ which was very well attended,” Karno explains. “What we are trying to do is fundamentally support the field of information professionals, information curators, and libraries all over the country as our alumni come from and go into all kinds of fields.”

Read on to learn how GSLIS graduates are preserving history, leading community conversations, enriching the lives of children and the elderly, elevating historically underrepresented voices, supporting academic scholarship and lifelong learning, and helping people find what they need in an atmosphere that makes them feel welcome. And heard.



STEPHANIE MILLS

“I’m a beg-borrow-and-steal librarian. I’m always running the book fair and doing things to increase our budget when times are tough. The library is for everyone, and that means having a broad range of titles.”

Rhode Island’s 2020 School Librarian of the Year, Stephanie Mills ’03, ’09, M.L.I.S. ’07, looks at the honor as something of a vindication. “It verifies and solidifies for me the important role of school libraries,” she says. “The library is the heart of the school; it’s the hub, the place that brings together a community of readers.”

Interest in reading wanes in middle school when children’s parents stop reading to them, Mills, school librarian at Park View Middle School in Cranston, R.I., notes. Her response has been to focus on information literacy and literature appreciation. School curriculums now include lessons on how to discern between fact and propaganda. Mills wants to encourage students’ desire to read by providing “choice and voice for students so that they’ll continue enjoying reading because they’ve found a good story. Not everything we do or teach has to be tied to a grade,” Mills says.

When COVID-19 caused schools in Rhode Island to close, Mills created pop-

up libraries outside, rolling book carts around her school’s parking lot so students could check out books. “And I had a delivery service where I was running from room to room delivering what they’d requested through Google forms. So, we used modern technology to do a simple thing: Get books in the hands of the kids,” Mills says.

An unfortunate consequence of COVID-19, locally and nationally, has been the loss of library materials. Hundreds of library books are missing from Park View’s collection, in part because students haven’t been back to school in 18 months. Mills is replacing titles with grant money and with help from the school’s parent-teacher group. It’s not a one-for-one replacement of titles, though, Mills notes. Her purchasing decisions address broader concerns. “We have a diverse population, so I’m looking for books that represent diverse voices and are written by authors who are members of the marginalized populations they’re writing about,” Mills says.

Mills has an evangelist’s zeal for her profession. “I am as enthusiastic today about doing this job as I was when I started,” she says. “And I think that’s a measure of how great the profession is.”

Good Read: *The Vanishing Half* by Brit Bennett. Mills says, “It’s about Black twins



growing up in a segregated area in the South. In their town, over time, the African Americans have become lighter. It’s something the people there are proud of. One of the twins decides to leave and pretend to be a white woman because the opportunities are so plentiful for her. But she has to shut out her family.”

Reference Desk: Cutbacks in school libraries may be yielding unintended consequences. According to a study by Stanford University, more than 80% of middle schoolers cannot tell the difference between sponsored content and a real news article.
—American Library Association

Reference Desk: Americans check out an average of eight books a year. They spend \$36.96 a year for the public library—about the average cost of one hardcover book.
—American Library Association



LARRY SPONGBERG

“It was loud. I can have a pretty loud voice, but it was loud. I don’t even think they could hear me. So, I climbed up on the table. I don’t think I was thinking of doing that when I first walked into the room, but it did get their attention very quickly.”

Larry Sponberg, M.L.S. ’75, has three dresser drawers full of mementos from his 40-plus years as a librarian at Assumption University’s Emmanuel d’Alzon Library in Worcester, Mass. Even in retirement, he can be relied upon to fill in as needed and to keep the library’s collection organized. Known as “Larry the Librarian” to the students of Assumption, Sponberg’s energy and way with students grew into legend. He’d ply them with puns and once even climbed onto a table to quiet a room.

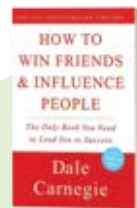
“I only had to stand on it that one time, which is good because it wouldn’t have had the same shock value later,” he says. “And I never noticed that it got that loud again.”

Sponberg studied history in college. It was his aunt, a town librarian, who encouraged him to consider library school. “But back when I was a college student, librarians had the reputation of being people who wanted to collect fines and tell other people to be quiet. My friends

said, ‘Why would you want a job where you just go around telling everybody to shut up?’

“So, it was ironic that during my first year I became known for quieting down that group that time, because that was against my inclinations.

“Libraries are places where people should feel welcomed and encouraged to ask questions,” Sponberg says. “I’d always hoped to be able to help people and deal with the public. Being a librarian enabled me to do that. Tremendously.”



Good Read: *How To Win Friends & Influence People* by Dale Carnegie. Sponberg says, “I found great ideas about how to relate to people, which helped me in my career.”



ED GARCIA

“Libraries are a trusted space.”

A decade out of college, Ed Garcia ’03, M.L.I.S. ’08, wanted a change. A history major who deejayed for WRIU, Garcia worked for Sony Music then fundraised for nonprofits. Michael Havener, then-director of the GSLIS program, convinced him to become a librarian.

“Dr. Havener showed me librarians can do so much more than people think,” says Garcia.

“The year I graduated, 2008, the economic meltdown started. I spent most

of my day helping people search for jobs. Public libraries can be a safety net for people who may not have the skills or the access to information or technology,” Garcia says.

A recipient of the GSLIS 2018 Alumni of the Year award, Garcia has been active in the American Library Association (ALA). In 2010, he was the first URI graduate named an ALA Emerging Leader.

These days, Garcia, director of the Cranston (R.I.) Public Library, and his team are focused on equity issues regarding everything from the purchase of e-books to naming conventions around collections. “We are building inclusive collections that reflect our community, which includes examining how materials are cataloged in our collections. The Dewey Decimal System, a Western, white male-centric system, does not reflect the diversity of our communities. We started by changing the subject heading ‘illegal aliens’ to ‘undocumented immigrants.’ We had GSLIS intern Tessa Mediano work with our cataloging librarian, Christine Hall ’03, M.L.I.S. ’14, to look at the subject headings and call numbers of our Native American collections. We created subject headings for all local tribes, rather than grouping them all under the heading of ‘North American Indians.’”

Libraries also provide potentially life-altering services, Garcia says. The Cranston Public Library has served patrons from more than 33 countries; conducted classes in English as a second language, citizenship, and computers; served free lunches to children during school vacation; and hosted diversity, equity, and inclusion training.

“We’ve had a lot of discussions on racial equity, climate change—a lot of topics,” Garcia notes. The library is a safe space that is trusted by the community.”



Good Read: *Dark Work: The Business of Slavery in Rhode Island* by Christy Clark-Pujara. Garcia says, “Even after Rhode Island outlawed slavery, the business of slavery was happening here. This book goes into depth about a forgotten part of our state’s history.”



ASHLEY SELIMA

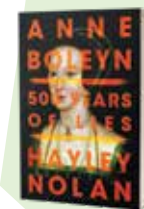
“Every day in the archives is a unique experience. Any job is going to have its moments when you’ve had one too many meetings for the day, but how many people can duck into a vault and look at the Bill of Rights?”

Sifting through public records might seem like dull work, but those documents can bring history to life, says Rhode Island state archivist and public records administrator Ashley Selima, M.L.I.S. ’12, M.P.A. ’13. In 2020, before COVID-19 derailed traveling exhibitions, Selima was putting together a traveling exhibition celebrating the centennial of the passage of the 19th Amendment granting women the right to vote. In her research, she found a record, circa 1919, from the president of the National Suffrage Association. “She wrote to a Southern congressman that if he wanted to keep his white majority, he should let white women vote in order to keep segregation in the South—that it benefitted him to give women more rights, but only white women.

“As a woman looking back 100 years at these women I’ve always seen as heroes—their work means I get to vote in my presidential election—I see there’s a reality to history that we can only learn from these

handwritten documents, which show the true complexity of people and, sometimes, the dark side of history. That moment solidified for me the importance of what we do as archivists: We preserve history that doesn’t always want to be seen, but needs to be seen.”

Other aspects of the job bring joy, though, Selima says. “Being a small part in helping people become more civically engaged is a really rewarding thing.”



Good Read: *Anne Boleyn: 500 Years of Lies* by Haley Nolan. Selima says, “She’s one of the most maligned women in history. I’ve always been fascinated by Tudor history. I heard about this book on the podcast, *You’re Wrong About*.”



DAVID KELSEY

“We serve everybody, every single person that comes into our library, no matter their background or values. And that is the beautiful thing about a library: We’re inclusive.”

David Kelsey, M.L.I.S. ’12, outreach services librarian at St. Charles (Ill.) Public Library and 2021 president of the Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services,

“Helping people become more civically engaged is rewarding.”

—Ashley Selima

cherishes vivid memories of his childhood trips to the library. “My mother would take me to the Wheaton (Ill.) Public Library once a week during the summer. We’d spend hours just looking at books.

“The books that really got me reading were the Harry Potter books. My friends and I would pretend we were in Harry Potter, and the stories would magically come to life.”

Library school was the perfect fit and URI, an adventure, Kelsey says. A recipient of URI’s 2019 GSLIS Alumni of the Year award praises the program. “I had opportunities that I wouldn’t have had anywhere else. It makes my heart happy to see all the great work they’re doing for the next generation of librarians.”

Kelsey’s education and experience reinforce his belief that a library has a civic responsibility for inclusiveness. He supervises an outreach team whose specialty is serving library patrons living in senior facilities. His was the first library in the country to do virtual programming for senior facilities during the pandemic. To hear Kelsey speak of his work is to realize the event is incidental; it’s the effect that matters. “Seniors can be a forgotten population, but they are still patrons and part of our library family. Just because they can’t come to the library doesn’t mean the library shouldn’t come to them.”



Good Read: *The Library Book* by Susan Orlean. Kelsey says, “It’s thoroughly fascinating and speaks to libraries’ uniqueness. My mother just finished it, and she thought the history of libraries would be helpful to me.”

Reference Desk: 73% of public libraries assist patrons with job applications and interviewing skills. 68% of public libraries help patrons use databases to find career openings. 77% of public libraries offer health resources. —American Library Association

Reference Desk: College libraries receive less than 3 cents of every dollar spent on higher education. —American Library Association

Reference Desk: Public libraries offer 4.3 million programs a year, and 95% provide online homework assistance and summer reading programs for children. —American Library Association

“Libraries are places where people should feel welcomed and encouraged to ask questions.”

—Larry Spongberg



LISA VILLA

“The idea of open access is to reduce the barriers to authors sharing their work because they want to keep their field moving forward and to spread their knowledge.”

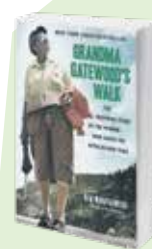
In 2013, with neither blueprint nor formal guidance, Lisa Villa, M.L.I.S. '95, digital scholarship librarian at College of the Holy Cross' Dinand Library (Worcester, Mass.), was tasked with building the digital equivalent of a cathedral. She undertook the creation of a digital archive, an open-access institutional repository with an ambitious aim: to advance research and scholarship at Holy Cross, while also creating a historical record readily accessible and responsive to all inquiries. The archive would be flexible and capacious enough to contain the college's output of scholarly articles and publications, reports, research, and creative works—in effect, a repository of significant contributions to the institution's overall intellectual capital.

Now nearing 5,000 items, the CrossWorks repository holds, among other

things, the student literary journal, *The Purple*, to which two-time U.S. poet laureate Billy Collins was once a contributor; the only known model of the East Indiaman ship, Earl of Abergavenny, an 18th-century ship captained by poet William Wordsworth's brother, John, who died when the ship sank off the coast of England in 1805; an oral history of LGBTQ students' experiences at the college; and copies of scrapbooks kept by former Boston mayor and Massachusetts governor James Michael Curley.

But the benefit goes beyond preservation, Villa says; the archive is a valuable teaching tool for the school's next generation of scholars. In her role as digital scholarship librarian, Villa talks to students about the scholarly communication process, copyright, and open access. “Faculty understand CrossWorks' value and now they're encouraging their students to submit—not so that they get 100 hits on their English paper, but because many of them will go on to do graduate work and they are just that much more primed for the quality of research they'll be expected to produce.”

“When students are aware that they're writing for a global audience, they tend to approach their work differently. They're no longer just writing a paper. They're writing a paper that will be seen—and possibly critiqued and used—by other people, and that knowledge raises the level of output.”



Good Read: *Grandma Gatewood's Walk: The Inspiring Story of the Woman Who Saved the Appalachian Trail*, by Ben Montgomery. Villa says, “I couldn't put it down. I had never heard of Gatewood, and now I want everyone to know about her—especially since the Appalachian Trail runs through New England.”

Reference Desk: Reference librarians in the nation's public and academic libraries answer nearly 6.6 million questions weekly.
—American Library Association



COLIN MCCULLOUGH

“Libraries are engines of social justice.”

Becoming a librarian was a career change for Colin McCullough, M.L.I.S. '16, director of the West Warwick (R.I.) Public Library, who previously worked for a humanitarian aid organization. He thought he'd become an academic librarian and worked at the Robert L. Carothers Library and Learning Commons while he was a student in URI's GSLIS program. But working in the Knight Memorial Library in South Providence, one of the poorest communities in Rhode Island's capital city, changed his mind. “I loved the part the library played in the community, so when the West Warwick job came up, there were similarities that attracted me,” he says.

“We're functioning as a community center almost as much as a library,” McCullough muses. Awareness of this influences the staff's purchasing and programming decisions. In West Warwick, for instance, a menstrual health program where free products are distributed might well benefit the community more than a reading by a best-selling novelist. “How do you make those programming decisions? Is it underpinned by social justice in some way?” McCullough asks, answering with certainty, “Yes.” He continues, “My personal feeling is that libraries are engines of social justice. Anyone can walk through our doors.”

McCullough recalls an anecdote from early in his career. A middle-aged woman came into the library. English wasn't her first language, and she needed a résumé to apply for a factory job. They spent an hour writing the résumé and cover letter and uploading it to the company website. “I thought, ‘Well, something's been accomplished here. You know, maybe she'll get the job.’ I got as much out of that as she did because I had the sense that I was actually making a difference.”



Good Read: *Say Nothing: A True Story of Murder and Memory in Northern Ireland* by Patrick Radden Keefe. McCullough calls it “a well-researched and nuanced picture of the troubles in Northern Ireland. In a wider sense, it's insightful on the effects of hatred and the futility of violence.”



Members of the Parasol Patrol at the West Warwick Public Library's Drag Story Time in June.

Back to the West Warwick Public Library's Drag Story Time: That Saturday, McCullough stood outside between the two groups that had formed at the library despite the oppressive, wet heat. The protesters claimed the lawn facing Main Street. One of the priests arrived. A sole protester marched back and forth yelling, “Stop sexualizing our children!” But otherwise, the group was quiet.

A second larger group set up beach chairs in the library's small parking lot and brought coolers filled with water and ice pops. Some wore adult-sized butterfly wings or carried rainbow umbrellas—these were members of the Parasol Patrol, adults whose fashion choices function to shield children from the angry protestors. Others wore T-shirts identifying themselves as members of Free Mom Hugs, a group that supports LGBTQ+ people by offering hugs at Pride parades. Some of the winged ones spread their wings and shimmied a bit to the Lady Gaga music pumped in from a house across the street. A pair of policemen made small talk with one another.

But nothing much else happened.

Even that day, there were more people in favor of the event than against it, McCullough noted afterward. “And on Facebook, you'll see that there was overwhelming community support and people saying things like, ‘We should try to have a Pride parade here.’ In some sense, we've kind of opened a door, you know?”

“What I see that event doing is leading the conversation and setting the tone for how librarians and libraries are performing functions that extend beyond the circulation desk,” McCullough says.

“To me, dialogue and communication are good things.” •

Think You Know What 'College-Aged' Means? **Think Again.**

Finding ways to include older adults in the Rhody community of teachers and learners has earned URI a national honor and enriched the lives of students, faculty, and community members.

By Diane M. Sterrett



The U.S. Census Bureau estimates 3 in 10 Americans will be over the age of 55 by 2030, representing an enormous opportunity to innovate and problem-solve. From training caregivers to dispelling ageism myths and offering lifelong education, URI is responding to the educational, social, and health needs of older adults with a comprehensive range of programs and partnerships.

In 2018, URI was honored to be designated an Age-Friendly University (AFU) by the Academy for Gerontology in Higher Education, one of 48 in the United States. AFUs endorse such principles as encouraging participation of older adults in the university's core activities, promoting intergenerational learning, and ensuring the university's research agenda includes the needs of an aging society.

"The idea of an Age-Friendly University is that it fosters multiple ways of viewing the experience of growing older," says Phil Clark, professor of human development and family science in the College of Health Sciences and director of the Program in Gerontology, who spearheaded URI's bid to earn the AFU designation. "There is a structured ageism in the way we approach education, a one-and-done approach. As an AFU, we have an opportunity to rethink that model and use the University as

a mechanism to enrich our community. Older people have a lot to contribute, but they are often overlooked."

URI's AFU initiative aims to find more ways to engage more older learners in URI classes, as well as to address ageism and increase student interest in working with older adults.

"Being an AFU gives us a framework and embedded philosophy to develop many aging and older adult-related teaching, research, and service efforts, making it a cohesive whole rather than a series of random offerings," says Skye Leedahl, associate professor of human development and family science, who leads many age-inclusive, intergenerational activities. "From a diversity and inclusion perspective, the university structure is an ideal place to include those of all ages and is a primary driver of why I am passionate about seeing the AFU concept evolve at URI."

Clark emphasizes that being an AFU is not about creating separate communities of young and old, but about creating awareness that people have varying educational needs throughout their lives, and ensuring the university meets and supports those needs in an affordable way.

There's also an economic benefit to thinking creatively about involving older adults in higher education, Leedahl points out. An Oxford Economics and AARP study estimated that the economic activity driven by Americans 50 and older pumped \$7.6 trillion into the economy in 2015.

As an AFU, URI has many initiatives, including those we highlight here, that address the aging population from several angles—educational, social, psychological, and medical.

"Older people have a lot to contribute, but they are often overlooked."

—Phil Clark, Professor of Human Development and Family Science and Director of URI's Program in Gerontology

Left, undergraduate and OLLI students in a joint health and aging policy class taught by Associate Professor Skye Leedahl engage in an intergenerational discussion of the book, *Being Mortal*, by Atul Gawande, in the Memorial Union on the Kingston Campus.

Rhode Island
Geriatric
Education
Center

Disrupt Aging
Classroom

Finish What
You Started

The Age-Friendly University initiative
integrates a wide range of programs
that bring older adults into URI's
community of teachers and learners.

Osher Lifelong
Learning
Institute

Engaging
Generations:
Cyber-Seniors

Rhode Island Geriatric Education Center

Funded by the federal government, Rhode Island Geriatric Education Center (RIGEC) is a consortium of educational, health-care, and outreach programs dedicated to improving health outcomes in older adults. With URI as the lead institution and Clark as director, it comprises hospitals, primary care networks, and key community agencies. The goal is to create an age-friendly health-care system in Rhode Island by integrating geriatrics into primary care and providing coordinated, comprehensive, patient/family-centered health care.

RIGEC provides geriatrics education and training to prepare professionals, students, and caregivers to better meet the physical, functional, and psychosocial needs of older adults. In the 2020–21 grant year alone, RIGEC provided 97 continuing education activities to over 4,000 health-care professionals and students from different disciplines, including medicine, pharmacy, nursing, allied health, social work, psychology, and health services administration. In addition, six 32-hour patient education workshops were provided to 292 community-dwelling older adults.

“Training the next generation and delivering community-based programs in support of age-friendly initiatives in health and social care are important in creating an age-friendly health-care system,” says Clark.

One of RIGEC’s partners is the Care Transformation Collaborative of Rhode Island (CTC-RI), a nonprofit working with clinical practices, health plans, and key stakeholders to transform primary care.

“They are really the go-to people for any needs in geriatric education,” says Susanne Campbell, CTC-RI’s senior program director. “We look to them any time we’re creating a program or testing innovation around what works for older adults and caregivers or looking for content experts for our annual conference.”

For the collaborative’s recent quality improvement initiative around telehealth, RIGEC helped Campbell connect with the Cyber-Seniors program and found training resources for community health workers. For another program on advanced care plans, RIGEC helped Campbell find legal and end-of-life care experts.

“RIGEC has provided education for our nurse care managers, including programs on the dangers of polypharmacy, assessing for falls, and creative approaches around cognitive problems. They’re very collaborative, have terrific resources, and can pull together a stakeholder group to problem-solve and strengthen team-based care,” Campbell adds.

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) is a learning community for adults aged 50-plus. The programs recognize the importance of lifelong learning and social engagement as we age: The oldest member is 98, the average is 72.

“OLLI is a happy, safe environment for people who want to continue learning, exploring, and meeting people,” explains Beth Leconte, OLLI’s director. “Instructors tell me they may be facilitating the subject matter, but it’s really an open give-and-take conversation because of the references and life experience people bring. From that, new friendships are developed, people form connections, and the magic just kind of happens.”

As a member-driven organization, classes follow participants’ interests. This summer, classes were offered in current events, history and government, humanities, and STEM. In addition to academic topics, OLLI offers special interest groups such as walking, poetry, golf, and mahjong. An OLLI class helped Liz Gilheene discover a drawing talent she didn’t know she had.

“It was like there was a seed inside me and OLLI watered it and it grew. If not for the OLLI lessons and support, I would not have known I

had this talent and be able to share it,” she says. “I get so much enjoyment out of it—when you’re older and retired, your world becomes a little smaller, and trying to carve out meaning for this part of your life is daunting at times.”

She began drawing Corvettes, the first a 1953 model she’d seen at a rally she and her husband attended. Requests for drawings poured in, and she has now drawn nearly every model year, giving them away as gifts.

Similarly, Jet Vertz retired to Rhode Island after a career in aviation and wondered what the next chapter of life would bring. He joined OLLI and began taking courses.

“OLLI gave me a structure and focus for my retirement,” he says. “I realized that it’s more than just playing another round of golf, walking the same beach for the hundredth time, or taking another cruise. I met other retirees who were going through a similar period of the retirement phase and searching for meaningful things to do beyond babysitting their grandkids. Later, I developed a course on generating a ‘purpose-driven bucket list’ and now teach the subject at OLLI.”

In addition to enhancing members’ lives, OLLI also benefits the University through intergenerational programming, such as an aging policy class and intergenerational classes that connect undergraduate students with OLLI members. Members are also often tapped by physical therapy, pharmacy, kinesiology, and engineering students for research.



Left to right, Kristen St. Jean, M.B.A. '20, Pharm.D. '20; OLLI member Prentice Stout; and Amanda Loomis, Pharm.D. '20, shared and learned about technology during a 2016 session of the URI Engaging Generations: Cyber-Seniors program at OLLI.

Engaging Generations: Cyber-Seniors

In Cyber-Seniors, undergraduates bridge the technology and generational gap by mentoring older adults in how to use smartphones, tablets, and laptops, mostly through one-on-one appointments. Since 2016, the program has provided assistance to more than 1,000 older adults with about 230 student participants, continuing through the pandemic via phone and Zoom.

“We offer many opportunities for older adults to get help, no matter what their level of digital literacy is,” says Leedah, who, along with pharmacy professor Erica Estus '96, Pharm.D. '00, leads this program and related research efforts.

With a new grant from the Rhode Island Office of Healthy Aging, Cyber-Seniors recently started an iPad initiative to get iPads and internet hot spots to older adults in lower-income communities who have never had access to technology. So far, they have reached about 120 adults and are hoping to reach 200 by the end of 2021.

Cyber-Seniors student mentor Thomas Hoong '23, a double major in Spanish and supply chain management, works with about 30 Spanish-speaking clients. “I have seen the program bring a lot of joy to older adults because now they have access to communication through technology. They connect to the world a lot better, build relationships through social media, and bond with family over videos. I teach them the basics, but also whatever they are interested in: practicing their English, listening to music, or learning recipes.”

In addition to a sense of satisfaction, the program gives Hoong a chance to practice his Spanish; develop skills in leadership, problem-solving, and communication; and learn about the process of aging. “It’s been an eye-opening experience to hear their stories,” says Hoong. “They are so grateful and happy to have the opportunity despite all their struggles.”

One of his favorite moments occurred during a two-and-a-half-hour Zoom session with 14 clients. “It was great to see them all talking and laughing with each other. By the end of the meeting, they were sharing addresses and phone numbers so they could meet up in person and hang out.”



Thomas Hoong '23, a Cyber-Seniors student mentor, leads a Zoom session for a group of Spanish-speaking clients, helping older adults in the group learn to use technology, and allowing him to practice speaking Spanish and develop his leadership and communication skills.

“When you’re older and retired, your world becomes a little smaller, and trying to carve out meaning for this part of your life is daunting at times.”

—OLLI member
Liz Gilheene

"In the future, when I work toward righting these inequalities [in health outcomes], I will know to keep older adults in mind."

—Meghan Hennedy '21, Disrupt Aging Classroom participant

Disrupt Aging Classroom

URI is an active participant in AARP's Disrupt Aging Classroom, an interactive curriculum built into existing courses. It challenges students to examine their perceptions about aging and to think about how the aging population is relevant to their personal lives and future careers. Students become more age-inclusive by broadening their understanding of and interactions with older adults and are encouraged to take a gerontology class or an internship that includes older adults.

OLLI instructor Jet Vertz also trained as a Disrupt Aging facilitator and responds to faculty requests to present the Disrupt Aging curriculum to students.

"Today's retirees are living longer and more productively, disrupting the stereotype of an AARP member," he says. "Passing on the core message of Disrupt Aging fits perfectly with my idea of purpose-driven retirement. We have an opportunity to give back to the world by making it a better place for our grandchildren."

As facilitators dive into the expectations and realities of aging, ageism, and the personal stakes of students, many of whom will become caregivers, response has been enthusiastic.

"I was shocked to learn just how little training professionals such as nurses, social workers, physical therapists, and medical students receive on aging and older adults," says Meghan Hennedy '21, who majored in biology and political science. "My study and future career are focused on inequality in health outcomes, and I had never thought of older adults as a demographic facing inequality. But if the professionals treating them don't have the proper training and experience, there will be inequality in outcomes. In the future, when I work toward righting these inequalities, I will know to keep older adults in mind."

Finish What You Started

One of the AFU principles is to address the full range of educational needs of older adults. URI's Finish What You Started program provides extraordinary support for older adults who left school earlier in life and now wish to complete their degrees. The oldest student is 83, the average adult student is 38, over 880 have enrolled, and 577 diplomas have been awarded.

"We all want someone to believe in us and that's what this program represents," says Nancy Rabidoux '88, degree completion coordinator at Finish What You Started. "If they have the courage to make that first phone call, we will make sure they land in the right place."

Rabidoux's team works with prospective students to help them transfer credits from other colleges or use their URI credits in the smartest way possible, direct them to financial aid and academic assistance, and find programs that work with their schedules. People call for many reasons—whether they left school early, need the degree to get a promotion, or want to finish their degree before their children do.

Susan DeCecco Kosiba '19 left URI in the 1970s for a job opportunity, just a few credits shy of a home economics degree. She came back and completed a Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies degree in 2019 at age 65 and along the way discovered a love of history. She was inspired to stay and earn a second bachelor's degree in history in 2021, then applied to the accelerated master's degree program.

"When my husband passed, I looked at my bucket list and saw, 'Finish your degree,'" Kosiba says. "Walking into that first class, I was shaking. But Nancy and so many amazing people helped me, and everyone was very welcoming. It was probably one of the bigger accomplishments in my life."



Susan DeCecco Kosiba '19 left URI in the 1970s to take a job. She came back and finished her degree in 2019 at age 65.

PHOTO: COURTESY SUSAN DECECCO KOSIBA

Alumni Programming

Several alumni programs support older learners and further establish URI as an Age-Friendly University. With more than 135,000 alumni living around the world, engagement potential is huge.

One of those programs is Faculty Office Hour, in which faculty host webinars on their areas of expertise, followed by lively Q-and-A sessions.

"The response has been tremendous. The last one had over 600 alumni from all over accessing the online livestream," says Karen LaPointe '77, M.B.A. '84, director of strategic initiatives, alumni engagement.

Two more online webinar series appeal to various age groups with a wide range of topics. In the Women's Leadership Series, successful alumni share their stories, career paths, and knowledge while providing inspiration. Coaches' Corner features athletic coaches talking about what's new in their particular sports. All are available on the URI Alumni YouTube channel.

Another program, URI CareerConnect, offers an online mentoring platform for alumni and students of all ages. "You can join to give career advice and be a mentor or join to get advice and be the mentee. You never know where someone is in their career journey—two years out of school, mid-career looking to start a new business, or recently retired looking for an encore career. We've been delighted at the response; many of our retired alumni joined as advisors and it's really heartening to see," LaPointe says.

Looking Ahead: A Retirement Community?

A URI committee has been studying the possibility of a university-based retirement community. Such communities have been successful at other universities and have become something of a national trend. The University of Missouri, for example, established a retirement community, and, because of the research being done there, their school of nursing's research funding increased 1,500 percent, making it the most well-funded school of nursing in the country.

URI representatives visited successful communities, documented the need, talked with developers and senior living experts, and created a proposal to promote healthy aging-in-place in an active, supportive environment. Envisioned as a walkable condo community, it could include four levels of care plus an interdisciplinary health clinic, pool or exercise facility, in-home services, smart home technology, entertainment, and space for OLLI classes to meet.



"We want to encompass all aspects of the person—social, physical, and educational—to stimulate their minds, really be a holistic place," says URI nursing professor Patricia Burbank '74, who led the committee. "Being affiliated with the University means residents could take classes, use some of URI's facilities, and have close relationships with students and faculty for research and service opportunities."

The project has the potential to impact the lives of older adults positively, as well as provide a research and training opportunity for URI nursing, pharmacy, and health sciences students and faculty, and the committee continues to move the proposal forward.

What's Next?

Based in a small state with a high percentage of older adults—in Rhode Island, more than 31 percent of residents are age 55 and older, compared with 28 percent nationally—and the beginnings of an age-friendly health-care system, URI is uniquely situated to become a leader in the AFU movement.

"We have an unprecedented opportunity to offer easier access to programs, not only to educate students about older adults and send them off into the workplace with the skills and abilities to work in this environment, but also for older adults to engage in higher education," Clark says.

Clark and Leedahl are proud of URI's successes and the ways the University has embraced being an age-friendly university. They also look forward to building on what URI already does well and expanding AFU activity into new areas, such as research.

"Aging and health is a growing area of expertise and interest at URI," Leedahl says. "Many faculty, staff, and students are increasingly involved in important research, teaching, and outreach initiatives in this area."

"We are committed to the idea of intergenerational solidarity," Leedahl adds. "We're stronger together, and if people can learn each other's values and truly embody and understand what others can contribute, there are so many social issues that can be solved." •

"We are committed to the idea of intergenerational solidarity. We're stronger together."

—Skye Leedahl, Associate Professor of Human Development and Family Science and Program Manager of Cyber-Seniors



Rosaforte at the Golf Writers Association of America awards dinner prior to the start of the 2015 Masters Tournament at Augusta National Golf Club in Augusta, Ga.

THE PRO'S PRO

When golf journalist Tim Rosaforte '77 became just the 12th person ever to be awarded honorary PGA of America membership, no one was surprised. Rosaforte retired from a brilliant and influential career in 2019, when he was diagnosed with early onset Alzheimer's. Rosaforte's legacy includes a URI scholarship to help students studying neuroscience, the result of a team effort by his friends and colleagues, who will tell you that his real legacy is kindness, integrity, and trustworthiness.

By T.J. Auclair '02

If there were a Mount Rushmore of modern-day golf journalists, Tim Rosaforte '77 would be on it.

A giant in the world of golf journalism, Rosaforte earned a bachelor's degree in journalism and played on the University of Rhode Island football team.

Jaime Diaz, an award-winning golf writer and friend of Rosaforte, notes that there are parallels between Rosaforte's football-playing days and his writing. He describes a phone call with Dave Campo, former Dallas Cowboys head coach and assistant football coach at University of Bridgeport (Conn.), where Rosaforte was a player in his first year of college, before he transferred to URI.

"I called Dave Campo when I was writing a story about Tim in 2014, when he won the PGA of America Lifetime Achievement Award in Journalism," says Diaz, a longtime writer at *Sports Illustrated*, *Golf Digest*, and *Golf World* before moving to Golf Channel. "Campo hadn't seen Tim since his football days but had instant memories of him. Campo described him as, 'a good player who studied film, took angles, understood limitations, and played hard. He was one of those rare athletes who got almost all of it out of himself.' I think Tim did that in his journalism career, too. Tim read that and said to me, 'I will always keep that. That's me. I took that football formula and that's my life.'"

A legendary golf insider whose extensive contact list includes the likes of Jack Nicklaus and Tiger Woods, as well as past U.S. presidents and countless Fortune 500 CEOs, Rosaforte began his remarkable career at the *Tampa Times* in 1977. He had stops at the *Fort Lauderdale Sun Sentinel*, *The Palm Beach Post*, and *Sports Illustrated* before heading to *Golf Digest* and *Golf World*, followed by a broadcast and writing career with Golf Channel.

In 2019, the 66-year-old Rosaforte—arguably

the most recognizable figure in golf media—was diagnosed with early onset Alzheimer's, leading to the difficult decision to retire after a career that spanned four decades. The 2020 Masters Tournament, normally held in April, but postponed until November due to the COVID-19 pandemic, marked the first time Rosaforte had missed the Masters since 1983.

"I really didn't know he was having memory issues," says Craig Dolch, another award-winning golf writer and one of Rosaforte's dearest friends. "He called me in late-December 2019 to tell me he was leaving the Golf Channel but didn't get into specifics. I had heard from others that something was wrong—he originally thought it was anxiety. When I saw him at the 2020 Honda Classic, it hit me how he was struggling. We talked a little about it, but it was more about two old friends trying to catch up. It's heartbreaking. I miss playing golf with him. I miss going to concerts with him. I miss calling him and bouncing ideas off him. I miss his smile.

"Tim forever changed the golf media business, becoming the first true insider who gave you facts and inside info, not outrageous opinions," Dolch adds. "He managed to stay relevant to two generations of star golfers."

Jim Nantz, CBS Sports lead announcer for golf, the NFL, and the NCAA Final Four, describes Rosaforte as one of the most connected and trusted members of the golf media, someone who is on top of everything happening at the highest level of the sport.

"He had two cell phones working at the same time," Nantz says. "Arnold on line one, Tiger on line two."

"Rosaforte had two cell phones working at the same time. Arnold on line one, Tiger on line two."

—Jim Nantz, CBS Sports lead announcer for golf, the NFL, and the NCAA Final Four



Rosaforte presented the Male Player of the Year award to Tiger Woods at the Golf Writer's Association of America awards dinner in Savannah, Ga., in 2007.



Rosaforte with George W. Bush, 43rd president of the United States, at the opening ceremony of the 2021 Walker Cup at Seminole Golf Club in Juno Beach, Fla. Bush's father, the late George H.W. Bush, 41st president of the United States, is one of the other 11 honorary PGA members.



Rosaforte presents the Charlie Bartlett Award to Jack Nicklaus during the Golf Writers Association of America 37th annual awards dinner in 2009 at the Savannah Rapids Pavillion in Augusta, Ga.

“Tim has connections like Tom Brady has rings.”

—Rich Lerner, host and commentator, *Golf Channel*

“To see Tim struggle with Alzheimer’s has been sad and shocking at the same time,” Nantz continues. “His mind was razor sharp for so long and then, all of a sudden, he was lost. Sadly, due to my father’s own battle with this insidious disease, I know the heartache it has caused for all who love Tim. Genevieve [Rosaforte’s wife] and the girls have handled the caregiving side of this with beautiful grace. It’s the untold story of Alzheimer’s. There are more people whose lives are changed almost overnight than just the one who is suffering from the disease.”

Rosaforte authored five books, covered 147 major championships and 17 Ryder Cups, and won over 40 awards for writing, including a Golf Writers Association of America “Grand Slam” for first-place magazine coverage in features, columns, event coverage, and special projects. In 2020, he became the 12th person ever to be awarded honorary PGA of America membership.

“You hear the phrase ‘pro’s pro,’” says Rich Lerner, a longtime colleague of Rosaforte’s at Golf Channel. “Tim is the quintessential pro’s pro. Busts his tail every day, working the smallest event with as much determination and focus as the biggest. I’d joke with him, ‘30 years into a legendary career, you’re hustling like a rookie trying to make an impression in his first week.’

“Tim has connections like Tom Brady has rings,” Lerner adds. “Presidents, Hall of Famers, superstars, actors. Rosie’s phone is a valuable piece of equipment. It speaks to his greatest strength: Trustworthiness. People trust Tim. Athletes will share with a reporter if they trust the reporter. Tim is, without question, one of the best golf journalists ever. Tim’s as generous and sweet as he is tough. He never let go of the old football player’s instinct for the ball, but he has a soft heart, too. For the 20 years my wife, Robin, and I, ran our charity golf event, Tim always made an appearance and a donation. He cares about the people in his life and about his work. One of the best human beings I have ever known. Loyal. Gives a damn. Smart. Tough. Good-hearted.”

PGA professionals. “Honestly, I was sitting home one night, and I heard what was going on with Tim. I sent Tom [Ryan] a text and said, ‘Hey, Tom, wouldn’t it be nice if our alma mater could honor Tim in some way?’ Then, quite frankly, it took on a life of its own.”

Ryan, former chairman, president, and CEO of CVS/Caremark, was happy to get involved.

“When we approached URI and the foundation about it, they were thrilled,” Ryan says. “They couldn’t have been happier, and they ran with it. It was easy to do. Tim’s one of the great guys. People want to help him and his family and have some legacy at URI for Tim. That’s the real key—have a legacy for Tim. This endowment will go on in perpetuity and help students in years to come.”

The cause is close to Ryan’s heart.

In 2013, Ryan and his wife, Cathy, formed the University’s George & Anne Ryan Institute for Neuroscience—named in honor of Ryan’s parents—to support innovation in discovery science and translational medicine in the fight against neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer’s.

“I lost my dad to Alzheimer’s, and I lost my mom because she took care of him,” Ryan says. “Alzheimer’s really killed them both, so it’s near to our family. We’re trying to make a difference and collaborate with other institutions around the country and

In recent months, fellow URI graduates Steve Napoli ’77 and Tom Ryan ’75, Hon. ’99, put together a team—which includes Rhode Island’s own Brad Faxon, an eight-time PGA Tour winner—to work with the University to create the Tim Rosaforte III ’77 Endowed Scholarship in Neuroscience.

“I’ve been in the golf industry my whole life and we crossed paths a lot,” explains Napoli, the 2003 recipient of the PGA of America Bill Strausbaugh Award, a national award given to an instructor who excels in mentoring fellow

the world. There’s no one who doesn’t know someone who has dementia or Alzheimer’s. It’s going to be a health-care tsunami with our aging demographics. We must find a way to slow the progression and ultimately find a cure to this heartbreaking disease.

“Brad, Steve, and I met Tim and Genevieve for breakfast,” Ryan adds. “I presented some scholarship options that could be endowed in Tim’s name. It was a short discussion. The Rosaforte family wanted to help students majoring in interdisciplinary neuroscience.”

Faxon can’t remember when he first met Rosaforte, but says he was “omnipresent” if you were a player on the PGA Tour.

“Any time in my career that Tim came up to me, or called, I answered,” Faxon says. “It was always with a smile. The way he asked questions, he earned your trust. Every player felt the same. He had the ability to garner contact information to get the inside-the-ropes trust and you always felt you could tell him things off the record and feel secure. We had an extra bond because of his Rhode Island connection.”

Faxon says that bond with Rosaforte was especially noteworthy to him after the United States lost the 1995 Ryder Cup—a biennial competition between the best golfers in the United States and Europe—in heartbreaking fashion.

“We all had to go in the pressroom,” Faxon remembers. “And you know those times when there’s just nothing more to be said? This was one of those times. I remember sitting next to Tim and we didn’t say anything. It was just comforting.

There wasn’t anything to say. A lot of journalists need a quick quote, but he sat there with us like he had lost, too.”

Like so many other giants in the golf world, Jack Nicklaus and Annika Sörenstam—arguably the greatest male and female golfers in history—had a special bond with Rosaforte.

“Tim has been a great friend for some 40 years,” says Nicklaus, who has more all-time major wins (18), than any other golfer in history. “He is also one of this generation’s great golf journalists.”

“Tim has always been such a good guy and a hard worker,” recalls Sörenstam, a World Golf Hall of Famer and 72-time LPGA winner. “I remember him before his time at Golf Channel, back when he was writing and covering a lot of LPGA events. He always had the inside scoop because he had the trust of the players.”

Rosaforte was a mentor to so many, including this writer. I’m a 2002 URI graduate and I shared many media center lunches and conversations at PGA Tour events with Rosaforte for more than 15 years.

He loved the fact that, like him, I was a URI grad. When he wasn’t telling me stories from his days as a URI football player in the 1970s, he would often joke, “We’ve got to be at least the third and fourth most popular URI journalism grads behind Christiane Amanpour and John King, right?!”

Longtime award-winning golf writer Helen Ross explains that

“There's no one who doesn't know someone who has dementia or Alzheimer's. We must find a way to slow the progression and ultimately find a cure to this heart-breaking disease.”

—Tom Ryan, ’75, Hon. ’99, former president, chairman, and CEO of CVS/Caremark

Rosaforte has always had the ability to make his subjects want to open up, allowing him to bring compelling stories to life.

Ross also credits Rosaforte for an opportunity that led to her dream of covering golf full time.

“I really got to know Tim when I served with him on the board of the Golf Writers Association of America,” she says. “And on a personal level, my life would have been a lot different had he not told me that the PGA Tour was looking for a managing editor for its new website back in 1995. He knew I wanted to write about golf full time, and I know he put in a good word for me. Not sure I’ve ever told him, but I will always be grateful for his support.”

Dolch will never forget the human side of Rosaforte.

In 2005, when Dolch was covering the U.S. Open at Pinehurst, his then-14-year-old son Eric was diagnosed with near-fatal encephalitis—an inflammation of the active tissues of the brain caused by an infection or an autoimmune response—which led to a life-changing brain injury.

When Eric was hospitalized in 2005, Rosaforte drove to Miami several times to take Dolch out to eat and to see Eric when he was in a coma.

In early 2006, when Dolch and his son were in Boston for rehab, Dolch received a call from Rosaforte.

“I got a call from Tim saying he was planning a family fundraiser the week of the Honda Classic,” Dolch remembers. “I didn’t ask him to; he just did it. And he did all the planning—he just asked me for some names of people I wanted to invite. He asked Raymond and Maria Floyd to host and pay for the fundraiser at Old Palm. Because of Tim,

folks like Jack and Barbara Nicklaus, Don Shula, Olin Browne, Jesper Parnevik, Tom Fazio, JoAnne Carner, and Jimmy Roberts showed up. It raised more than \$100,000 for our family. How do you say thanks to someone who does that?”

The way Rosaforte quickly organized this star-studded event for Dolch’s family left an impression on Diaz as well.

“One of most amazing nights I ever saw. Tim galvanized the Palm Beach golf world—the center of the universe—and got everybody to come to the dinner and donate money,” Diaz says. “Nicklaus, Floyd, [Greg] Norman, [Nick] Price. I went with Bob Toski. People were there because Tim asked, and they knew Craig. They were moved by this community effort and what Tim did with his resources.”

For Diaz, that event encapsulated the person Rosaforte is.

“To me, I always tried to be as good a sportswriter as I could, but what people remember most is, ‘What kind of guy was he?’” Diaz says. “I think Tim leads the league in leaving people feeling good.” •

If you wish to contribute to the Tim Rosaforte endowed scholarship to assist students in the field of neuroscience, visit urifae.org/rosafortescholarship. For information, contact Eric Schonewald at 401.874.9017 or eschonewald@uri.edu.

Network



= CLASS NOTES =

Let your classmates know what you're up to. Reunions, gatherings, career or academic updates, weddings and birth announcements, retirements, exhibition openings, travel, or your favorite URI memories.

Submit notes and photos by email to urimag@uri.edu or online at alumni.uri.edu.

1957

Russell J. Hahn writes, "My wife and I retired to Vero Beach, Florida from R.I. in 1994. I started a new 'career' at 62, taking 24 courses in art over eight years. I began selling my large flower watercolors in 2003 to individuals, interior decorators, and corporate interests, including



'Pink Rose' and 'Windmill' by Russell J. Hahn

PNC Bank, Cleveland Clinic Indian River Hospital, and Viera Assisted Living. In 2000 I began researching and creating collages with old, cancelled postage stamps, an art form begun in the mid-1800s, 50 years before Picasso created his first paper collage, "Guitar," in 1912. My 22-page research article "Postage Stamp Collage Art" was published by the *American Philatelist* in 2012 as their lon-

gest-ever feature. It was the first known comprehensive article published on the art form since 1898."

1960

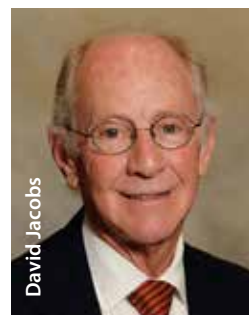
Claude Trottier writes, "Lois Martin Blankenship (Mimi) is currently a 104-years-young resident of the Elderwood of Scallop Shell senior care facility in Wakefield, R.I. The Biking Sigs/Road Scholars of Sigma Chi, URI have been bike-riding and meeting for lunch for over 15 years and have been serenading Mimi since she turned 100. The Sigs started this labor of love through her daughter, Judy Martin, who was a Sigma Chi house mother for a number of years and is an honorary member of our Housing Corporation Board of Directors in her retirement. A delegation of the Sigs recently sang the 'Sweetheart of Sigma Chi' song to Mimi in honor of her 104th birthday."

1964

Charlie Lee, see page 22

Ron Rothstein, see page 24

1967



David Jacobs writes, "After 40 years at Metro-North Railroad



SIGMA CHI SERENADE FOR MIMI'S 104TH

Pictured are: (seated) Mimi's daughter-in-law Eleanor Martin and Mimi, and (standing) Denny Denelle '63, Claude Trottier '60, Father Richard Cipolla '63, Dick Kalunian '59, and Jim Quinn '64.

and 24 years in the Navy Reserve, I finally retired. Decided to go back to school full time. Just completed the Ph.D. program in civil engineering at the University of Connecticut. Now teaching as an adjunct at the University of Hartford."

1971



Thomas Belisle is pleased to announce the May 2021 publication of his second thriller

novel, *Taking the Dream Spinner*. It follows his first novel, *Raptor Bloom*, published in April 2020, and continues the *Matt 'Ace' Black* series of action-packed, suspense-filled thrillers. His author website is thomasbelisleauthor.com. He is currently working on the final novel in the series while residing in Florida.

Susan West-Kurz published a memoir, *Gardens of Karma*, in May 2021. kirkusreviews.com.

1972

Claude English retired as director of athletics at Park University in Parkville, Mo. English joined Park University in 1992, serving as the men's basketball head coach through the end of the 2004-05 season. In January 1996, English added the title of athletics director, a

role he held for more than 25 years until retiring in 2021. While at URI, he was a two-time All-Yankee Conference first team (1968-69 and 1969-70) and served as a team captain those two years. He averaged 12.3 points and 8.2 rebounds per game over those two seasons. In addition, he was a one-year letter-winner in track in 1969.

1973

Melissa Gabriel writes, "I recently published a novel called *Shooting from the Heart*. It is similar to *Eat, Pray, Love*. It is available on Amazon.com. A good deal of the book takes place in Newport, R.I."



Kathryn (Stellitano) Ladd was chosen as the 2021 CAACE (Connecticut Association for Adult & Continuing Education) Educator of the Year for her years of service to the field of adult education. Mrs. Ladd currently teaches United States Citizenship and GED Science and Math classes, in addition to being a trained National External Diploma Program (NEDP) assessor. In his nomination letter to CAACE, Dr. Mangiafico, principal of the East Hartford Adult Education Program wrote, "Kathryn Ladd has spent her entire teaching career going above and beyond for her students. From working with expelled students, to those with disabili-

ties, to attending the naturalization ceremonies of her students: she always finds a way to help students succeed."

Ladd is a former Clark Lane Middle School science teacher, Waterford High School health teacher and lead instructor for Waterford's On-TRAC District Expulsion Program, and assistant to the superintendent/principal in Sterling, Conn. She lives in Lebanon, Conn. with her husband Michael. Her favorite pastime is spending time with her family, including her parents Dr. John (URI '48) and Mary Stellitano and her grandchildren. (*This note was previously published with incorrect degrees and graduation years listed. Our apologies for the error.*)

1974

Patricia Burbank, see page 39

Patricia Mulcahy-Ernt was recently inducted into the Fellows program at the Council of Learning Assistance and Developmental Education Associations (CLADEA). The CLADEA Fellows program recognizes and honors the most outstanding leaders in the profession. Mulcahy-Ernt is a professor of education in reading and language arts at the University of Bridgeport, Conn., where she chairs the graduate literacy and English education programs. She holds a B.A. in secondary English education from URI, an M.S.Ed. from Colorado State University, and a Ph.D. in educational psychology from the University of Minnesota.

1975

Tom Ryan '75, Hon. '99, see page 42

Larry Spongberg, M.L.S. '75, see page 30

1976



Steve Bousquet was appointed editor of opinion content for the *South Florida Sun Sentinel* in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. Steve (B.A., Journalism) is a long-time Florida journalist and resident of Tallahassee who has reported extensively for *The Miami Herald* and *Tampa Bay Times*.

1977

Karen LaPointe '77, M.B.A. '84, see page 39

Tim Rosaforte, see page 40

1980



Mark B. Morse, Esq. was elected president of the Rhode Island Bar Association with a term running from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. He graduated from URI and the New England School of Law, where he served as research editor of the *New England Law Review*. Morse lectures on a variety of legal issues and served as editor-in-chief of the *Rhode Island Bar Journal*. He is

active on a number of committees and subcommittees. He is a fellow of the Rhode Island Bar Foundation and is past president of the RI Association for Justice and presently serves on its Board of Governors. Morse is also active in the American Association for Justice and served as chair of the State Delegates, and as a member of its Executive Committee. In 2011, Morse was awarded the Dorothy Lohmann Public Service Award for his work with Defenders of Animals. He is married with three children.

1981



Debra Nelson Boelkes '81, M.B.A. '82 of Amelia Island, Fla. just published her third book, *Women on Top: What's Keeping You from Executive Leadership?* to transform the way women pursue their careers. After publishing her first award-winning book in 2019, *The WOW Factor Workplace: How to Create a Best Place to Work Culture*, which changed our expectations for achieving joy and fulfillment from our jobs, she went on to publish a second award-winning book in 2020, *Heartfelt Leadership: How to Capture the Top Spot and Keep on Soaring*, which changed our expectations of those who lead. Each book brings to life what you really need to know to become one of the best and most beloved leaders you can be. Deb holds a B.S. and an M.B.A.

from URI's College of Business. She spent nearly 30 years climbing the leadership ladder in Fortune 150 technology firms.

1983



James Hilton, a Tiverton, R.I. resident and the founder of The Hilton Group at UBS Private Wealth Management (Newport), has earned the international professional designation of certified exit planning advisor from the Exit Planning Institute.

1985

Kevin Glynn published a novel, *Voyage of Reprisal*, in July 2021. The book is available on Amazon.com.

1987

Raymond Williams has been named to the Legal Intelligence's 2021 list of Distinguished Leaders. Williams was recognized for his dedication to promoting diversity, a "commitment that extends to both internal initiatives and high-profile legal matters," as well as his "thriving pro bono practice that focuses on disparity-related issues and underserved communities." Williams is national diversity and inclusion partner at DLA Piper, a global law firm with lawyers located in more than 40 countries.

1988

Nancy Rabidoux, see page 38

1992

Meredith Mendelson of Newton, Mass. was named a Commonwealth Heroine in 2021 by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women. Mendelson is the executive director of the Needham-based organization Ellie Fund, which provides non-medical services like groceries, meal delivery, transportation,

childcare, integrative therapies, and light housekeeping to patients in treatment for breast cancer. Mendelson was honored for her work to expand the outreach of a remarkable organization that ensures those who struggle with breast cancer have the resources and support they need.

1995

Lisa Villa, M.L.I.S. '95, see page 32

1996



Jean Canosa Albano, M.L.I.S. '96, is the assistant director for public services at the Springfield (Mass.) City Library. She writes, "I was so sorry to hear that one of my favorite, most influential professors, Cheryl McCarthy, passed away in May of 2021. I recall her library administration course methods and readings frequently; they continue to influence me. One of the joys of being involved in the New England Library Association was our not-infrequent meetups at annual conferences, where I was thrilled to see her receive that organization's prestigious Emerson Greenaway Award, given for distinguished service in librarianship, in 2016. (I was also in attendance when another influential professor, Fay Zipkowitz, was so honored in

2019.) We alums of URI's graduate school of library services are fortunate to have learned from many outstanding educators. I would love to hear from other library school grads to exchange memories or to talk about librarianship. I am always recruiting and love to get applications from fellow grads! Connect with me on LinkedIn. Outside of the library world, I am currently serving as president of the board of directors of Art for the Soul Gallery, a true gem here in the City of Springfield."



Gilda Bryand has been promoted to tax operations senior manager at Baker Newman Noyes, a nationally recognized top 100 accounting firm located in Portland, Maine. She is responsible for supervising administrative staff assigned to the tax practice. Bryand joined the firm in 2015 after working for many years in the telecommunications industry.

Michelle Fontes '96, M.A. '11, see page 51

1999

Kevin Gilmore, see page 1

2000

David Penney was named information technology manager for Wood River Health Services in Hope Valley, R.I.

2001



Sam Reich, an attorney with the personal injury law firm Laffey, Bucci & Kent in Philadelphia, Pa., has been named to the 2021 Pennsylvania Super Lawyers list. A program of Thomson Reuters, Pennsylvania Super Lawyers is a rating service of outstanding lawyers who, through a peer review and independent research process, have been identified as attaining a high degree of peer recognition and professional achievement.

2002

T.J. Auclair, see page 41

2003



Edward Garcia '03, M.L.I.S. '08 was named the recipient of the 2021 Emerson Greenway Award for distinguished service in librarianship by the New England Library Association. He is director of the Cranston Public Library in Cranston, R.I. See page 30 for more about Ed.

Stephanie Mills '03, '09, M.L.I.S. '07, see page 29

Mary Moen, M.L.I.S. '03, Ph.D. '15, see page 28

2004

Douglass Reed, see page 9

2006

Robert "Bobby" Britto-Oliveira '06, M.S. '11, see page 51

2008

Sara Montiero, see page 51

2009

Elise Petrarca '09, M.L.I.S. '12, M.A. '13 has been accepted into the first cohort of the New England Library Association Emerging Leaders program.

2011

Ashley Gingerella O'Shea, M.B.A. '11, was named a *Providence Business News* top 40 professionals under the age of 40 in R.I. in 2021.



2006

Daniel Goldklank of Brick, N.J. writes, "Since graduating, I went into sales, earned my MBA from Northeastern, and am currently a strategy leader at athenahealth. Growing up boating, I earned my Master Captains License and my wife, Gabrielle, and I started a yacht event business based here in New Jersey: Golden Knot Yacht Services. We plan luxury nautical events on yachts! We also have a 2-year-old daughter, Lyla. Glad to see Tau Epsilon Phi back at URI as an alum!"

2012

David Kelsey, M.L.I.S. '12, see page 31

Ashley Selima, M.L.I.S. '12, M.P.A. '13, see page 32

Alyssa Taft, B.A. '12, B.S. '12, M.L.I.S. '17, M.A. '17 has been accepted into the first cohort of the New England Library Association Emerging Leaders program.

2013

Tanya Wang, see page 20

2014

David Cipoletta '14, M.S. '19, see page 16

2016

Colin McCullough, M.L.I.S. '16, see page 33

2019

Tayla Cardillo, M.L.I.S. '19 has been accepted into the first cohort of the New England Library Association Emerging Leaders program.

Susan DeCecco Kosiba, see page 38

Karen Petrik, see back cover

Allie Reilly, see back cover

Patrick Henry Warren was appointed associate director of global regulatory affairs at NOVAVAX, where he will lead COVID-19 vaccine development in Switzerland, UAE, Japan, and Singapore markets. He is a graduate student at Harvard University, where he is studying biotechnology with a focus in immunology and infectious diseases.

2020

Gina Miranda, see page 51

2021

Thomas Bonneau, see page 15

Jonah Callandret has become affiliated with The Bulfinch Group, a financial services and investment management firm headquartered in Needham, Mass.

Meghan Hennedy, see page 38



BIRTHS AND ADOPTIONS

Pete Mandeville '88 and Tarra Mandeville welcomed Amelia Lynn Mandeville on June 4, 2021. Pete says, "It's a little tough to see but she is wearing her first Rhody gear, pink URI socks! URI Class of 2043!"





1980 and 2021

Pictured here in the URI gardens are (aunt) Ann Marie Chalmers Sabula '80 and (niece) Emma Rose Chalmers Richelsof '21. Ann Marie received an Academic Excellence Award for Nutrition and Dietetics in 1980. Emma received an Academic Excellence Award for Public Relations in 2021. Ann Marie attended the ceremony at which Emma received her award.



ENGAGEMENTS AND WEDDINGS

Shannon Oliver '19 and Adam Capwell '19 were married on October 9, 2021, at the Meadowbrook Inn in Charlestown, R.I. They currently reside in Smithfield, R.I.

Kevin Christofaro '10 and Jacqueline Coutu '11 were married on May 1, 2021.

Stephanie Russell '14 and David Hansen '14 were married on April 17, 2021, at Harbor Lights in Warwick, R.I. Stephanie writes, "We absolutely loved our 4 years [at URI], cheerleading and football team. We still get to a lot of games. We had a big URI attendance. Go Rhody!"



Shannon Oliver and Adam Capwell



Kevin Christofaro and Jacqueline Coutu



Stephanie Russell and David Hansen

= CHAPTER AND CLASS ANNOUNCEMENTS =

AATCC STUDENT CHAPTER

Calling all alumni who have been members of the AATCC (American Association of Textile Chemists and Colorists) Student Chapter at URI! It is our chapter's 50th anniversary! We want to hear about your experiences in the AATCC student chapter. Please help contribute to a history of the chapter on our forthcoming website by emailing memories and photos to aatcc.uri@gmail.com.



= YOUR STORIES = The Copeland Effect

In June, beloved men's track and field coach John Copeland announced his retirement after 39 years at URI. Under Copeland, the team secured 25 A-10 titles. But more important to Copeland was his impact on the students he coached.

It is difficult to measure the effect one person can have on another. It is nearly impossible to measure the effect that coach John Copeland had at URI over the last four decades. In addition to the championships—there were many—his legacy at URI is reflected in the thousands of student-athletes he coached.

"Cope" was tough in every manner of the word. But he was committed to taking time with the members of his team outside of practice. I can hardly remember a time when his office door was closed. Many of my teammates can talk for hours about what they learned from Cope just sitting in that office and listening to stories about track and life.

After a rough freshman year, I asked him if he would allow me to transfer. Per NCAA regulations, I was required to get his approval or forfeit a year of eligibility. While he was under no obligation to do so, he said, "Of course," and promptly picked up the phone, called the coach at the school I wanted to transfer to, and gave me the release. Luckily, I was not accepted to that school and remained in Kingston, where I completed my undergraduate and graduate degrees. It was the best thing that ever happened to me.

I eventually found my stride at URI and a few years later I was mulling my plans for after I graduated. Naturally, I was considering coaching and asked Cope why he was still coaching all these years later. He told me that coaching at the collegiate level gave him the opportunity to shape boys into men, men who were ready to tackle the world.

Now 31, and coaching, I understand what he meant. He drilled into our heads

lessons like the five Ps: Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance. He demanded we give maximum effort in the classroom and on the track. He was never the "rah-rah" kind of coach, but he expected his teams to support one another at practice and on meet days with passion. The five years that I spent under his tutelage in Kingston helped shape me into who I am today. On behalf of the men's track and field alumni, I want to thank him for everything he did for us while at URI. •

—Steve McKenna II '13, M.A. '15

Author's note: This story could be from any of the thousands of athletes Copeland coached. Cope meant a lot to me. More importantly, he meant a lot to all the Men's Track & Field alumni from the last 39 years.

To read more about coach Copeland's retirement and his time at URI, go to bit.ly/30Kjm5y.

"He drilled into our heads lessons like the five Ps: Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance."





= IN UNISON =

The Torchbearers

The Alumni of Color Network celebrates its 15th anniversary in 2022. Michelle Fontes '96, M.A. '11, the group's organizer, reflects on how one of URI's strongest alumni groups got started and what lies ahead.

By Marybeth Reilly-McGreen

In 2007, President George W. Bush signed the Fair Minimum Wage Act into law, Nancy Pelosi was the first woman to be elected speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, and Forest Whitaker became the third Black actor in history to win an Academy Award for best male actor. Together, the three events signaled a change: Historically underrepresented groups, minimum wage earners, women, and people of color were coming into power, occupying spaces and roles previously denied them.

The year 2007 is significant for URI, too, as it marks the inception of the Alumni of Color Network (ACN), a group that provides personal and professional development, mentoring and networking, advocacy, and community-building opportunities for its members. Michelle Fontes '96, M.A. '11, assistant dean of diversity, retention, and student success initiatives for the College of the Environment and Life Sciences, recalls the critical contributions of some of the early leaders of the group she piloted, including Earl Smith III '90; Gerald Williams '92, M.A. '00; Charles 'Chuck' Watson '93, M.A. '21; Karoline Oliveira '94, M.S. '03; Abu Bakr '73, M.S. '84, M.B.A. '88; Ana Barraza '95, M.S. '04; and Tommy Garrick '90.

"That group brainstormed how we might establish a committee," Fontes says, "and that's how the Alumni of Color Network was established."

In 2007, Fontes was working in URI's Alumni Relations Office. "I recognized, as a woman of color, that there was no representation of folks of color, and I knew a lot of alumni," Fontes says. "It made me question why we weren't involved. No judgment or blame, I just think if you don't have an eye on these things, if you are not a person in that role in the alumni office planning events, you don't see what's missing."

From left, ACN co-chairs Sara Monteiro '08 and Bobby Britto-Oliveira '06, M.S. '11; Michelle Fontes '96, M.A. '11; and Gina Miranda '20



In September, members of the ACN celebrated the official establishment of the endowment for the Alumni of Color Network Student Scholars Fund. Pictured are, standing, from left, ACN co-chairs Sara Monteiro '08 and Bobby Britto-Oliveira '06, M.S. '11, and seated, from left, ACN members Gina Miranda '20 and Michelle Fontes '96, M.A. '11, and Mary Grace Almandrez, URI associate vice president and chief diversity officer.

All that existed for alumni of color at that time was an occasional, volunteer-run panel event featuring distinguished graduates talking about their careers. The turnout was modest—the panel's audience was easily accommodated in the URI Alumni Center. Fontes saw that her first task would be to convene alumni of color employed by URI to discuss formalizing and promoting the panel, as well as other initiatives and events.

Fortunately, bringing people together is one of Fontes' specialties. She sought student involvement and input, which resulted in a second wave of members including, as she recalls, Robert "Bobby" Britto-Oliveira '06, M.S. '11; Wynston Wilson '08, M.A. '13; Marquis Jones '12; Tyrene Jones '10, M.P.A. '14; Cyntoya Simmons '14; Kevin Martins '07, M.B.A. '10; John Cruz '03, M.S. '14; Margarida Da Graca, '09, M.S. '13; and Wilson Okello, M.S. '12. Fontes notes with pride that some of those former students are still active in ACN today.

Britto-Oliveira, who is now assistant director of URI's Multicultural Student Services Center, was a graduate student in 2009 when he first became involved with ACN. "I'd heard of Michelle and her involvement with Talent Development and of what she was doing with the network. She asked me to do outreach, to try to generate student interest in the alumni panel event. I knew a lot of students. That year, the event might've had 35 to 40 students in the audience. I was disappointed, but evidently that was real growth from the previous year when they had seven to 10 students.

"The following year we had 75 students; the year after that 150, and we were maxing out the Memorial Union Ballroom," Britto-Oliveira says. The annual alumni panel presentation continues to be one of the most successful ACN events.

Sharing the wisdom of experience

Britto-Oliveira now co-chairs the ACN, which has added networking get-togethers at Alumni and Family Weekend to its event offerings, as well as an event for recent graduates. His face registers a bit of surprise—or maybe wonder—that a promise to put some students in some seats led to a leadership role in the organization.

"I've definitely benefited from the mentorship and guidance that our seasoned alumni have provided over the years," Britto-Oliveira says, noting that the ACN is a natural complement to the work being done by the University's Talent Development office, an admission program that serves in-state students from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds, as well as the Multicultural Student Services Center, which provides meeting space and resources to students. "My hope is that ACN is a resource for all students of color once they graduate," he says. "We try to get students involved right away. We're trying to let them know that we're here and that we've experienced what they're experiencing."

Britto-Oliveira also hopes exposure to successful alumni and hearing about their student years at URI narrows the natural gap that comes from generational differences.

"One of the questions often put to the panelists is to recount their challenges and successes as students of color at URI, and the whole point of that is to get the students to see themselves in us, however many years down the line that may be."

Britto-Oliveira speaks from experience. As a student, he realized some of the older alumni of color were, in a real sense, his benefactors. He recalled the work of Fontes, along with that of Malcolm Anderson '94, and Karoline Oliveira '94, M.S. '03, in the formation of the Black Student Leadership Group (BSLG). In November of 1992, the BSLG made the front page of the state's largest daily newspaper, *The Providence Journal-Bulletin*, for its peaceful takeover of Taft Hall. Its actions motivated the University to direct more funds to the Talent Development program and to create the precursor to the Multicultural Student Services Center that Britto-Oliveira now helps direct.

Making it easier for those who follow

"The struggles the Black Student Leadership Group went through might not have been my struggles, but they made it easier for me," Britto-Oliveira says. "We didn't have to go through what they did. And our goal as more recent alumni is to make it easier for incoming students, for the classes that come after."

Britto-Oliveira's co-chair Sara Monteiro '08 also approaches her ACN volunteer work with an awareness of legacy. Her uncle, the late Antonio DaMoura '92, was one of the 1992 student activists and founder of the Cape Verdean Students Association. "For me, it's always a carrying of the torch," she says. "URI is a multigenerational school for my family. My mother went there, and I have two lovely boys who clearly see URI as an option someday."

Monteiro estimates she devotes 12 or more hours a week to the ACN. She is particularly dedicated to its philanthropic work. In 2020, the group was instrumental in raising \$25,000 for the RhodyNow: Students First Fund, which provides immediate financial assistance for students in need, says Amy Simonini, associate director of Alumni Engagement. Spurred by that success, ACN has established an endowment, the Alumni of Color Network Student Scholars Fund, which will generate scholarships for students of color. They are currently working toward their goal of raising \$50,000 for that fund.

"ACN is one of the most dedicated groups I have worked with in nonprofit and higher education management," Simonini says. "The ACN volunteers are passionate, engaged, hardworking, devoted, and dedicated to making sure that they provide resources for students and connect alumni to lifelong learning and engagement opportunities."

Motherhood proved additional motivation for Monteiro. "My children make me understand how pivotal this work could be and how important it is, as a parent, to think equitably about funding education," she says. "I'm trying to create roads for families to envision higher education as a possibility at all times.

"And so I do this work for the advancement of the next generation because it was the work of my uncle that allowed me to be a student and a thriving adult. And I want my children to go there under stronger circumstances still."

Looking back over the last 15 years, Bobby Britto-Oliveira will tell you that ACN's successes started much earlier than 2007. Arguably, 15 years earlier. Michelle Fontes, Antonio

DaMoura, and their fellow student activists sowed the seeds with the 1992 protest. "Let's be cognizant of where I'm at right now," Britto-Oliveira says. "The Multicultural Student Services Center would not have existed had it not been for their initiative and their ability to be changemakers. I wouldn't be in this office right now. There wouldn't be all these fabulous groups of multicultural student organizations that have a home on campus."

Seeing the spark; having the focus

"Michelle's someone who sees the spark and has the focus, and she sees it in people who don't necessarily see it in themselves, myself included," Britto-Oliveira says of Fontes. My involvement in ACN was just to be a general member. I wasn't trying to take any leadership role, but because of Michelle I was able to see what she saw in me."

As for Fontes, 15 years of effort is paying dividends. "I'm very proud of my role in helping it all come together," she says and grins. "But I'm not one for leading a group to do something. I want them to do what they want so that they take ownership of it." Those who know Fontes, though, will tell you that, besides bringing people together, another one of her specialties is giving people a gentle nudge now and then to help close the gap between a person and their purpose.

Fontes says she hopes that the Alumni of Color Network will see growth in membership and in the endowment over the next 15 years. "The endowment creates an opportunity for alumni, especially those from diverse backgrounds, to stay involved by giving back," Fontes says.

If there's a silver lining to the pandemic, Fontes says, it is that it spurred people to engage with new technology that makes it possible for alumni to gather virtually. Fontes practices outreach with a zeal others save for favorite hobbies. "There are people out there who don't know this group exists," she says. "They don't know how it came to be, and they don't know how to support it."

But when they do?

"The power of bringing people together and naming it the Alumni of Color Network—to be able to say to a person from a diverse background, 'Here is a group specifically for you,'" Fontes begins, and then pauses. "Well, that's pretty amazing, right?" •

"My hope is that ACN is a resource for all students of color once they graduate."

—Bobby Britto-Oliveira

If you wish to contribute to the Alumni of Color Network Student Scholars Fund, you may contribute here: urifae.org/ACNScholars. For information, contact **Mat DeLaire** at **401.874.2207** or **mat_delaire@uri.edu**.



= IN MEMORIAM =

John Peterson '39	Joyce (Capalbo) Shields '64
John McBride '47	Peter Megrđichian, M.P.A. '65
Robinson Hindle '49, M.S. '55, Ph.D. '64	Ronald Rickey '65
Arthur Sherman '50	James Walsh '65
Raymond Ugone '50	Dorothy (Conway) Barry '66
Anna (Ferreira) Carrera '51	Janeth (Kershaw) Brewster '66
Joshua Chopy '51	Francis Dietz, M.B.A. '66
John Faulkner '51	Joyce (Brown) Fletcher '66, M.A. '71
Charles Higginson '51	John Morra '66
Nancy (Rawlinson) Reo '51	Spencer Martin, M.S. '67
Shirley (Whitcomb) Bentley '52	Henry Mook '67
William Fortin '52	Harold Morsilli '67
Donald Guinan '52	Kenneth Dede '68
Patricia (Quinn) Hillstrom '52	John Plummer '68
Robert Kalberer '52	Raymond Young '68
Mary (Rougas) Quinn '52	Helmut Augenstein '69
Robert Sarni '53	John Nagle '69
Daniel Smith '53	Marianne Salisbury, M.B.A. '69
Robert Arabian '54	Wallys (Tucker) D'Agostino '70
Martha (Smith) Frost '54	Jerry Hatfield '70
Louise (Maguire) Joyal '54	Ronald Hamel '71
Augustine Ledwidge '54	Roger Reynhout '71
Joyce (Hahn) Taylor '54	John Zapatka '71
Robert Taylor '54	Lisbeth Hunt-Pike '72
Hope (Pritsker) Zawatsky '54	David Marinsky '72
Jane (Wood) Hesketh '55	Cecile Martin '72
Leonard Nalibow '55	June Pierce '72, M.L.S. '73
Joseph Pizzo '55	Joseph Sharman '72, M.S. '78
Stuart Smith '55	Kathryn Zachirchuk '72, M.A. '80
Anthony Valente '55	Sandra Casacalenda '73
Albert Dacosta '56	Lillian Golden '73
James Fitzmaurice '56	Roberta Todd, M.S. '73
Ernest Greenhalgh '56	Joseph Lombardi '74
Donald Hesketh '57	H. Jefferson Melish, M.A. '74
Richard Schiappa '57	Louise Felder, M.L.I.S. '75
Irving Cahalan '58	M. Karen Jameson, M.L.I.S. '75
Everett Kenyon '58	Alice (Massingham) Pfeninger, M.S. '75
Charles Miller '58	Dian (Parker) Roberts '75
Thomas Wright '58	John Warner '75
Thomas Welch '59	James Lee '76
Charles Dress '60	
Donna (Gilbert) Sciola '60, M.A. '81	
Samuel Kinder '62	
Thomas H. Campbell '63	
Chieu Nguyen '63, M.S. '65	
William Rider '63	

Ellie Lemaire

Longtime University of Rhode Island Athletics administrator Eleanor “Ellie” Lemaire passed away on Sunday, July 25, at the age of 92.

The first senior woman administrator in URI Athletics history, Lemaire’s legendary career impacted the lives of female athletes on a local and national scale. She spent more than 40 years working in women’s athletics. At the dawn of Title IX in 1976, she came to URI as the University’s senior associate director of athletics, a position she held until 1992.

Lemaire is largely responsible for the creation of all women’s athletics at the University of Rhode Island.

“The world lost a special person with the passing of Ellie Lemaire,” Director of Athletics Thorr Bjorn said. “She changed the landscape of opportunity for women in collegiate athletics, not just at Rhode Island, but on a national scale. Ellie was a pioneer and true advocate for women in sports, and her impact is still felt today. She was a valued friend who will be missed but never forgotten.”

Inducted into the URI Athletics Hall of Fame in 1994—one of nine Hall of Fame inductions in her lifetime—Lemaire was a teacher, coach, official, and administrator throughout her career. She volunteered on numerous state and national committees, serving as a champion in the fight for support of women’s athletics.

Read more about Lemaire in the 2016 *QuadAngles* story, “The Grueling Politics of Women and Sports,” at uri.edu/quadangles/the-grueling-politics-of-women-and-sports/



Beverly Mattera '76, M.B.A. '84
Carol Opiekun, M.S. '76
J. Patrick Shanley, M.A. '76
Paul Herzog '77
Ferdinando Pastore, M.S. '77, M.S. '79
Cynthia (Bouvier) Smalley '77
Charles Joyce '78
William Matteson, M.A. '78
Rayfield Drowne '79, '85
Peter Ciparelli, M.L.I.S. '80
Barbara Girard '80, M.A. '87
Julia (Thomas) Doutaz '81
Daniel Finn '81
Vincent Nadaskay '81
Victor Moniz '82
Peter Moore '82
Joan Alfiero '83
Ronald Carreiro '83
Jane Kamm, M.L.I.S. '83
Katherine Cross-Das, M.A. '86
Ruth Murray, M.A. '86
Ann (Daniello) Hoag '88
Patricia DiPrete '90

Marion (Whipple) Andrews, M.L.I.S. '91
Patrick Lupo '91
Edward Hay, M.L.I.S. '92
Ashleigh Feeny '94
Jason Rose '94
Janet Schab, M.A. '94
Matthew Harrington '95
Linda Hedrick, M.L.I.S. '96
Amy McHale '96, Pharm.D. '05
Mildred O'Donovan '96
Robert Kolpin '97
Robert MacDonald '97, M.L.I.S. '03
Troy Marzetta '98
Holly Mather '99
Timothy Brien '01, M.S. '05
Wilma Lynch '02
Andrea Long '08
Danielle Hazard '09
Joseph Alberg '10
Jasmyn Beatty '15
Miya Brophy-Baermann '19
Maximus Julian '21
Leah Ribner-Martin '25

FACULTY AND STAFF

Joel A. Dain, professor emeritus of biochemistry

Ira Gross, professor emeritus of psychology

Robinson J. Hindle Jr. '49, M.S. '55, Ph.D. '64 professor emeritus of plant sciences and entomology

Ellie Lemaire, former senior associate director of athletics

Spencer J. Martin, M.S. '67, professor emeritus of accounting

Calvin Poon, professor emeritus of civil and environmental engineering

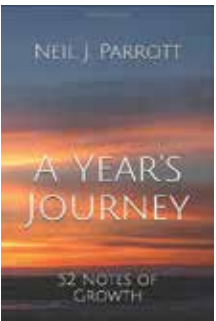
Arthur Sherman '50, professor emeritus of kinesiology



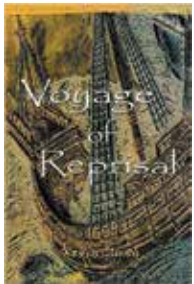
Gardens of Karma: Harvesting Myself Among the Weeds
Susan West Kurz '71 (2021)



Shadows Over Baku: The Armenian Massacre in Azerbaijan
Karina Yesayeva Khachatorian with Stephen Gross, M.L.S. '65 (2019)



A Year's Journey: 52 Notes of Growth
Neil J. Parrott, M.B.A. '15 (2020)



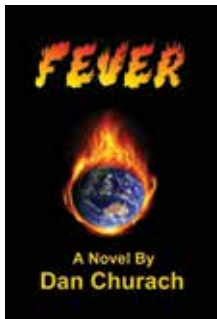
Voyage of Reprisal
Kevin Glynn '85 (2021)



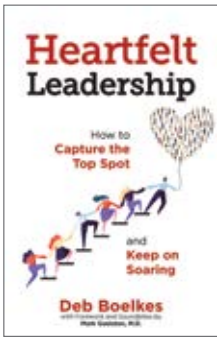
In a Class All Their Own: Unique and Historic Boats of New England
Tom Verde '81 (2020)



The Italian Art of Living: Your Passport to Hope, Happiness and Your Personal Renaissance
Dawn Mattera '84 (2020)



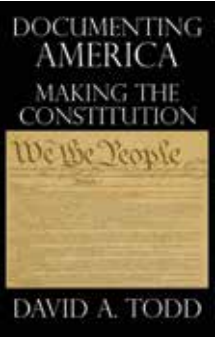
Fever
Dan Churach, M.A. '72 (2021)



Heartfelt Leadership: How to Capture the Top Spot and Keep on Soaring
Deb Boelkes '81 (2020)



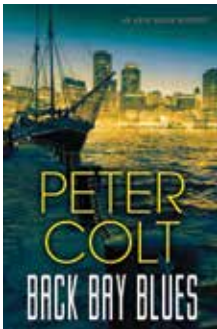
Animalian
Norah Pollard Christianson, M.A. '68 (2021)



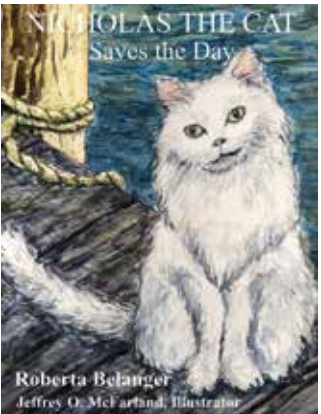
Documenting America: Making the Constitution
David Todd '74 (2019)



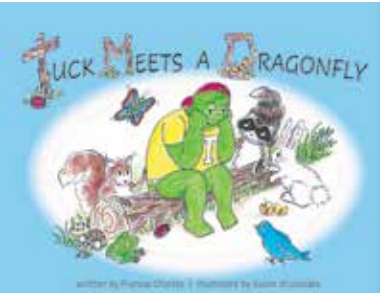
Taking the Dream Spinner
Thomas Belisle '71 (2021)



Back Bay Blues
Peter Colt '96 (2020)



Nicholas the Cat Saves the Day
Roberta Belanger '85 (2020)



Tuck Meets a Dragonfly
Maureen F. Redihan Walsh '76 (2021)



= BOOKSHELF =

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

= CAPTION THIS =

Photo Caption Contest

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

Submit entries by
January 15, 2022



SUMMER WINNERS

WINNING CAPTION

"Hey guys! Once we're done with this job, they want us to change a lightbulb over at Edwards Hall!"
—Stephen Koch '75

RUNNERS-UP

"My wife tells me I'm going bald, but I want it peer-reviewed first."
—Mark Frankel '92, M.B.A. '96

"Next semester we get real shaving cream, and a guy with hair!"
—Don Yost '83

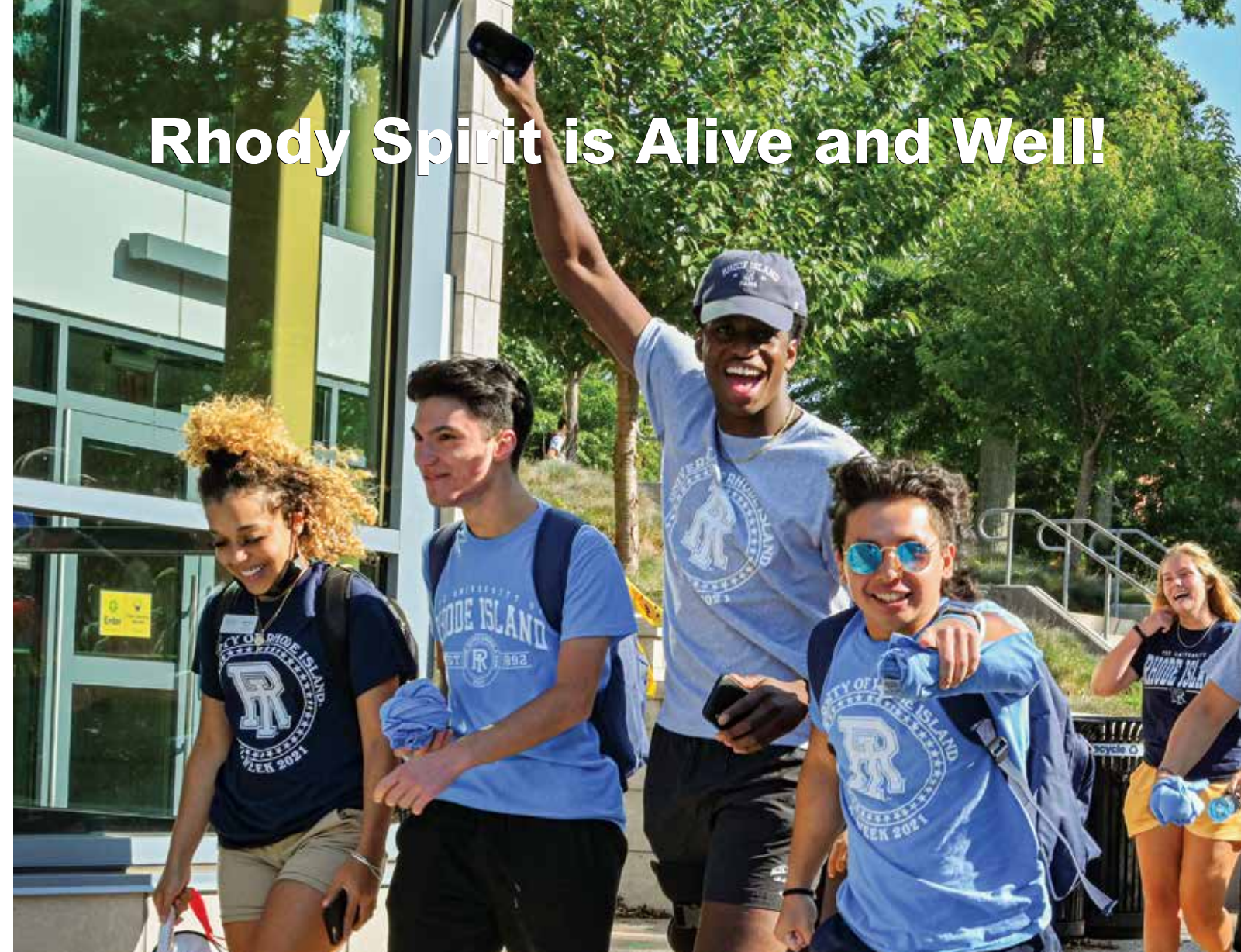
PRESIDENTIAL SPECIAL

This photo (summer 2021) inspired lots of captions. Many could be organized into the following categories:

- *The Three Stooges*
- "Shave and a haircut, two bits"
- The "snip-snip here, snip-snip there and a couple of tra-la-las" grooming scene from the *Wizard of Oz*

In fact, this photo (dated Dec. 20, 1954) shows Edward Rawdon, URI barber and honorary alumnus, getting his hair clipped by URI's fifth president, Carl Woodward (center, behind Rawdon) and two other men. The February 1955 *Alumni Bulletin* says that Rawdon received the "Presidential Special" hair clipping in celebration of his retirement "after 50 years of clipping academic heads, among them five Rhody presidents." The *Bulletin* goes on to say that Rawdon "made himself a place at the heart of campus that cannot be filled."

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= GO RHODY =

Silver Medal for Ram-Led U.S.A. Rowers

University of Rhode Island rowing coach Shelagh Donohoe, along with coxswain Karen Petrik '19 (foreground) and Allie Reilly '19 (behind her), led the U.S. PR3 mixed four with coxswain to the silver medal on Aug. 29, 2021, at the 2020 Paralympic Games in Tokyo.

They covered the 2,000-meter course in 7 minutes, 20.13 seconds, about 11 seconds behind Great Britain in first. France took the bronze with a time of 7:27:04. It was Reilly's third silver in the event in international competition and Petrik's second.

► Read the story by Tony LaRoche '94 at uri.edu/rhodyrowers