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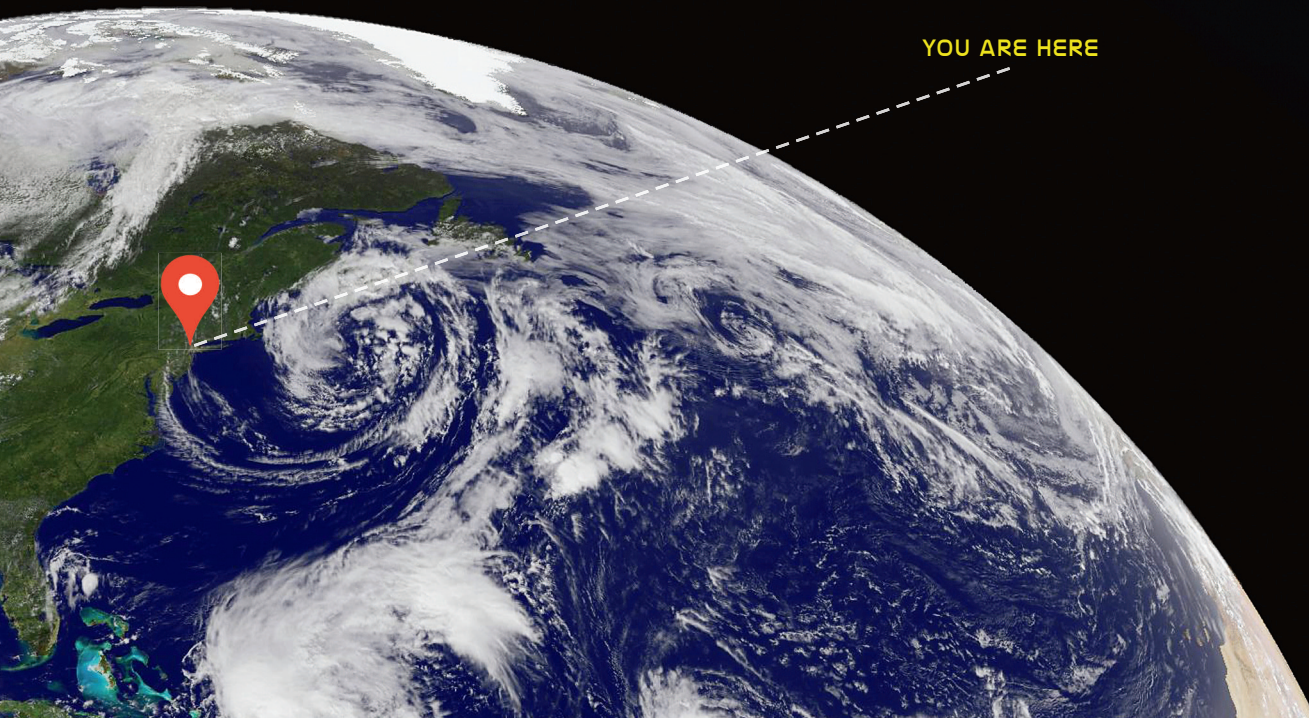
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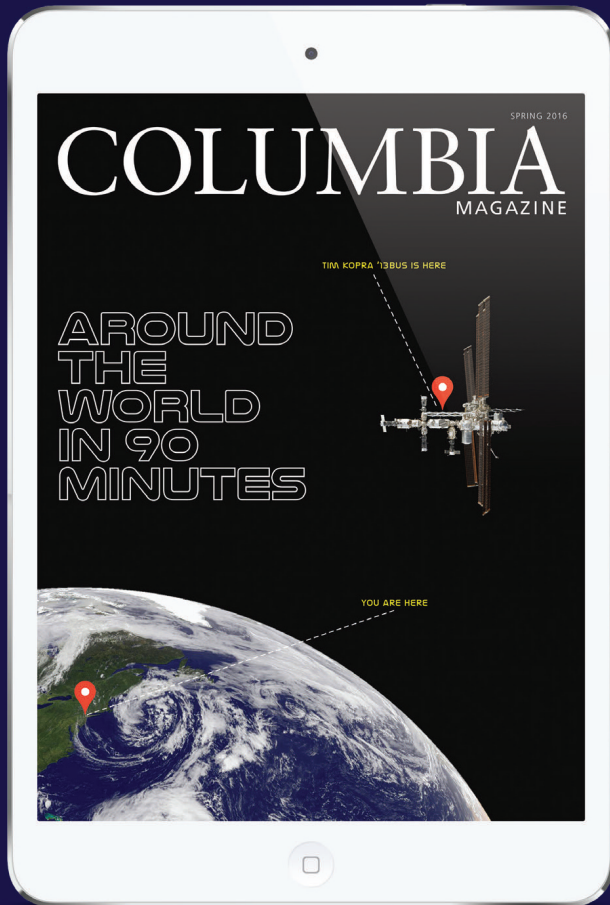


DEPARTMENTS

- 3 **Letters**
- 6 **College Walk**
Strong Opinions . . . Pottery Slam . . .
Glasses Menagerie . . . *The Wire* Goes Ivy
- 44 **Explorations**
- 50 **News**
Alumni Welcome Center named for Susan K. Feagin
. . . Pulitzer Prizes kick off centennial celebration
. . . College launches new campaign . . . Columbia
celebrates completion of David N. Dinkins
archive . . . Kenneth T. Jackson honored with new
endowed chair . . . \$13M gift to establish center for
Japanese art, new faculty chair . . . Columbia joins
White House collaborative to advance equity for
women and girls of color
- 54 **Alumni Newsmakers**
- 58 **Reviews**
- 63 **Classifieds**
- 64 **Finals**

FEATURES

- 10 **Launch Code**
By Paul Hond
Astronaut Tim Kopra '13BUS circles the
planet sixteen times a day. What on Earth
propels him?
- 20 **The Decisive Moment**
On the centennial of the Pulitzer Prize, we
look back at award-winning photos that
captured history
- 28 **Phillip Lopate Celebrates
the Personal Essay**
By Lorraine Glennon
The prolific writer recommends six great
essayists he really thinks you should read
- 36 **Making Light of Death**
By Eric Kester '15SOA
At Columbia's DeathLab, the search for a
cleaner, smarter alternative to burial is a
deeply serious matter
- 40 **Cause and Effect**
By Lauren Savage
Law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw on the
Say Her Name movement and her fight for
gender-inclusive racial justice



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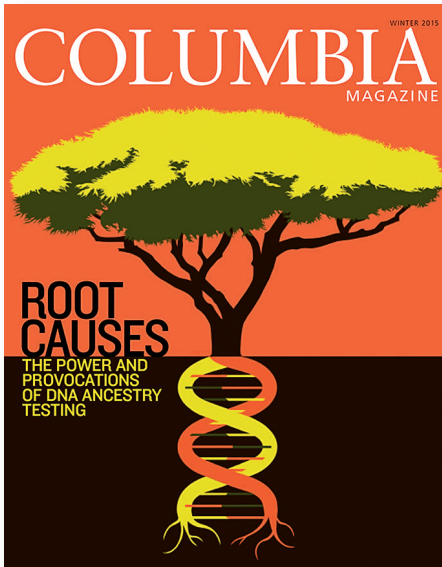
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letters

ISSUE-MINDED

Just wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed reading the entire Winter 2015 issue of *Columbia Magazine*. I especially liked the Explorations section, with all the reports of cutting-edge research. Keep up the great work.

Kathy Cortes '76PH
Morganville, NJ

FOUNDING FATHERS' SECRETS

When Alexander Hamilton entered King's College in 1774, he expected to graduate three or four years later ("Hamilton Is in the House," Winter 2015). His education was interrupted by the American Revolution in 1775. He resigned from the college and quickly joined George Washington's staff as an aide-de-camp. His rise to Founding Father was meteoric. As your article noted, despite his relatively short life, he was the author of most of the Federalist Papers, New York's sole signer of the Constitution, first secretary of the Treasury, architect of our financial system, visionary of an industrial America, father of the Coast Guard, inspector general of the Army, founder of the Federalist Party, and more. Mind-boggling! In addition to all this, he married into New York high society and became one of the top practic-

ing lawyers in that state on his way to becoming a very rich man.

But like his contemporary, Thomas Jefferson, Hamilton had his dark side. Historians have ignored or downplayed this aspect of his life, but it was evident in his social life, his sexual activities, and his relationships with women, all of which throw a depressing light on his moral character. His quite public bedding of Angelica Schuyler, his sister-in-law, whenever his wife was pregnant, did not prevent his face from being recognized in most of the brothels along the East Coast. Hamilton's affair with Maria Reynolds became the great sex scandal of the day. So, though Columbia is justly proud of her student, she must take a dose of that bad with all the good, and remember that Alexander Hamilton is a mixed bag, with justifiably honored contributions to this country's development, but also shortcomings that prevent his being idolized too much by sensible historians.

John B. Moses '45PS
Rexford, NY

The reference to "the evidence that [Thomas Jefferson] fathered children with at least one of [his slaves], Sally Hemings" is categorically false. There is no evidence

at all that Jefferson fathered children with slaves. The infamous DNA experiment some years ago did not prove paternity, because Jefferson's own DNA was not used. Instead, DNA of Jefferson's descendants was employed; that can only prove a family relationship — and there were a dozen or so male Jeffersons (including Jefferson's brother) who could have fathered Hemings's children. Until Jefferson's own DNA is tested, there can be no answer based on science. Ever since this media-distorted story started, I have urged that Jefferson be exhumed to obtain his DNA so this question can be settled. However, the perpetrators of this apparent myth are not interested in a final resolution. Why are they so afraid of discovering the truth via the tools of science?

Philip Ranlet '83GSAS
Middle Village, NY

In 1998, the Thomas Jefferson Foundation, which administers the Monticello historic site, commissioned a comprehensive review of all the evidence, scientific and historical, that Thomas Jefferson fathered children with Sally Hemings. The foundation's report, released in 2000, concluded that Jefferson was most likely the father of all six of Sally Hemings's children.

LETTERS

Ten years later, the foundation affirmed its support for this conclusion and noted that it had become the consensus view of most historians. The report — including a dissenting voice — can be read online at www.monticello.org. — Ed.

BORDER PATROL

In “The Cosmopolites” (Winter 2015), Atossa Araxia Abrahamian wonders if national borders are still relevant. Does she care about freedom of speech and the press? Equal treatment for homosexuals and women? Then borders are relevant. The very fact that people are leaving their places of birth and traveling largely to Western Europe and the United States rather than to — say — Saudi Arabia and China shows that borders are indeed relevant. Western Europe and the United States have democratic governments and free-market economies that have made them strong and successful. If they are to continue to be successful, the French, the Americans, and the English need to be taught to appreciate and honor their national value systems and not dilute them with some vague notion of global citizenship. The Western democratic tradition is under great stress at the moment because of the rising tide of political and economic migrants. US and Western European leaders have a great task ahead of them: to help those in need while at the same time preserving what has made their nations the most successful and humane places on earth.

Carol Crystle '64GSAS
Chicago, IL

POSITIVE ENERGY

Thank you for Rebecca Shapiro's story “Power for the People” (Winter 2015), about the impressive success of Donnel Baird '13BUS in establishing a company that helps low-income communities convert to clean energy and reduce their

DO YOU REMEMBER 1968?



In 2008, while I was preparing a version of my documentary film *A Time to Stir* for the fortieth anniversary of the 1968 Columbia University campus protests, *Columbia Magazine* ran a cover story on my research project (“Stir It Up,” Spring 2008). Eight years later, work continues apace. Thus far, more than five hundred interviews have been filmed, and many boxes of documents and photographs have been located and deposited in the University Archives. I am now working on a book for Columbia University Press on the subject. Both book and film will be ready for the fiftieth anniversary, in 2018. Should readers have any reminiscences of those days, or material relating to the protests of 1968 — including the years leading up to those heady times — please get in touch at pauljcronin@gmail.com or call 646-757-0793.

Paul Cronin '14JRN
New York, NY

energy costs. I suspect that it was fairly easy for Baird to decide to meet with US Department of Energy representatives to present his ultimately successful application for a two-million-dollar contract at the cost of failing a course. But the unexpected bonus that he received of being forced to take a makeup course in which he learned many of the things he needed for assuring the success of his new company must have been particularly sweet. On the other hand, I wonder at the arrogance of the professor who could

not make an accommodation to allow Baird to make up the missed presentation — particularly since this occurred in the business school, where one would expect entrepreneurship to be prized rather than discouraged.

Herbert Weinblatt '62CC, '63SEAS
Chevy Chase, MD

TAKING AIM

I read the full op-ed written by public-health professor Jennifer S. Hirsch about encountering a lovely librarian who was suddenly not so lovely because she admitted to having a gun in every room of her house (“Bullet Points,” Primary Sources,

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Winter 2015). Hirsch contends that she is not naive and that conversations with gun owners are worthwhile to advance her agenda of gun control. Yet she never actually speaks to the librarian. Why not? Perhaps it's easier to carry good intentions than to actually listen to those with opposing views.

I further note the unmistakable left leaning of *Columbia Magazine*. In one issue we learn of people having more heart problems when they live near wells created by fracking, a clean-energy revolution for the poor, a game-theory analysis of climate-change agreements, and "Does democracy pay?" The lack of a semblance of balance in story selection exceeds even my own preconceived notion of the left-leaning agenda of the school. I guess the magazine is playing to who it thinks its readership is. It certainly fails to resonate with me.

Steve Rosenblatt '74SEAS
Houston, TX

VETERANS NEED APPLY

I want to compliment the School of General Studies for its positive affirmation of the value of our student veterans ("New GS dean for student veterans," News, Winter 2015). As a Marine Corps veteran and Harvard graduate, I lived through the period when ROTC was banned from campus both at Harvard and at Columbia. This positive step of appointing a dean for veterans gives me hope for the future. Well done!

Gerard J. Cassedy Jr. '65BUS
Ponte Vedra Beach, FL

Questions?
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Strong Opinions

“What are the consequences if I write something on race at Columbia?” a student asked the panel at a recent discussion titled “Going Public: Writing and Publishing the Op-Ed.” The overflow crowd of two hundred undergrads in Schermerhorn 501 was all ears. So was Glenn Michael Gordon ’10SOA, the assistant director of the Undergraduate Writing Program at Columbia and the event’s creator and host.

The afternoon had been an attention grabber from the get-go. You might have thought that students raised on the Internet would either a) view the traditional op-ed as passé, its power diluted in a sea of opinionated tweets and blog posts, or b) retreat from public discourse altogether,

for fear of nasty comments and forum trolls. Yet the turnout said otherwise, as did Gordon’s introductory remark that, since 2011, when the first-year composition class University Writing began assigning op-eds, students have published more than a hundred of these essays, in places like the *New York Daily News*, the *Baltimore Sun*, *USA Today*, the *Huffington Post*, *Army Times*, the *Atlantic*, *Salon*, the *South China Morning Post*, and a bundle of hometown papers.

You might have thought that students raised on the Internet would view the op-ed as passé.

The panel was made up of five sophomores who had taken University Writing the previous semester and subsequently published their op-eds: Madison Cox linked the scarcity of female engineers to childhood gender socialization in her piece for the *Washington Post*; Adam Croxton, a US Air Force veteran who was raised in a Mississippi trailer park, published an op-ed in the *Columbia Spectator* on student debt and being the first in his family to attend college; songwriter Tinatin Japaridze, in the *Moscow Times*, told of how entering the Eurovision Song Contest after the 2008 Russo-Georgian War laid bare her divided loyalties between Russia, where she grew up, and her native Georgia; Kira LeBron, opining in the *Peoria Journal Star*, urged that paper’s readership to consider the underlying causes of unrest in Ferguson and Baltimore; and Josef Starc, a product of the oft-criticized Oakland public school system, where teachers were negotiating a new contract, wrote in praise of his high-school education in the *Oakland Tribune*.

“In University Writing, students write four essays, the last of which is the op-ed,” says Gordon. “For the first three, you’re working on building an argument. By the time you write your op-ed, you’ve learned to develop your argument and present it within a highly crafted essay.”

Gordon had the panelists read parts of their op-eds aloud, and demonstrated the ways in which all the pieces answered the four questions that editors ask when considering an op-ed: Why you? Why us? Why this? Why now?

Gordon, who is the former editor in chief of Readersdigest.com, strongly encourages students to submit their op-eds for publication, noting that “the word ‘published’ still has a lot of cachet.” He told the audience: “It never hurts a CV to have publications on it — it shows a level of excellence and striving.”

This comment was in response to the student who asked about the risks of writing an op-ed about race. The student, who was white, posed a hypothetical in which, two years after publishing his op-ed, “I apply for a job at Goldman Sachs and they Google my name and say, ‘This guy’s a racist: we can’t hire him.’”

There was a three-second pause before a wave of nervous laughter welled up from the audience and rolled lightly over the room. Gordon jumped in. “You know what? I think partially there’s laughter because it’s the laughter of recognition,” he said. “A lot of people have anxiety about putting themselves out there — putting a strong opinion out there. And there is some truth to the idea that often your biggest critics are people who haven’t even read your op-ed and just react to what they *think* it’s about. So I understand the nature of your question.”

Thus Gordon rescued both the audience (from its assumption that the student had just implied he was racist) and the student (from further snickers). He then asked the panelists if they’d like to address the student’s concern.

“The onus is on you to have a well thought out, clearly communicated piece, so that it can’t be misinterpreted,” said Croxton, the Air Force veteran. “If you hold a controversial view, stick to it. But make sure that it’s smart. I think if you shy away from something that’s controversial, you’re not doing yourself or journalism justice.”

— Paul Hond

Pottery Slam



Rolexes. Cash. Convertibles. There’s almost no limit to the incentives that some recruiting colleges have dangled in front of prized high-school athletes. It’s a matter of leverage, and recruits know when they have it. So when Arizona state wrestling champion Garrett Ryan considered his list of college options, he first made sure his needs would be met.

“There had to be a pottery program,” says Ryan, who weighs in at 240 pounds. “That was the real deal-breaker.”

Ryan, now a sophomore, chose Columbia in part because of the ceramics studio in Teachers College. When the former Ivy League rookie of the year isn’t in Dodge contorting opponents into any shape he

wants, he can often be found in the studio doing a similar number on lumps of clay. With his immense shoulders hunched over a potter’s wheel, he delicately molds vases, cups, and other fine objects.

“I always loved working at the wheel,” says Ryan, who got interested in pottery in a high-school art class. “But it’s not a relaxing or Zen process — it takes a lot of careful focus. You have to be controlled in your movements, keep your muscles locked in place, and be firm with your hands so the clay doesn’t get wobbly.”

It’s this precise, deft, tactile manipulation that links Ryan’s two seemingly disparate passions. In wrestling, he’s known as a strategist who eschews brute strength in favor of composed maneuvers.

3 FACEBOOK PAGES THAT ARE WORTH A LIKE



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“I’m trying to control my opponent and get him into the positions I want,” Ryan explains. “It’s the same for ceramics. I’m trying to keep the clay from going where it wants to go. Clay doesn’t naturally want to keep spinning; it wants to jump outside of the wheel.”

Even with a full course load and wrestling tournaments in places like Cuba and Azerbaijan, Ryan finds time to get his hands gloppy. He says an insatiable pursuit of perfection drives him in both of his crafts. While a layperson looks at a Ryan vase and sees elegance, its creator occasionally sees inconsistent weight distribution or an under-trimmed lip. And while Ivy League officials awarded Ryan all-conference honors his freshman year, the heavyweight tactician only looks ahead.

The 2020 Summer Olympics will be held in Tokyo, and Ryan has designs to be there. And if he makes it to the games in Japan, his family and friends back home will rise at dawn to tune in to his matches, sipping from glazed coffee mugs that were meticulously and lovingly hand-made.

— Eric Kester '15SOA

The Wire Goes Ivy

On a recent Saturday, actor Jamie Hector was in a trailer classroom behind Medgar Evers College in Crown Heights, helping

kids in the Moving Mountains theater company block a scene from *West Side Story*. Hector, who played the sphinx-like drug lord Marlo Stanfield in the HBO drama *The Wire*, founded Moving Mountains in 2007, when the series was in its fifth season. On weekends he would drive from Baltimore to Brooklyn to teach. Now, in his *Wire* afterlife, with acting projects on both coasts, he still makes time for his kids, who are rehearsing for a performance at Columbia on April 9 — the finale of a two-day public event called “*The Wire* — The Conference,” sponsored by the Heyman Center for the Humanities.

The Wire, known for its outstanding writing and acting and its knife-sharp social commentary, is more popular now than it was during its original run (2002–2008). It has also been growing on academia: in the past few years, Harvard

and Yale (among dozens of others) have held conferences on the show.

“Academics are watching TV in ways they haven’t before,” says Heyman Center executive director Eileen Gillooly ’93GSAS, alluding to the rise in the last two decades of the literary quality of the medium. Gillooly, the conference’s organizer, first watched *The Wire* in 2013. She devoured all five seasons that summer, and likens the experience to reading a great book. The show’s creator, David Simon, has volunteered comparisons to Balzac and Greek tragedy, but many critics connect *The Wire* to the sprawling novels of Charles Dickens. Gillooly, a Dickens scholar, notes the shared traits of “interweaving storylines, abundance of characters, inside jokes, use of dialect, critique of public institutions, and a city as main character” — London and Baltimore.

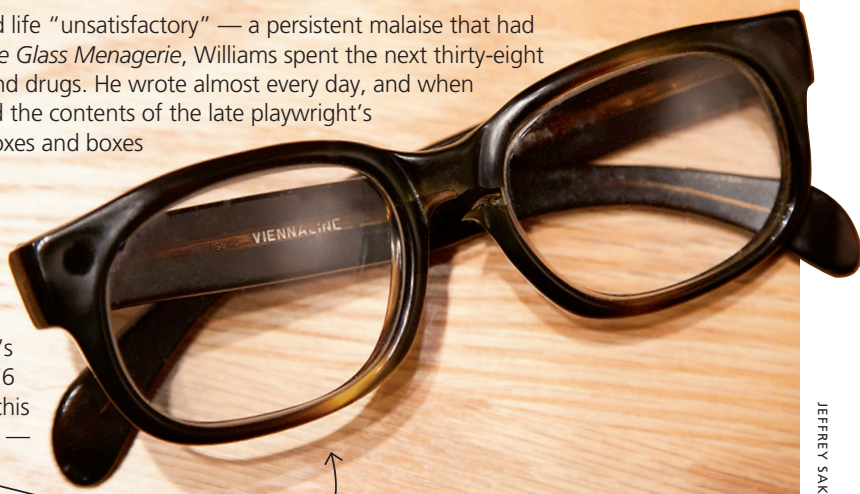
English professor Marcellus Blount, who uses *The Wire* in his classes on race, sexuality, and masculinity, will be part of a conference panel on teaching *The Wire*. “I’m interested in the diversity of Black

HIDDEN COLUMBIA

Glasses Menagerie

Tennessee Williams said that he wrote because he found life “unsatisfactory” — a persistent malaise that had its productive side. After the success of his 1944 play *The Glass Menagerie*, Williams spent the next thirty-eight years trying to escape his demons with dramas, drink, and drugs. He wrote almost every day, and when Columbia’s Rare Book and Manuscript Library purchased the contents of the late playwright’s Key West home in 1994, the bounty was rich indeed: boxes and boxes of his correspondence, memoirs, and manuscripts.

Under curator Jennifer Lee ’76LS, the library acquired additional materials in 2013. These included a draft of Williams’s memoir, a stash of typescripts, and letters from, among others, Paul Bowles, Lillian Gish, and Laurence Olivier. Scholars who wish to view the collection usually request documents related to Williams’s oeuvre, but should they ask to see the contents of box 76 they would find a tooth, a button declaring “The Mariachis Are Here,” a bead key chain, and — no minor accessory — a pair of the playwright’s reading glasses.



JEFFREY SAKS

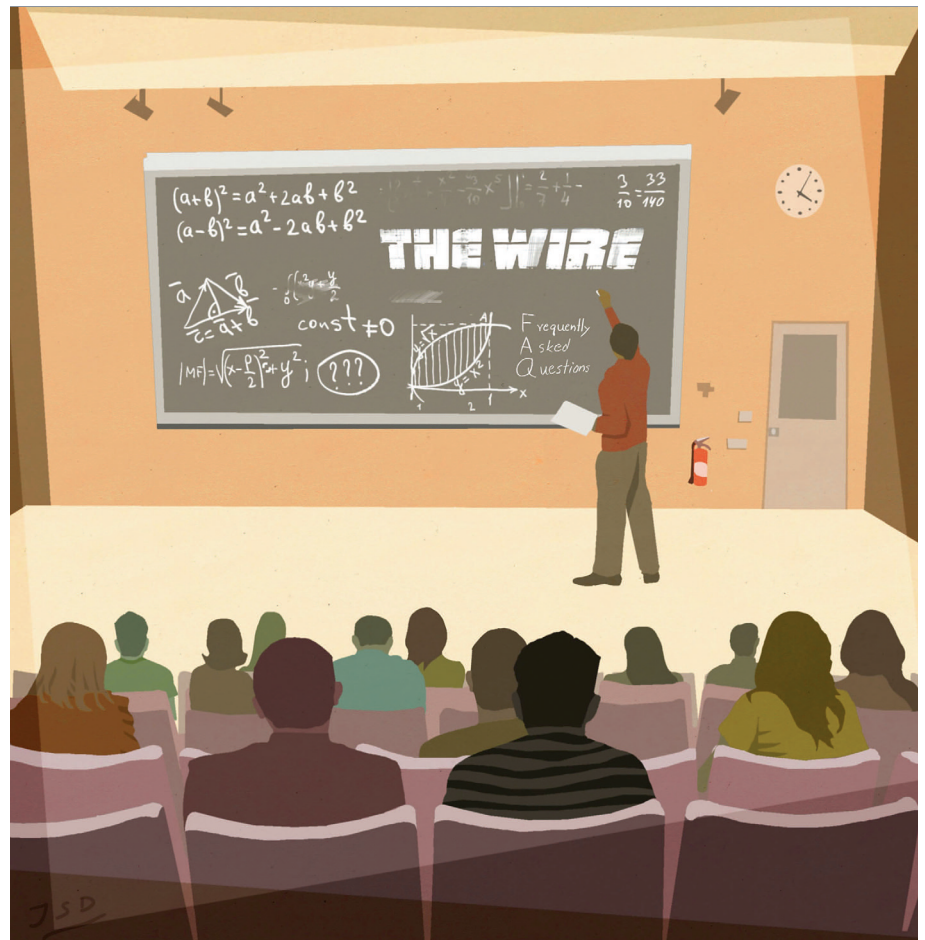
men as characters,” he says. “Black men are represented variously as politicians, police, journalists, and kids caught up in the drug trade. The power of *The Wire* is that characters become individuals, not just social types.

“My question,” he continues, “is how is *The Wire* consumed? The original audience — mostly white, progressive subscribers to HBO — may already have had an appreciation for the complexity of Black life, but part of what drives interest in the series is for the viewer to gain access to another way of living. In that sense, the show, as a work of social realism, can so easily be *mis*-consumed. *The Wire* is not a sociological study of poverty and the drug trade; it’s an artistic interpretation of those realities. The series represents different facets of Baltimore, but there’s a richness of working-class Black life that we only get glimpses of. To the extent that the drug trade is understood by some viewers as representative of Black urban life, that’s really problematic. But *The Wire*, as a fictional work, doesn’t claim to portray the scope and fullness of Black life. It’s the viewers’ responsibility to make that distinction.

“Yet even if they don’t,” Blount says, “*The Wire*, like any great work of art, can still educate the audience.”

The April conference will also include panels on seriality and narrative; on the intersection of race, religion, and politics in cities; on actors and activism, with Jamie Hector, Sonja Sohn (who played narcotics detective Kima Greggs), and other cast members; on immersion journalism, led by TV-news producer and J-school professor June Cross; on the music of *The Wire*, with the show’s music supervisor, Blake Leyh; and on the school-to-prison pipeline.

“As people think about the legacy of *The Wire*, I’m thinking about the legacy of mass incarceration,” says panel organizer Carla Shedd, an assistant professor of sociology and African-American



studies. Shedd examines the paths that young people take from neighborhoods and schools either toward or away from the criminal-justice system. “My research team and I spent a year in juvenile-justice courts, looking at these institutions and who’s coming through them. These are the children of mass incarceration — a legacy of the War on Drugs.”

Jamie Hector can relate, and not just from playing Marlo on *The Wire*. As a teenager in Crown Heights, Hector would drift from school to the street, where trouble was always waiting. His school had no arts classes, and without a structured environment in which to explore his creativity, he might have gone the way of *The Wire*’s corner boys. But come four o’clock, he’d tell his friends, “I’ve got to go — I’ll be back.” He didn’t say where he was going,

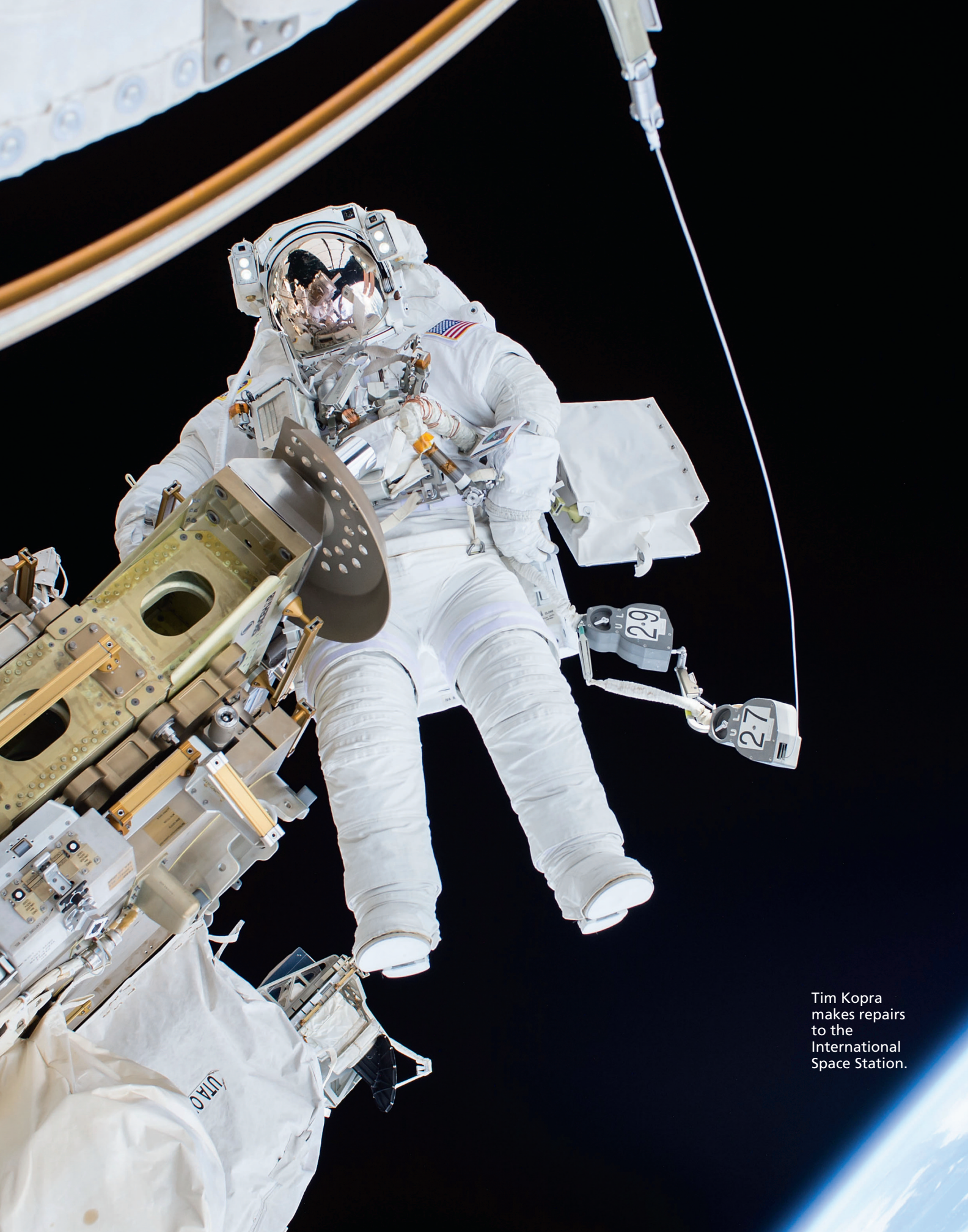
which was to a rehearsal at a youth theater company much like Moving Mountains. Soon, he was studying at the Lee Strasberg studio. His first stage role was a man in prison. His next role was a doctor.

“Actors can change lives and inspire through screen and TV,” says Hector, whose speech is woven through with spiritual aphorisms. “But I also feel the need — because there’s a need in the community — to lay on hands and support and push forward the young’uns that’s coming up out here now. It’s my job, and it’s something I’m truly fascinated by, because you can see it happening. Watching talent grow is something incredible.”

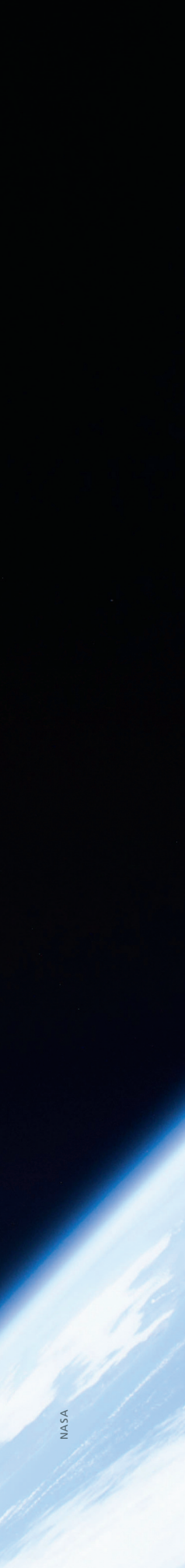
— Paul Hond

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Tim Kopra
makes repairs
to the
International
Space Station.



NASA

HUNTER

MOON

**ASTRONAUT
TIM KOPRA '13BUS
CIRCLES THE
PLANET
SIXTEEN TIMES
A DAY. WHAT
ON EARTH
PROPELS HIM?**

BY PAUL HOND

THE AMERICAN ASTRONAUT

is on his back. In his white suit he lies in the custom-contoured seat, knees bent. That's the best way to take the g-forces. When the rocket zooms toward the atmosphere's dome, the astronaut will feel the pressure of five times his weight — nearly a thousand pounds — drive into his chest.

Through the visor of his helmet he studies the control panel, its dials and buttons marked with Cyrillic characters. He knows this board like the back of his gloved hand, having spent much of the past two years in Star City, the Russian space-training complex near Moscow. Though the spacecraft is fully automatic, no system is infallible, and the astronaut has practiced, ad nauseam, manual docking and manual descent in the Star City simulator. Now he's inside the real thing — a Soyuz spacecraft poised atop a slim Soyuz rocket at the Baikonur Cosmodrome, in the desert steppe of Kazakhstan.

In every sense, Tim Kopra '13BUS is locked in. It is December 15, 2015, just after 5 p.m., and Kopra is in the leftmost seat — the copilot's seat — for Expedition 46 to the International Space Station (ISS). To his right is flight commander Yuri Malenchenko of the Russian Federal Space Agency. To Malenchenko's right is Tim Peake, a Briton from the European Space Agency.

It's freezing in Baikonur and the skies are clear. Not that weather ever matters with the Soyuz. When it's scheduled to go, it goes. It's the most dependable rocket ever built — basically the same type the Soviet Union sent up in 1966, in the heat of the Space Race, when Russo-American cooperation was even more of a fantasy than a 450-ton orbiting lab. Fifty years later, a Soyuz is set to take Kopra and crew to the ISS, which houses voyagers from five space agencies — Russian, American, European, Japanese, and Canadian. The astronauts live and work together for months at a time, studying the effects of microgravity on fluid, fire, plants, microorganisms, and, above all, themselves. With each breath of machine-generated oxygen, each sip of recycled water, they are setting the course for long-term human habitation of space.

Kopra, fifty-two, is a retired Army colonel with a blond buzz cut, an aviator's jaw, and the toothy grin of someone game for a hike at 3 a.m. Since he became an astronaut in 2000, two events — one in the heavens, the other on terra firma — shook his world and altered his path. He won't take a moment of this six-month trip for granted.

Six months in space. Kopra couldn't do it without support at home. No astronaut could. What really makes this launch special for Kopra is that his

family has come all the way to Kazakhstan to see him off: his wife, Dawn; their daughter, Jacqueline, a sophomore at Princeton; and their son, Matt, a first-year West Point cadet.

Wrapped in their coats on the roof of a building less than a mile away, the Koprass gaze at the launch site. The Soyuz stands straight and cold in the red desert, a white spire banded in gray and orange.



A few days before his flight, Kopra takes a moment from his regimented schedule to make a point about orbital mechanics.

"Space Station is moving at 17,500 miles per hour around the earth," he says. "It's continually falling but only slightly descending because of a minuscule amount of drag. This is just as Isaac Newton predicted: he posited that if you shot a cannonball far enough at the right velocity, it would simply go around the planet, which would be curving away at the same rate the object fell. That's what Space Station is doing, at five miles per second. And the Soyuz has to chase it down."

How high up is Space Station? For reference, passenger planes don't fly higher than eight miles in the air. The boundary of outer space is sixty-two miles up. Space Station is about 250 miles above Earth. And since Space Station is falling, its inhabitants

are weightless, just as they'd be in an endlessly dropping elevator.

Kopra calls it "Space Station," never "the space station," as if it were more a place than a thing. It is as wide as a football field (including the dragonfly wings of its solar arrays), and made up of dozens of modules that were put together — in space — starting in 1998. Inside, it's like a human Habitrail: tubular passageways lead to pods and chambers (labs, galleys, sleeping compartments), and white Velcroed walls bristle with hoses and gadgetry. There are windows, too.

In 2009, Kopra went to Space Station on the space shuttle *Endeavour* for a two-month stay. His team brought up parts for the Japanese module, including a platform for experiments, which Kopra attached by operating a robotic arm. This required a five-and-a-half-hour space walk, for which he had to put on a two-hundred-pound protective suit (you don't feel the weight, but the added mass makes your movements harder to control) and then maneuver his tethered bulk through an open hatch and into the black void. Like all space activity, space walks carry risks, whether it's decompression sickness (i.e., the bends) or a suit leak (a meteor as small as a grain of sand can cause a catastrophic nick). Some astronauts have described a primordial fear



of coming unhooked and drifting away in the dark. But generally, they are so focused on their tasks, and secure in the knowledge that, as Kopra says, “thousands of people are working to keep us safe,” that fear takes a back seat.

And you get to fly. Inside Space Station, astronauts move around by a kind of directional floating. “You use handrails to push off, and you go,” Kopra says. “It’s amazing how fast you adapt to zero gravity.” Of his first mission, Kopra says, “I was totally relaxed. Before I knew it, I was carrying things with my legs like it was another day at the office.” The downside is atrophy. “In space, your bones lose calcium and your muscles weaken because they have no gravity to fight.” For that reason, astronauts

sets every forty-five minutes. “Those stripes of color on the horizon: violet to blue to yellow to orange to red. It was so beautiful it didn’t look real,” Kopra says. “In daylight you could see a thin film covering the planet — the atmosphere. All else was the blackness of space.

“You begin to realize that you have the earth, and then you have *nothing*. You recognize that we’re really, really alone.”



Wake up, Timmy! Wake up!

Danny Kopra yanked his baby brother from his dreams and set him in front of the TV.

Texas (just 150 miles west of Mission Control in Houston, which might as well have been the center of the universe), the brothers watched Neil Armstrong in his puffy white spacesuit bounce on the surface of the moon.

Like millions of other kids, Kopra thought: *I want to be an astronaut.*

Three years later, Danny woke his brother again, this time after midnight, to watch Apollo 17, the last lunar mission. While the rest of the family slept — their older brother, Andy; their dad, Lennart, the son of Finnish immigrants and a communications professor at the University of Texas; and their mom, Martha, the daughter of a Lutheran pastor — Tim and Danny watched the Saturn V rocket blast off in a

performing companies in the cadet corps. Tim led by positive motivation. He led by example. He set a high bar for every goal and made you want to achieve that goal. People wanted to follow him.”

One day in 1981, as Kopra was eating in the mess hall with 4,500 other cadets, three alumni guests got up to speak. These men were all former astronauts. One of them, Frank Borman, was commander of Apollo 8, the mission on which humans first orbited the moon. “I didn’t have sports heroes growing up,” Kopra says. “My idols were astronauts. To think that Borman had once been a plebe himself and sat in this same mess hall — and became

“THOSE STRIPES OF COLOR ON THE HORIZON: VIOLET TO BLUE TO YELLOW TO ORANGE TO RED. IT WAS SO BEAUTIFUL IT DIDN'T LOOK REAL.”

must exercise at least two hours a day on special equipment. There’s a treadmill with a harness, and a device that uses resistance to mimic the effects of weightlifting.

When they’re not working (which is seldom), astronauts can read, watch movies, listen to music, and send e-mails (there is Internet service onboard). Kopra’s favorite pastime on his first mission was looking out the window. On Space Station, the sun rises or

The screen showed black-and-white images of something so incredible that even six-year-old Tim, up past his bedtime and enlivened by the bolt of history and his brother’s excitement, could grasp its importance. Danny, who was twelve, had a desk crowded with models of Gemini and Apollo rockets. He was born in 1957, the year the Soviets launched Sputnik, the world’s first artificial satellite. Tim was born in 1963, a year after John Glenn became the first American to orbit Earth. Now, on July 20, 1969, at 9:56 p.m. in Austin,

fiery convulsion that turned the nighttime into day.



Kopra, a former Boy Scout, had always been geared toward leadership and service, and when it came time for college, he was accepted to West Point.

“Tim was commander of his cadet company,” says Sean McDevitt, a West Point classmate. “It was one of the top-

an astronaut. Suddenly the dream didn’t seem so crazy.”

That same year, on April 12, a new vehicle, Space Shuttle *Columbia*, took off from Cape Canaveral, Florida, and returned two days later, landing like a glider — the world’s first reusable spacecraft.



After four years at West Point, Kopra had to decide what branch of the Army to serve in. He chose aviation.

EXTREME ENGINEERING

SPACE VOYAGER MIKE MASSIMINO '84SEAS PUSHES STUDENTS TO THE FRONTIER OF THE POSSIBLE

It wasn't just the thrill of flying that lit the flame in his gut. "For me, it's about having a task, performing it as well as you can, and always finding room for improvement," he says. "What I like about aviation is that it requires a blend of technical, operational, and leadership skills. It's extremely demanding." He spent three years at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, in the 101st Airborne, training on scout helicopters like the Bell OH-58 Kiowa — "no buzzers or whistles, no GPS, just a manual and maps."

In May 1990, Kopra married Dawn Lehman of Lewisburg, Kentucky. That summer, Iraq invaded Kuwait. By fall, Kopra had completed training in an Apache helicopter — essentially a flying tank, with night vision and three weapon systems to take out armored vehicles. By December, Kopra was flying Apaches in Operation Desert Shield.

After the war, Kopra went to school and became an experimental test pilot, an elite and dangerous job whose most famous practitioner was the original sound-barrier buster, Chuck Yeager. These pilots explore the outer limits, take a machine to the screaming edge of its capacity. Or, as Kopra puts it: "If an aircraft has a new weapon system or new aerodynamic qualities, you have to try them out."

He was aware, of course, that America's first astronauts — the Mercury Seven — had all been test pilots. Where else was there to go, really, but up?

The career of an astronaut comes with high highs and low lows. For Mike Massimino '84SEAS, a professor of engineering at Columbia, some of the former came when he flew to fix the Hubble Space Telescope. Some of the latter came when he was an engineering student, struggling with difficult coursework.

In 2014, Massimino, a retired NASA astronaut, joined the faculty of the Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science, where he met "talented students with big dreams." Knowing the price of those dreams — like surviving that mind-melting class in electromagnetics — he reflected on ways to keep students inspired.

"I was at a 9/11 charity event and I met Gerry Cooney, the former heavyweight boxer," Massimino says, by way of illustration. "Cooney said to me, 'What was it like to fly in space?' And I said, 'Never mind that: what was it like to get hit by George Foreman?' And he said, 'Mike, I loved every minute of it.' Another time, I watched a movie about Navy SEALs doing all these dangerous things. The next day I saw a SEAL friend in the gym. I said, 'Did you *like* doing that stuff? Are you out of your mind?' And he said, 'Did you like space walking?' I said, 'Yeah.' He said, 'Are you out of *your* mind?'"

"The point is, people don't do these things for the money. They do it for love."

Love. For Massimino, it's the common thread among people he knows who lead what he calls "extraordinary lives" — athletes, rock stars, race-car drivers. It seems so simple, until you realize that few people labor by such pure light.

"If you're a test pilot, you have to really love flying airplanes," Massimino says. "That's why kids get interested in engineering or science: something clicks — maybe it's a teacher, or a show on TV — and they're hooked."

"But engineering isn't necessarily a fun field of study. It can be devastating when you start taking these classes and get your butt kicked. It happened to me: I was a junior, majoring in

industrial engineering, and I thought, 'What am I doing?' It's tough. But if you stick it out, you get a very valuable education, and a ticket to do really cool things." Like perform thirty hours of space walks and become the first person to tweet from space.

Last spring, Mary Boyce, dean of SEAS, approached Massimino with the idea to start Extreme Engineering, a series of talks and videos introducing students to high-flying people who show what can happen if you keep the light burning through the withering gusts of your thermodynamics class. "It's a way to keep students excited about what they might do in the future," Massimino says.

So far, Extreme Engineering has featured a discussion on the movie *The Martian*, which

included the screenwriter, the producer, and NASA's chief of robotics; a visit from Alfred Scott McLaren, a former submarine captain and polar explorer; and a chat with Scott Altman, a pilot and astronaut who flew stunt scenes in *Top Gun*.

Moved by these talks, a dozen of Massimino's students formed the Columbia Space Initiative, made up of

students and professors dedicated to space research. The group has already applied for NASA grants. "They're a ball of fire," Massimino says.

Massimino, who went to Hubble on the space shuttle *Columbia* in 2002 and on *Atlantis* in 2009, thinks engineering students in all fields have good reason to be excited. Take aerospace: in the 1960s, he says, "astronauts were celebrities. They were invited on JFK's boat. If you wanted to go to space, you had to become Neil Armstrong." Today, however, space-travel companies like Virgin Galactic and SpaceX are creating new opportunities for engineers. "You can be an entrepreneur, or even come up with your own spaceship design."

In other words, the sky is no longer the limit. And Massimino knows what's on the other side of that rump-bruising course in logistics.

"My space walk," he says, "is the highlight of my life."



Michael
Massimino
'84SEAS

00:06

In 1998, NASA invited Kopra to work as an engineer at Johnson Space Center in Houston. It was a sign that the agency saw Kopra as astronaut material. After two years, Kopra, now a father of two, applied for the astronaut class of 2000. NASA was looking for seventeen people: doctors, pilots, flight-test engineers, and scientists. Six thousand applicants were whittled down to six hundred, then to 120, Kopra included. He was brought in for tests and an interview. The interview was key. You sat facing eighteen NASA representatives and were basically asked one question: what have you done since high school?

recognized that the real work was just beginning.” He spent the next two years learning about the space shuttle and Space Station, and how to operate their systems.

By 2003, Kopra was in line to go to space. That’s when things changed.

00:05

On January 16, 2003, the space shuttle *Columbia* lifted off from Cape Canaveral with a crew of seven for a two-week research trip. Eighty-two seconds into the launch, a piece of foam insulation broke off

Kopra was called to assist in the recovery mission. His job was to help organize the recovery of *Columbia* using helicopters and airplanes to identify debris, which was then retrieved by a ground force of 3,500 firefighters and volunteers combing the East Texas woods.

Shuttle launches were suspended for thirty months. During that time, the space-station program relied on the Soyuz to carry personnel, and Space Station crews were reduced to two people.

It was a grim period for Kopra. The loss of *Columbia* was a terrible blow. Then, in 2005, Danny Kopra died of a heart attack at forty-eight.

On July 15, 2009, Kopra went to space. Neither his father, who died in 1998, nor Danny was able to see it, but

space-shuttle program was ending, and Kopra was to be a part of history.

00:04

The front tire hit a slick spot and the astronaut went flying. It was January 15, 2011. Six weeks before *Discovery*’s final mission, Kopra was sprawled on the asphalt of a suburban Houston street. His bicycle lay nearby.

Dawn Kopra drove up and saw her husband lying there. Her heart dropped. He was conscious, but in severe pain. His hip was broken.

Kopra couldn’t believe it. He’d trained for more than a year, endured a string of launch delays, hurled himself

HE'D TRAINED FOR MORE THAN A YEAR, ENDURED A STRING OF LAUNCH DELAYS, HURLED HIMSELF INTO THE JOB BODY AND SOUL — AND NOW THIS.

Kopra had done a few things since high school. He started going over them.

He was testing hardware at Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama, when the phone rang. It was the deputy director of Johnson Space Center calling. Kopra had been selected.

“I was overwhelmed,” Kopra says. “You dream of this as a kid, and now it was actually happening. It’s a pinnacle moment. At the same time, I

from the external fuel tank and struck the thermal protection tiles on the left wing, punching a dinner-plate-sized hole. The shuttle made it to orbit, and the mission went as planned. On February 1, *Columbia* headed back to Earth. Just after 9 a.m., the shuttle reentered the atmosphere, a high-friction event that produced three-thousand-degree heat on the craft’s protected surface. Hot gases entered the gash in the wing, and the shuttle broke apart, forty miles above East Texas. Fragments fell across a two-thousand-square-mile swath.

his mother and his brother Andy were there. Dawn and the kids got to watch from a rooftop at Kennedy Space Center as *Endeavour*, bound for Space Station, rose from great cauliflower clouds on a column of flame.

Kopra returned to Earth on September 11, 2009, aboard *Discovery*. Even before he got his gravity legs back, NASA invited him to go on *Discovery*’s final flight. The

into the job body and soul — and now *this*. “Astronaut Tim Kopra Injured in Bike Accident,” reported CBS News. Given the extent of his injury, there was no chance of his flying on *Discovery*.

Kopra was crushed. For him, there could be few worse things than being scratched from a mission. But that wasn’t all: with the shuttle program ending and fewer astronauts going up, Kopra was staring at the end of his space career.

Grounded, Kopra mulled his options. “I’d been a military

guy, and was a government guy,” he says. “I didn’t have much experience in the business world, but I’d always had an interest.” Now he had time. He applied to Columbia Business School’s executive MBA program and got in. “My primary focus was to learn some new skills and also to better understand what opportunities are out there.”

Kopra, who had earned a master’s degree in aerospace engineering from Georgia Tech in 1995, liked grappling with arcane concepts. “At Columbia, I tried to learn something I knew little about, which is finance, and tried to focus on something I knew more about, which is leadership,” he says. The twenty-month part-time course also allowed Kopra to see the world in a way he couldn’t from a spacecraft window. “I took a class in Buenos Aires, so I spent a week there. One of the lectures was in Dubai, and I spent a week there. NASA agreed to let me take these breaks, and I balanced my work and business school.

“In my B-school classes, we learned about human behavior, decision-making, leadership techniques, and organizational structure. What I found is that leadership, whether in the military, in the space program, or in business, is always about the same thing: people.”

For Kopra, the executive MBA program was “one of the best experiences of my life,” and not least for how it expanded his social orbit. “I now have great friends in Peru and Mauritius,” he says. “Who’d have thunk?”



With an MBA in hand, Kopra was preparing for his future — but it was a future he hoped to delay. There was other business he had to attend to.

“A lot of people would have given up after that injury,” says McDevitt, Kopra’s West Point classmate. “They would have said, ‘That’s the end of my space career.’” But once doctors confirmed he could recover, Kopra immediately began training to be eligible for another space flight. “He was absolutely determined to push forward,” says McDevitt. “That’s the embodiment of Tim. He turned a devastating, apparently career-ending injury into a situation where he’s going to be the commander of Space Station.”

If you’re going to come back, you might as well come back all the way. As Space Station commander, Kopra will be responsible for operations inside and outside the ISS, and for maintaining the cohesion of the crew. He calls it “a unique leadership challenge,” in that it involves a few people onboard and an enormous team on the ground. “Good communication is absolutely critical,” he says.

Listening to Kopra talk leadership and teamwork just as the first space tourists are piercing the atmosphere in commercial rockets is a good reminder that astronauts are in it for more than the adventure.

“Sometimes people think astronauts are just big risk takers, thrill seekers,” Kopra says. “I don’t think that’s the case. What motivates us is the

mission. If anything, one of the greatest skills of the people in our profession is being able to *assess* risk. When your life is in peril, your personal radar for understanding where you are becomes highly attuned.

“That said, there’s definitely a sense of excitement in riding on a rocket and docking at Space Station. It’s an experience of a lifetime. I remember undocking and looking at Space Station, and just being in awe. You can’t even describe how cool this thing is, and not simply because of how big it is and how complex it is, but for what it represents: all these nations and the human effort to build this thing — *in space*. It’s mind-blowing.”



The first time Kopra saw Earth from space was in 2009, when he went from *Endeavour*’s mid-deck to the flight deck and looked out the window. His response to the planet as seen from space was physiological. Kopra’s internal instruments of balance and vision were thrown; the sight of the earth moving made him feel as if he’d spun briskly around in a chair and stood up. It took a little time to adjust.

But even more disorienting is returning to Earth. After a couple of months of weightlessness, your hand-eye synchronization is wonky and your inner-ear settings are shut off, and you have to spend forty-five days in a rehab program to regain muscle strength. “It’s a little miserable,” Kopra says with a laugh. “For the first two days,

SPACE ACADEMY

MEET SIX OTHER
ASTRONAUTS
WHO REALLY MADE
THE GRADE



KEN BOWERSOX '79SEAS
Missions: 1992, 1993, 1995,
1997, 2002–03



KEVIN CHILTON '77SEAS
Missions: 1992, 1996, 1998



WILLIAM G. GREGORY '80SEAS
Missions: 1995



GREGORY H. JOHNSON '85SEAS
Missions: 2008, 2011



STORY MUSGRAVE '64PS
Missions: 1983, 1985, 1989,
1991, 1993, 1996



EUGENE TRINH '72SEAS
Missions: 1992

**"WHEN I WAS SIX, EVERY KID
WANTED TO BE AN ASTRONAUT.
THE SPACE PROGRAM WAS A
GREAT OBJECTIVE, AND A VERY
CLEAR ONE."**



it's like a cross between the flu and a terrible hangover.”

Time will tell how a six-month trip affects him. But he already knows what he wants to do after he comes back this spring, as “therapy.” He wants to get a motorcycle.



On a cold day in Moscow three weeks before his launch, Kopra walked through the All-Russia Exhibition Center, a vast park of space-themed sculptures and monuments, aircraft and spacecraft, and a museum honoring Russian space achievement, especially the career of Yuri Gagarin. “Space is like a religion here,” Kopra said. He thought it was cool that his Soyuz would lift off from the same platform that launched Gagarin on April 12, 1961. That day, Gagarin became the first human being in space. Sacred stuff.

The aura of hallowed tradition could be felt, too, in the prelaunch hours in the hangar at the Baikonur Cosmodrome, where the press trailed the crew through its final preparations: suit fittings, pressure checks, simulated drills, capsule inspection, and the blessing of a Russian Orthodox priest. Kopra took it in. He was genial with reporters and reverent toward his crewmates — the stoic Malenchenko, one of the most accomplished cosmonauts in history (“a rock star,” says Kopra), and the cheery, unassuming Peake, the first Briton to visit Space Station. “I’m blessed to go up with them,” Kopra said.

With supporters waiting outside, the trio left the hangar in blue flight suits to board the bus to the launch pad (Kopra, all grins and thumbs up, called out to friends in the crowd: “Party in July!”). At the launch site they changed into their pressure suits, walked toward the virtuous missile, and rode the elevator up the service tower to the orbital module, 150 feet in the air. Soon they’d be higher than that.



White fumes curled from the four conical rocket boosters clustered around the core rocket. That was how Dawn Kopra knew it was time. There was no countdown clock like in Florida. The smoke swelled and flashed with light, the four fueling towers retracted like a flower opening up, and the rocket lifted from the platform. The bright-orange gases of burning propellant fluttered from the exhaust nozzle with an infernal rumble. In moments, the rocket became a flaming diamond, and let loose a fabulous white contrail that stroked the sky and cast a shadow over the desert; the Soyuz, now a twinkling spur, jettisoned its boosters and disappeared. Eight minutes after liftoff, Kopra was in orbit.

The chase was on. Six hours later, a view from Space Station revealed the Soyuz approaching like a metallic bug with solar-panel wings. It drew closer against the swiftly moving backdrop of a luminous blue sphere marbled and feathered

with white clouds. At 17,500 miles per hour, the Soyuz had reached its destination. It was time to dock.

In a theater in Baikonur, the Kopra family sat with the other families, watching the event live on a big screen. With the Soyuz a few hundred feet from port, something odd happened. The Soyuz backed away. A glitch in the onboard computer caused the automated docking system to shut down — a rare event. Malenchenko would have to attempt a manual docking.

Dawn Kopra wasn’t worried. She knew Malenchenko and had confidence in him and the crew. Faith, she says — “faith in God, faith in Tim, faith in the team” — helps her cope with the anxiety of having a loved one blast into space, live aboard a satellite, undock and reenter the atmosphere in a capsule at blistering speeds, and land, not so softly, under a subsiding parachute in the Kazakhstan steppe. In any case, she feels that Kopra is safer in space than he’d been in other locales. “I just remind myself that at least he’s not deployed,” she says. “No one is actively trying to hurt him.”

Malenchenko, on the second try, lined up the crosshairs and docked the Soyuz. Applause and exhalations on the ground. Higher up, the crewmates of Expedition 46 wriggled through a hatch and into the falling laboratory, where the three current residents, including Scott Kelly, an American

who’d been onboard since March 2015, greeted them.

Days after Kopra’s arrival, a problem was discovered on the station’s exterior. A rail car for the mobile transporter had stalled, and it had to be fixed before the next supply ship arrived. This required an unplanned space walk. The task fell to Kopra and Kelly. Tim Peake and cosmonaut Sergey Volkov helped the Americans into their protective suits. Kelly and Kopra stepped out into space and quickly got the rail car unstuck. When they poked back inside, there were slow-motion fist bumps all around.

Kopra, circling the earth, was home.

Once, he had awakened to a world in which humans walked on the moon. Now he was testing the limits of human duration in space, a grand experiment that was pointing in the direction of the unthinkable: a journey to Mars. NASA wants to send humans to the red planet by the 2030s, and is now recruiting astronauts for that purpose.

“When I was six, every kid wanted to be an astronaut,” Kopra said that day at the All-Russia Exhibition Center. He was standing near *Monument to the Conquerors of Space*, a 1964 titanium sculpture of a 350-foot contrail curving upward, capped with a small rocket. “The space program was a great objective, and a very clear one.” Kopra paused. “Astronauts were serving their country. They were also serving humanity.” 🇺🇸





1942

A sailor in a lifeboat adrift on the Indian Ocean pleads for water. These sailors (and the photographer) had been traveling on a freighter bound from Singapore to Burma when it was sunk by a Japanese torpedo.

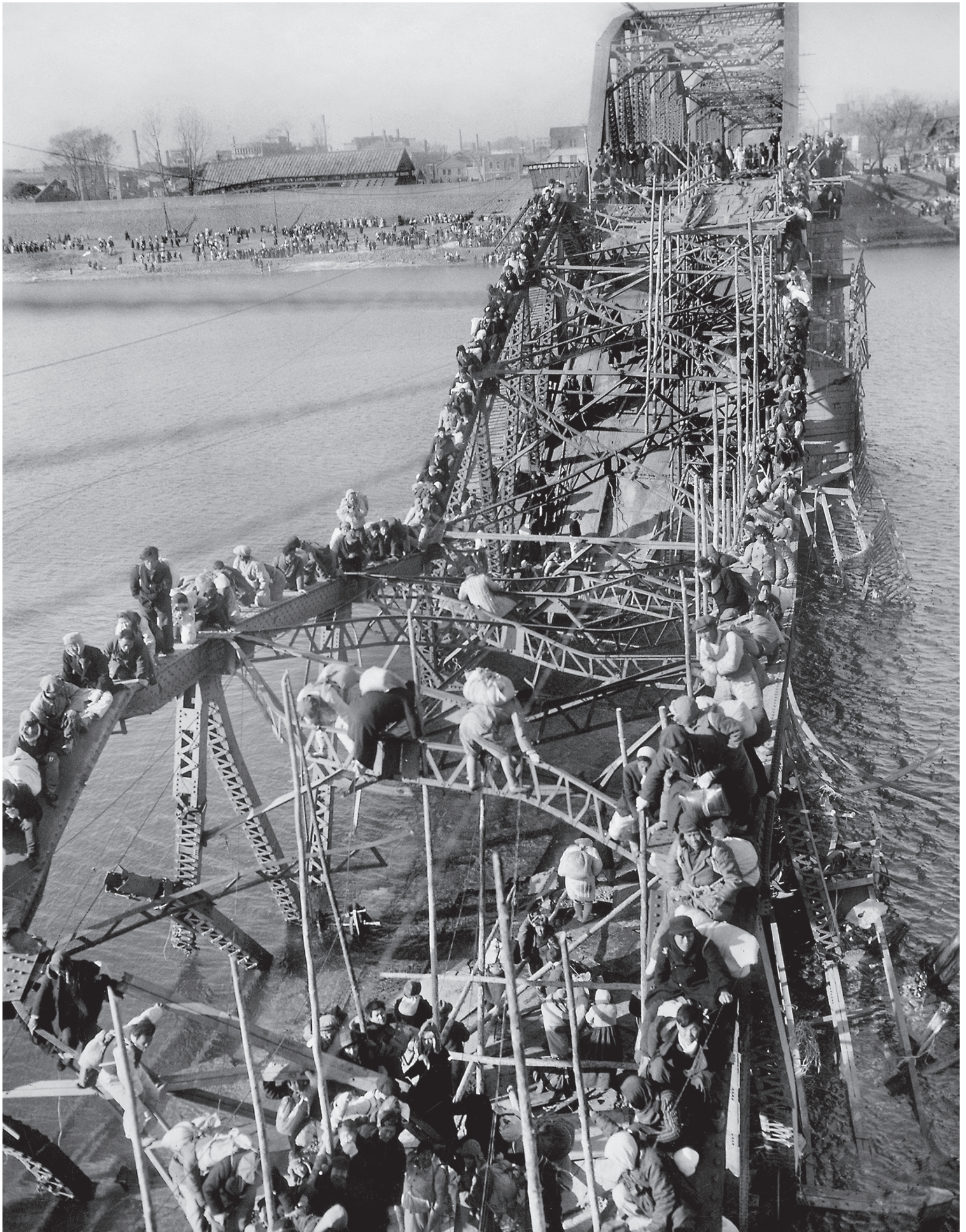
FRANK NOEL

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

“Photography,” wrote Henri Cartier-Bresson, “is the simultaneous recognition, in a fraction of a second, of the significance of an event as well as of a precise organization of forms which give that event its proper expression.” Cartier-Bresson understood that, with the click of a shutter, a photographer might not only capture a moment in time, but reveal a deeper truth about humanity.

This year, as Columbia marks the 100th anniversary of its Pulitzer Prizes and celebrates Graduate School of Journalism founder Joseph Pulitzer, we look back at some award-winning images that, in capturing a decisive moment, bore witness not just to a single event, but to history in the making.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF AP IMAGES



1950

North Korean refugees crawl over a bridge's shattered girders as they flee south to escape the advance of Chinese Communist troops. The Chinese entered the Korean War as allies of North Korea; US troops battled on the side of South Korea.

MAX DESFOR

1961

With their heads bowed, President John F. Kennedy, left, and former US and Columbia president Dwight D. Eisenhower '47HON walk along a path at Camp David, near Thurmont, Maryland, on April 22, 1961. The two met to discuss the Bay of Pigs invasion.

PAUL VATHIS



1973

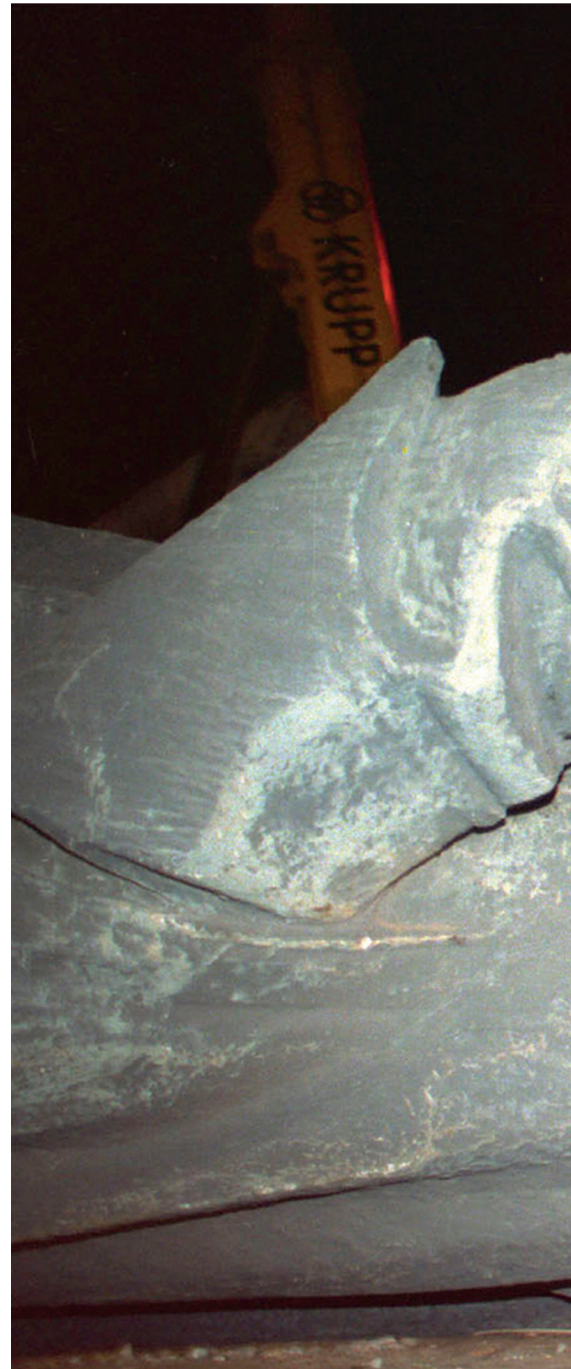
Released prisoner of war Lt. Col. Robert L. Stirm is greeted by his family at Travis Air Force Base, in Fairfield, California, as he returns home from the Vietnam War. Pictured, from left, are Stirm's daughter Lorrie; his son Robert; his daughter Cynthia; his wife Loretta; and his son Roger.

SLAVA VEDER

1981

Secret Service agent Timothy J. McCarthy, foreground; police officer Thomas K. Delahanty, center; and presidential press secretary James Brady, background, lie wounded outside a Washington hotel after John Hinckley Jr. fired six shots into a crowd on March 30, 1981, in an attempt to assassinate President Ronald Reagan.

RON EDMONDS





1991

People step on a statue of Felix Dzerzhinsky — the founder and chief of the Soviet secret police, later known as the KGB — which was toppled in front of the KGB headquarters in Moscow on August 23, 1991.

ALEXANDER ZEMLIANICHENKO



“IF IT MAKES
IT RIPS OUT

2004

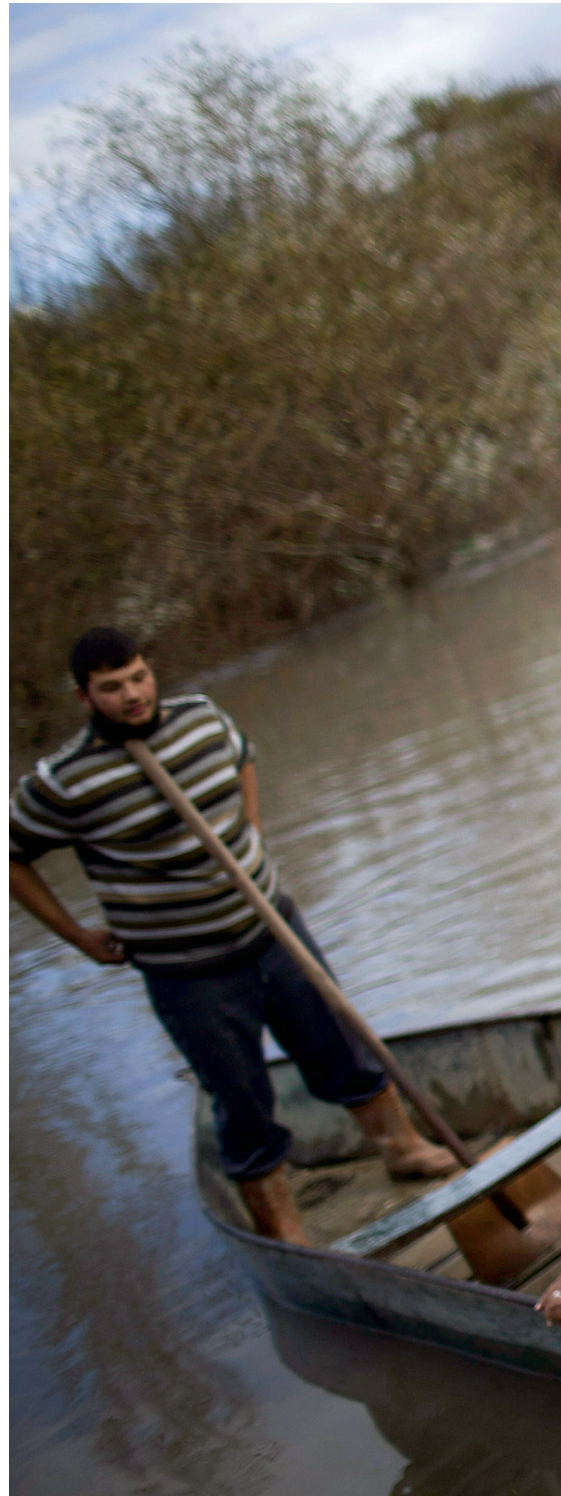
A detainee in an outdoor solitary-confinement cell talks with a military policeman at the Abu Ghraib prison, on the outskirts of Baghdad. This photograph is one in a portfolio of twenty taken by eleven different Associated Press photographers in Iraq throughout 2004.

JOHN MOORE

2012

Syrian refugees cross into Turkey via the Orontes River, near the village of Hacıpasa, Turkey.

MANU BRABO



YOU LAUGH, IF IT MAKES YOU CRY, IF
YOUR HEART, THAT'S A GOOD PICTURE."

—Eddie Adams, 1969 Pulitzer Prize winner



O

ne day in the 1980s, the writer Phillip Lopate '64CC stood before the bookcase of a vacation home he had rented for the summer, looking for something to read. His eyes fell on a volume by William Hazlitt, and though Lopate wasn't deeply familiar with the Romantic Age essayist and critic, he pulled the book from the shelf and carried it outside to a hammock. Instantly, he became immersed in Hazlitt's forthright, conversational voice.

Hazlitt led Lopate to Charles Lamb, Hazlitt's close friend and a distinguished essayist himself. Both these Englishmen referred often to Montaigne, the sixteenth-century French writer who is credited with inventing the modern essay and giving it its name (which derives from the French verb *essayer*, or "to try"). "By the time I got to Montaigne,"

Lopate says, "I was completely hooked on the form."

Thirty years later, Lopate, who is the director of the nonfiction concentration in the graduate writing program at Columbia's School of the Arts, sits in his light-filled four-story brownstone in Carroll Gardens, Brooklyn, and speaks about the personal essay — the literary form of which he is a leading practitioner, advocate, and connoisseur.

Lopate, seventy-two, has worked hard to get this underappreciated form embraced not merely within the academy (long dominated by poetry,

drama, and fiction), but also, perhaps more improbably, in bookstores and on bestseller lists. Meghan

Daum, Leslie Jamison, John Jeremiah Sullivan, John D'Agata, and a host of other writers who've recently published popular personal-essay collections owe at least a modicum of their success to this man.

Lopate doesn't disagree with that assessment ("There are far more essayists and the essay is definitely more popular today than it was thirty years ago, and

I'll take a little credit for that"), but he also believes that the genre is uniquely suited to the times we live in. The rise of digital media has brought with it a flood of sharing

and storytelling in the form of blogs, and in an era of ever-briefer attention spans, "an essay is short and rarely takes more than an hour to read."

"There's also the fact that this form is comfortable with skepticism, doubt, and self-doubt," says Lopate. "Instead of

lecturing you, it invites you into the pathways of the mind of a writer who's examining, testing, and speculating. As [German social theorist Theodor] Adorno said, the essay isn't responsible for *solving* anything. And that suits an historical moment that's filled with uncertainty and mistrust of dogmatism."

Lopate had always been fond of first-person narration, both in his writing (fiction, poetry, and the memoir-like pieces he began publishing in the 1970s) and in his reading. "I loved Dostoyevsky's *Notes from Underground* and Browning's 'My Last Duchess,'" he says. "The narrator didn't have to be reliable or even likable; he or she just had to be lively." So, naturally, when he encountered the confiding, distinctive voices of essayists like Hazlitt, Lamb, and Montaigne, he began to seek out similar writers, for the pure pleasure of their company. His discovery of these past masters of the essay deepened his interest in

PHILLIP LOPATE CELEBRATES THE PERSONAL ESSAY

*(and recommends
six great essayists
he really thinks you
should read)*

By Lorraine Glennon
Illustrations by
Demetrios Psillos



psillos

the form and its roots, and he began teaching the personal essay in his literature courses at the University of Houston, where he was a faculty member from 1980 to 1988. But when he started scouring the book catalogs for an anthology to assign his students, he found nothing suitable. “There were collections of contemporary works, but there was nothing historical, nothing that suggested the canon going all the way back.” Now Lopate had a mission: “It was up to me to produce the anthology I was looking for.”

He got a contract for that collection, and the result, published in 1994, was *The Art of the Personal Essay*, which takes the reader from the ancient musings of Seneca and Plutarch to the modern ones of Annie Dillard and Gore Vidal. The book has been widely adopted by colleges and universities, for use in survey courses as well as courses that focus specifically on the essay. And thus did this Rodney Dangerfield of genres (“The essay has been considered minor even though it’s an ancient, distinguished form,” Lopate says) assume its rightful place in academia. Lopate’s collection

“I don’t want the experience of reading somebody who’s tormented. That sounds very narrow of me, but on some level I’m still looking for wisdom when I read.”

follows the development of the essay as it becomes ever more elastic, expanding to encompass personality-suffused criticism as well as the “new journalism” of the sixties and seventies, as practiced by Tom Wolfe, Hunter S. Thompson, Joan Didion, and Norman Mailer.

Lopate embraces such eclecticism and is not the least bit doctrinaire in his tastes. In evaluating an essay — whether he’s reading it for work or pleasure — his only yardsticks are his own enthusiasm and the sparkle of the prose. As it happens, his enthusiasms run both deep and broad, accommodating writers as different as Friedrich Nietzsche and Nora Ephron. He asks only that a writer be entertaining and honest. As for sparkling prose, it’s easy to recognize but difficult to define. Nonetheless, Lopate believes it can be broken down into three key components: 1) an element of surprise, in that each sentence ends in a different place than you thought it would; 2) textured language, with buzzes and quirks created by the placement of interesting words next to other interesting words; and 3) a density of thought, with no dumbing down and an implicit awareness of the essay’s long literary tradition.

Still, as catholic as his tastes are, Lopate, like every passionate reader, has certain predilections that lead him to favor some writers and types of writing over others. “We all bring our own backgrounds to our reading,” he says,

“and we tend to respond more to work that resonates with our own experience.” Lopate admits, for example, that he cannot fully appreciate even as highly influential and gifted an essayist as David Foster Wallace, partly because he is made uncomfortable and slightly anxious by Wallace’s “confusion and neurosis.” (“There was a lot of nuttiness in my family,” Lopate says.) Although his students look up to Wallace as “this brilliant eccentric, a sort of Kurt Cobain of literature,” Lopate says, “I can’t have that same relationship to him because I’m older than Wallace, and in my own reading I’m drawn to authors who seem wiser than I am. I don’t want the experience of reading somebody who’s tormented. That sounds very narrow of me, but on some level I’m still looking for wisdom when I read.”

He’s also partial to contrarians, and can rattle off a list of favorite works with “against” in their titles: Susan Sontag’s *Against Interpretation*; Joyce Carol Oates’s “Against Nature”; the Polish writer Witold Gombrowicz’s “Against Poets”; Laura Kipnis’s *Against Love* (“She says love is a kind of

bully”); Lopate’s own *Against Joie de Vivre*. “These are perverse positions,” he says. “How can someone be against such things? But I like these paradoxes because they’re a way of introducing doubt. In a period where there’s a lot of orthodoxy around political correctness, it becomes risky but

enticing to interrogate your own prejudices, your own lack of sympathy — to try to tell some truth instead of pretending that you’re universally sympathetic.”

Ultimately, the all-encompassing nature of the essay may hold the key to its staying power. Lopate points to two main traditions in essay writing. “There are the essayists like Charles Lamb, who are always dilating over something daily and minor,” he says, “and then there are those like George Orwell and James Baldwin, who are grappling with the major themes of the day.” Like the novel, the essay can engage with any topic imaginable. “Nothing is off-limits — the essay can absorb theology and science and philosophy, as well as experience. It’s a very capacious literary form, and I believe absolutely that it will endure.”

But who and what, amid a multitude of options, should an eager reader tackle first? *Columbia Magazine* put the question to Lopate: which six essayists do you recommend that everyone read? Given the wealth of material, limiting Lopate to such a small number seemed almost sadistic. So to narrow the field, we added parameters: stick to modern-day essayists (twentieth and twenty-first century) writing in English, and choose distinct voices that in no way duplicate one another.

Lopate’s final list is a lot like a terrific essay — quirky, unpredictable, and highly individual.



Max Beerbohm

British, 1872–1956

Lopate's take: For me, wisdom is often found in humor, so I naturally gravitate toward a comic writer like Beerbohm, an essayist who was also a brilliant caricaturist. From my first reading of Beerbohm — whom I discovered after I came across Virginia Woolf's mention of him as the only true inheritor of the tradition of Hazlitt and Lamb — I found him hilarious, especially in his willingness to portray himself as disreputable or dimwitted (he was anything but) and to push the boundaries of convention, deflate pretension, and expose hypocrisy. And how could I, the author of a book called *Against Joie de Vivre*, not relate to the curmudgeonly, contrarian persona that Beerbohm often adopts? I'm a big fan, and my hope that he'll be discovered by a wider audience led me to edit and write the introduction to *The Prince of Minor Writers: The Selected Essays of Max Beerbohm*, published last year.

If you read just one: "Laughter"

Memorable lines: "A public crowd, because of a lack of broad impersonal humanity in me, rather insulates than absorbs me. Amidst the guffaws of a thousand strangers I become unnaturally grave. If these people were the entertainment, and I the audience, I should be sympathetic enough. But to be one of them is a position that drives me spiritually aloof."



George Orwell

British, 1903–1950

Lopate's take: Writing from the perspective of a decent everyman, Orwell tries, in all his autobiographical work, to position his own experience within the larger historical context. And, curiously, everyone finds his own Orwell; he's a hero to the right *and* the left, and everyone likes to quote him for his own purposes. "Good prose is like a window pane," he says in his essay "Why I Write," and his own style is a model of clarity. Above all, Orwell is notable for his integrity, evident

in his unwavering honesty about his own petty or ugly impulses (as in "Shooting an Elephant," in which he admits to hating both the empire he serves as a police officer in Burma and the Burmese people, who make his life a living hell). With Orwell, the reader always feels that he's leveling with us. He's showing us how a decent, civilized person can have these appalling tendencies when faced with difficult options. Like all the best essayists, Orwell moves us toward complexity.

If you read just one: "Such, Such Were the Joys"

Memorable lines: "It is not easy for me to think of my schooldays without seeming to breathe in a whiff of something cold and evil-smelling — a sort of compound of sweaty stockings, dirty towels, faecal smells blowing along corridors, forks with old food between the prongs, neck-of-mutton stew, and the banging doors of the lavatories and the echoing chamber-pots in the dormitories."



James Baldwin

American, 1924–1987

Lopate's take: In my view, the Harlem-raised Baldwin (who lived most of his adult life as an expatriate in Europe) is the most important American essayist of the postwar period. And perhaps nothing makes that case more eloquently than his masterwork, "Notes of a Native Son." As with the best essays, what drives it is the writer's need to figure out what he thinks. And "Notes" also showcases Baldwin's trademark honesty and ability to turn himself into a character who comes alive on the page. In it, he braids together the Harlem riot of 1943, his father's death, and his own young man's confusions: Does he hate his father? Does he love his father? Is he becoming his father? He juggles all these different perspectives, moving between past and present and between individual psychology and the sociological. It's a twenty-page essay with the density of a novella.

If you read just one: "Notes of a Native Son"

Memorable lines: "It began to seem that one would have to hold in the mind forever two ideas which seemed to be in opposition. The first idea was acceptance, the acceptance, totally without rancor, of life as it is, and men as they are: in the light of this idea, it goes without saying that injustice is a commonplace. But this did not mean that one could be complacent, for the second idea was of equal power: that one must never, in one's own life, accept these injustices as commonplace but must fight them with all one's strength."



Joan Didion

American, 1934–

Lopate's take: Didion, a native Californian, came to essay writing through journalism, and her meticulous reporting skills shine through everything she writes. While many essayists flee from the topical, she is attracted to it, drawing fascinating connections among various cultural phenomena of the day, from rock songs to California weather to the Manson Family murders. Regardless of the topic, we want to know what Didion has to say about it; after being bombarded by what all the half-wits are saying, we need to see what a sophisticated eye like Didion's sees. There's something poignant in her cool, incisive prose style (Hemingway was a major influence), particularly in her presentation of self — generally as small (a kind of little girl in the corner), timid, inarticulate, and not especially likable. Like Baldwin, Didion demonstrates an invaluable skill of the personal essayist: the ability to make herself a compelling character.

If you read just one:

"Goodbye to All That"

Memorable lines: "To an Eastern child, particularly a child who has always had an uncle on Wall Street and who has spent several hundred Saturdays first at F. A. O. Schwarz and being fitted for shoes at Best's and then waiting under the Biltmore clock and dancing to Lester Lanin, New York is just a city, albeit *the* city, a plausible place for people to live. But to those of us who came from places where no one had heard of Lester Lanin and Grand Central Station was a Saturday radio program, where Wall Street and Fifth Avenue and Madison Avenue were not places at all but abstractions ('Money,' and 'High Fashion,' and 'The Hucksters'), New York was no mere city. It was instead an infinitely romantic notion, the mysterious nexus of all love and money and power, the shining and perishable dream itself. To think of 'living' there was to reduce the miraculous to the mundane; one does not 'live' at Xanadu."



Vivian Gornick

American, 1935–

Lopate's take: The Bronx-born Gornick, a stalwart of the feminist movement, is a quintessentially urban writer, drawing material for her personal essays almost entirely from the streets of New York City. She's an American version of what the French call a *flâneur*, or, in her case, a *flâneuse*: someone who's constantly on the street, walking around, observing, and having amusing encounters with strangers. Gornick casts herself as an "odd woman" (her latest book is titled *The Odd Woman and the City*), who is lonely but stubborn and whose friends have become her surrogate family. She builds her essays out of the fragments she picks up as she wanders around the city. It's territory she's perfected and owns.

If you read just one:

"On the Street: Nobody Watches, Everyone Performs"

Memorable lines: "They're in the room with me now, these people I brushed against today. They've become company, great company. I'd rather be here with them tonight than with anyone else I know. They return the narrative impulse to me. Let me make sense of things. Remind me to tell the story I cannot make my life tell. I need them."

Richard Rodriguez

American, 1944–

Lopate's take: Raised by Mexican immigrant parents in Sacramento, California, Rodriguez '85GS, '91SOA documented his gradual separation from their world in his celebrated 1982 book *Hunger for Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez*. This acute assessment of what it means to become an American took an unpopular position, because the book basically says that you can't go back to the old country; you can't be a hyphenate in America. When you assimilate, you lose your roots. So the minute Rodriguez became a "scholarship boy," there was a schism between him and his parents. Accustomed to going against the grain — he opposes affirmative action and bilingual education; he is a spiritual person whose peers are secular; he claims membership in an institution (the Catholic Church) that officially condemns his homosexuality — Rodriguez is comfortable with paradox. And that results in a bemused, disenchanted point of view that I find witty, wise, and very reassuring.

If you read just one: "Late Victorians"

Memorable lines: "At the high school where César taught, teachers and parents had organized a campaign to keep kids from driving themselves to the junior prom, in an attempt to forestall liquor and death. Such a scheme momentarily reawakened César's Latin skepticism. Didn't the Americans know? (His tone exaggerated incredulity.) Teenagers will crash into lampposts on their way home from proms, and there is nothing to be done about it. You cannot forbid tragedy." 🍷



MAKING LIGHT OF DEATH

*At Columbia's DeathLab,
the search for a cleaner,
smarter alternative to
burial is a deeply
serious matter*

BY ERIC KESTER '15SOA

P icture six black coffins lined up in a row. They represent the six deaths per hour in New York City.

Now pan out in your mind's eye to an aerial view of many more coffins, occupying nearly every inch of a major street intersection. That's 144 coffins, New York's deaths per day.

Keep pulling back until you recognize the streets of Manhattan's Lower East Side, the grid soon filled by the ever-growing number of coffins planted in the ground per week, per month, per year.

After a decade, we're at a half million deaths. The burial plots required for these coffins is consuming all the street space in Brooklyn and spreading west through Lower Manhattan. The coffins are creeping relentlessly toward SoHo, where Karla Rothstein, seated in her office at the architecture firm Latent Produc-



tions, is determined to solve a problem that seems as unstoppable as death itself: where on earth are we going to put our urban dead?

Rothstein '92GSAPP is an architect and the director of DeathLab, a Columbia research collaborative of architects, scientists, and theologians that uses the coffin-multiplying image in a video meant to demonstrate the urgency of New York's urban-dead problem. As a specialist in urban spaces, Rothstein, who is an associate professor at Columbia's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation, is thinking about what most of us would rather not: what becomes of our bodies when we die, and what impact that has on the living.

But even more eye-opening than the scope of the burial-space problem are DeathLab's solutions.

Some of these are illustrated in meticulous renderings that are printed and stacked on Rothstein's desk. If DeathLab's designs bear out, the remains of New York's dead may soon be suspended from the Manhattan Bridge in glowing pods — or, to put it in more scientific terms, in vessels illuminated by the organic energy latent in our loved ones' biomass.

This vision — what the design team calls Constellation Park — is the culmination of years of urban-design research, scientific findings, and heartfelt sensitivity to the spiritual needs not only of mourners, but of society at large. At first pass the entire project may feel like a stretch. But take a deeper look



LEFT: KARLA ROTHSTEIN
IN AVERY HALL.

BOTTOM LEFT:
DEATHLAB'S STUDIO.
BOTTOM RIGHT:
CONSTELLATION PARK
(RENDERING).

into where America's burial practices are now and where they're headed, and soon you may see DeathLab's proposal as an ingenious and welcome alternative.

"Once you start thinking about our burial system, the logistic imperative of space becomes kind of obvious, even though it's something that's not widely discussed," says Rothstein. "All of the cemeteries in New York equal about five times the area of Central Park. It's a vast territory. And it's basically full."

It was back in her graduate-school days that Rothstein became interested in the peripheral spaces of cities. These outer territories are where most societies build their cemeteries and their crematoriums. Rothstein realized that most cities — especially her own — have reached a tipping point: residents who have lived in Queens for eighty-five years are being laid to rest eighty-five miles away in New Jersey; low-income families in Brooklyn have to splurge on train tickets to pay respects to loved ones buried in plots so

costly that they should come with a mortgage.

In response, Rothstein is devising plans for local memorial sites that can be woven into the fabric of everyday city life. The DeathLab researchers, all with their own areas of expertise and interests in the problems around burial, have gone on a global search for understanding. They've visited cemeteries in Beijing and Jordan, explored columbaria in

Tokyo, and studied how bodies are interred in Rio. What they've found is that the United States is one of the last nations in the world that still favors embalment and burial. They also found that the negative consequences of the American burial tradition run far deeper than a simple matter of space.

Embalment is a preservation process that grants a small window in which the body assumes a peaceful image



of natural rest. According to Rothstein, that's about as natural as embalment gets. She calls the procedure itself "invasive," but that is putting it lightly. During embalment, the body is drained of its blood and pumped full of formaldehyde, a highly toxic, malodorous carcinogen. The eyelids are glued shut. The mouth is wired closed, and every orifice gets plugged. The body is groomed for the funeral service, then often placed in a rubber-sealed

So ecological concerns joined spatial efficiency on DeathLab's list of priorities. And it's these concerns that ruled out the most obvious solution to our space problem — cremation. In its research into the environmental impact of cremation, DeathLab found that the process, which requires a fire to burn at 1,500 degrees Fahrenheit for at least two hours, is ecologically undesirable because of the required energy, the use of non-renewable fuels, and the sometimes toxic

been one of DeathLab's top priorities, and perhaps its greatest challenge. Few such processes exist. One that DeathLab has considered is "promession," in which the body is freeze-dried in liquid nitrogen, allowing it, as Rothstein says, "to be shattered to dust with a slight vibration." It's biologically based, so Rothstein likes it as a technique, though it remains largely conceptual: to her knowledge no commercial promatorium has yet been built.

Another form of organic disposition that DeathLab has researched is alkaline hydrolysis, or "flameless cremation." In this method, the body is exposed to a lye solution that, with the help of a low-energy pressurized chamber heated to 350 degrees Fahrenheit, breaks down the body into a small remainder of mineral ash and disposable fluid. DeathLab describes the latter byproduct as a "greenish-brown liquid containing amino acids, pep-



CONSTELLATION PARK, AT THE MANHATTAN BRIDGE (RENDERING).

casket that, while protecting the body from perceived underground evils ("like worms," Rothstein supposes), causes it to unnaturally decompose into what Rothstein describes as a sort of "black goo." The casket is lowered into the ground, where what unites with the earth isn't the body but the toxic formaldehyde that eventually escapes even the most heavy-duty casket and seeps into the soil — if we're lucky, away from our sources of groundwater.

gases released to the atmosphere. Studies have demonstrated that the amount of energy used to cremate a single body equals the home-energy demands of a typical American over an entire month. The United Kingdom's government-run Environment Agency found in 2005 that the burning of dental fillings during cremation was responsible for 16 percent of the nation's mercury pollution.

Finding an environmentally sound, spatially efficient alternative for body disposal has

tides, sugars, and salts," but opponents of alkaline hydrolysis (of which there are many) prefer a terser label: sludge.

Religious institutions including the Catholic Church have declared the disposal method of the liquid via public sewer systems "undignified" for both body and spirit, all but insinuating that alkaline hydrolysis is akin to pouring Grandma down the drain. In 2008, a push to bring alkaline hydrolysis to New York was defeated by legislators who branded

the initiative “the Hannibal Lecter bill,” after the infamous fictional serial killer. Today, the process is legal for commercial use in only seven US states. It’s clear that if DeathLab is going to incorporate accelerated decomposition in its urban designs, it’s going to have to develop it itself.

To that end, DeathLab is collaborating with Kartik Chandran, an associate professor of earth and environmental engineering at Columbia and the winner of a 2015 MacArthur “genius grant” for his work recovering wastewater for use as a resource (see “Liquid Assets” in the Fall 2015 issue of *Columbia Magazine*). It was Chandran’s lab work on biological fermentation and decomposition that caught Rothstein’s eye in 2011. Recently, Rothstein and Chandran secured a \$27,500 grant from the Earth Institute that will enable the development of anaerobic microbial digestion: microorganisms that can consume bodies without the need for oxygen. This method will reduce the corpse to a smaller amount of material. But more strikingly, it will produce energy that can be harnessed to generate light.

Which brings us to DeathLab’s grandest vision, Constellation Park, where your loved ones would twinkle along a bridge in the Manhattan skyline. Constellation Park is one of DeathLab’s preferred memorial designs because it satisfies its most cherished ideals. The urban memorial is local and accessible (extravagantly so, since you could see your deceased loved one from miles away).

It’s suspended from a bridge, so it has no footprint. It’s integrated into the city’s preexisting infrastructure, and it’s not cloistered — platforms and walkways below the bridge will allow people to visit and leave flowers by the vessels. Constellation Park is renewable, too, because the bodies will naturally decompose through microbial digestion, after which a small amount of remains can be retrieved by the family, opening the vessel up for a new body.

Perhaps most importantly, DeathLab believes that Constellation Park will provide spiritual consolation. Rothstein understands that memorials must offer solace above all else, and that’s why she brought in Christina Staudt ’01GSAS, a grief counselor and the chair of the Columbia University Seminar on Death, which hosts monthly discussions about the role of death in our society. Mark Taylor, a professor in Columbia’s Department of Religion, is also a part of DeathLab, consulting on the role of spirituality during death and mourning.

Communal solace is the primary goal for Constellation Park, where the glowing light emitted from each vessel would wax and wane before peacefully extinguishing after a year — though DeathLab also seeks to calibrate the duration of decomposition to support the needs of the bereaved.

“People are so moved by the possibility that the corpse of a loved one could create light,” Rothstein says. “We don’t talk about death; we don’t think about it. But to

“PEOPLE ARE SO MOVED BY THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE CORPSE OF A LOVED ONE COULD CREATE LIGHT.”

feel like your grief would be part of a larger community, and this person whose life is being honored remains part of this enduring constellation — it’s something people respond to really positively.”

Despite initially supportive reviews of the concept of Constellation Park, Rothstein knows that it will take a larger shift in cultural attitude for her project to gain widespread acceptance. Death is a touchy subject in American culture — the dead are supposed to be in our outlying cemeteries, not smack-dab in an iconic skyline.

But Rothstein isn’t asking the culture to uproot existing mores. Our traditional burial system “is, for most people, incredibly comforting and desirable,” she admits. “Our intent is not to deny that. It’s really to show that there could be other alternatives.”

These alternatives may be more in line with our values than we first thought — and available sooner than we’d expect. Rothstein says that DeathLab hopes to gain

public and municipal support to develop a prototype of the illuminated vessels in an urban park — an ideal way of getting the public comfortable with the much larger idea of Constellation Park. To further educate the public, DeathLab will also host a “Life and Death” colloquium at Columbia on April 1.

In the meantime, Rothstein and DeathLab will continue to refine a new method of anaerobic microbial digestion, with a focus on creating an organic material that mimics the mortuary processes of the body — a technique that would allow them to test human decomposition without the human. They’ll work on the science and design, and Rothstein, through her teaching, will continue to influence cultural views. She’s optimistic about a society that she sees as increasingly conscientious about the welfare of the world even after we’re gone.

“I think the choices we make about our dead,” Rothstein says, “reflect the character of the living.” 🕯

CAUSE & EFFECT

Kimberlé Crenshaw on the Say Her Name movement and her fight for gender-inclusive racial justice

BY LAUREN SAVAGE

A law professor and the founder and director of Columbia's Center for Intersectionality and Social Policy Studies (CISPS), Kimberlé Crenshaw is a leading authority on civil rights, Black feminist legal theory, and race, racism, and the law. In 2015, she helped create the Say Her Name movement to call attention to police violence against Black women. We sat down with Crenshaw to learn more about her efforts to highlight the challenges facing women and girls of color.




Columbia Magazine: You and your colleagues at CISPS and the nonprofit African American Policy Forum (AAPF) helped create the Say Her Name movement. Can you tell us more about it?

Kimberlé Crenshaw: Say Her Name is an effort to challenge the way we think and talk about racial justice so that it becomes far more gender-inclusive. We were inspired to start Say Her Name while protesting the Eric Garner grand-jury decision. Protesters were calling out the names of Black men who had been killed by the police, but Black women who had died in similar circumstances were not mentioned. We began saying the names of these Black women. We began chanting: *Say her name*. It soon transformed from a Twitter hashtag into a movement. Our goal is to break the silence around state violence against women of color.

What kind of response have you received?

Some people are surprised to hear that the police kill Black women. Others are really grateful that we have raised these issues. And then there are a few — just a few — who are disturbed by it, because



they actually see us as intervening in a way that is undermining the focus on Black men and boys.

What do you say to this argument that including Black women's experiences in the movement against police brutality undermines the work being done on behalf of Black men?

My colleagues and I would say that we can't significantly improve the well-being of communities of color without dealing directly with the vulnerabilities that women face. To ignore Black women's experiences would constitute a deeply tragic misunderstanding of how multiple vulnerabilities get enhanced in relationship to each other. But even if you adopted the male-exclusive approach, you can't work toward bettering the lives of Black boys, for example, without paying attention to the socioeconomic status of their mothers. In our community, the vast majority of Black children are dependent on their mothers' income and well-being, and many of those children are living in homes with single Black mothers. Yet Black women are faring worse in the economy than any other group. Clearly, race- and gender-targeted interventions are needed to improve the well-being of Black women, Black families, and Black communities.

Your theory of intersectionality speaks to many of the challenges that Black women face. Tell us about intersectionality.

I first used the term nearly thirty years ago to describe a case where several Black women sued General Motors on the grounds of race and gender

discrimination. Though the company had employed Black people and women, the jobs that were available for Blacks were only given to men, and the jobs that were available for women were only given to white women. So, for a long time, the intersection of GM's race and gender policy had a special impact on Black women, completely excluding them from any of the jobs. The theory of intersectionality is about learning to recognize the multiple vulnerabilities that every person faces, which sometimes set us up for compounded or targeted forms of discrimination. You need to have a sense of the varying ways that people experience social injustice in order to be more inclusive of their realities. Intersectionality theory highlights aspects of discrimination that have historically made it much more difficult for certain people to be seen and for their circumstances to be addressed by the law.

Police brutality is often framed as an injustice against men and boys. What does police violence against women look like?

Sexual misconduct is the second most common form of misconduct reported against law-enforcement officers [according to a

2010 Cato Institute report], and this critical issue also requires our attention. In our Say Her Name report [released by the AAFP and CISPS in May 2015] many women point out that police have no significant constraints around the use of sexual power. In fact, two-thirds of police departments in the United States do not have a *single* policy that addresses sexual abuse by their officers. Daniel Holtzclaw, a former Oklahoma police officer, was recently convicted of sexually assaulting eight Black women, and while he was ultimately sentenced to 263 years in prison, his conviction should be viewed as the exception rather than the rule. We live in a rape culture: victims are not only blamed for the violence they endure, but their credibility is also attacked. There are untold numbers of socially marginalized women who encounter all forms of sexual violence by law enforcement and have no chance of having their cases heard or prosecuted.

Why do you think Black women's experiences are pushed to the margins in the movement against police violence?

I think there are a couple of obvious reasons. Black women are not valued. It's not that the violence is invisible; it's that it isn't seen. One horrifying example is the death of Natasha McKenna at the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center. There is a video showing Natasha McKenna being violently extracted from her holding cell, naked, by five sheriff's deputies in hazmat suits, who then tase her four times in the process of moving her to a restraint chair. It is incredible that this video has prompted very little response across the country. There are other videos showing Black women being beaten on the sides of highways in plain sight, hauled out of car windows, hogtied, and dragged across the floor — grandmothers stripped down and thrown — it's there for anyone to see. The question is, when it is seen, why doesn't it become a problem? Why aren't we incited to say their names?

Your Black Girls Matter report [released by the AAFP and CISPS in February 2015] focuses on the structural inequality that Black girls face. Tell us about your findings.

Our study showed that the disparity in treatment between Black girls and white girls was greater than the disparity in treatment between Black boys and white boys. Around the country, Black boys are three times more likely to be suspended from school than white boys, but Black girls are *six* times more likely to be suspended than white girls. So race seems to be more salient in the decision to punish Black girls than it is in the decision to punish Black boys. That often gets suppressed and marginalized because there are so many boys in general who get suspended. But it's important that those differences rise to the surface in our efforts to intervene.

How can your research, reports, and advocacy translate to a change in policy?

My team and I are currently working on a policy strategy with respect to Say Her Name and the sexual abuse of women by

police officers. In thinking about interventions, we have to start by looking at the permissive policies and uneven distribution of power that enable the problem. Then we can begin to consider dismantling them and creating another grid of power. We know that leading by example and having a strict, articulable policy really make a difference. Both signal to officers that sexual access is not a perk of their job. So we're advocating for the development and implementation of a clear set of open procedures and expectations for law-enforcement officers. A key component of our work is building public awareness so that people have the will to address these problems.

More and more college students are involved in racial-justice advocacy. Do you think this reflects a shift in consciousness?

The current shift among students is important, because it represents a repudiation of the effort to suppress ongoing racial-justice issues. Post-racial ideology [the idea that America is colorblind] can't completely contain the realities that people are experiencing. That is an essential starting position for any effort to make a shift more historically stable. The rate at which students of color are matriculating onto campuses is starting to decline. So student activists really are casting attention to critical issues, and for a lot of folks, these students are heroes.

Black Lives Matter drew a lot of comparisons to the civil-rights movement, and some people felt that it didn't measure up. What's your response to this assessment? The thing that disturbs me the most is assuming that the struggle for racial justice is divided up into separate and distinct movements. That is not how we think of the structural oppression we have been resisting for centuries. There are clearly ebbs and flows and different generational moments in the movement. Ideological differences have always existed among people of the same generation around how to frame the problem, how to mobilize against it, and what should be first on the agenda. But some factors are constant. The role of women in organizing and mobilizing, and their relative absence as subjects of racial injustice, has been continuous. I don't think any generation can say to the other, you got it right, or you got it wrong. These are debates across our history. [↗](#)

"We can't significantly improve the well-being of communities of color without dealing directly with the vulnerabilities that women face."

NOT FORGOTTEN

STORIES OF POLICE BRUTALITY AGAINST BLACK WOMEN FROM THE SAY HER NAME REPORT



Shereese Francis: Suffocated to death on March 15, 2012, at her home in Queens, New York, as police officers were subduing her during a mental-health crisis ■ **Rekia Boyd:** Killed by an off-duty Chicago police officer on March 21, 2012 ■ **Sharmel Edwards:** Killed by police in Las Vegas on April 21, 2012, while being followed on the suspicion that she was driving a stolen car ■ **Shantel Davis:** Killed by a plainclothes detective in East Flatbush, Brooklyn, on June 14, 2012, while unarmed ■ **Malissa Williams:** Killed by police in Cleveland on November 29, 2012, after the driver of the car she was riding in refused to pull over ■ **Shelly Frey:** Killed by an off-duty sheriff and minister in Houston on December 6, 2012 ■ **Kayla Moore:** Killed by police in Berkeley, California, on February 12, 2013 ■ **Kyam Livingston:** Died from a seizure on July 24, 2013, when NYPD officers allegedly left her in a holding cell despite complaints that she was in pain ■ **Miriam Carey:** Killed by federal agents in Washington, DC, on October 3, 2013, while with her one-year-old baby ■ **Yvette Smith:** Killed by police responding to a domestic-disturbance complaint in Bastrop, Texas, on February 16, 2014 ■ **Gabriella Nevarez:** Killed by police in Sacramento on March 2, 2014 ■ **Pearlie Golden:** Killed by police in Hearne, Texas, on May 7, 2014 ■ **Michelle Cusseau:** Killed by police in Phoenix on August 13, 2014 ■ **Sheneque Proctor:** Died in her cell in Bessemer, Alabama, on November 1, 2014, after police allegedly ignored complaints that she was ill ■ **Aura Rosser:** Killed by police responding to a domestic-dispute call in Ann Arbor on November 9, 2014 ■ **Tanisha Anderson:** Died in Cleveland on November 13, 2014, as police were subduing her at her home during a mental-health crisis ■ **Natasha McKenna:** Died in Fairfax County, Virginia, on February 8, 2015, after police tased her four times while she was handcuffed and in leg shackles ■ **Janisha Fonville:** Killed by police responding to a domestic dispute in Charlotte, North Carolina, on February 18, 2015 ■ **Meagan Hockday:** Killed by police in her home in Oxnard, California, on March 28, 2015 ■ **Mya Hall:** Killed by National Security Agency police in Baltimore on March 30, 2015 ■ **Alexia Christian:** Killed by police investigating a stolen-vehicle complaint in Atlanta on April 30, 2015 ■ **Sandra Bland:** Found dead in her cell in Waller County, Texas, on July 13, 2015, after having been originally pulled over by police for failure to signal a lane change

Journey Through Your Alumni Benefits



Alumni Travel Study



Columbia Libraries



Shopping Discounts

Finance and Insurance



COLUMBIA *alumni*
ASSOCIATION



EXPLORE YOUR BENEFITS: [ALUMNI.COLUMBIA.EDU/ALUMNI-DISCOUNTS](https://alumni.columbia.edu/alumni-discounts)

EXPLORATIONS

Getting the low-down on land grabs

Over the past decade, countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean have sold or leased millions of acres of state-controlled farmland to foreign interests eager to replace small farms with agribusinesses. These deals have often been struck in secret, with neither party disclosing the terms. As a result, farmers who have been working the same plots of land for generations have found it difficult to learn whether they are legally entitled to stay on the land after it is sold or what concessions they are owed if they are evicted.

In an effort to bring more transparency to these types of transactions, a group of researchers at the Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment — a joint venture of Columbia Law School and the Earth Institute — recently launched OpenLandContracts.org, a website that gathers all publicly available legal documents pertaining to the

sale or lease of large parcels of farmland by developing nations. The website, which is supported with funding from the UK Department for International Development, contains summaries of the contracts' major provisions written in simple prose. It is intended to help ordi-

nary citizens in developing countries understand the legal ramifications of these purchases, and, its organizers say, to encourage countries that are failing to disclose the details of their land sales to be more forthcoming.

Public awareness of these deals is crucial, say the Columbia researchers, because the leaders of some developing



Workers in Kimunye, Kenya. A new Columbia initiative aims to help communities understand their legal rights when farmland is sold to multinational corporations.

Take out the trash: A strategy to subdue Alzheimer's

A tidy brain is a healthy brain: to stay in working order, brain cells must continually clear out old, worn, or damaged proteins by breaking them down into smaller molecules that can be recycled. If the cellular machinery that is responsible for dismantling old proteins doesn't work efficiently, clumps of leftover proteins can accumulate inside brain cells, obstructing their function, and, say some scientists, contributing to Alzheimer's disease and other neurodegenerative conditions.

This past fall, a team of researchers led by Columbia cell biologists Karen

Duff and Natura Myeku provided the most convincing evidence yet that boosting the productivity of the brain's so-called "garbage-disposal system" could be an effective way of treating diseases like Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and Huntington's. In a series of experiments conducted on mice that were genetically engineered to have Alzheimer's-like memory problems, the researchers showed that the drug rolipram improved the animals' cognition by accelerating the pace at which their brain cells dispensed with old proteins.

"The change we witnessed in the mice was dramatic — they went from having

almost no short-term memory to perfectly normal cognition," says Duff, whose study appeared in *Nature Medicine*. "We could see this was the result of improved protein disposal because we inspected the mice's brain cells before and after the drug treatment. The cells' proteasomes, which literally chew up old proteins, were functioning much better afterward, reducing protein buildup."

Scientists have known for years that rolipram, developed in the 1990s as an antidepressant, could improve memory in mice. But the new Columbia study is the first to demonstrate that the drug achieves this effect by stimulating proteasomes.

countries need to be given an incentive to protect the rights of small farmers, both when negotiating deals with foreign investors and, later, in monitoring the new owners' behavior. The researchers also hope that their website will give developing nations more leverage in negotiating benefits for their citizens as part of future land deals.

"If one country sees that its neighbor is requiring land investors to provide its citizens job training, employment opportunities, and other types of social commitments, it may be more likely to demand those same benefits for its people," says Kaitlin Cordes '08LAW, an associate research scholar at the law school, who is leading the project. "We believe that making these contracts accessible is an important step in establishing international norms for how local communities ought to be treated when these land deals occur."

To see video of the project's launch event, visit magazine.columbia.edu/landcontracts



And while rolipram is inappropriate for use in humans — it was never approved for any clinical purpose because it causes severe nausea and other side effects — the Columbia researchers are hopeful that they may soon find a safer drug that has a similarly invigorating effect on the brain's cleanup machinery.

"This opens up a whole new strategy for treating Alzheimer's disease and related conditions," says Myeku. "Our strategy is unlikely to provide a cure, since neuro-degenerative conditions are extremely complex, but we believe that it holds out the possibility of at least slowing the progression of disease."

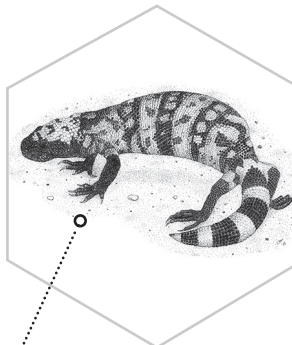
The ultimate venom database

Animal venom, counterintuitively, has been a source of medicine for millennia. To help medical researchers find new therapeutic applications, a team of Columbia data scientists recently created a database that gathers the results of all previously published research documenting the effects of different venoms on the human body. The database, called VenomKB ("KB" is short for "knowledge base"), so far contains 5,117 studies, dating back to 1975, that have explored the use of venoms for treating diseases like cancer, diabetes, and heart failure. The Columbia scientists hope that the open-source website will give medical researchers new ideas for treating these and many other conditions. "The power of the database will increase exponentially in the next few years as more researchers study venoms and contribute their own results," says Nicholas Tatonetti, an assistant professor of biomedical informatics, who created VenomKB with graduate student Joseph Romano. "Only a tiny percentage of venoms that exist in the wild have been studied for their medicinal properties, so the potential for future drug discovery is enormous."

POISONS THAT HEAL

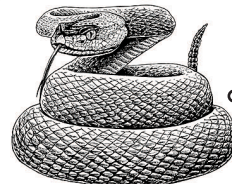
CONE SNAIL

The cone snail hunts small fish by injecting them with paralytic chemicals through a retractable harpoon; scientists are using these chemicals to develop new drugs for treating severe and chronic pain.



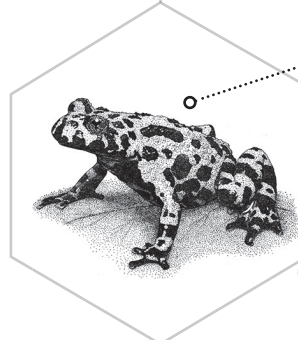
GILA MONSTER

The venom of the Gila monster, in addition to containing poison, is laced with chemicals that control the lizard's blood-sugar levels; scientists have used these chemicals to create the diabetes drug Exenatide.



MALAYAN PIT VIPER

A protein found in the venom of the Malayan pit viper, a snake whose bite causes internal bleeding, is being used to develop anticoagulants for treating strokes and heart disease.



EUROPEAN FIRE-BELLIED TOAD

The skin of this amphibian is covered in chemicals that taste repulsive to would-be predators; scientists have discovered that these chemicals, which latch onto neurons, are useful in locating tumors in humans.

Flash-forward

If you think snapping high-definition pictures on your smartphone is the pinnacle of digital photography, think again. At the Columbia Vision Laboratory, engineers are designing cameras with 360-degree fields of view, cameras that power themselves, and cameras that capture more detail than is visible to the human eye.

What's the point of a photograph filled with invisible detail?

"You may not be able to see all the visual data it contains, but a computer can," says Shree K. Nayar, the computer-science professor who directs the laboratory, at Columbia's school of engineering. "This technology could be useful in creating new types of medical-imaging devices, space telescopes, or microscopes."

Nayar and his colleagues at the Columbia Vision Laboratory are at the forefront of a nascent field called computational photography. This is different from what is commonly known as digital photography; the digital cameras that are popular today collect light through a single hole positioned behind a curved lens, just as traditional

cameras do, but computational cameras often use complex arrays of mirrors or movable sensors to collect enormous amounts of data before generating an image.

"In computational photography, there is no 'image' to speak of until the very end of the process, when your software has assessed the jumble of digital data you've gathered," says Nayar, who is widely regarded as a pioneer of the field. "This enables you to achieve some pretty remarkable things in terms of image quality and energy efficiency."

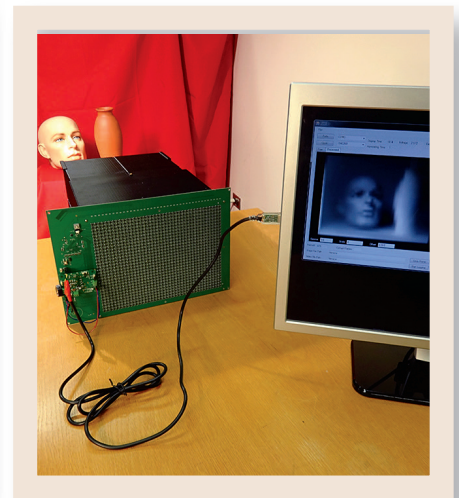
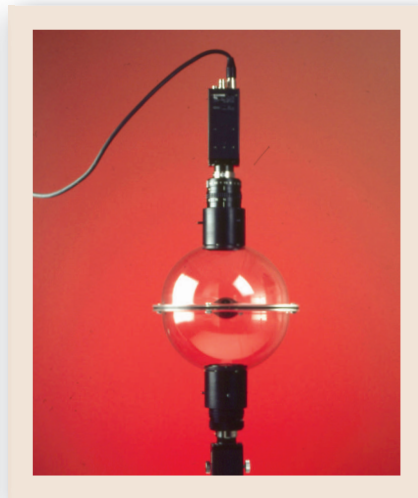
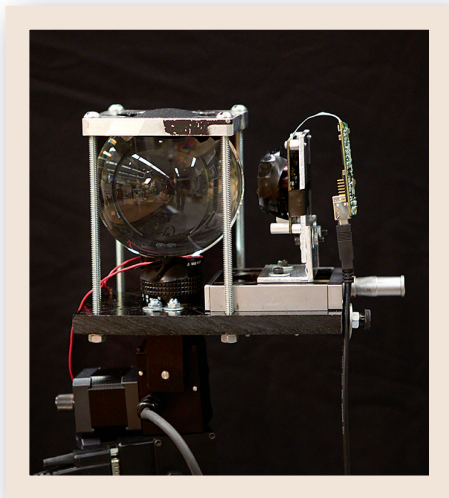
Some of Nayar's inventions have already been incorporated into commercial cameras. He helped Sony develop a new type of high dynamic range (HDR) sensor that can detect and correct for imbalances of light on a pixel-by-pixel level; this technology is now used in

many smartphone cameras. But Nayar's projects are typically more experimental. The camera that produces extremely high-resolution images, for instance, began as a test of Nayar's theory that spherical lenses could overcome traditional limitations in photographic resolution. A prototype that he and former graduate student Oliver Cossairt '11SEAS built uses a glass sphere and a concave sensor behind it to gather light from different angles.

"Nobody asked us to build this thing," says Nayar. "But there's an insatiable appetite for high-resolution imaging in academia and in many industries, and this is one way to achieve it."

A solar-powered video camera that Nayar's lab built also grew out of a technical theory he had dreamed up. A few years ago, it occurred to him that

"There's an insatiable appetite for high-resolution imaging in academia and in many industries, and this is one way to achieve it."



Among the experimental cameras being developed at the Columbia Vision Laboratory are, from left, a super-high-resolution camera whose lens is a glass sphere, a camera with a 360-degree field of view, and a video camera that is powered by the light it collects.

the sensors that cameras use to record light are structurally similar to those in solar panels that convert light into energy. He wondered: could his team design one sensor that did both? Last year, Nayar, working together with research engineer Daniel Sims '14SEAS and several other collaborators, succeeded in creating a sensor that can toggle between the two functions. The result is a camera that can operate indefinitely while shooting at least one image per second, outdoors or in a well-lit room. Nayar thinks it would be useful in situations where it is difficult to replace a camera's battery.

"I got a call from people at the Wildlife Conservation Society saying they'd love to have a bunch of these cameras installed in remote locations for observing endangered species," says Nayar. "How cool would that be?"

Nayar doesn't expect that these inventions will be adopted widely in their current forms. The prototypes, which he acknowledges are bulky and look rather inelegant, are intended merely to demonstrate their technological principles. Nayar hopes that camera companies will eventually work with him to create sleeker, more commercially viable versions.

"We're inventors, not product designers," he says. "But we believe that our technologies could be miniaturized fairly easily."

Which is not to say that the team's prototypes don't possess a certain retro charm.

"Doesn't this one resemble an old daguerreotype camera from the nineteenth century, with its big light box?" says Nayar of the self-powered camera.

"I love that. I love how these objects recall the dawn of the age of photography while at the same time pointing the way forward."

To see a video demonstration of the self-powered camera, visit magazine.columbia.edu/camera



In cooking their books, corporate accountants like a good recipe

Every year, hundreds of US companies release documents called restatements, in which they acknowledge having made accounting errors in past earnings reports. These companies, which have typically overstated their earnings, often suggest that their bookkeepers made honest mistakes — an explanation that generally appears to satisfy the federal Securities and Exchange Commission, which punishes less than 15 percent of firms that issue such restatements.

But a new study by researchers from Columbia, Rutgers, and Nanyang Technological University in Singapore suggests that something more troubling is taking place. In analyzing 2,376 restatements that US companies issued between 1997 and 2008, the researchers discovered that when a prominent company admits to mismanaging its books, many of its competitors will begin mismanaging their own books in similar ways soon afterward. These firms will go on to overstate their earnings for about two and a half years, on average, before issuing their own restatements. The researchers say that these episodes of "restatement contagion," as they call it, occur only if the company that initially admits to a particular accounting error doesn't get disciplined by the SEC, sued by its investors, or criticized in the press; if the company is hit with any of these consequences, its peers rarely mirror the mistake.

"Many of the errors that get repeated, we believe, are just crafty means of inflating income," says Shivaram Rajgopal, an accounting professor at Columbia Business School who is among the study's authors. "A company might declare revenue from a multi-year contract a year early or neglect to devalue its old, unsold inventory."



Rajgopal and his coauthors, whose paper appears in the *Accounting Review*, do not claim to be able to prove that any specific US corporations intentionally overstated their earnings over the twelve-year period covered by their study. But they say that their analysis leaves no doubt that US companies are routinely mimicking the purported mistakes that their competitors get away with — essentially using other firms' financial restatements as crib sheets for their own bad behavior.

"The patterns that we've detected, when looked at statistically, could not possibly have resulted from pure chance," Rajgopal says. "Our analysis shows that financial fraud is much more widespread than previously appreciated."

According to Rajgopal, executives at publicly traded companies face powerful incentives to overstate their earnings and are often willing to do so even if it seems likely they will eventually need to correct their numbers. He says that his paper shows that corporate executives, in looking for ways to boost the bottom line, have become highly adept at anticipating the types of accounting errors that SEC investigators will believe are accidental. He suggests that the SEC, in order to keep companies off balance, should adopt analytic techniques similar to those used by his research team to periodically identify and go after copycat fraudsters.

Reduced snowfall could cause water shortages for 2 billion people

Snow-covered mountains make for remarkably efficient reservoirs, storing enormous amounts of precipitation in the winter and then releasing it gradually as meltwater in the spring and summer, precisely when people at lower altitudes need it for irrigating crops. But with snowfall levels expected to decrease in many parts of the world as a result of climate change, how will the global water supply be affected?

A team of scientists led by Columbia's Justin Mankin '04GS, '10SIPA recently set out to answer this question, and what they discovered is alarming. At least two billion people, they conclude, live in regions that are likely to experience much drier springs and summers by the end of this century as a result of nearby mountain ranges accumulating less snow in winter months. The regions likely to be affected include Northern and Central California, where millions of people now depend on meltwater from the Sierra Nevada, Klamath, and Northern Coast Mountains; a large swath of the American Southwest and northern Mexico, where millions more rely on runoff from the Rocky Mountains; and vast stretches of Iran, Syria, and Iraq that receive meltwater from the Zagros Mountains. Also likely to be affected are parts of Portugal, Spain, and France located below the Cantabrian and Pyrenees Mountains; a section of Northern Africa now kept verdant by snow melting off Morocco's Atlas Mountains; and parts of Italy, the Balkans, and Central Asia that depend on meltwater from surrounding highlands.

"Mountains in these areas are likely to receive more of their winter precipitation as rain, which will wash away," says Mankin, a postdoctoral fellow at Colum-

bia's Earth Institute. "The snow that does fall will melt earlier in the year."

The new Columbia study is the first to assess the risks posed by diminished snowfall across the entire Northern Hemisphere, which receives most of the planet's snow. Mankin and his colleagues, who include fellow Columbia postdoc



Californians rely on melting snow from the Sierra Nevada Mountains to boost water supplies in spring and summer.

Deepti Singh and researchers from the University of Zurich, the University of Twente in the Netherlands, and Stanford, examined a total of 421 mountain drainage basins on four continents and considered how their conditions might change over the next century, based on multiple climate models. They then analyzed present demographics and water-use patterns to identify ninety-seven drainage basins in which people run at least a two-thirds chance of experiencing serious water shortages in the future.

"Our goal was to assess the human impact of reduced snowfall," says Mankin. "So we looked to see which drainage basins are both densely populated and likely to get drier."

Interestingly, the researchers identified several drainage basins, including those along China's Yellow River and India's Indus and Ganges Rivers, where losses of meltwater over the next century are likely to be offset by heavier summer rains as temperatures rise. Mankin's previous research also suggests that melting glaciers are likely to increase water supplies, at least temporarily, in some parts of the world. This is true, for instance, in parts of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan near the Pamir and Tian Shan Mountains, where some of the world's largest glaciers are rapidly retreating.

"All of these outcomes are consistent with global warming," says Mankin, whose latest paper appeared in the journal *Environmental Research Letters*. "The hydrological cycle is very complex, so you wouldn't expect changes in seasonal snowfall to have a direct, predictive relationship with water supplies in every drainage basin. But that is why our study is useful: it identifies those areas where the most likely result of reduced snowfall is water stress."

Mankin hopes that his research will inform public discussion about how regions vulnerable to shrinking snowpacks might update their water-management strategies. "Water managers in many places need to prepare for a world where the snow reservoir no longer exists," he says. "Should they expand their manmade reservoirs? Should they invest in more efficient irrigation methods or switch to less water-intensive crops? These are expensive investments, and they require long-term planning that's grounded in robust estimates of the range of outcomes that could result from global warming."

A 17th-century “flap book” gets new life online

A team of Columbia book conservators recently restored and digitized a seventeenth-century anatomical flap book that represents one of the earliest attempts to show the three-dimensionality of the human body on the printed page. The book, a 1661 German translation of Johann Remmelin’s *Catoptrum Microcosmicum*, originally published in Latin in 1613, uses a series of overlapping paper flaps to illustrate the layered systems of the body — a strategy that medical-textbook publishers have continued to use to the present day, only changing the materials from paper flaps to transparent plastic overlays in the twentieth century.

Acquired by Columbia in the late 1920s from the estate of George S. Huntington (1861–1927), a Columbia physician and professor of anatomy, the book had been in storage for several decades when librarians selected it for restoration last year.

“It’s an important title, both in the history of anatomy and the history of bookmaking,” says Stephen Novak, the head of archives and special collections at the Columbia University Medical Center’s Augustus C. Long Health Sciences Library, which owns some 27,000 rare books.



“It’s very fragile, though, and over the years its condition had deteriorated. Many of its flaps had become so brittle that we didn’t dare let anyone touch them.”

Last summer, conservators at the Columbia University Libraries’ conservation lab painstakingly flattened and mended each of the book’s nearly 120 flaps and rebound the volume. Their colleagues in the libraries’ preservation and digital-conversion division then created an electronic version of the book by photographing its pages in every possible iteration, their individual flaps opened one by one.

“Now everybody can explore it online,” says Novak, “and the original volume is in better shape than ever, preserved so that future generations of researchers can study it.”

The book’s flaps open to show as many as eight layers of the human body.

STUDY HALL RESEARCH BRIEFS

Yoga: It’s Good for Your Bones Practicing yoga may be an effective way to treat

osteoporosis, according to a new study led by Loren M. Fishman, a Columbia physician who specializes in rehabilitative medicine. From 2005 to 2015, Fishman followed 227 older men and women — 83 percent of whom had osteoporosis or its precursor, osteopenia — who agreed to complete a twelve-minute yoga routine every other day. By the end of the study, he found, participants had denser bones in their legs, hips, and lower backs than when they began.

That’s My Boy Men are more likely to take paternity leave for a son than for a daughter, according to a new study by researchers at Columbia, the University of California at Santa Barbara, and the University of Virginia. The researchers, led by Columbia professor of social work Jane Waldfogel, assessed the effects of California’s paid family-leave insurance program and also found that fathers in the state are more likely to take paternity leave if they work in a female-dominated profession, such as teaching or nursing.

The Pay Gap Is Totally Depressing According to a new study published in *Social Science & Medicine*, the gender pay gap puts women at increased risk of depression and anxiety. Researchers from Columbia’s Mailman School of Public Health analyzed surveys of 22,581 working Americans and found that women whose income is lower than that of their male counterparts are almost two and a half times more likely to suffer from depression and four times as likely to suffer from anxiety.

Eat Right, Sleep Tight A diet consisting primarily of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and lean meats can improve the quality of your sleep. That’s the conclusion of a study led by Columbia nutritionist Marie-Pierre St-Onge. The results, published in the *Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine*, show that people experience deeper, more restorative sleep after healthy meals.

Too Busy to Commute A new paper by Columbia economist Lena Edlund, PhD student Maria Micaela Sviatschi, and Cecilia Machado ‘10GSAS suggests that the gentrification of US inner cities is being driven, in part, by a “reduced tolerance for commuting” among urban professionals, who are working longer hours than in the past. “Long hours render non-work time scarce, planting low-utility activities such as commuting in the cross-hairs,” the authors write.

¿Qué Pasa con Esa? Despite pledges from US movie studios to cast more Latinos in prominent roles, the proportion of Latino lead actors and actresses in blockbuster films actually decreased between 2000 and 2013, from 2.8 to 1.4 percent, according to research by Frances Negrón-Muntaner and colleagues at Columbia’s Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race.

—Lauren Savage

To see the book online, visit magazine.columbia.edu/flapbook



NEWS

Alumni Welcome Center named for Susan K. Feagin

The Columbia Alumni Welcome Center, which since its opening in 2009 has provided a space for graduates to meet, relax, and access University resources, was recently named in honor of longtime administrator Susan K. Feagin '74GS. President Lee C. Bollinger formally dedicated the center on November 16 in recognition of Feagin's "exemplary service to the University," according to a special resolution from the Trustees.

Before retiring last year, Feagin led a distinguished career at Columbia, most recently as special adviser to the president. She served as the executive vice president for University development and alumni relations from 2003 to 2010, during which time she brought together alumni donors and friends of the University to achieve the largest fundraising effort in Ivy League history, the \$6.1 billion Columbia Campaign.

Together with Trustees and other alumni leaders, she was instrumental in the creation of the Columbia Alumni Association, the global network that links 320,000 alumni in more than one hundred countries. Feagin also spearheaded

the re-launch of *Columbia Magazine*, the opening of the Columbia Alumni Center, and the revitalization of the Columbia University Club of New York.

Feagin began her career at the University's development office in 1974, after receiving a bachelor's degree from the School of General Studies.

"The defining characteristic of Susan's extraordinary accomplishments lies in her deep capacity to draw people in to work together to achieve seemingly unattainable goals," said President Bollinger at the naming ceremony. "It is most appropriate that we celebrate her achievements here, in the house that Susan built."



Susan K. Feagin at the 2011 Commencement ceremony, where she received the Columbia Alumni Medal.

The Susan K. Feagin Alumni Welcome Center, which is on the ground floor of the Columbia Alumni Center, at 622 West 113th Street, includes a lounge, library, and office space, and is open to all alumni visiting campus.



Pulitzer Prizes kick off centennial celebration

This year, Columbia will administer the 100th annual Pulitzer Prizes. To celebrate, the Pulitzer Prize Board has launched the Campfires Initiative, a series of more than one hundred events that will focus on past winners, their work, and the cultural significance of the prizes.

The initiative is the result of a collaboration between the Pulitzer Prize Board and the Federation of State Humanities Councils. Through their joint efforts, the two organizations secured \$1.5 million in grants to forty-six state humanities councils for Pulitzer-themed projects and events.

"We are excited about the events planned for 2016, organized by communities from Guam to Bar Harbor, Anchorage to Miami," says Keven Ann Willey, vice president of the *Dallas Morning News* and the chair of the Pulitzer Prize Board's centennial committee. Larger marquee events, which Willey believes "have great potential to inspire new audiences around the best of American journalism, letters, drama, and music," will take place in Dallas; Los Angeles; St. Petersburg, Florida; and Cambridge, Massachusetts.

In addition to events funded by the Campfires Initiative, many teachers, schools, historical societies, and other organizations are planning to host grassroots events that highlight the value of journalism and the humanities today.

Established and endowed by Columbia Graduate School of Journalism founder Joseph Pulitzer, the first Pulitzer Prizes were awarded on June 4, 1917. The Pulitzer Prize Board, which currently includes Columbia president Lee C. Bollinger and journalism-school dean Steve Coll, gives twenty-one annual prizes, including fourteen for journalism, five for books, one for drama, and one for music composition.

This year's 100th class of Pulitzer Prize winners will be announced on April 18, 2016.

Learn more about upcoming events at pulitzer.org/centennial



College launches new campaign

Columbia College has launched a \$400 million fundraising and engagement campaign to enhance its undergraduate liberal-arts programs and provide additional financial support for students and faculty. The campaign, called Core to Commencement, is the first-ever fundraising and engagement campaign to be dedicated exclusively to Columbia College.

Core to Commencement details a comprehensive vision for the future of the College and its Core Curriculum, a program of liberal-arts courses that has been required of all undergraduates for almost one hundred years. Among the campaign's priorities are to develop the Core through the use of innovative technologies and interdisciplinary programming; to increase financial support for faculty, including through the establishment of endowed professorships; to offer all students at least one funded summer internship, research fellowship, or global experience; to reinforce the College Fund; and to strengthen connections among students, parents, faculty, and alumni by creating mentorships, internships, intellectual programming, and volunteer opportunities.

"Columbia College is the greatest college in the greatest university in the greatest city in the world," says James J. Valentini, the dean of the College. "The Core to Commencement campaign is a commitment to sustaining this greatness."

Core to Commencement, which is scheduled to run through the Core's centennial in 2019, is being led by campaign co-chairs Alexander Navab '87CC, Lisa Carnoy '89CC, and Jonathan Lavine '88CC.

Visit college.columbia.edu/campaign

Columbia celebrates completion of David N. Dinkins archive

The University recently announced the completion of its David N. Dinkins Papers and Oral History Project, which involved compiling the professional papers of New York City's 106th mayor and conducting lengthy interviews with Dinkins about his life and career.

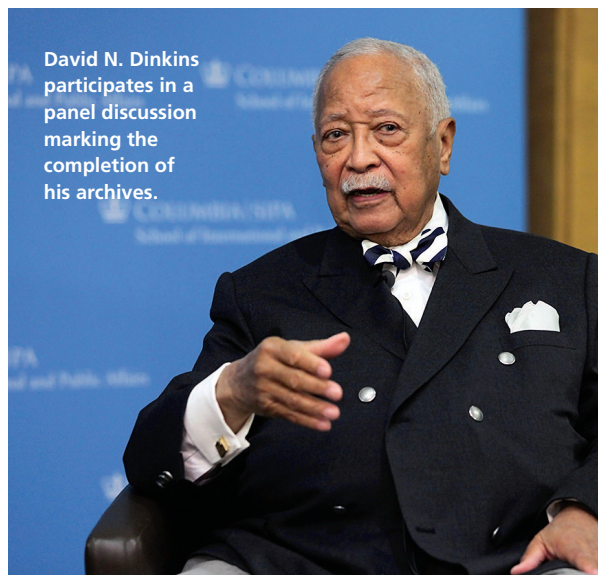
The archive, which is available to scholars at Columbia's Rare Book and Manuscript Library, contains ninety-one linear feet of boxes filled with Dinkins's speeches, campaign materials, endorsements, position papers, and other documents, as well as hours of recorded interviews.

Dinkins, who served as New York City's mayor from 1990 to 1993 and is currently a professor at the School of International and Public Affairs, participated in a panel discussion at SIPA celebrating the archive. The panel, moderated by his former campaign aide and current SIPA faculty colleague Ester Fuchs, included Alondra Nelson, a Columbia sociologist and dean of social science who has written extensively about race and inequality, and Carl Weisbrod, a former member of the Dinkins administration who now chairs the New York City Planning Commission.

Nelson, when asked to discuss Dinkins's place in history, said that his election as New York City's first Black mayor opened up opportunities for Black politicians on a larger world stage and "prefigured and shaped what would become the Obama presidency."

Dinkins noted that he had never considered running for mayor until Percy Sutton — the Manhattan borough president and the city's highest-ranking Black politician at that time — suggested it. "No Black man runs for mayor in the city of New York. Who but Percy Sutton could have envisioned a Black man [even] owning a radio station?" he said, referring to the fact that Sutton had cofounded New York's Inner City Broadcasting Corporation, which was one of the first major media corporations owned by African-Americans.

Dinkins, looking out over a sea of friends and former colleagues, then said: "What I hope people will understand and appreciate tonight . . . is that nobody, but nobody, gets anywhere alone. Everybody stands on the shoulders of others."



David N. Dinkins participates in a panel discussion marking the completion of his archives.

To see video of the panel discussion, visit magazine.columbia.edu/dinkinsarchive

Kenneth T. Jackson honored with new endowed chair

The Robert D. L. Gardiner Foundation, established by the late Robert David Lion Gardiner '34CC, has donated \$3 million to the Columbia University Faculty of Arts and Sciences to establish the Robert Gardiner–Kenneth T. Jackson Professorship in the history department. The new chair, named after Kenneth T. Jackson, the Jacques Barzun Professor of History and the Social Sciences, will be used to support the teaching of New York history. The total endowment amounts to \$4 million, when combined with a preexisting \$1 million fund.

“Having dedicated my entire professional life to the study of cities and, in particular, New York, it is a singular honor to have this chair established in my name, and to share it with Robert Gardiner, another proud New Yorker —



Kenneth T. Jackson

and Columbian,” says Jackson, who directs the Herbert H. Lehman Center for the Study of American History.

Jackson, who has taught at Columbia for nearly fifty years, is the author of several notable books on American history, including *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* and *The*

Encyclopedia of New York City. He is also well-known for his creative teaching methods, which include leading a midnight bike ride from Morningside Heights to Brooklyn, during which he introduces students to famous city landmarks.

“This gift ensures that our mission — fostering the appreciation of New York history — will continue to thrive at the university that calls New York home,” said Joseph R. Attonito '66LAW, president of the Robert D. L. Gardiner Foundation.

Columbia joins White House collaborative to advance equity for women and girls of color

In November, Columbia became a charter member of the Collaborative to Advance Equity through Research, a White House–sponsored affiliation of twenty-four colleges, universities, and nonprofit organizations that are committed to studying how various types of educational, health, and social services may help women and girls from marginalized communities succeed in school and their careers.

Leading Columbia’s participation are Alondra Nelson, a professor of sociology and gender studies and the dean of social science, and Farah Jasmine Griffin, the William B. Ransford Professor of English and Comparative Literature and African-American Studies.

“Faculty and students across Columbia are already engaged in a range of efforts to advance equity for women and girls of color,” says Griffin. “As part of an iconic and diverse community in New York City, we are in an ideal position to bring not only our scholarship but also our firsthand experience to collaborating with the Obama administration and our academic colleagues around the nation.”

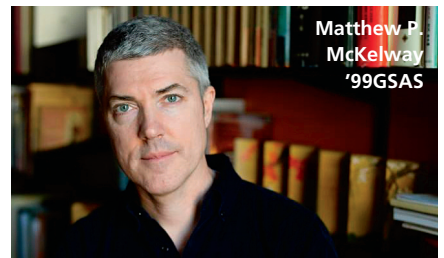
This spring, the University will host the Black Girl Movement Conference to discuss social-justice issues relevant to Black girls. In the summer, Columbia will host the Feminist Seminar for Girls, which Nelson launched in 2014 with the New York City YWCA.

\$13M gift to establish center for Japanese art, new faculty chair

Columbia has received a \$13 million gift from the Mary Livingston Griggs and Mary Griggs Burke Foundation to establish a center for Japanese art and an endowed professorship in East Asian Buddhist art history.

The Mary Griggs Burke Center for Japanese Art will be located in a newly renovated space in Schermerhorn Hall; the foundation’s gift will fund the center’s programs in perpetuity and support graduate and dissertation fellowships, predoctoral research grants, publication subsidies, conferences and symposiums, and postdoctoral fellowships in Japanese art and other East Asian art fields.

Matthew P. McKelway '99GSAS, the Takeo and Itsuko Atsumi Professor of



Matthew P. McKelway '99GSAS

Japanese Art History, first envisioned the Burke Center and will serve as its director. He recalls meeting the late Mary Griggs Burke '43GSAS, a Columbia benefactor who helped support generations of graduate students in their study of Japanese and East Asian art, when he was a graduate student in Columbia’s art-history department in the 1990s.

“When I met her, she already possessed the greatest private collection of Japanese art in the world,” says McKelway. “She was steadfast in her support of scholarly research and teaching in the field.”

The new endowed chair, the Mary Griggs Burke Professorship of East Asian Buddhist Art History, is Columbia’s fourth in Asian art.

In Brief



Jocelyn Wilk

Wilk appointed University archivist

Jocelyn Wilk, a longtime staff member who is known as an authority on Columbia's institutional history, has been named the University archivist. She is charged with collecting and interpreting Columbia's history and helping to implement a records-management program for the Office of the Provost.

GS senior wins Rhodes Scholarship

School of General Studies senior Luca Springer has won a Rhodes Scholarship, making him the first GS student to earn the prestigious fellowship. Springer, who is currently studying political science in Columbia's dual-degree program with Sciences Po in Paris, will pursue a master's degree in public policy at Oxford's Blavatnik School of Government beginning this fall.

School of Continuing Education changes name

Columbia's School of Continuing Education has been renamed the School of Professional Studies. The name reflects the school's renewed mission to serve "professionals grappling with the challenges of a transformed global marketplace," says President Lee C. Bollinger.

The School of Professional Studies offers fourteen master's degrees in disciplines such as actuarial science, applied analytics, bioethics, sports management, and sustainability management, alongside a comprehensive portfolio of non-degree programs.

Philosophy students recognized

Rethink, a community-outreach program led by graduate students in the philosophy department, was awarded the 2015 Prize for Excellence and Innovation in Philosophy Programs by the American Philosophical Association and the Philosophy Documentation Center. Rethink volunteers lead small-group discussions with youth caught up in the court system, as well as victims of domestic violence.

Startup expert named fellow

Steve Blank, a Silicon Valley entrepreneur who has cofounded several successful technology companies, has been named the University's inaugural Senior Fellow for Entrepreneurship. Blank will work with faculty, students, and administrative leaders to enhance the resources available for the University's programs in entrepreneurship, innovation, and design.

Grounds for congratulations

The University's Baker Athletics Complex in Upper Manhattan recently received the Professional Grounds Management Society's Grand Award — its highest honor for exceptional field maintenance. Judges noted the complex's "great looking turf," "flawless maintenance of landscape," "diverse plant and hardscape surfaces," and sustainable practices.

Five profs elected to American science association

Neuroscientists Michael Shadlen and Steven Siegelbaum, neurologist and pathologist Robert Burke, biologist Andrea Califano, and sociologist Thomas A. DiPrete '78GSAS were recently elected fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

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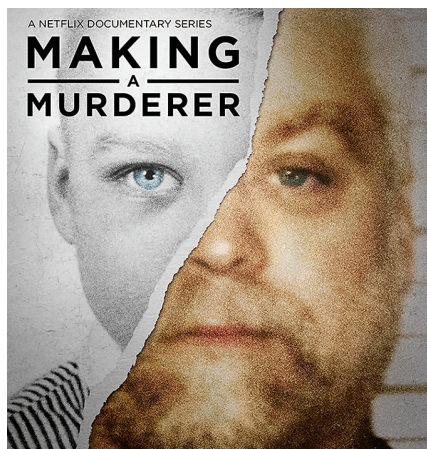
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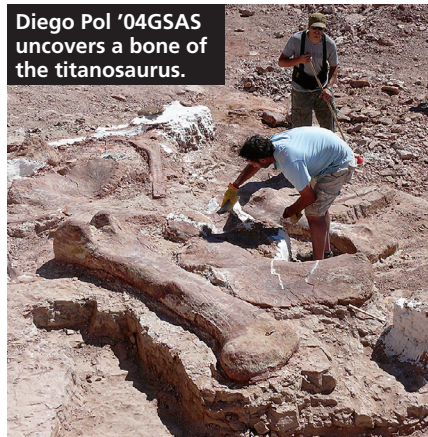
Making a Hit

As Columbia film students in 2005, **Moira Demos '96CC**, '08SOA and **Laura Ricciardi '07SOA** stumbled across a *New York Times* story with an incredible plotline. A Wisconsin man named Steven Avery had served eighteen years in prison for a rape he didn't commit. He was exonerated by DNA evidence and released, was hailed as a poster child for the Innocence Project, and sued the local police department for negligence. But as his suit was pending, Avery was arrested again — this time for murder.

Demos and Ricciardi packed their bags and moved to rural Wisconsin, where they spent the next ten years, off and on, filming what would become an increasingly complex case. The result was *Making a Murderer*, a ten-part documentary released on Netflix this past December 18. Like the podcast *Serial* and the HBO series *The Jinx*, the controversial documentary has clearly struck a nerve, inspiring everything from a Tumblr dedicated to the fashion of Avery's lawyers to a 300,000-person petition urging President Obama '83CC to pardon Avery (an impossibility, since Avery was convicted under state law). As a result of the documentary, the Wisconsin Innocence Project has agreed to reexamine Avery's case.

Head Honcho

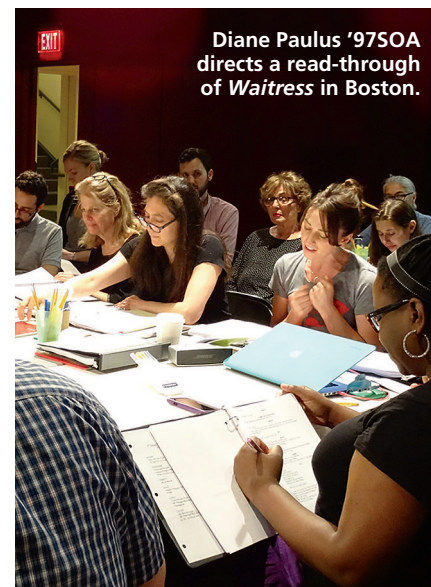
Jared Grusd '06BUS, one of the “coolest, most inspiring people in the New York tech industry,” according to *Business Insider*, was recently named CEO of the *Huffington Post*. The lawyer-turned-tech-executive who once worked as an associate at Skadden, Arps has held senior leadership positions at Google, AOL, and Spotify and has taught at Columbia Business School, where he also serves as a member of the Eugene Lang Entrepreneurship Center's advisory board. Under Grusd's leadership, the *Huffington Post* recently expanded into China — the fifteenth country to have its own edition. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, Grusd will oversee the launch of a new international edition every seven to eight weeks, to reach a total of fifty by 2020.



Diego Pol '04GSAS uncovers a bone of the titanosaurus.

Titanosaurus Rex

Diego Pol '04GSAS has found the world's biggest dinosaur. Pol and his team of paleontologists spent four years in southern Argentina unearthing the bones of the titanosaurus, which was 122 feet long and likely weighed over seventy tons (that's about the heft of ten African elephants). A model of the beast now stretches over two rooms at New York's American Museum of Natural History.



Diane Paulus '97SOA directs a read-through of *Waitress* in Boston.

Recipe for Success

Diane Paulus '97SOA will make theater history this spring with her production of *Waitress* — the first Broadway musical with an all-female creative team (director, writer, composer, and choreographer). The show, which opened in previews this March, is based on a 2007 movie written and directed by Adrienne Shelly. It tells the story of a small-town waitress who dreams of opening her own pie shop. She is derailed by a loveless marriage and unexpected pregnancy, until a baking contest offers her a way out.

Paulus is known for her innovative direction of Broadway revivals and her use of women in traditionally male roles. She was nominated for the Tony Award for best direction for her revival of *Hair* in 2009, was at the helm of the Tony-winning revival of *Porgy and Bess* in 2012, and won the Tony for best direction for her revival of *Pippin* in 2013. *Waitress* was first produced as a musical last summer at the American Repertory Theater, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where Paulus serves as artistic director.

FAR RIGHT: KATI MITCHELL

Global Entry

Akshay Shah '14SEAS has been named one of the inaugural Schwarzman Scholars — a program at Beijing's Tsinghua University that is already being equated with the Rhodes and Marshall Scholarships. Funded by Blackstone Group chairman Stephen A. Schwarzman and

boasting an advisory board that includes Tony Blair, Condoleezza Rice, Henry Kissinger, and Yo-Yo Ma, the program describes its goal as preparing the next generation of global leaders.

Shah was one of three thousand applicants from 135 countries vying for the 111 spots. At Columbia, Shah was

an electrical-engineering major, 2014 class president, a Columbia University senator, and one of ten undergraduate students nationwide to win an IEEE Microwave Theory and Techniques Society scholarship. Since graduation, he has been working as a business analyst at McKinsey & Company.

STARTUP SPOTLIGHT

PARTY LIKE IT'S 1799

Sam Bodkin '12CC has always been a music lover, though when he first arrived on campus, his tastes tended more toward the Beatles than Bach. Like most teens, he thought classical music was irrelevant — something enjoyed by tuxedo-clad aficionados in stuffy concert halls. But during his freshman year at Columbia, Bodkin happened to live next door to a cellist.

"He played me Beethoven's op. 133, the *Große Fuge*, which is undoubtedly the composer's most modernist, experimental piece. It was so at odds with everything I thought I knew about classical music," Bodkin says.

Bodkin became obsessed. He listened to the fugue up to fifteen times a day, then went to the library and downloaded every piece of classical music he could find. By the end of the year, he was the only non-musician member of the Columbia Chamber Players and had become an evangelist.

"It had filled my interior world with such depth," Bodkin says. "I knew I was going to devote my life to

sharing this kind of music with other people."

A few summers later, Bodkin was interning for the Boston Symphony Orchestra. At night, he would gather with several musician friends and watch them play. The mood was festive and casual, but at the center was a pure appreciation for the art. Bodkin started to wonder if this experience was something he could replicate.

The result was Groupmuse, a company that Bodkin founded in January 2013. Groupmuse matches party hosts with classical musicians. The service is free, and anyone can sign up. Hosts register on the company's site, schedule a concert in their home, and invite a minimum of ten guests. Two-thirds of the spots can be reserved for their friends. The rest are offered to the public, who can find tickets online. All guests are requested to donate at least ten dollars, which goes directly to the musicians.

Bodkin says that Groupmuse parties are not what most people picture when they think of a classical performance. There's eating and drinking



Musicians perform at a Groupmuse party in New York City this past winter.

and socializing before and after the music. The audience often ends up sitting on the floor, and they are encouraged to react to the music, and to applaud between movements.

"I think the entire reason that classical music has been dying out is that the younger generation is intimidated by the cultural implications of the concert. When you don't have much money, the last thing you want to do is spend it on a ticket where you're told how to behave: when to clap, how to dress. It's not that people don't appreciate the music," he says. "They don't like the culture that comes with the music."

In the last three years, Groupmuse has hosted over

one thousand parties and has been featured on NPR and in *Time* magazine and the *Wall Street Journal*. While most of the events have taken place in New York, Boston, San Francisco, and Seattle, Groupmuse plans to expand to more cities. A recent Kickstarter campaign, which raised more than \$130,000, will help fund that effort.

"People have been worried about the future of classical music, but in a world so desperately in need of beauty, classical music is certainly in no risk of dying," says Bodkin. "Classical music is one of our deepest and most profound forms of expression . . . it just needs to get out more."

WOMAN OF THE YEAR



Hari Nef '15CC on the *Transparent* set.

Since graduating last spring with a degree in theater, Hari Nef '15CC has made her runway debut at New York City's fashion week, been featured in *Vogue*, earned a coveted modeling contract with IMG, and nabbed a recurring role on the hit Amazon series *Transparent*.

It's an impressive list for any actress and model. For Nef it was also groundbreaking. She is the first openly transgender model to sign with IMG — she transitioned while at Columbia — and one of very few in the entire field.

"I've always been obsessed with fashion," says Nef. "But I never thought that anyone would see me in that light."

Nef says she owes her modeling career to connections she made while interning for several fashion designers during her time at Columbia.

"I knew a lot of photographers from my internships. When my appearance started to change, they wanted to shoot me," Nef says.

Nef posted the photos to her robust Instagram account (@harinef) and started to get a reaction from some unexpected people — including Jill Soloway, the creator of *Transparent*, a show that follows a Los Angeles family in the wake of the patriarch's gender transition.

"I thought that maybe they'd fly me out to do a cameo, but I was lucky enough to get a role in the second season," Nef says. "The show resonates with me for a lot of reasons. I give it a lot of credit for contributing to the change in our collective consciousness around trans issues."

Nef says the year ahead will be filled with auditions and more modeling work, though she admits that the last twelve months will be difficult to top.

"I told *Vogue* that the only thing that would make my year better is frozen yogurt and girl talk with Caitlyn Jenner," Nef says. "That still hasn't happened. But maybe she reads *Columbia Magazine*."

YOUNG LIONS

40 Under 40

The *Chronicle of Philanthropy* named four Columbians to its inaugural "40 Under 40" list, which recognizes extraordinary contributions to the nonprofit and social-enterprise worlds:

■ Data scientist **Bob Filbin '12GSAS** was honored for his work with the Crisis Text Line, a nonprofit hotline that operates entirely by text. Filbin had learned that text requests took up a disproportionate amount of time at traditional crisis-counseling centers; using data analysis, he was able to identify those frequent texters and encourage them to get help. More than eleven million text messages have been exchanged since the nonprofit was founded in 2013.

■ **Donnel Baird '13BUS** was recognized for his company Bloc Power, which retrofits buildings in low-income neighborhoods with energy-efficient equipment. (For more on Bloc Power, see *Columbia Magazine's* Winter 2015 feature story "Power for the People.")

■ Philanthropist **Liesel Pritzker Simmons '06CC** is known for making a social impact not only through giving, but through economic empowerment. An heir to the Hyatt Hotels fortune, she is the founder of the Blue Haven Initiative, which has invested \$50 million in social and environmental causes.

■ **Ommeed Sathe '00CC** is a pioneer in the field of "impact investments" — investments that try to create social good in addition to financial returns. As a vice president at Prudential Financial, he oversees a \$500 million portfolio. Prudential plans to increase the amount of money it invests to one billion dollars by 2020.

30 Under 30

Twelve Columbia alumni, two faculty members, and five students were featured in *Forbes* magazine's annual "30 Under 30." The list, edited by Caroline Howard '01JRN, recognizes six hundred innovators across twenty different industries, from science to social entrepreneurship. This year's alumni winners include:

■ **Amanda Gutterman '13CC** MEDIA

As a cofounder of *Slant*, a website that offers its writers a share of revenue, Gutterman is changing the way freelancers get compensated for their work.

■ **Jordana Kier '14BUS**

RETAIL AND E-COMMERCE

Kier's direct-to-consumer, subscription-based company Lola, which sells hypoallergenic organic-cotton tampons, has raised \$1.2 million in less than a year.

■ **Shana Knizhnik '10CC** MEDIA

A law clerk on the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, Knizhnik is the woman behind the popular "Notorious RBG" Tumblr, which celebrates America's favorite dissenting Supreme Court justice, Ruth Bader Ginsburg '59LAW. This past October, Knizhnik published a best-selling book based on her blog.

■ **Stephanie Korey '15BUS**

RETAIL AND E-COMMERCE

Korey ran the supply chain at high-profile startups Warby Parker and Caspar before launching her own luxury luggage company, Away.

■ **Christopher Lorn '10CC**

MARKETING AND ADVERTISING

An analytics whiz, Lorn has developed digital campaigns for companies like Samsung Mobile and Purina through the digital agency Big Spaceship. He recently joined Philip Morris International.

■ **Roy Moran '12LAW** LAW & POLICY

Moran has a job that would make any twelve-year-old jealous: lead counsel at FanDuel, the wildly successful fantasy-sports website.

■ **Heben Nigatu '14CC** MEDIA

Nigatu is the cohost of BuzzFeed's popular new podcast *Another Round*, which has attracted guests like Hillary Clinton and New York City First Lady Chirlane McCray, and which boasts several hundred thousand subscribers.

■ **Rami Rahal '09SEAS** VENTURE CAPITAL

Rahal founded his venture-capital firm Blue Cloud Ventures at the age of twenty-five; it has since raised more than \$65 million, largely by investing in subscription-software companies.

■ **Chelsey Roebuck '10SEAS** EDUCATION

Roebuck's nonprofit Emerging Leaders in Technology and Engineering (ELiTE) helps people generally underrepresented in these fields gain access to educational opportunities like summer camps, school programs, and e-learning.

■ **Jerelyn Rodriguez '11CC** EDUCATION

Rodriguez's nonprofit The Knowledge House, which she founded in her native South Bronx in 2014, has sent more than three hundred young people from low-income communities into careers in technology and entrepreneurship.

■ **Anna Stork '11GSAPP**

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Stork's company LuminAID provides inflatable solar-powered lights to partners like Doctors Without Borders and ShelterBox for use in natural disasters.

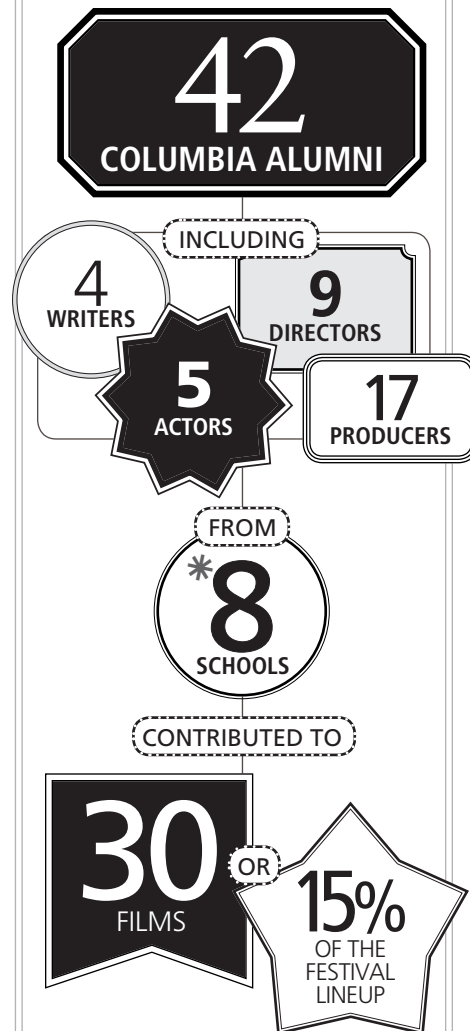
■ **Michael Tannenbaum '10CC** FINANCE

As a vice president at financial startup SoFi, Tannenbaum helped raise one billion dollars in investment, the largest ever for a financial-tech company.



IT'S A MARVELOUS NIGHT FOR A SUNDANCE

An impressive number of Columbia filmmakers participated in this year's Sundance Film Festival. Check out these stats.



* Barnard College ■ Columbia College ■ Graduate School of Arts and Sciences ■ Graduate School of Business ■ Graduate School of Journalism ■ School of General Studies ■ School of International and Public Affairs ■ School of the Arts

REVIEWS

A Strangeness in My Mind By Orhan Pamuk (Knopf, 624 pages, \$28.95)

On the very last page of *A Strangeness in My Mind*, the latest novel by Columbia humanities professor and Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk, there is a photograph of a traditional Turkish boza seller. The slight man faces away from the camera, a long stick balanced across his shoulders. Hanging from the ends of the stick are two containers filled with his product — a traditional, mildly alcoholic drink served with cinnamon and chickpeas. Opposite him, three men squat in a doorway. A woman approaches from the left, her head covered in a scarf. The street is cobblestone, the door of the building ornate. The picture, which is undated, could be from any year in the past century, save for the graffiti of arrow-pierced hearts spray-painted on the building, marking it as relatively contemporary.

Coming at the end of this quiet, subtly powerful book, the photograph echoes the themes of the preceding six hundred pages: the melding of tradition with modernity; the juxtaposition of the individual against the group; the ideal of romantic love and the reality of relations between the sexes; the primacy of the city.

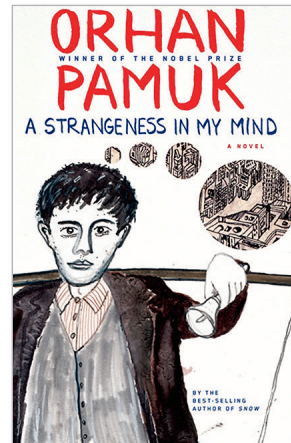
Pamuk's book follows the small, ordinary life of Mevlut, who, like the man in the photograph, walks the streets of modern Istanbul selling boza. The work is low-paying and backbreaking, filled with aggravations ranging from hostile stray dogs to condescending customers who invite Mevlut into their homes to pour them a glass, then treat him like a curiosity from a traveling museum. He may walk ten miles a night, down alleys, through cemeteries, and over hills, and peddle only a few cups of his product.

But Mevlut loves selling boza. For him, boza links Istanbul's past with its rapidly

changing present, and roaming the city on foot at night enables him to assimilate the onslaught of modernity at his own pace.

To his family and friends, Mevlut seems simple to the point of stupidity. But in fact his mind is complicated terrain, as twisted and vertiginous as Istanbul's ancient alleys. Unlike many of the less conflicted characters in the book, who have no problem saying one thing while meaning another, Mevlut strives to reconcile his thoughts and actions, to match his intentions to his deeds.

The book opens with an episode of biblical tragicomedy that makes this goal near-impossible. After glimpsing a girl with “unforgettable eyes” at a wedding, Mevlut writes her love letters for three years. His cousin arranges for him to run away with the girl, but once the plan is enacted, Mevlut realizes a switch has been made: “They had shown him the pretty sister at the wedding, and then given him the ugly sister instead. Mevlut realized he'd been tricked.” Or had he? Mevlut and his bride, Rayiha, wind up being a true love match, and enjoy a happy and satisfying life together before tragedy strikes. But even in their moments of truest communion, Mevlut is plagued by the knowledge that his love letters were intended for Rayiha's sister, Samiha. “Mevlut knew he could have been happy only with Rayiha. God had made them for each other,” he decides, then immediately second-guesses himself. “What would have happened if I'd put ‘Samiha’ on my letters instead of ‘Rayiha’?” thought Mevlut.



Would Samiha have eloped with him?”

Mevlut's personal torment comes against the backdrop of much larger political turmoil both in the region and globally. Pamuk invokes politics often — the Turkish occupation of Cyprus, the Iranian Revolution, the Tiananmen Square protests, civil war between secular Turkish intellectuals and political Islamists, the 9/11

attacks, and the arrival of Syrian refugees in Turkey. Mevlut experiments with radicalism, but mostly remains apolitical, believing that in an unstable country, his private thoughts are best left unexpressed. Pamuk expertly shows the way this political repression leads to a form of emotional self-censorship.

By the novel's end, Istanbul has become a city of skyscrapers and parking lots, “so big and sprawling that it was impossible to drive to and from [the] neighborhoods in a day, let alone walk.” Mevlut stares out over this “unbreachable” city from behind the barrier of an apartment-tower window, dozens of stories in the air. Sealed off in this way, he feels tremendous nostalgia for the streets he used to know so intimately, yet he refuses to believe that this lost world is truly inaccessible to him. “For the moment, he refused to choose between the two realms. His public views were correct, and so were his private ones; the intentions of the heart and the intentions of words were equally important.” Just like the boza seller in the photograph on the final page, Mevlut ends the book already a token of Istanbul's disappearing history, but, for the moment, at one with his city.

— Jennie Yabroff

Too Much of a Good Thing: How Four Key Survival Traits Are Now Killing Us

By Lee Goldman (Little, Brown, 352 pages, \$28)

If your New Year's resolutions to eat better, exercise, and stress less are already a dim and distant memory, perhaps you shouldn't blame it on your weak willpower but on your stubborn genes.

According to a new book by Lee Goldman, dean of the faculties of health sciences and medicine at Columbia University Medical Center, our cravings for salty french fries, our tendency to eat past the point of satiety, and even the twinge of anxiety we feel when we step on the scale are all survival mechanisms that have been hardwired into the human body over some two hundred thousand years.

Once, these and other impulses helped to protect *Homo sapiens* against starvation, dehydration, violence, and bleeding, but, Goldman warns, genetic traits that served Paleolithic hunter-gatherers do not suit “a species of gradually aging, sedentary people who live indoors, ride in cars, take elevators, and may or may not engage in occasional exercise.” As a result, he argues, the traits designed to help us survive have paradoxically become our greatest killers.

Goldman, a renowned cardiologist (he developed the Goldman criteria, guidelines that determine which patients with chest pain require hospital admission, and the Goldman index, which predicts which patients will have heart problems after surgery), delivers a clear-eyed account of how our bodies have fallen out of sync with our environment.

He reminds us that, in just two hundred years, industrial and technological revolutions have completely transformed our world. Adaptation, of course, takes place over tens of thousands of years, so “we're stuck with genetic traits that were finely tuned over millennia to deal with a pre-industrial age.”

Goldman's argument may bring solace to those who find it difficult to kick their bad habits. He tells us that we overeat and store the excess calories because our ancestors did not have a consistent food supply and needed to gorge when calories were at hand.

Our preference for salty foods is also biological, since salt helps us retain water and avoid dehydration, but as we age, excess salt can lead to high blood pressure and damage our hearts, kidneys, and blood vessels.

We have developed fears, hyper-vigilance, and aggressive tendencies because these defensive instincts help us avoid getting killed by our enemies. Today, Goldman argues, “the anger that used to be directed externally toward other people is now increasingly directed internally, where it's manifested as anxiety and depression.” Suicide, he observes, is the tenth most common cause of death in the United States.

A fourth survival trait, a blood-clotting system that saves us from bleeding to death if we are grievously injured, is of course still essential. However, as our bodies age and become more sedentary, that clotting mechanism can become deadly. In America, according to Goldman, “diseases caused by clots — heart attacks, clotting strokes, pulmonary embolism, and the like — cause about 25 percent of all deaths, more than four times the number of deaths caused by all forms of bleeding.”

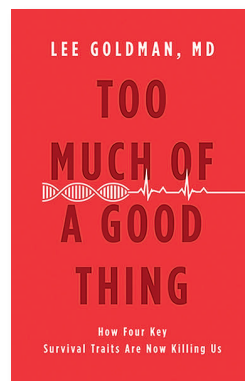
Though Goldman's message is alarming, it's not pessimistic. Even while the author is demonstrating our biological inability to adapt to a rapidly changing world, it's obvious that he is in awe of the body and its

miraculous complexity. While on the subject of dehydration, for example, Goldman describes in elegant detail the wonder of our sweating mechanisms. He marvels at the prodigious output of our eccrine glands, which can evacuate “as much as 3.5 quarts per hour in a highly acclimated person living in the tropics,” and at the fact that the evaporation of sweat produces a cooling power equivalent to four thousand BTUs.

The author has faith that science and modern medicine will help save us from ourselves. He points out that medications that treat high cholesterol, depression, and high blood pressure are already helping us adapt. He also believes that as we enter a new era of personalized and precision medicine, it will be entirely possible to manipulate our genomic profile so that we might silence or deactivate genes that don't serve us anymore.

Goldman, who has published more than 480 medical articles, writes that he has done his best to make the book “as scientifically rigorous as possible while still being understandable and, I hope, enjoyable for a broad audience.” He has succeeded in these goals. Goldman's argument is both clear and compelling, and the book is full of fascinating offbeat facts and figures. Is the book enjoyable? Yes. But once readers begin to understand that the body's survival mechanisms are now responsible “for more than six times the number of deaths they prevent,” they might describe this book differently. Perhaps the words “alarming,” “concerning,” or even “slightly terrifying” might be more apt.

— Sally Lee



Pulitzer's Gold: A Century of Public Service Journalism

By Roy J. Harris Jr. (Columbia University Press, 488 pages, \$35)

The Pulitzer Prize's public-service award is given annually to recognize reporting that demonstrates a "measurable impact in the community." Often, these are the stories that have commanded the nation's attention — Watergate, Katrina, 9/11, the Catholic Church abuse scandal. In *Pulitzer's Gold: A Century of Public Service Journalism*, Roy J. Harris Jr. traces the history of the award over a hundred years, portraying the delicate web of teamwork that goes into producing an in-depth news package. The depiction of the faith, strategy, and bankrolling that some stories require is masterful; the book is essential reading for aspiring and seasoned newshounds alike.

In newsrooms and courtrooms, on stakeouts and in back alleys, in rural communities and church basements, Harris illustrates the stirrings of each story before

it became a Pulitzer winner. Some of those behind-the-scenes details are mundane; others are harrowing. For example, Harris describes the scene at the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* building where, in 2005, 140 reporters were camped out overnight to cover Hurricane Katrina: "The sudden quiet within contrasted sharply with the howling wind without. Any who were dozing early that morning awoke abruptly. A large window in an executive office blew in, and then another, and another."

Other anecdotes are more obscure, and provide charming insight into the way a less obvious story can develop. In one chapter, for example, Harris takes us to a highway overpass in Florida, where a pair of *Sun Sentinel* reporters were staging a 5 a.m. stakeout, hoping to catch off-duty cops speeding. It was raining, their equipment was hardly top of the line, and with headlights shining in their faces, they

couldn't tell which cars belonged to police officers anyhow. They retreated and, using records from police cars' transponders, were able to publish the story and ultimately win the award.

This muscular revision of *Pulitzer's Gold* — originally published in 2007 — is well-timed for the prize's centennial. Pulitzer famously created his awards in a time when journalism was hardly revered or respected. One hundred years later, reporters face a different set of crises: how news stories are read and funded and what that means for the survival of the profession. What Harris's book shows is that, over the course of the past century, the Pulitzer Prize for public service has remained a beacon, reminding us that important stories are reported every day, and that the people publishing them can and do exact political change.

— Kelly McMasters



What advice do you have for the **Class of 2016**?

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The Secret Chord

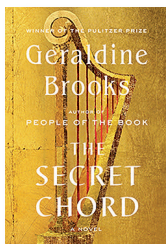
By Geraldine Brooks (Viking, 320 pages, \$27.95)

The legend of King David is familiar to anyone who grew up in the Abrahamic tradition, but his story, as told by Geraldine Brooks '83JRN, is something of a revelation. Gone is the hagiography of the poor shepherd boy who vanquished Goliath and united the tribes of Israel. What remains is an unvarnished, almost distractingly violent portrait of a complex individual of coarse appetites and brutal ambition.

David's story is told from the perspective of Natan, a prophet and scribe. He sets out to meet with David's mother, brother, and wives in an attempt to gather multiple perspectives on his subject. However, as the story unfolds, Natan's account begins to read less like a character study and more like a litany of bad deeds. The beloved biblical figure who composed moving psalms and played the harp is almost unrecognizable.

Brooks won a Pulitzer for her novel *March* (which imagines the Civil War exploits of the absent father in *Little Women*), and she is known for her ability to humanize the bit players on the historical stage. In *The Secret Chord*, she shifts her focus to the leading man. However, this David is no saint but a sinner, a characterization that sometimes strikes the wrong note.

— Sally Lee

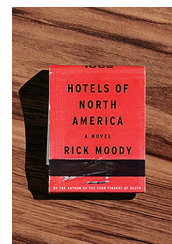


Hotels of North America

By Rick Moody (Little, Brown, 208 pages, \$25)

In an age dominated by text messages, letter-writing is a vanishing art, and it's easy to assume that the epistolary novel is as good as dead. But in the charming, inventive, and deeply weird *Hotels of North America*, Rick Moody '86SOA proves that the form is as vital as ever. His story unfolds not through conventional letters but online hotel reviews, written by Reginald Edward Morse, a top reviewer on a fictional website. In a spare two hundred pages, Morse — a middling stockbroker turned middling motivational speaker — critiques everything from Manhattan's Plaza Hotel to an Ikea parking lot, where he once slept in his car. Along the way, he reveals the tragedies of his life, both great (a failed marriage, a daughter he rarely sees, alcoholism) and mundane (sleep apnea, bedbugs, and the gritty crunch of a dirty carpet). His tone, often indignant, betrays an inflated sense of self-worth, making Morse familiar to anyone who has spent time on sites like Yelp, where the layman is empowered as a critic. While this can be funny, there are also profundities hidden in Morse's verbosity, and over the course of the book he morphs from a buffoon to something sadder. He becomes, as he puts it, "just another guy sweating out droplets of desperation and heartache in the 21st century."

— Rebecca Shapiro



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The Art of the Meal

James Beard Award–winning chef, television personality, and writer Jacques Pépin '70GS, '72GSAS discusses his twenty-sixth — and arguably most personal — cookbook, *Heart & Soul in the Kitchen* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt)



Columbia Magazine: You're known for your illustrious culinary career, but you're also a scholar of French literature. How did you end up at Columbia?

Jacques Pépin: I came to America in September of 1959 to work at the famous French restaurant Le Pavillon. I hadn't even graduated from high school — I had been working in restaurants since I was thirteen. But I always knew that I wanted to go back to school. I happened to travel across the Atlantic on a boat with a lot of exchange students, and one night on deck I struck up a conversation with a professor, who told me that Columbia was the best university in the city. I could barely speak English then, but I took the subway uptown and asked how I could apply. After two years of preparatory courses and entrance exams, I started at the School of General Studies.

CM: Why did you decide to return to a career in the kitchen?

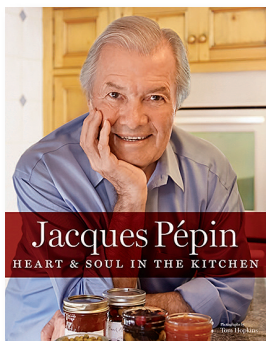
JP: I never stopped cooking. I worked in restaurants for the entire time that I was studying. I even turned down a scholarship for graduate studies because it stipulated that I couldn't work more than twenty hours a week. I did ultimately start a PhD program in literature, and I might have continued down that path, but Columbia rejected my thesis proposal.

CM: What was the topic of your thesis?

JP: It was about food, of course! The history of French food in the context of

literature. My adviser — a Frenchman, no less — told me that it was too frivolous for serious academic pursuit. This was in the early 1970s; it was a different time. No one was thinking seriously about food then.

Now there are entire degree programs at major universities in food studies. When Boston University was starting a culinary



department, I helped to found their master's program in gastronomy — an academic discipline that thinks about food in the context of literature, sociology, and history. When I was developing the curriculum, I knew exactly where to start my research — I picked up where I had left off on my thesis. I just had

to wait for America to catch up a little bit.

CM: America is clearly more interested in food now. But do you think the American palate has caught up, too? I noticed, for example, that your new cookbook includes a full chapter on offal, which is probably new to many home cooks.

JP: When I first came to America, I remember going to a grocery store on 50th Street at First Avenue. I walked through the aisles looking for the produce section, and all they had was iceberg lettuce. When I asked where I could find mushrooms, they pointed me to the canned goods. The change over the last few decades has been astounding. America is absolutely in a food revolution — from wine producers in California to artisanal cheesemakers and bakers — and people's tastes are changing all the time. I notice that young chefs are increasingly interested in sweetbreads and

other kinds of organ meats. Those were things that I grew up cooking and eating in France. They're never going to be for everyone, especially if you're not used to the taste, but I do finally feel that some of my readers are ready to try working with these kinds of ingredients.

CM: This will be your twenty-sixth cookbook, a companion to your thirteenth PBS television series. What do you think makes this collection distinct?

JP: I've written a lot of books that have had very specific goals. I wrote a book on budget shopping and cooking, for example, and one for the Cleveland Clinic on heart-healthy cooking. I've always thought of myself as a teacher first, and it's been a pleasure to help people solve the problems that they encounter in the kitchen. But at this later stage in my career, I wanted to do something more personal. I've been married for fifty years, and every time my wife and I have hosted a dinner together, I've drawn up a menu of what we're serving. I add some pictures — decorative drawings or paintings of the food — and have the guests sign the back, and then I put it into a binder. We now have eight or nine of those binders, and it's wonderful to go back and remember the food and the company. Those are the recipes in this book.

CM: Is that where the art in the book comes from?

JP: Yes, that's all mine, and I'm afraid you can blame that on Columbia, too. I took two drawing classes as electives and found that I loved it. I suppose if cooking didn't work out and academia didn't work out, I could have always been a painter . . .

— Rebecca Shapiro

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The Oscar Quiz

Ready to test your CU celluloid savvy? The envelope, please . . . By Marley Marius

1 Dede Gardner '90CC, a producer of this year's best-picture nominee *The Big Short*, was also a producer of which best-picture nominees from the past two years?
 A) *Gravity* and *Birdman*
 B) *12 Years a Slave* and *Selma*
 C) *The Wolf of Wall Street* and *American Sniper*

2 Jennifer Lee '05SOA, writer and codirector of 2013's best animated feature, *Frozen*, holds which of the following two distinctions?
 A) **First woman to direct a Walt Disney animated feature film**
 B) **First female writer at a major studio to become a director**
 C) **First woman to direct a film grossing over one billion dollars in box-office revenue**
 D) **First woman to direct an Oscar-winning animated feature**

3 Simon Kinberg '03SOA, a producer of this year's best-picture nominee *The Martian*, wrote which of these films starring Brad Pitt?
 A) *Confessions of a Dangerous Mind*
 B) *Meet Joe Black*
 C) *Mr. and Mrs. Smith*

4 In a scene from the 2010 best-picture nominee *The Kids Are All Right*, directed and cowritten by Lisa Cholodenko '97SOA, Nic (Annette Bening) and Paul (Mark Ruffalo) get into an impassioned conversation about which album?
 A) *Blue*, by Joni Mitchell
 B) *Modern Times*, by Bob Dylan
 C) *Pearl*, by Janis Joplin



5 What did both Oscar-winning films written by William Goldman '56GSAS — *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969) and *All the President's Men* (1976) — have in common?
 A) **Both were directed by Alan J. Pakula**
 B) **Both starred Paul Newman**
 C) **Both featured music by Burt Bacharach**
 D) **Both were based on real-life events**

6 In the 1999 drama *Boys Don't Cry*, directed by Kimberly Peirce '96SOA, Hilary Swank won best actress for her portrayal of which character?
 A) **A female boxer who competes against a man**
 B) **A transgender man in Nebraska**
 C) **The first female fighter pilot**
 D) **A female racecar driver who disguises herself as a man in order to compete**

7 Which actress did James Mangold '99SOA direct to Oscar gold in his 1999 drama *Girl, Interrupted*?
 A) **Winona Ryder**
 B) **Angelina Jolie**
 C) **Brittany Murphy**

8 For which of the following Oscar-nominated Ang Lee films did School of the Arts professor of professional practice James Schamus receive both producing and writing credits?
 A) *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000)
 B) *Brokeback Mountain* (2004)
 C) *Life of Pi* (2012)

9 Joseph L. Mankiewicz '28CC nabbed both best-director and best-adapted-screenplay honors two years in a row with which back-to-back hits?
 A) ***A Letter to Three Wives* (1949) and *All About Eve* (1950)**
 B) ***Julius Caesar* (1953) and *The Barefoot Contessa* (1954)**
 C) ***The Quiet American* (1958) and *Suddenly, Last Summer* (1959)**

10 The 1966 film adaptation of Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, whose cast included George Segal '55CC in the role of Nick, made Oscar history by being:
 A) **The first film to receive a nomination in every eligible category**
 B) **The first film to have its entire credited cast nominated**
 C) **The first nominated film to feature Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor together**
 D) **All of the above**

11 Which filmmaker presented Kathryn Bigelow '81SOA with her Oscar for best director in 2010?
 A) **Nora Ephron**
 B) **Barbra Streisand**
 C) **Sofia Coppola**

12 George Lucas, father of the Oscar-winning *Star Wars* franchise, has cited the writings of which Columbia alumnus as a major influence on his work?
 A) **Anthropologist Leslie White '23CC**
 B) **Mythologist Joseph Campbell '25CC**
 C) **Religion professor Joseph Leon Blau '34CC**



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—KEVILLE FREDERICKSON TOMASSON
'64NRS, '74TC

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