Living the life precarious

What's up? Doctors.
connecting you to WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY the STATE the WORLD
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Cover: Rock rows seen from the shore in Olympic National Park. Left: “Golden Light, Palouse” (Photos Chip Phillips)
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First words

Stability. Every building is only as strong as its foundation. The same holds true for our countries, our communities, our lives.

One stabilizing force for many of us is work. It pays the bills for homes, food, and other necessities, and often provides satisfaction and pride. Many people lost their jobs last year, and hopefully we’ve turned a corner, but the world of work has been shifting for a while. The number of gig workers and people who travel the country as nomads searching for temporary work has grown significantly. The feature story in this issue looks at the lives of those workers and digs into the reasons for the change.

Another strong pillar for many of us is our alma mater or chosen home: Washington State University. During the pandemic, we reconnected with college friends and recalled good memories of student days. And, as young alumni and the students graduating in May face a transformed working world, they can also count on WSU help through the Coug nation and the WSU Alumni Association.

The WSUAA has always been a reliable partner for this magazine, and we’re pleased and thankful that this issue is exclusive to WSUAA members, subscribers, and the campus community. The alumni association has innovated during the past year to lift Cougar spirits with virtual events and more.

While visiting a real campus was difficult in 2020, we can still picture the iconic buildings there. WSU architecture professor Phil Gruen and others completed a monumental task of selecting significant structures across the state, including some at WSU such as Stevens Hall.

A community is definitely more than buildings, though. Health care sits at the heart of towns and cities, and the first doctors graduating from the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine are ready to go out and be community leaders.

However, we face a crisis of stability on a broader, national level. The January 6 invasion of the US Capitol represented a clear danger to democracy, and WSU political scientist Cornell Clayton places the event in historical context in his essay.

Hopefully this magazine offers you an ongoing connection to WSU and a steady presence in your life. We always welcome your support, and you can find ways to help at magazine.wsu.edu/friend.

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Editor’s note: We asked for your Stevens Hall stories and heard some great ones. Here are two of them, and you can find more stories and a link to Tori Stuckey’s Stevens Hall history site through magazine.wsu.edu/extra/Stevens-Hall-letters.

When I left my childhood home in Wailuku, Maui, Hawaii, in September 1961, to my new one at Stevens Hall, I had absolutely no idea what awaited. I was a 17-year-old who had never been to the mainland, what we islanders call the continental states. In those days, students from Hawaii didn’t go on campus visits, the Internet wasn’t born, and my only orientation to WSU was through the hard copy catalog.

Just after a month at WSU, I received a special delivery letter from my mom, telling me that my grandmother, who had lived in our same household, had suddenly passed away. Phone calls from Hawaii in those days were expensive and my family—with five younger siblings—couldn’t afford the call.

Due to the cost of airfare, I wasn’t able to fly home for the funeral. Knowing I was sad and homesick, my mom sent a letter with money to Mrs. Wade, my dorm mother, telling her about my grandmother’s passing and asking if she would host a birthday party for me. My birthday is November 11.

November 12, as my friends and I were heading out to a movie in downtown Pullman, my roommate feigned a headache to stall our movie outing while waiting for the cue to tell me Mrs. Wade wanted to see me. When I was told that Mrs. Wade wanted to see me “right away,” I nervously thought, “What had I done?” As I walked into her apartment, a group of girls yelled, “Surprise!” I stood stunned with my mouth wide open. A sad time turned happy, thanks to my mom, Mrs. Wade, and my new friends at Stevens Hall.

SHIRLEY (KODANI) CAVANAUGH (’65 SPEECH)

Stevens Hall is what really bolstered my love for history and historical architecture. When I lived there, I became obsessed with researching Stevens’s history. I looked through all of the old photos and documents in the government closet downstairs, the scrapbooks in the lobby, and the MASC, as well, to get any information I could get my hands on. The fact that thousands of women walked through those halls and that Stevens was the social hub of campus in its early years is what really is amazing. I could write for hours about Stevens—and I did, actually. I made a website about its history.

TORI STUCKEY (’18 FORESTRY)

Alumni Association News

A message from the WSU Alumni Association executive director

Making and maintaining connections with Cougs is what the WSU Alumni Association (WSUAA) is all about. Doing that successfully during a pandemic is challenging. The WSUAA staff took the challenge head on. With equal measures of creativity and hard work, they pulled it off.

Communication is at the heart of linking Cougs with WSU and with one another. We produce CougNews—a compilation of stories from across the WSU system—delivered electronically each month. The WSUAA also prepares members only emails about benefits, services, and programs members can enjoy. Event announcements are another mainstay. Four times each year, we send all members copies of Crimson Quarterly, an old-fashioned, hands-on, printed newsletter that includes news of upcoming activities, WSUAA highlights, and alumni and volunteer features.

This issue of Washington State Magazine is an example of our innovative communications efforts. We partnered with the WSM staff to share this issue exclusively with WSUAA members—all 40,000+ of us. We are huge fans of the magazine and thank our WSM partners for helping us get this issue into your hands.

The WSUAA is likely best known for our events. In a “normal” year, the WSUAA conducts 1,000+ in-person events nationwide. Those stopped in March 2020 when we shifted to virtual programming. The positive response from our members has been overwhelming. Events range from our virtual book club (Well Read Cougs) to a live tour of Bolivia to our innovative Feast@Home food-wine-fun virtual gatherings to career nights. Our programming focuses on learning, networking, and fun, three areas important to our members.

Truth be told, we miss gathering with Cougs in person. When we can, we will restart our in-person events while continuing our communications and virtual programming. Cougs are social by nature.

We look forward to seeing you soon.

In the meantime, thanks for being a WSUAA member and for helping us support WSU.

Go Cougs!

TIM PAVISH ’80
Executive Director and Platinum Life Member
THANK YOU WASHINGTON
FOR SUPPORTING WSU’S FIRST DOCTORS

For the thousands of firsts you’ve made possible, and the thousands more to come.

MEDICINE.WSU.EDU | WSUMedicine

Elson S. Floyd
College of Medicine
WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
As you know, Washington State University has greatly expanded its statewide presence during the last 30 years—going from a single flagship campus in Pullman to an evolving system of interconnected campuses in the growing population centers of Everett, Spokane, Tri-Cities, and Vancouver. Add in the ever-increasing contributions of our Extension programs and the worldwide reach of our Global Campus, and you begin to quickly grasp the complexity of managing this enterprise.

As I near my five-year anniversary as WSU’s president, I’ve seen firsthand multiple times the challenges of providing effective executive leadership that reflects the University’s long-held operating principle of “one university, geographically dispersed.” In short, the University long ago defined an operating principle but never developed a clear framework for how it would operate as a cohesive system.

It’s now time to address this need. While the University continues to make notable strides, including record student enrollment, the establishment of a medical college, and growing partnerships with the state’s agricultural interests, the institution is experiencing limitations due to our organizational and administrative infrastructure. Many of our campuses are, in fact, dependent on the flagship campus in Pullman to make executive-level decisions—restricting their ability to make needed decisions at a campus level.

What’s the best solution? For WSU to continue to grow its ability to meet the needs of the communities it serves, we are in the early stages of creating a unified system infrastructure. Known as OneWSU, we seek to provide an appropriate level of autonomy at each campus location, while at the same time ensuring consistent WSU mission, branding, and quality.

Through the OneWSU system structure, the University’s six campuses, four research and extension centers, ten subject matter centers, and 39 county and one tribal extension offices will join in a commitment to a set of OneWSU operating principles as outlined in the OneWSU System Strategic Plan.

We believe this approach will deliver significant advantages to our stakeholders statewide. While individual campuses will be obligated to contribute to the role and mission of the overall WSU system, they will also be free to pursue the mission and implement the programs most needed by the communities in which they are located. Likewise, we will clarify which administrative and organizational functions are best executed at the campus level versus those best executed at the system level.

You’ll be hearing much more about OneWSU in the weeks and months ahead. Bottom line: we are more committed than ever to delivering accessible, quality education to students, conducting research that solves everyday challenges, and serving the needs of residents on both sides of the Cascades. OneWSU will raise our game to the next level.

KIRK SCHULZ
President, Washington State University
Crème de la crème

BY ADRIANA JANOVICH

Cougar Tracks with fudge swirls and peanut butter cups. Apple Cup Crisp with caramel and oatmeal cookies. Any one of sixteen classic flavors sandwiched between two oatmeal cookies in a Grabber. Cougar Gold sharp cheddar and other flavorful cheeses.

IT’S NO WONDER Ferdinand’s Ice Cream Shoppe at the Washington State University Creamery enjoys a cult-like following. Sweet or savory, its offerings are rich and creamy, decadent and dreamy.

Cougars can’t get enough. And others are catching on. In fact, in January, Bon Appétit featured WSU’s signature canned cheese in its “Highly Recommend” column, calling Cougar Gold “absolutely incredible.” The recommendation led to what WSU Creamery manager John Haugen (’93 Civ. Eng.) calls “the most significant (sales) bump I’ve ever seen.”

Normally, “Three days during holiday season might have 1,500 orders,” Haugen says. “We ended up with about 3,000 orders over the three-day weekend” following the review. Web traffic “tapered off after that, but our orders remained higher than normal for that time of year for a couple of weeks. Pretty amazing!”

At the same time, the persisting pandemic has impacted sales of WSU-made dairy products. Without large in-person events such as football games, demand for ice cream dwindled.

Cheese production took a hit, too. The plan had been to ramp up weekly output from seven to eight batches, yielding about 800 cans each. When the COVID-19 crisis struck, the creamery reduced production to one batch per day five days per week for months.

But Cougs are still going for the Gold, especially around the holidays. WSU Creamery typically sells two-thirds of its cheese in the last third of the year. Cougar Gold is its top seller. Cheddar and Smoky Cheddar tie for second. Crimson Fire! comes in third. *

Cougar Gold

2019
• 189,762 cans produced
• 152,897 cans sold (that’s every single can of Cougar Gold made in 2018)

2020
• 191,320 cans produced
• 185,654 cans sold

I scream, you scream
You know the rest. WSU Creamery has 16 standard flavors as well as limited seasonal offerings such as pumpkin and peppermint.

2019
• 24,000 gallons
• 78,887 scoops
• 24,726 Grabbers
• 9,186 milkshakes

2020
• 12,000 gallons
• 36,734 scoops
• 13,157 Grabbers
• 4,136 milkshakes

ALL CHEESE
• 2019: 260,384 cans
• 2020: 252,258 cans

more about Ferdinand’s milk, student workers, and history: magazine.wsu.edu/extra/ferds
Aircraft powered from wind?

Excess power from wind can produce hydrogen for aircraft fuel cells.

The rising hydrogen economy could bring billions of dollars to the Northwest. Washington State University researchers and entrepreneurs are leading the way.
Graduation season brings with it a rush of bright-eyed alumni on the competitive hunt for the coveted “first-job-after-college.” Add in a global pandemic, and this celebratory epoch turns suddenly paralyzing for many young alumni.

As a senior graduating this May, I also have my own doubts. What if I can’t find a job after I graduate? Or even worse, what if I get laid off from my first job due to the pandemic? I find myself increasingly uncertain about my future while time seems to be running out.

The COVID-19 pandemic upended the workforce across the country. Lost opportunities and occupations littered the summer of 2020. Workplaces, schools, and businesses slowly metamorphosed into their respective virtual worlds.

“If the pandemic has taught us anything,” says Amanda Morgan (‘06 Busi., ‘08 M.Ed.), associate director of the Academic Success and Career Center (ASCC) at Washington State University, “it’s that we can’t really anticipate what’s coming around the corner.” Now, as the dust of the job market crash begins to settle, navigating this new normal is an everyday challenge. But, Morgan says, although the online space in many people’s lives may be unfamiliar, “it actually makes opportunities a little more accessible.”

In fact, says ASCC internship coordinator Judy Hopkins (‘12 Ag.), “there is an incredible opportunity for graduates because employers have literally pivoted from the previous way of managing their internships to creating remote opportunities.”

This pivot is opening doors instead of nailing them shut. So, what can young WSU alumni do to succeed?

Using online tools like LinkedIn to build connections within the WSU alumni family, Hopkins suggests, is where many young alumni should begin. “It’s not a cold call whatsoever, it’s a very warm connection when we have that opportunity to reach out to fellow Cougs.”

After building connections on LinkedIn, young alumni can reach out to relevant contacts for an informational interview. “Whatever it is that you are wanting, whatever your goal is, tell as many people as you can,” Morgan says. “You never know who’s going to be able to open that door for you.” These informational interviews can serve as the first step in a pathway to a dream job or even as the foundation to reach additional resources. As Hopkins says, “Often, because we have that Cougar connection, there is a strong possibility that it is going to unfold as a real meaningful connection.”

The pandemic has caused many habitually hopeful graduates to doubt their abilities. Even if it seems like the only thing to do is take a step back and wait out the storm, now more than ever is an opportunity to push through the clouds of uncertainty. “You’re graduating with other students, maybe competing for some of the same jobs,” Morgan says, “so this is not the time to be humble. This is the time to really showcase what you’ve done in every experience that you’ve had.”

Graduates must realize the job search process takes time. “I don’t think a lot of people, especially new graduates, recognize how time intensive that process can be and that can be really daunting and overwhelming. But it’s 100 percent worth it,” Morgan says.

As new graduates like me challenge this era’s scarcity, it is clear that things may not be so bleak after all. “We’ve been forced to be creative and innovative,” Hopkins says. “We have greater opportunities for success in new ways that we haven’t considered before.”

WSU Academic Success and Career Center

- Professional résumé reviews and career coaching
- One-on-one virtual appointments (all WSU campuses)
- Freshman students through alumni for six months after graduation
- Online resources at ascc.wsu.edu

WSU Alumni Association

- Cougar Career Academy: Workshops and interactive webinars led by WSU alumni that cover professional development and job search topics. alumnic.org/wsu
- Mission Collaborative: A 30-day online career development program for alumni who are looking to figure out what they want from the next chapter of their careers.
- Job search and career development resources at alumni.wsu.edu
Significantly Washington

BY ADRIANA JANOVICH

Of course, Seattle’s iconic Space Needle is on the list.

So is the Pacific Science Center, Smith Tower, and Seattle Central Library, along with the Amazon Spheres, multiple museums—of Flight, Glass, Pop Culture, and more—and several entire towns: the Bavarian-themed Leavenworth, Victorian seaport of Port Townsend, and company mill town of Port Gamble.

Washington State University made the cut, too.

The most difficult part of the project, says J. Philip “Phil” Gruen, was narrowing down the list to a hundred significant sites in the state. “There could have been a thousand sites,” says Gruen, associate professor in the School of Design and Construction at WSU’s Voiland College of Engineering and Architecture.

Gruen recently served as one of the coordinators of Washington’s Classic Buildings for SAH Archipedia, an online encyclopedia produced by the Society of Architectural Historians. The site contains entries for more than 20,000 landscapes, structures, monuments, and buildings across America. Its open-access component, SAH Archipedia Classic Buildings, contains maps, photos, and peer-reviewed essays for more than 4,100 structures in all 50 states.

Gruen and Robert R. Franklin (’14 MA History), the other project coordinator and assistant director of the Hanford History Project at WSU Tri-Cities, were tasked in 2015 with selecting the most representative works of Washington state’s built environment. They enlisted the help of 25 colleagues statewide—current and retired professors, graduate students, architecture professionals—to document each location’s building materials, techniques, and styles, as well as social and political contexts.

“We could have made it easier on ourselves by just selecting old buildings or buildings designed by well-known architects,” says Gruen, who teaches modern and vernacular architecture, historic preservation, the global history of design, and the built environment of the Pacific Northwest, including local and regional landscapes of the Palouse. He also serves on Pullman’s Historic Preservation Commission and WSU’s Historic Preservation Committee.

Instead, he and his collaborators considered contemporary as well as historical structures, famous and lesser-known designers, rural and urban locations, and variety in structure type—from private residences and places of worship to commercial buildings, including a tavern and a parking garage, to public spaces such as libraries, schools, and athletic arenas. Some of the sites that they considered don’t house buildings at all, but bridges, roads, or elevated tracks such as the Seattle Monorail.

Ultimately, Gruen says, these sites “had to be representative of the state. For us, that meant sites related to the landscape of the Northwest in some fashion. Most places we chose had some connection to the landscape or the context in which they sat—be that sky, water, forest, mountains, or hills.”

Gruen and his team made sure to include places that are important to indigenous and underrepresented peoples, including women. “In my view, almost everything is significant—if you’re willing to work hard enough to talk to the people, to do the research, to dig up the
A few of the 235 structures in Washington’s Classic Buildings

Ten significant examples >>

A few of the 235 structures in Washington’s Classic Buildings

archives, and to understand that the built environment is more than just famous old buildings designed by old white men. Looking at sites that way, I think, is a type of social justice architecture.”

Geographical balance was also important and, in the end, Gruen and his team included sites in almost every county in Washington state. Some of the locations they chose contain multiple structures. In all, their list of 100 sites encompasses 235 separate entries, including 17 at WSU Pullman. Gruen and Franklin edited all of the entries, researched and wrote about four dozen entries, and photographed the bulk of them.

Above all, Gruen says, “we wanted to tell stories—stories about place, about culture, about people.”

As a historian of the built environment, Gruen emphasizes interpretation and narrative as critical tools for reading human-made surroundings. His expertise lies in American architecture and urbanism of the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries.

“Historians tend to focus on design and style and names and dates. But, fundamentally, it’s meaning. How did the designs resonate? The life inside the buildings—that’s how people begin to bring meaning to buildings,” Gruen says. “When we start to tell those stories, they become the architecture of the building, in many ways.”

**SEATTLE CENTRAL LIBRARY, SEATTLE**

This is sleekness in Seattle, a library for the digital age, a dynamic, light-filled, and unconventional edifice with a distinctive diamond-shaped exterior grid of steel and glass. This is, writes Jaime Lynn Rice, academic program manager in WSU’s School of Design and Construction, “one of the few buildings to place Seattle firmly on the international architectural map.”

Completed in 2004 for nearly $170 million, the 11-story Seattle Central Library encompasses a full city block and more than 350,000 square feet. Its exterior planes resemble stacked volumes while interior spaces are open and flexible to adapt to changing needs. Rem Koolhaas and Joshua Prince-Ramus of the Rotterdam-based Office of Metropolitan Architecture designed the contemporary public space with exposed structural elements and dramatic uses of color. Escalators radiate an almost neon chartreuse. A spiral connects four floors of bookstacks via gently sloped ramps. A mixing chamber, modeled after trading rooms, holds more than 100 computers. A dumbwaiter carries books between the stacks and the chamber.

**STADIUM HIGH SCHOOL, TACOMA**

Construction started in 1891 on what was to become a luxury hotel resembling a French chateau. When a financial crisis hit two years later, the unfinished hotel was used as railroad storage. By the time the Tacoma School
District bought it in 1904, the building had been partially dismantled, having sustained heavy fire damage in 1898. Tacoma High School opened in 1906, was renamed in 1913, and has since been renovated several times. In 1999, Stadium High School served as the setting for *10 Things I Hate About You*. Its Stadium Bowl, also seen in the film, opened in 1910 with seating for 32,000 and breathtaking views of Commencement Bay. Presidents Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and Warren G. Harding gave speeches there. John Phillip Sousa and Louis Armstrong performed there. And WSU’s football team played there in 1917 against a team from Fort Lewis, 1941 against Texas A&M, and 1948 against Penn State.

GOVERNOR’S MANSION, OLYMPIA
This three-story, red-brick, Georgian Revival mansion, designed by the Tacoma-based firm of Russell & Babcock, was completed with 19 rooms in 1909.

Governor Marion E. Hay, his wife, Lizzie, and their five children were the first inhabitants. The mansion continues to serve as the state’s executive residence. A 1975 renovation added about 4,000 square feet to the back of the building. Since then, the home has only seen slight alterations.

ROTHSCHILD HOUSE MUSEUM, PORT TOWNSEND
Washington’s smallest state park encompasses a half-acre atop a bluff overlooking Port Townsend Bay. The heart of the property is a simple, two-story, Greek Revival home built in 1868 by one of Port Townsend’s early merchants.

David C. H. “The Baron” Rothschild opened his downtown mercantile in 1858, living with his wife, Dorette, and their first three children above the business. Their last two children, Emilie and Eugene, were born in the eight-room uptown house, which includes a formal dining room, parlor, sewing room, and children’s playroom. Emilie, Port Townsend’s first librarian, lived there until her death in 1954. Eugene, who had long since moved to Seattle, deeded the property to the state five years later.

The Rothschild House Museum opened to the public in 1962, giving guests a glimpse into what life was like for a prominent family in Washington’s Victorian seaport in the second half of the nineteenth century.

CAPE DISAPPOINTMENT LIGHTHOUSE, ILWACO
Washington’s oldest operating lighthouse stands at the mouth of the Columbia River, the most dangerous entrance to a commercial waterway in the world. Since the late 1700s, more than 2,000 vessels have wrecked in the Columbia Bar’s shifting sands, high seas, and heavy winds, including the *Oriole*, which, in 1853, was carrying building materials to erect a lighthouse to help other ships escape the same fate. Construction finally got underway after another supply ship arrived the following year. The Cape Disappointment Lighthouse was first lighted October 15, 1856. It stands 53 feet tall and tapers from a diameter of just over 14 feet to 10-and-a-half feet at the lantern room. Its distinctive black horizontal band was added in 1930. The light was automated in 1973.

ROLLING HUTS, MAZAMA
Situated on the eastern edge of the North Cascades, this pack of six, two-hundred-square-foot, contemporary cabins offers an elevated Washington state-style camping experience. Their award-winning design features modular furniture and hardy, low-maintenance materials. The steel, glass, and wood structures, created by Tom Kundig and completed in 2007, stand three feet above the ground and are topped with butterfly roofs. Sliding glass doors and wrap-around decks give campers spectacular views of the mountains, meadow, and trees. Set close to nature, the industrial-looking, minimalist huts are outfitted with wood-burning fireplaces, Wi-Fi, and microwaves, but no bathrooms.
more selected buildings: magazine.wsu.edu/extra/significant-bldg

STONEHENGE MEMORIAL, GOLDFENDE
This concrete replica of England’s famous Neolithic structure honors Klickitat County’s World War I dead. Dedicated July 4, 1918, it’s likely the oldest full-scale Stonehenge replica in the world. The Stonehenge Memorial stands on 5,300 acres purchased by affluent industrialist Sam Hill in 1907 with the dream of creating a Quaker farming community along the Columbia River. The remote location and lack of irrigation ultimately caused that project to fail. And, in 1914, work began on what was to be his hilltop Beaux Arts mansion; instead, Maryhill Museum of Art opened in 1940. The memorial, completed and re-dedicated in 1929, stands 16 feet tall and remembers 14 local men who lost their lives in the “war to end all wars.”

TEAPOT DOME SERVICE STATION, ZILLAH
This teapot-shaped gas station—short, stout, handle, spout—originally sat along the highway between Zillah and Granger. Today, the roadside attraction serves as Zillah’s visitor center and reminder of a hundred-year-old scandal. In 1921, President Warren G. Harding transferred control of three oil fields, intended as emergency naval fuel supplies, from the US Navy to the US Department of Interior. Interior Secretary Albert Fall then leased the reserves to two oil companies at low rates without competitive bidding. An investigation found Fall received $400,000 in bribes, and he became the first to be convicted of committing a felony while holding a Cabinet post.

One reserve was at Teapot Dome, Wyoming, and the incident became known as the Teapot Dome Scandal. It inspired Jack Ainsworth, whose father had a general store in the Yakima Valley, to install a kettle-shaped gas station beside the mercantile. The younger Ainsworth designed and built the structure in 1922, dubbing it “Teapot Dome.” The circular, wood-shingled edifice stands 14 feet in diameter with 10-foot ceilings, a decorative sheet-metal handle, and concrete spout that functioned as a stove pipe.

MONROE STREET BRIDGE, SPOKANE
When it was completed in 1911, the Monroe Street Bridge was the longest self-supporting arch in America and the third largest in the world. It replaced a steel bridge, which had replaced a short-lived wooden bridge lost to fire. City engineers designed the structure, and Spokane architects Kirtland Cutter and Karl Malmgren designed its four pedestrian pavilions adorned with life-size, bas-relief, concrete bison skulls. After a two-and-a-half-year, $18 million restoration led by the engineering and construction management firm of David Evans and Associates, the bridge—a key link between downtown and the north side of the city—reopened in 2005.

STEVENS HALL, PULLMAN
WSU’s first all-women’s dormitory, named for former Washington territorial governor Isaac Stevens and completed in 1896, is WSU’s oldest residence hall and second-oldest surviving building. It has been in continuous use since its completion, save for a year-long closure for rehabilitation in 1958.

Designed by the Seattle architectural firm of James Stephen and Timotheus Josenhans, Stevens Hall, done in New England Shingle Style with Pacific Northwest touches, feels classic and dignified yet unpretentious and homey. Local basalt, red brick quarried from clay deposits on campus, and sawn cedar shingles were used in the original build.

During the college’s formative years, the hall served as a social center, hosting receptions, readings, dinners, dances, and teas.
GENDERgaps

You’re IT

BY BECKY KRAMER

Michelle Carter was a single mom in her 30s when she earned a master’s degree in computer science. It changed the course of her life.

“Computer science was definitely the turning point for me,” says Carter, associate professor at the Washington State University Carson College of Business. “Even though I had an undergraduate degree in literature, I was still working part-time and living week to week, crisis to crisis.”

With database management skills, Carter became part of a cadre of highly employable tech workers. She worked in industry and later earned a doctorate in information systems—a career trajectory Carter says once seemed unfathomable for someone like her, a first-generation college graduate who returned to school after leaving at 15.

“I know what it’s like to be a single parent without enough education to have opportunities,” Carter says. “It left me with a deep, abiding sense of wanting to help other people have choices. I became very, very interested in the role of information technologies in either enabling people or marginalizing them.”

As part of that drive, Carter wants to help other women explore careers in technology, and specifically in information systems.

“In business schools, information systems is where the students learn programming, systems design, and database design—all within the context of business,” Carter says. But helping female students envision careers in the field requires expanding the ranks of women faculty, she says.

Just 28 percent of information systems faculty at US colleges and universities are women, according to the Association of Information Systems (AIS), an international organization for academic professionals. And women faculty are concentrated in non-tenure track positions.

Carter is part of a team of women faculty from five universities on a $1 million, three-year National Science Foundation grant aimed at growing the numbers of women professors in information systems. The effort also involves AIS as a grant partner as they look at gender equity issues within information systems academia and removing barriers to women’s advancement to full professor.

Female students who take introductory classes from women professors often get excited about continuing on.

“Who we have teaching at universities affects who is majoring in information systems, applying for jobs in the field, or considering a PhD,” Carter says. “If you don’t see other people like yourself in certain roles, it’s hard to imagine yourself there.”

Carter’s work in gender equity is “so much a part of who she is,” says Stacie Petter, a Baylor University professor of information systems and business analytics, who also works on inclusivity issues through AIS.

“She has a natural way of drawing folks in and making sure they have opportunities to be part of the conversation,” Petter says. “You can see that in her research, too, which focuses on how the use of information technology shapes identity.”

As a nontraditional student, Carter knows how it feels to be an outsider.

She spent her early years in England’s industrial north, in what she calls “a typical working-class family.” Women needed to work outside the home to help support their families, Carter says. But they didn’t have career options. They were factory workers, retail employees, and nursing assistants.

Carter didn’t picture college for herself. But after leaving school as a teenager, she eventually earned the equivalent of a GED and an undergraduate degree.

Carter was teaching part-time at a community college when she got the chance to get a master’s degree in computer science. “Britain was recognizing that it needed to increase the number of technology workers,” she says. “I had never even been near Excel; the only thing I’d used was a word processor. But it intrigued me. I took up the challenge.”

Carter was one of three female students in a cohort of 50 in her master’s program. She also was outnumbered by male peers when she worked in private industry.

“It’s not an easy profession for women to get into, and it’s not an easy profession for women to stay in,” Carter says. And that applies to the academic side, too.

After earning her doctorate in 2012 from Clemson University, Carter and her female colleagues compared the advice they were getting about job interviews. Another woman, who had recently married, was asked if her husband would be willing to relocate.

“For a male job candidate, being married was considered a sign of stability,” Carter says. “For a woman, it was a potential liability.”

Carter has helped raise gender equity awareness among academic professionals, Petter says.

“We’re talking a lot more about inclusivity than we have in the past,” she says. “Research shows that as teams become more diverse, they produce more creative solutions and better results.”

Gender equity work is more than individual universities can tackle on their own, so it’s exciting to have the AIS as a grant partner, Carter says.

Her role in the grant includes leading implicit bias training workshops for AIS leadership and members. The training will help people recognize subtle, ingrained biases that can cause them to favor one gender—or certain groups—over another as they think about candidates for awards, speaking engagements, and editorial positions at research journals.

“As humans, we exist in structures that give some people advantages. It’s OK to shine a light on these issues and try to address the challenges,” Carter says. ✫
PULLMAN WAS NEW TERRITORY. Until he came to Washington State University, George Raveling had never traveled west of Kansas City, and he had never worked as a head coach.

“It was on-the-job training,” recalls Raveling, whose last trip before the COVID-19 pandemic was to Pullman. In early February 2020, he returned to watch his name raised to the rafters in Beasley Coliseum during a special halftime ceremony. He’s the only WSU coach to have that honor.

“I teared up,” he says. “It was one of those extraordinary moments in my life when I could walk back and see some of the faces from early in my career and feel their warmth and have nothing but good memories.”

On the court, addressing the crowd, he began, “Thank you for bringing me back home.”

Raveling resides in Los Angeles County’s Ladera Heights. He moved to LA in 1986 when he became head men’s basketball coach at the University of Southern California. He went on to work for Nike for more than two decades, retiring in 2016 as director of international basketball.

But the longest stint in his coaching career was for the Cougs.

“And I loved every second of it,” says Raveling, calling his time at WSU as “a marriage made in heaven.”

Raveling served as WSU’s head men’s basketball coach from 1972 to 1983, earning 167 wins. He was twice named the Pac-8/10 Conference Coach of the Year and twice took the Cougs to NCAA tournaments. The team’s 1980 appearance marked the first for WSU since placing second in 1941. He also took the team to the playoffs during his last season at WSU.

“It was such a joy to coach there,” Raveling says. “They took a risk on me, and they supported me, and it was such a great journey. Maybe in those early years I would have liked to have won more games. But I wouldn’t trade the 11 years I spent at Washington State for anything. They brought out the best in me as a human being.”

In 1983, Glenn Terrell announced his plans to step down as WSU president, then-athletic director Sam Jankovich left for the University of Miami, and the University of Iowa came calling. “It was,” Raveling admits, “a lot more money at Iowa.”

He coached at Iowa for three years before heading to USC, serving as assistant coach for two US Olympic men’s basketball teams in 1984 and 1988, and winning numerous accolades. He’s been inducted into the National Collegiate Basketball Hall of Fame and Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, which also bestowed him with its prestigious John W. Bunn Lifetime Achievement Award. The WSU Athletic Hall of Fame inducted him, too.

Raveling arrived in Pullman on the heels of the Civil Rights Movement and presented WSU with a milestone and lasting legacy: serving as the first Black head basketball coach in University history.

“At the time, I didn’t think a lot about it,” he says. “I spent all of my time trying to prove to people that I could coach. When I look back now, race was never an issue. I don’t remember any time that I felt uncomfortable as a Black person at WSU. The University, its leadership, and its athletic department all supported me along the way.”

One of the biggest differences he notes between today’s Black Lives Matter movement and the marches, sit-ins, and Freedom Rides of the 1960s is smartphones.

“Technology has been our best freedom fighter,” Raveling says. “Technology was able to lay out to the world just what happened to George Floyd, and I think it galvanized not only a national conscience but a global one.

“Change is never easy—people inherently resist change—but I think people are really receptive to change right now and are trying to do the right thing. It’s going to take time, and we have to be patient and we have to be vigilant. But I remain enthusiastically hopeful that we are going to make the necessary changes.”
Can I have that, Dr. King?

He wasn’t planning to be there.

When his best friend’s father asked him and his buddy if they were going to attend the March on Washington, they both said no. They didn’t have the money, and they didn’t have a ride.

“He said, ‘Well, I’ll solve that.’ He gave us money and the use of one of his cars,” George Raveling recalls.

It was two nights before the march. The 26-year-old former Villanova University basketball star hadn’t yet made history himself—as the first Black assistant basketball coach at his alma mater and the University of Maryland, the first Black basketball coach in the Atlantic Coast Conference, and the first Black head basketball coach in the Pac-8 (now Pac-12) and at Washington State University, University of Iowa, and University of Southern California.

In summer 1963, he was having dinner in Delaware at his friend’s parents’ house when Woodrow Wilson, the preeminent Black dentist and Raveling’s friend’s dad, encouraged both young men to make the drive to Washington, D.C.

They ended up on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, working security during Martin Luther King Jr.’s famed I Have a Dream speech. Each came away from the day with a front-row experience of the iconic event. But Raveling took home a concrete reminder and one-of-a-kind historical artifact: King’s own copy of his legendary address.

“I knew it was important,” Raveling says. But, at that time, “I didn’t know it was historic.”

Raveling had been following the Civil Rights Movement and considered himself “a huge fan” of King. He had heard the reverend speak roughly half a dozen times in and around Philadelphia before the March on Washington on August 28, 1963.

He and his friend, Warren Wilson, arrived the night before to explore the grounds. “We ran into a gentleman who asked if we were coming to the march.” Then, “he asked if we were interested in volunteering, and we said, ‘For what?’”

Both stood over six feet tall. The man told them, “You guys would be great for security,” and we said, ‘OK, we’ll do it.’”

Raveling had a spot on the podium to King’s left. “When King spoke—as soon as he was done—we were to move in and secure him and the people on the dias, and get them out the back. Just as he was finishing, we started to move closer toward the podium.”

Suddenly, Raveling says, “I was right there beside him.” He seized the moment. “I said, ‘Dr. King, can I have that copy?’”

King was folding his speech. Next thing he knew, “he was handing it to me,” Raveling says. “Then he turned to talk to the rabbi, who came to congratulate him. It all happened that quick.”

The most famous paragraphs aren’t part of the original, untitled text. The activist ad-libbed those. An asterisk on the third page—put there by Raveling—indicates where King began to stray from the typed words.

The sixteen-minute speech served as “one of the most emotional moments in my lifetime,” says Raveling, who chalks up his experience to being “in the right place at the right time. It was an unusual set of circumstances that got me there. I feel most fortunate.”

His ask was spontaneous. To this day, Raveling says, “I have no idea why I did it.”

He never crossed paths with King again. The legendary civil rights leader was assassinated on April 4, 1968.

A year later, Raveling’s friend Warren was killed in a car crash.

By then, Raveling had tucked away King’s speech and didn’t think about or look at it again for two decades. During an interview for a 1984 newspaper story, he was asked whether he had participated in the Civil Rights Movement. The question spurred a search for the speech. He’s since been offered millions of dollars for the pages, now framed and stored safely in a bank vault in Los Angeles.

In 2013, in honor of the fiftieth anniversary of the march, Raveling told CBS, “The speech belongs to America. The speech belongs to Black folks. It doesn’t belong to me, and it would be sacrilegious of me to try and sell it to profit from it.”

Saying hello to goodbye

In the United States, death isn’t comfortable.

We don’t like talking about it, and we certainly don’t want to experience it. Making plans for what will happen after we or our loved ones die is often the last thing on our minds. But when one of us inevitably crosses over, this pressure to keep quiet leaves survivors alone in their grief.

Cory Bolkan ▲, associate professor at Washington State University Vancouver, and Raven Weaver ▼, assistant professor at WSU Pullman, seek to change that norm. Their course, Human Development 360: Death and Dying, gives students the tools to form a healthy relationship with death.

“When students come into this class, the perception is that it’s going to be really morbid and sad and depressing,” Bolkan says. “But the more we talk openly about death, the more it helps us lead productive and intentional lives.”

With topics like terminal illness, suicide, burial practices, and cross-cultural norms around death, the course is particularly relevant to students in criminal justice, social work, psychology, and medical fields, but Bolkan and Weaver say the course is useful for everyone.

“If you work with people, you’re going to work with people who experience loss and...
Bolkan says, “Having an outlet to study what loss means and how to manage those feelings will help you be a better employee and human service worker, but it’ll also have a personal benefit.”

The first page of the syllabus lists WSU counseling resources, keeping students mindful of the course’s heavy subject.

“We check in and see how students are doing and grappling with their material throughout the semester and via their weekly reflection assignments,” Weaver says. “I’m really intentional about monitoring students’ assignments and reaching out because of the sensitive topic.”

With the COVID-19 pandemic, feelings of loss are higher than before. Students reported higher feelings of anxiety about death in the last three semesters compared to students who took the course between 2012-2016, according to Bolkan and Weaver.

“We have this grief pandemic, and there’s no timeline for how long that’ll last or when that’ll end,” Weaver says.

Though it is typical for programs focusing on human development to discuss death and dying, Bolkan and Weaver say many institutions aren’t teaching the subject.

“Maybe they just don’t have someone who feels comfortable teaching it, but this attitude of death denial is reflected in the lack of course offerings,” Bolkan says. “A good portion of medical students and social workers say they don’t feel sufficiently trained on it.”

“Some students say after starting the course, it feels like there was a world of knowledge being kept from them,” Weaver adds.

Only a third of adults over the age of 18 have a plan for their care during a medical crisis, Weaver says. While life expectancy has increased and people are less likely to die unexpectedly now than in past decades, having this conversation can help facilitate a more productive experience of grief when the time comes.

Resources like the Death Café in Pullman and Vancouver and the international organization Death Over Dinner provide a good starting point for those interested in tackling the topic, Weaver says. She also recommends conversation starter games like “Hello” to get comfortable talking with family and friends.

“It’s a gift you give each other to have these conversations with your loved ones,” Bolkan says.

The sturdy and massive buoy, made from some 800 pounds of military-grade steel, was likely once used to help hang anti-submarine and anti-torpedo netting in Port Townsend Bay. A system of heavy floats and cable netting—think giant chain-link fencing for bodies of water—was part of a maritime defense system designed to protect US Navy assets in Puget Sound during World War II.

Buoy as this, says Janine Johnson, publications coordinator for the WSU Bread Lab in Burlington, “are exceedingly rare.” This particular buoy was found covered in blackberry brambles on Marrowstone Island, located just east of Naval Magazine Indian Island, which was commissioned May 10, 1941. Seven months later, the United States entered World War II.

The buoy has since been repurposed by Bread Lab director Stephen Jones, who purchased it from a friend who knew the origin of the metal buoys used at Indian Island. However, she says, Indian Island’s Navy spokesman, Julianne Stanford, “we don’t know the origin of the metal buoys used at the island.” However, she says, Indian Island “used the metal buoys more frequently than the wooden ones to suspend the anti-submarine nets across the harbor inlets in Puget Sound. They were much easier to handle and attach since they were lighter and smaller than the heavier wooden blocks.”

Bread Lab director Stephen Jones bought this particular metal buoy from a friend who found it on their property. Inspired by a similar creation at Dented Buoy Pizza and Catering at Finnriver Farm and Cidery in Chimacum, ten miles south of Port Townsend, Jones set out to repurpose the find, transforming it into a wood-fired pizza and bread oven. The first group to use the buoy, Johnson says, was a leadership team from Microsoft. In November 2019, Bread Lab employees cooked Thanksgiving dinner in it, including a turkey.

Today, the salvaged buoy—insulated and outfitted with legs and an inner dome fashioned from an old propane tank—weighs “at least a ton and a half,” Jones says. A crew from Skagit Valley Malting helped retrofit the buoy-oven, which can reach temperatures of up to 1,000 degrees Fahrenheit. It was installed in late 2019 in a rustic dining hall, built with reclaimed barn wood, in the Bread Lab parking lot. The plan, pandemic-permitting, is to host a series of pizza workshops, including classes with John Shelley, owner of Dented Buoy.
Get out your baskets and buckets. It’s berry-picking season.

Wild berries abound in Washington state in summer and fall. From tart to sweet, and deep purple to peachy pink, they come in a rainbow of colors and variety of shapes, sizes, textures, and flavors. Some are so delicate, it’s best to immediately eat them; they don’t travel well. Others bake beautifully into pies, tarts, and cobblers, or cook down into sweet-tart jams and sauces to top everything from ice cream to thick-cut steaks.

Finding wild berries can take patience. But if you know where to look, how to recognize them, and which ones to avoid, you can graze through the greenery, turning your summertime treks into wild and wonderful feasts, rich in antioxidants, fiber, vitamin C, and other nutrients.

According to the “berry rule,” a general guideline meant to help gauge toxicity, only 10 percent of white and yellow berries are edible; 50 percent of red berries are edible; 90 percent of blue, purple, or black berries are edible; and 99 percent of aggregated berries—those recognized by their clusters, such as blackberries and raspberries—are edible. Modernsurvival.org offers this rhyme to help berry-pickers remember: “White and yellow will kill a fellow. Eating red could be good, could be dead. Purple and blue are good for you.”

Rick LaMonte’s favorite berry is deep purplish black. The founder of Northwest Wild Foods in Burlington prefers trailing blackberries, which his company calls Wild Mountain or Little Wild blackberries. “Little Wild Blackberries are like no other berry in the world,” he says. “I’d rather have a Little Wild Blackberry pie for my birthday than anything else. Add a scoop of vanilla ice cream, and you’re just in heaven. If I was going to die of a heart attack, that’s how I’d like to do it. But I’d like to finish the dish first.”

LaMonte founded Northwest Wild Foods in 1988 and soon began supplying trailing blackberries to Anthony’s Restaurants, including Chinook’s at Salmon Bay. It was there in 1991 that Atlantic food writer Corby Kummer tried “one of the best (desserts) I’ve ever been served in a restaurant”—the wild blackberry cobbler.

LaMonte first picked wild blackberries as a boy in the late 1940s in the South Puget Sound region. “They go all the way back to pioneer days. My grandmother was born in 1883, and she harvested them,” he says. “You would never tell anybody where your patches were.”

The same is true for huckleberries, which enjoy a cult-like following throughout the Pacific Northwest. “Their flavor is legendary,” says Amit Dhingra, interim chair of the Department of Horticulture and director of the Genomics Lab at WSU’s College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences. He first tried huckleberries upon moving to Pullman in 2006. Today, Huckleberry Ripple—huckleberry ice cream with a huckleberry swirl—is his favorite flavor at Ferdinand’s Ice Cream Shoppe on the WSU Pullman campus.

While he hasn’t foraged huckleberries, researchers in his lab have been growing their own for about ten years. “I was told it was impossible to grow huckleberries outside of their natural environment, that people have tried transplanting them from their place of origin and they do not survive,” Dhingra says, noting the researchers in his lab “are an adventurous group.” When lab manager Nathan Tarlyn proposed the idea of attempting to cultivate huckleberries, “I said, ‘Let’s try that.’”

They bought seedlings from a native plant nursery, and, “over the years, developed a method to grow huckleberries in a greenhouse. One could grow them in a controlled environment year round for a specialty market, but it would be at a high premium. Now, our approach is to try to bring the best traits of
huckleberries—that legendary flavor—into blueberries, which are already grown commercially. That would benefit blueberry growers. But it would also help prevent excessive foraging of huckleberry stands on public lands."

Before the pioneers, wild berries served as a traditional staple for Pacific Northwest indigenous peoples for centuries. In their journals, while wintering at Fort Clatsop in 1806 in what’s now Oregon, both Meriwether Lewis and William Clark noted the plentiful salal berries, which Clark compared in size to “buck shot.” Lewis described how Native peoples ate them “when ripe immediately from the bushes” or dried them in the sun or in kilns for later use. “Very frequently they pound them and bake then in large loaves of 10 of fifteen pounds,” he wrote, adding the loaves kept “very well during one season.”

Lewis and Clark’s journals also noted Native peoples tended to favor salmonberries, thimbleberries, and wild strawberries over salal, eating them fresh because they’re too soft to dry. Now, like then, they might end up in your mouth without ever making it into your picking pail—except for maybe bearberries, which might not make it into either.

**BEARBERRIES** (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*)—Although pretty in color, these bright red berries, also called kinnikinnick, aren’t pleasing on the palate. Their skin is thick; their texture, mealy. Boiled and dried, they taste a bit better. But that doesn’t mean Lewis liked them. He called them tasteless and insipid. “The natives usually eat them without any preparation,” he wrote, adding they would hang the berries “in their lodges in bags where they dry without further trouble, for in their most succulent state they appear to be almost as dry as flour.”

**CASCADE BILBERRIES** (*Vaccinium deliciosum*)—These sweet, dark blue berries, also called Cascade blueberries and blueleaf huckleberry, were a staple for indigenous peoples, who would often travel long distances to harvest them.

**EVERGREEN HUCKLEBERRIES** (*Vaccinium ovatum*)—Native peoples also traveled long distances for these sweet-tart, deep purple berries, which grow in shady places.

**OREGON GRAPE** (*Mahonia nervosa*)—Beware of the leathery, sharp-tooth, evergreen leaves—reminiscent of holly—when foraging these sour berries, similar in appearance to blueberries. Native peoples used to pair them with salal berries to sweeten them.

**RED HUCKLEBERRIES** (*Vaccinium parvifolium*)—These bright red, round, pea-sized berries taste like the darker variety and are most often found growing out of nurse logs or near downed trees or stumps.

**SALAL BERRIES** (*Gaultheria shallon*)—These dark purplish berries are commonly found in coniferous forests and moist, shady areas. They have a somewhat mealy texture, so use them in pie, jam, or jelly.

**SALMONBERRIES** (*Rubus spectabilis*)—Resembling large raspberries but ranging in color from yellow to peachy pink and orange, these mildly sweet berries grow in moist, shady areas. Watch out for their thorns.

**THIMBLEBERRIES** (*Rubus parviflorus*)—These tart, bright red, thornless berries resemble small raspberries, or thimbles, and are often found along the edges of clearings in shady, moist areas. Because they’re so soft and delicate, they’re best eaten soon after picking.

**TRAILING BLACKBERRIES** (*Rubus ursinus*)—Found in sunny brambles, dry open forests, or logged or recently burned areas, these blackberries are smaller than the invasive Himalayan variety but full of flavor. Beware of their thorns.

*more berries and how to find them: [magazine.wsu.edu/extra/wild-berries](http://magazine.wsu.edu/extra/wild-berries)*
Living
the life precarious
The merits of capitalism aren’t usually top of mind when you’re scrabbling to make ends meet. Choosing to juggle a full-time job plus a couple smaller gigs on the side is more about surviving an economy that can leave people exhausted and wondering in bed at night why it’s so hard to get ahead.

The discouraging reality is built on decades of small social, political, business, and labor changes that, piled together, have pushed some Americans to forgo conventional living arrangements and try their hand at “wheel estate.”

One by one, scrappy individuals have turned in house keys and adapted their vehicles, joining a growing subculture of nomads and van-dwellers who travel the nation working online or in temporary jobs for companies like Amazon. Many are older or retired but lost their retirement savings in the Great Recession. More than a few find it difficult to rejoin the traditional workforce.

The movement is increasingly fueled by younger itinerants who both live and work in their vehicles in order to save money for future endeavors.

It’s a phenomenon highlighted in Jessica Bruder’s eye-opening 2017 novel Nomadland, which follows a number of unhoused people as they crisscross the nation working in sugar beet factories, national forests, and Amazon warehouses. Nomadland was released as a motion picture in February.

The trend was also addressed on a deeper level by University of London professor Guy Standing, who extends the movement across the globe as the rise of the precariat—an emerging class of people who face financial insecurity, moving in and out of precarious work that provides little meaning to their lives.

A play on proletariat—workers whose value lies in their labor power—Standing writes that the precariat includes millions of people doing online piecemeal jobs or temporary work in the rapidly growing global gig economy.

Washington State University Carson College of Business associate professor Kristine Kuhn studies the gig economy and says over the last decade, technology has triggered huge growth in online platforms like Uber, Task Rabbit, and Upwork, which offer short-term jobs ranging from driving and delivery, photo tagging, home repairs, and moving furniture to accounting, graphic design, and writing.

Although gig work offers flexibility and some freedom to be your own boss, it comes at the cost of worker protections and a stable and predictable income.

Kuhn says that although exact numbers are hard to pin down, the platform movement has now grown so massive, it is beginning to disrupt workplace norms and trigger changes in public policy and employment regulations around the world.

That’s something Michelle, who has traveled 30,000 miles over the last two years, is trying to determine for herself. During a phone call last January, the self-professed professional vagabond agreed to share a few details from her peripatetic lifestyle. Due to some sensitive topics, we use only her first name.

Michelle, age 56, was employed at WSU for five years before going on the road full time in 2019. She says, at the time, life just hadn’t been working well and she was ready for a change. She didn’t like her job or being tethered to house payments or doing the same thing day after day. So, finally, she loaded her 2015 Jeep Wrangler Sport with three layers of emergency supplies and an inverter box for charging electronics and put the wheels in motion.

“I’m currently working at Big Bend National Park in Texas on a six-month seasonal contract,” Michelle says. “It’s a dark sky area—very remote and quiet. I’m enjoying exploring the desert on a deeper level.”

In the United States, however, the subculture of precariat van-dwellers and car-based nomads remains largely under the radar.
While she’s happy with this gig and even considering a longer stay, some of her earlier experiences were a little less homely.

“Last March, I had just begun working as a shuttle driver at the Snow Mountain Ranch in Colorado,” she says. “I got free lodging, meals, and activities but it only lasted two weeks as COVID hit and we all got kicked out.

“I thought, ‘Shoot, what do I do now?’ I had a job booked in Minnesota in April, so I drove up to Kenosha, Wisconsin, and got hired at the Amazon fulfillment center. It’s a giant warehouse where packages get sorted, scanned, repacked, and loaded onto trucks—thousands of packages are whirling above your head on conveyor belts.

“They tell you you’re signing up for a physical job—up to 8–10 miles of walking a day,” says Michelle. “I chose jobs like loading and unloading trucks and I ended up working as much overtime as my mind and body could stand. They pay $17 per hour and $34 per hour overtime.

“Amazon served a purpose; I saved some money,” she says. “Then I drove to my next job in Minnesota where I worked through September as an outfitter at the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.”

Michelle’s Jeep is too small to sleep in, so she usually sets up a tent camp at each new gig, which fits well with her lifelong love of camping, hiking, and spending time in beautiful natural areas. Occasionally, the weather can be daunting.

“I can’t do high winds or the tent will collapse. I went through a really raucous storm in North Dakota; it scared the pants off of me,” she says. “The cold can also be a problem, as could a hurricane.”

The question Michelle encounters most often on the road is, “Aren’t you afraid?”

“I’m no spring chicken; I don’t have a boyfriend or a dog,” she says. “But when people ask if I’m traveling alone, I say yes. Some people lie and put out extra shoes by the door. I think if you’re afraid, you need to address the thing that scares you.

“I’ve always been a little nontraditional and not very approachable. But I’m not naive, I know I could still be targeted.”

To that end, Michelle has armed herself with two concealed carry permits, a 9mm pistol, and a Smith & Wesson .357. She’s done self-defense training, jujitsu, and knows how to kickbox.

“Twice I was in a situation where I was afraid,” she says. “But it was just my imagination. One night in Arkansas, I was at a free campground on a back road and everyone else left. I was alone and it hit me, ‘I’m out here by myself’ and I felt really small and vulnerable. But nothing happened and later the other campers returned.”

Michelle says her biggest challenge is getting health care. She’s struggling with a few health issues and has insufficient insurance coverage.

“I live and work amongst fairly low-trained, less educated people. Many don’t have a lot of life skills or resources. Nobody can get health care,” she says. “Then, when they do, they run through the clinics like cattle. People with higher incomes can see whomever they want. But the people working on their cars, nannying their kids, or cleaning their houses can’t get access to that. That really burns my toast.

“When you live like I do, you live a lie,” she says with frustration. “I rent a mailbox in a small town but I don’t have a permanent residence. I’m technically homeless so I have to lie to get stuff like a driver’s license or car tabs. If you’re homeless, you can’t vote as you have to sign an affidavit saying you live at a specific address. So, I didn’t vote.

“You’re not allowed to be homeless in this country and you just can’t live a life if you are. We don’t have national health care, national libraries, gun permits, or driver’s licenses. You always have to affiliate somewhere.

“To be honest, I don’t know how long I will continue being a vagabond,” Michelle says. “It’s nice to be able to cook in the house the park provides for me—it was always cans and boxes on the road. I’ve created a new narrative for my life and I’m pretty proud of that. I don’t think I can go back to a conventional life again.”

“Besides the song’s obvious reference to marijuana, I took it to be about a guy in his twenties with the years ticking by and he’s not doing anything with his life,” Siler, 25, says from his family home in Pullman. “It was a pivotal moment for me.”

He spent his first night in the car in Ashland. “I was wondering if I should sleep in a hotel or my car and decided, ‘Screw it, I’ll sleep in my Camry and see what that’s like,’” says Siler.

“I parked downtown in an artsy district and wondered if I could sleep there. But I had no window coverings and worried someone might think I was drunk or dead and try to break the window and call police.

“So, I drove around for two hours and got very paranoid,” Siler recalls. “I considered going out into the country but when

Brian Siler x’14 had just graduated from Gonzaga University and found himself a bit at loose ends.

One morning, he awoke with Tom Petty’s song “Mary Jane’s Last Dance” running through his mind. A couple days later, he got in his car and took off for California, planning to visit his sister.

you’re alone out there, no amount of Cat Stevens helps.”

Finally, around midnight, he found a tiny street that allowed parking on the Southern Oregon University campus. “It was warm, so I cracked the window but got
paranoid again thinking what if some weirdo came by and threw up through the crack,” Siler says. “At first, your brain is telling you everything scary that could happen but that faded after the first week.”

Eventually he learned the rules of counterculture car sleeping, such as spending nights in Walmart parking lots. He looked at apartments in the Bay Area but they ran an exorbitant $2,500 per month. After five weeks, he moved to Seattle.

“I rented a room in a huge house with a bunch of other human beings. I was paying $750 for one room,” Siler says.

“When I heard Amazon was hiring, I went down to the Kent fulfillment center, Siler met many people who lived in their cars and parked in various areas around town.

Those in their 20s said their rationale was that if you live in your car, you only need to pay for auto insurance and gas,” he says. “You can make about $200 per day five days a week. And if you do that for six months, you can spearhead it into better things.

“I met a lot of interesting people and they all had stories about doing it temporarily to get pocket change, or they were bored, or were waiting for their real job to start.”

While working at Amazon, Siler also drove for the ride-hailing service Lyft.

“I love meeting people and making small talk and I don’t mind having strangers in my car,” he says. “A majority of the drivers were college graduates or middle-aged people trying to pay the bills. It was 2018, and many of them were making up to $150 per day.”

Kuhn generally agrees with Siler’s observations and says research shows most people do gig work as a side hustle.

“They might have a regular job and also drive for Uber on the weekend,” she says. “Or work as a graphic designer but are trying to set up their own business and Upwork lets them see if they can build up some clients.

“That gives them some flexibility but if it’s their only source of income, they can be locked out of traditional benefits like health insurance or paid sick leave.”

Kuhn explains that many gig platforms consider their workers to be independent contractors or freelancers and pay them on a 1099 basis. This differs from short-term temp workers who are paid on a W-2 basis and have an employment relationship with the firm or intermediate staffing agency.

“If you’re a temp employee and become injured while working, you may be eligible to apply for things like worker’s compensation,” she says. “But if you are a 1099 employee, those sorts of workforce protections, including minimum wage requirements, overtime rules, antidiscrimination laws, or health insurance benefits, don’t apply to you.”

Kuhn says that under normal circumstances, 1099 workers are not eligible to receive unemployment benefits. During the COVID-19 pandemic, however, ride-hailing services Uber and Lyft were hit so hard by the economic downturn that they lobbied Congress to allow 1099 workers to receive unemployment. For the first time ever, the US government agreed.

“Unfortunately, the system wasn’t set up for people who aren’t W-2 employees, since unemployment benefits are tied to payroll taxes,” Kuhn says. “Some gig workers managed to collect unemployment, but it generally was more difficult for them to apply and took longer.”

And while ride-hailing service calls tanked during the pandemic, Kuhn says demand for deliveries skyrocketed. In response, the Uber platform set up Uber Work Hub to help drivers find alternative gigs with warehouses or delivery services.

Growing increasingly powerful, Uber and other platforms have begun flexing their muscles to lobby for more regulatory changes in the workplace. The fight to retain gig workers as independent contractors rather than legal employees recently reached the boiling point in California.

In 2019, California legislators passed a bill to curb deliberate worker misclassification—the practice of dubbing workers as independent contractors instead of employees to avoid paying higher labor costs. It was aimed in large part at gig companies that argue their self-employed workers enjoy being their own bosses and don’t merit extra protections.

In response, Uber and Lyft banded together with DoorDash to sponsor the $200 million California ballot initiative Proposition 22 which would legally exempt them from classifying their workers as employees and protect them from lawsuits. The ballot passed with nearly 60 percent in favor last November.

By January, grocery giant Albertsons, which owns Safeway and Vons, announced the layoff of many of the company’s in-house delivery drivers, saying they would be replaced by third-party apps or gig platforms like DoorDash. The few company workers who were unionized were not affected.
It's a result predicted by labor advocates who decried Prop 22 as an incentive for businesses to eliminate traditional middle-class jobs in favor of independent contractor agreements with fewer benefits and protections.

Kuhn says similar regulatory challenges are taking place all over the world.

“In France, courts decided a gig worker was falsely classified as self-employed and the company was ordered to make changes to its business model,” she says. “So, gig work is still evolving.”

Cowan says escalating housing costs are another factor, especially in large urban centers like the Bay Area, Seattle, and New York—areas that attract a high-skill labor force and companies that require those skills such as technology firms.

Combined with a simultaneous shortage of affordable housing, he says it becomes very difficult for lower-wage workers to live in these areas, which ultimately deprives them of some of the best job opportunities.

Sherman believes the nation needs to provide some kind of societal safety net, whether that’s health care, wages, or housing.

“Something has to change as this isn’t sustainable. It will be a disaster,” she says. “But we’ve come to accept disaster as an acceptable cost of the capitalistic system.”

Russell, who specializes in rural sociology, says the Pacific Northwest used to have many more jobs in extraction industries like logging and mining.

“Even if you were seasonal, they paid a living wage,” she says. “Now, they’ve often been replaced by service sector jobs that don’t pay a living wage. You really can’t support a family on service sector work anywhere.”

“The labor markets in rural areas are so small and nondiverse that they have little else to offer,” says Sherman. “Those making high wages are often telecommuting for work outside of the community.”

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Dalton Russell (’16 Acc.) is a young tax accountant in Seattle who last year paid $1,200 per month rent in Bellevue. Then he became a van-dweller.

“Rent is so expensive,” says Russell, 26. “So, I bought a 1987 Ford E350 van for $1,000 and put a couple thousand into repairs. I built it out with a kitchen and bed and was able to live and work in it for a long time. It cut costs really quickly.”

He initially planned to park the van in different areas around the city while continuing to work at the office.

“My main goal was to save money so I could eventually buy a house or a plot of land,” Russell says. “But COVID happened and I couldn’t go back to the office, so I ended up working remotely. Summer’s pretty slow for me, so I was able to take advantage of that and travel throughout the west at the same time.”

On the road, he saw other people living in vans and busses.

“Vanlife is becoming very popular,” Russell says. “I think it’s bigger than most people realize. Unless you dive into that world and explore it, you wouldn’t really know.

“It’s kind of like tiny homes. People are realizing they actually don’t need a lot to live a good life.”

Though the ubiquitous gig economy might tempt some people to forfeit traditional home life and take up residence in an RV, it’s only one piece of a complex puzzle.

WSU associate professor and labor economist Ben Cowan says over the last 40-50 years, middle-skill jobs like manufacturing and office clerical work have steadily declined in the United States, thanks to changes in automation and globalization.

“For those who aren’t increasing their education and training, especially in high-growth fields, oftentimes the best alternative is a lower-skilled generic kind of job and those are the kind increasingly available,” Cowan says.

“That means real wages have progressively fallen since about 1980 for a good segment of the US population, even as wages for other segments, high-skill, high-education positions, have risen, often considerably so. All of that has contributed to wage inequality in the US.”

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THE GOOD NEWS from the 2020 election? Record turnout. Nearly 67 percent, 155 million Americans voted. That is the highest turnout since 1900, when William McKinley defeated William Jennings Bryan.

Faith in the power of voting is vital to democracy. We should celebrate so many Americans believed their votes mattered enough to stand in lines, sometimes for hours, to cast ballots during a pandemic. As it turns out, hyper-polarization is good for political engagement since voters perceive so much to be at stake.

The bad news? The nature of today’s polarization is threatening our democracy.

Let’s begin at the end. Compared to other recent elections, the 2020 presidential contest was not that close. Joe Biden won with a popular-vote margin of almost 5 percent and a 306-to-232 advantage in the Electoral College.

Despite this, Donald Trump refused to concede, claiming wide-spread election fraud. The Trump campaign lost more than 60 court cases challenging the results, many before judges Trump appointed. The president’s claims were rejected by his Department of Justice and his top election security official at the Department of Homeland Security, who declared 2020 “the most secure election in American history.”

Undaunted, the former president launched a last-ditch effort to stop Congress from certifying the election. On January 6, a mob stormed the US Capitol and tried to hunt down the vice president of the United States, the speaker of the House, and members of Congress.

For inciting an insurrection, Trump was impeached a second time by the House of Representatives. Seven Republican senators voted with all 50 Democrats to convict the former president. The remaining 43 Republicans quibbled over whether a former president could be tried for impeachment after already leaving office. So, Trump narrowly escaped becoming the first president in history to be impeached, convicted, and barred from future office-holding.

Still, there is no question, Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell said, “that President Trump is practically and morally responsible for provoking the events of that day ... American citizens attacked their own government because they had been fed wild falsehoods by the most powerful man on Earth—because he was angry he’d lost an election.”

How should we understand such extraordinary events?

First, Trump’s loss was no surprise. The campaign took place amid a pandemic that has cost half a million American lives, and an economic recession. Despite the zeal of his supporters, Trump consistently trailed Biden in national polls. Though he styled himself a populist, he was never popular. He lost the 2016 election by 3 million votes, never rose above 50 percent public approval during his presidency, and lost reelection by 7 million votes.

Whatever one makes of Trump’s legacies regarding policy and in redefining the Republican Party (neither of which are insignificant), his presidency will be viewed by historians as a fiasco. He was the only president ever to lose the popular vote twice, be twice impeached, and suffer the ignominy of senators from his own party voting to convict him. Like Nixon’s Watergate, the January 6 insurrection will forever stain his presidency.

Looking beyond Trump, what is most striking about 2020 is just how little changed during the last four years, or the previous twenty for that matter. Election margins have remained close, voters polarized, and the red-blue map mostly unchanged.

Congressional elections are a better indicator of those trends. In 2020, Democrats retained control of the House of Representatives, but lost 24 seats. They now have a slim 11-seat majority (222 to 211). Republicans meanwhile lost 5 seats in the Senate, which is now evenly split 50-to-50. This gives Democrats the narrowest margin of control, relying on the vice president to break tie votes.

During the past two decades, partisan control of the Senate has flip-flopped five times, control of the House has changed hands three times. Red districts are getting redder, blue districts bluer. In 2020, just 16 out of 435 districts backed a presidential nominee from one party and a House candidate from the other party. Only 4 percent of districts “split” their tickets, the smallest number in 70 years.
The fissures in American politics are not just about policy; they have become deeply enmeshed in race, class, religion, and anxieties about identity. The US Capitol attack, the riots last summer over police brutality and racism, the armed protests at state capitols over COVID-19 restrictions, and the violent white supremacist rally in Charlottesville in 2017 all indicate that identity-driven politics is leading more Americans to shed democratic constraint in favor of more violent political tactics.

A recent survey by the conservative American Enterprise Institute found bipartisan agreement that the American system of democracy is failing. Nearly seven in ten (69 percent) agree that American democracy serves the interests of only the wealthy and powerful—70 percent of Democrats and 66 percent of Republicans. Moreover, a majority (56 percent) of Republicans, 35 percent of independents, and 22 percent of Democrats now say they would support the use of force to prevent the decline of their traditional way of life.

These are red-flag warnings. American democracy is in serious trouble.

Americans have been divided before (including in 1860, when Lincoln’s election was met by southern succession). What is different this time is how protracted the divisions have become. Ideological polarization, close elections, and divided government have become the norm since the 1980s. The only other time we remained divided so deeply for so long was during the Gilded Age between the mid-1870s to early 1900s. That too was an era when the nation experienced persistent divided government and close elections, including two where the winner of Electoral College also lost the popular vote.

Social divisions back then were also remarkably like those experienced today. Industrialization created steep economic inequalities. Americans were divided by race and class as reconstruction ended in the South and millions of ethnic, working-class immigrants moved into urban areas. There were religious divides over the acceptance of Catholics and Jews, and gender divisions as the women’s temperance and suffragist movements gathered steam.

Today’s partisan divides also mirror that period. Political parties were tribal, defined by ethnic, class, and religious divides. Populist demagogues like William Jennings Bryan claimed to represent the “silent majority” against corrupt elites, and peddled conspiracy theories like the anti-Semitic Gold Conspiracy. Campaigns were moral crusades where opponents were demonized.

Trump’s populist rhetoric, his refusal to concede an election, and his embrace of conspiracy theories have echoes from this period. In 1876, Republican Rutherford B. Hayes refused to concede to Democrat Samuel J. Tilden despite losing the popular vote by 3 percent. The election was eventually resolved in a backroom deal in Congress, the compromise of 1877, which gave Hayes the presidency in exchange for ending reconstruction.

For historical perspective, you may wish to read more about the Gilded Age, starting with Eric Foner’s Pulitzer Prize-winning *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution* (Harper & Row, 1988); Richard Hofstadter’s Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Age of Reform* (Vintage, 1960); and Michael Kazin’s *The Populist Persuasion* (Cornell University Press, 1995).

Today, too, populism and partisan polarization are symptoms of deeper political challenges that the nation confronts. How should we deal with the destabilizing level of inequality created by globalization and technology? What should we do about the disappearance of middle-class jobs? How should we address climate change, the legacy of race discrimination, or the role of immigration in a society where demographics are rapidly changing?

Addressing these challenges is not easy. What we must avoid is transforming them into contests over identity. For pluralist democracy to work, people must view politics as a process of finding compromise and common ground, not an existential struggle between “us” and “them.” The astute political observer Michael Gerson notes, policy differences and ideological conflicts can be negotiated. “But if partisan differences become expressions of identity—rural vs. urban, religious vs. secular, ethnic vs. white, nationalist vs. cosmopolitan—then losing an election threatens an entire way of life.”

Elections reflect who we are at a moment in history, a mirror inviting us to consider whether we like what we see. 2020 was just one more in a long line of elections, which, by itself, will neither create nor end whole ways of life.

But it is an inflection point. One that could lead us toward a different style of politics if we chose.

Biden ran a campaign committed to “restoring the soul of America” and healing our national divisions. Whether you voted for him or for someone else, we should all wish the new president success in his effort. Our democracy may depend on it.

Cornell Clayton is director of the Thomas S. Foley Institute for Public Policy and Public Service and Claudius O. Johnson Distinguished Professor of Political Science at Washington State University.
What’s up? Doctors.
The Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine launches its first class of physicians to fulfill the mission of bringing health care to rural and underserved communities.

This inaugural class of WSU physicians has 21.4 percent who grew up in a rural county and 18 percent notably in a Washington rural county. 18 percent are first-generation college graduates. 55.4 percent come from a low socioeconomic background. 18 Washington counties represented: Benton, Chelan, Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Franklin, Grant, King, Kittitas, Pacific, Pierce, Snohomish, Spokane, Stevens, Thurston, Whatcom, Whitman, Yakima.
Most people studying to be a medical doctor have those moments. Alex Franke experienced it when he helped a baby with botulism.

It’s that “ah-ha” event that reminds future physicians why they are joining the medical profession.

While on a pediatric emergency medicine rotation in Spokane last summer, Franke, a fourth-year medical student at Washington State University’s Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine, diagnosed the rare condition, which affects an average of 77 infants each year in the United States. Franke explained the situation to the parents, and, with treatment, the baby was fine.

It was another milestone for Franke, who grew up in Seattle and first became an EMT in New Orleans. Now he is fulfilling his goal to become an emergency room physician, “very much a natural extension of the work that I was doing before as an EMT,” he says.

The first class of medical doctors graduates in May and marks the next chapter for only the second public medical school in Washington state, which launched in 2017 at the WSU Health Sciences campus in Spokane.

After four years of rigorous study and rotations all over Washington state and the country, Franke and the other students take their white coats, MD degrees, and their dreams to residencies around the United States.

One of his fellow students, Becky Gold, was inspired to pursue obstetrics and gynecology.

“The first time I felt a baby born, I knew I was going into OB-GYN. It just took the one time,” Gold says. “The patients actually asked if they could take a picture of me with the baby, because they wanted to put it in the baby book. They could always tell their baby that this was the first baby that I saw born.”

Another student, Brent Conrad, says he felt chills returning to his hometown of Colfax to work with doctors who had encouraged him to pursue medicine.

“I saw what a difference a primary care doc could make in a small community,” he says.

Every one of the students will carry their own memories as they become the first class of WSU medical doctors, driven by a mission to serve those who need it most.

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

While medical training in Eastern Washington had occurred for years in a collaboration with the University of Washington, an increasing need for physicians led WSU to start its own medical college in 2015.

The tireless work of late WSU President Elson S. Floyd and others culminated in state government approval for the new college.

In October 2015, John Tomkowiak became the founding dean of the college. Then, it was a whirlwind of momentous events: receiving preliminary accreditation, finding the first group of students, hiring faculty and staff, and connecting with clinical partners for training opportunities.

“I’m incredibly proud of how fast we have built this college,” Tomkowiak says. “Of course, it was through the great efforts of all of our community partners across the state, our legislature, and of course the support of the University itself.”

It was a watershed moment for Spokane and its WSU campus, but a challenging one.

“If anyone ever tells you it’s easy to start a new medical school, they’re probably trying to sell you a bridge somewhere,” says Radha Nandagopal, a pediatric endocrinologist in Spokane, and an associate professor and clinical skills education director at the college.

Nandagopal grew up in Spokane and returned in 2015 to work with Ken Roberts, who became interim college dean. She was involved from the beginning as they prepared for accreditation and is chair of the committee to admit new medical students.

Ted Chauvin (’03 PhD Genetics & Cell Biol.) also started with Roberts, moving to Spokane in 2009 to run Roberts’s lab and then to help launch the college. Chauvin is one of the faculty members who is not a medical doctor. He teaches biochemistry and molecular biology, is in charge of the evidence-based medicine component, and serves on the admissions committee.
When the accreditors came in 2019, they “were shocked that the molecular biologist was in the room,” Chauvin says, but it was part of the holistic vision of the college.

The small group got right to work to bring in the first class of medical students. They decided to use MCAT and test scores for initial screening, but the revolutionary holistic process focuses on personal attributes and experiences of well-rounded students. That included extensive interviews with applicants.

“As soon as we got that preliminary accreditation in 2017, we only had a couple of months to fill the class. We were doing interviews almost every Monday and Friday,” Chauvin says.

It took time, but it was important that students reflected the state, say Chauvin and Tomkowiak. “We were recruiting a student body who all have ties to the state of Washington. Over 30 percent are first-generation,” Tomkowiak says.

Students like Gold really noticed the difference. “I don’t know how they picked the exact right people for this first class, but they did,” she says. “It was like every time we needed something from a student, there was someone who fit that role perfectly.”

The admissions committee selected 60 students, and then decided to call them personally to offer acceptance rather than just an email or letter.

“I remember we had the entire admissions team gathered in my office for our first phone call to a student to accept them,” Tomkowiak says. “I can tell you every single student that is in our college remembers that phone call because it’s a life-changing event.”

After they arrived in fall 2017, the students took part in the white coat ceremony, a medical school tradition to welcome them to the profession. Tomkowiak felt the weight of the moment. “When I gave my first white coat ceremony speech, I ended with a quote that the great thing about a first is it leads to a thousand other firsts,” he says.

Then the hard work began.

“The first two years is like drinking from a fire hose,” Franke says. “The rate at which you’re learning new information, I was kind of scared that not all of it would stick.”

Conrad also noticed the camaraderie during the early classroom years.

“I thought it was going to be a really competitive kind of cutthroat environment,” Conrad says. “Instead, I walked into a place where all my classmates wanted to help each other and we all wanted to succeed.”

PATIENTS FIRST

One of the distinguishing features of the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine is its laser focus on a mission to help underserved communities.

“You know we’re committed to serving the rural and underserved,” Nandagopal says. “That might look like someone who’s providing care to individuals experiencing homelessness, or it might look like a specialist who has this wide area where they’re helping people by telemedicine.”

Chauvin agrees. “And it’s not just rural. Underserved is underserved, no matter where you are. And the students are really good at pointing that out to us,” he says. “I don’t care if you have $50 million or $50 to your name, you still deserve the best care you can get.”

It’s not just an abstract concept, and the medical students have already been recognized for their service, such as working with COVID-19 testing and vaccination, and with Range Community Clinic, a health network for communities in need.

Conrad says another memorable example is Blessings Under the Bridge, where they provided meals to homeless people in Spokane.

“We really want our students to understand the communities that they’re serving, so our training is built upon that principle,” Tomkowiak says. “We’re already providing care to people who are underserved, like through our street medicine program.”

It hasn’t always been an easy few years, but Tomkowiak says, despite the curveballs, “whether it’s been the fiscal tightening that we’ve had to do or dealing with the pandemic, one of our strengths is that the mission has been a guiding light, a true north that we have not strayed from.”

A key part of accomplishing the mission, says Nandagopal, is emphasis on listening to patients. “I see my role as really imparting those solid clinical skills,” she says. “So, what does that mean? Communication, physical examination skills, demonstrating empathy, and caring.”

Nandagopal points to the rapid shift in health technology as an example of how doctors need to support patients. “Technology may leave those folks behind, unless we’re really intentional about it,” she says. “I think it’s up to doctors to advocate more, not less, for those patients, so they don’t get left behind.”

That sentiment resonates with students. “You have to remember why you started doing this in the first place,” Gold says. “I’ve had my
most positive and meaningful experiences when I can educate and advocate for my patients.”

The medical students also benefit from the college’s emphasis on training in health care teams. The interprofessional training, led by nursing faculty Barbara Richardson, brings together students from nursing, pharmacy, the medical college, and other health sciences, which reflects the real hospital experience.

“There’s definitely a commitment to making sure that our students and faculty really acknowledge and work well with multidisciplinary teams,” Nandagopal says. “I simply couldn’t do my job as a doctor if I didn’t have the staff in the office, the social worker, the certified diabetes educators, to round out how we help care for the patients.”

“We get to do some integrated simulations and sessions with some of those other programs, nursing, pharmacy, nutrition and exercise physiology,” Gold says. “We know how to work with them and it makes the patient care experience a lot smoother if everyone knows their role.”

In addition to the interprofessional teams, the medical students need a solid understanding of science, says Chauvin. “We require them to do 300-plus hours of scholarly work. In the evidence-based medicine component that I direct, I have 10 facilitators and only one of them is a medical doctor. The rest are scientists. We work with the physicians to make sure we teach at the right level.”

The positive results of the clinical training recently struck Nandagopal.

She was on call this spring for pediatric endocrinology when it really hit her that these students were on the cusp of success. She received a page from a local ER and when she called, she heard, “Hi, Dr. Nandagopal! It’s your student, Morgan Black,” in her fourth year and heading into emergency medicine.

“Morgan presented the patient with such grace, accuracy, and confidence. She hit all the high points, asked the right questions, and I couldn’t help but feel I was talking to a colleague,” says Nandagopal. “I didn’t need to talk to the attending physician—and that’s saying something.”

THE DOCTORS’ PATH

From the inception of the medical college, there’s been an emphasis on community-based education, where students go all over the state for rotations.

“We don’t have our own teaching hospital. We rely on communities and our partners to train our students,” Tomkowiak says.

Franke went to Vancouver for part of his education. “I think the quality of our rotations, being a community hospital, were way better than I ever could have imagined,” he says. “I think it was really advantageous that the focus of the education was very much on you and targeted to your level.”

Nandagopal says the students really get to know the places they work in, which is by design.

“We do a homestay that usually does a really good job of integrating us within the community,” Gold says. She worked in Vancouver and Centralia. “It just makes it so much smoother because they really helped out with that kind of learning curve.”

“We have patients who really struggle with housing insecurity and food insecurity right next to these really nice neighborhoods and mansions,” she says. “I’m getting to meet patients from all walks of life and learn how their needs are just really different.”

Conrad even found his way back home for one of the rotations. “I got to go to Colfax and do an internal medicine week,” he says. “It was a really cool experience to be back in the place where I started shadowing, and with a lot of these doctors who got me on this track.”

Tomkowiak emphasizes that doctors also need leadership skills.

“Everyone in health care needs to be better leaders,” he says. “We’re the only medical school in the country that has that intensive focus on leadership built into the medical school curriculum. When
students eventually go on to practice, they’re going to have skills to be able to help manage and coordinate teams.”

The students actively embraced the leadership curriculum, even taking part in adjusting their own medical education and seeing the results. “I’ve always really thrived in environments where I get to be part of the leadership and get to help create something and build something new,” Gold says.

Even though he has worked at five medical schools, Tomkowiak says, “I’ve never been in a school where I think there’s been this great relationship between faculty and students. We change what we’re doing based in part on student feedback. And that’s allowed us to really be on the innovative edge of medical education across the country.”

The relationship goes beyond innovation in learning. The faculty and students support each other, even outside the classroom or operating room.

Gold faced a tough time last spring when her father died of COVID-19. The college “really worked with me on what I needed and how I could best be learning as I worked through my grief and everything,” she says.

The students, too, really help each other out and remain close, say Conrad, Franke, and Gold.

“Medicine can be really isolating, even pandemic aside,” Gold says. “A lot of times we see really hard things in the hospital and we come home and there’s not that many people we can talk to about it who really understand.

“I saw my first code with one of my very best friends because she and I have a rotation together,” she continues. “I feel really lucky that we got to have that experience together because how can you explain it to someone?”

THE FUTURE LOOKS BRIGHT not only for the future doctors, but for the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine.

Five years later, Tomkowiak says, “we’re already one of the most productive community-based research colleges in the country.”

The college has plans for more research, with millions in grant funding already coming in. And, this year it received 1,700 applications for 80 spots in the class of 2025. Nandagopal sees promise in all the future students.

“If they’re the doctor who stops and asks their patient, ‘What else can I do?’ I think we’ve done our jobs. I hope that is the special spark that sets them apart as the WSU physician,” Nandagopal says.

After she finishes her residency, Gold wants to practice in a small town in Washington as an OB-GYN. “I fully intend to be a physician who’s very connected to my community,” Gold says.

Conrad aims to return home as a family physician in Colfax.

Franke hopes to become an emergency room doctor in Seattle. An event this spring as he was on a rotation in the emergency department reinforced that goal.

He and the attending physician had a patient go into cardiac arrest, so they did CPR, pushed medication, and were able to bring the patient’s pulse back.

“it really reminded me of why I was going to do emergency medicine,” Franke says, “to be with people at these inflection points in their lives.”
When first entering the tech scene in her native Thailand, Patama Chantaruck (’95 MBA) had few female peers as a computer science and engineering undergraduate and even fewer when she penetrated the professional ranks.

After venturing to the United States and earning her MBA from Washington State University, she stepped into the halls of Microsoft, a female foreigner in a world then largely dominated by white, American-born men. Sometimes when she walked into a room, she was asked not for her input, but for a cup of coffee.

“I was an Asian woman with an accent and little understanding of the culture,” she says. “I couldn’t talk American football, and I didn’t play golf.”

What Chantaruck had, however, was intellect and drive. Unapologetically, even cheerfully, she shattered tech’s traditional mold.

“I understood my mind is what matters,” she says.

Throughout a 23-year run at Microsoft, Chantaruck mixed intellect, humility, and an industrious spirit to climb the tech giant’s corporate ranks. By 32, Chantaruck guided Microsoft’s marketing in Asia. By 35, she claimed responsibility for the enterprise’s $3.4 billion global marketing program.

No longer mistakenly asked to fetch coffee, she led efforts championing tech as a force for good—a means to connect people, spread ideas, and help individuals create.

“There wasn’t one day I didn’t want to go to work,” she says of her Microsoft career that coincided with the twenty-first century’s tech revolution. “We were helping to change the world with technology.”

In 2018, however, Chantaruck left Microsoft for a position heading IBM’s operations in Thailand as well as the company’s Indochina expansion. The move enabled Chantaruck to continue her journey in tech and to be closer to her aging parents.

“I wanted to come back home, but I wasn’t leaving Microsoft for just anything,” she says. “I needed to be with a company that’s committed to having an impact.”

At 110-year-old IBM, which was behind the success of the first man on the moon and now applies its innovative mindset to global problems like cancer and supply chain, Chantaruck is certainly doing that, leveraging technology such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and the cloud to propel local businesses and empower residents.

During the past two years, Chantaruck has overseen the debut of the world’s first blockchain-based platform for government savings bonds distribution as well as the launch of a smart farming project that uses AI and the Internet of Things to support crop health, prevent disease, and improve yields of sugarcane, one of Thailand’s principal exports. More recently, Chantaruck and her IBM team helped Thai citizens navigate the impact of COVID-19, including supporting...
residents, businesses, and governments transitioning to a remote workforce.

“It’s using technology with a purpose and in benefit to others,” Chantaruck says. “As a child, my parents encouraged me to figure out who I wanted to be when I grew up, not what I wanted to do. Today, I try to be the best version of myself and use the platform I have to pay it forward and inspire others.”

For Evers Hope

BY WILL FERGUSON

Black History Month is both a celebration and a shame for Hasaan Kirkland (’99 MFA), an art professor at Seattle University and Seattle Central College.

It is a celebration in the sense that there is a lot to honor about African American history, African history, and the myriad complex contextual relationships that bind the two together.

Kirkland, who previously served as chief curator of the Northwest African American Museum in Seattle and before that as a studio fine art professor at Johnson C. Smith, a Historically Black College and University, knows this better than most.

He readily admits he could talk for days about the historical contributions of local Black artists and scholars as well as the lives of prominent national icons such as Romare Bearden, Jacob Lawrence, Lois Mailou Jones, Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison, and David Driskell to name a few.

“Black History Month is a celebration because it gives us this time and the due elevation to show some relevant love, gratitude, perspective, acceptance, and profound respect to the contributions of Black people historically and today,” Kirkland says. “But at the same time, I think it is a weak offering and a dismissive compliment to note the contributions of Blacks in America and in the world in a month of time.”

After all, Black people were making significant political, cultural, agricultural, civic, scientific, and evolutionary contributions to the world before America was colonized and well before 1976 when February was administered as a month to be honored.

“Black History Month is not enough,” Kirkland says. “It is with perspective, grace, and mercy that it is received, but it is with honor, respect, and accountable gratitude that it should exist and be celebrated.”

Kirkland’s artwork often straddles the line between art and history, weaving the two together to bring exposure to the systemic racism and political, educational, economic, medical, and societal neglect Blacks have faced and continue to face today.

Above: Hasaan Kirkland. Below: For Evers Hope, 2013, acrylic on canvas. Courtesy WSU News
In his painting *For Evers Hope*, he attempts to capture the life, death, and legacy of Medgar Evers, a civil rights activist and World War II veteran who was shot dead in his driveway in Mississippi in 1963 for his work advocating for overturning segregation and increasing voting rights for African Americans.

Kirkland says the concept behind the painting was that while Evers was murdered for challenging the greater establishment, his beliefs and his sacrifice led to a future where the idea of a Black president and greater equality is even possible.

“It’s powerful because despite the oppression against Black men, women, and children, it conveys the secret to having boundless power over oppression,” Kirkland says. “You can reduce us or even kill us, but you cannot kill our ideas.”

*For Evers Hope* is among five of Kirkland’s recent paintings that helped earn him a Black Lives Matter Artist Grant from the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art at Washington State University.

The grants recognized 20 artists from across Washington for their creative works responding to the Black Lives Matter movement, marginalized communities, and experiences with systemic racism and inequality. The works will be featured at the museum beginning in fall 2021.

“In my time in the state of Washington, I often noted the marginalization of Black artists and members of the Black community in the landscape of art or culture, as well as the lack and limited representation regarding positive imagery, thought leadership, inclusion, placement, and equitable artistic cultural expression and agency,” Kirkland says. “I would like to contribute to change that.”

One of the hardest things he says he’s struggled with throughout his award-winning career was the desire to be an artist on the same conceptual and literal platform as other artists and not just a “Black artist.”

A child of a military family who grew up traveling between diverse locations such as Turkey, England, France, and Japan, it wasn’t until coming back to the states to start high school in Tacoma and later attend WSU as a fine arts student that he discovered what this meant.

“Getting introduced to racism and the deep-seated prejudices that are generated from the existence of systemic oppression against people who look like me began to shape my desire to stand up, speak out, and develop my art and creative voice within the lens of social justice,” Kirkland says.

“The unfortunate regard I faced and continue to face forces me to manage twice the load: one to manage perception, complicit negligence, and the inescapable covert and overt judgement or critique by White counterparts brought on by my presence and involvement in the fine arts. The other: succeeding in the fine arts.”

Despite the challenges, Kirkland has gone from a young man inspired by comic books and graffiti to an internationally acclaimed painter and visual artist, who has published and exhibited in prestigious venues around the world throughout his 30-year career.

In addition to his role as a studio artist and educator in the Seattle area, he founded a visual art company, Kairos Industry, in 2010 and started a visual and performing arts honor society, Psi Rho Alpha, in 2014.

Kirkland is also pursuing a doctorate from the University of Washington where he is studying education—curriculum and instruction, and art as pedagogy and social justice.

“I am continuing my education as a means to expand my own career and creative intellect and deepen my discovery of reshaping the landscape of instruction and learning,” Kirkland says.

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**Passing it on**

**By Adriana Janovich**

When Rick Small (’69 Ag.) planted his first wine grapes “by and large,” he says, “people thought it was a joke.”

It was the second half of the 1970s, Small was in his late 20s, and the soil quality on that particular plot was second-rate. “It was very poor land, with a lot of basalt underneath. It was not good for wheat. That’s why my father was willing to let me take care of an acre of it—and try to learn something.”

Small, who comes from a family of dryland wheat and cattle ranchers, learned that basalt-rich soil was great for wine grapes. And he experienced even more success as he planted more vines farther up the same ridge, now covered with myriad varietals, from cabernet franc and cabernet sauvignon to sauvignon blanc, merlot, and several experimental Italian and Rhone varietals.

“I was hopeful,” Small recalls. “I was out to prove to my father that this could be viable, but I didn’t know for sure that it would be or that it could be. I was just so pleased to have the opportunity, and I ran with it.”
ALUMNI profiles

Today, Woodward Canyon Winery, established in Lowden in 1981 as the second winery in the Walla Walla wine region, is celebrating its fortieth anniversary with a limited-release premium red blend, made mostly from estate-grown cabernet sauvignon. And Small and his wife, Darcey Fugman-Smith—he’s a Coug, she’s a Husky—are preparing for the next generation of leadership. Their children, part-owners in the winery, have been taking on more and more responsibility.

“I’m proud of our winery and the quality of our product and our reputation,” Small says. “What we did wasn’t easy, but it’s nothing like what our children are facing today with the virus and the lack of sales in restaurants because of the shutdowns.”

Jordan Dunn-Smith, director of direct-to-consumer sales operations, created Woodward Canyon’s wine club and has been working on boosting online sales. After college in Portland, she returned home to work in the wine industry, joining the family business after several years at other wineries and wine-related businesses, including the Walla Walla Wine Alliance. Today, she’s an alliance board member.

After attending culinary school in Seattle, Sager Small spent ten years working there as a cook. Since coming home and completing a community college viticulture program, he’s taken over management of the certified Salmon-Safe, 41-acre Woodward Canyon Estate Vineyard, focusing on organic and bio-dynamic practices.

Part of the winery’s original chardonnay planting remains. In addition to estate-grown grapes, Woodward Canyon also sources fruit from other acclaimed vineyards, including Champoux and Sagemoor. It typically produces some 10,000 cases per year and is known for consistently producing premium, age-worthy, Bordeaux-style red blends, including its cabernet sauvignon-based “Artist Series,” an annual release featuring labels with the works of different West Coast artists. Its famed “Old Vines” cabernet sauvignon was the first Washington wine to break into the top 10 of Wine Spectator’s annual top 100 wine list in 1990 with its 1987 vintage.

The Smalls have been supporters of the WSU Alumni Association’s Wine-By-Cougars Wine Club since its inception in 2007.

When they established Woodward Canyon, there were only about 30 wineries in the state. Today, there are more than a thousand. “The biggest problem we had was getting access to good science,” says Small, who was instrumental, along with his wife, in the process of obtaining federal approval of the Walla Walla Valley appellation in 1984.

Today, Small, a former chair of the Washington Wine Commission who has also served on the joint WSU and University of Idaho Food Science External Advisory Board, is pleased to be passing the baton to his son and daughter.

“We didn’t ask them to come back,” he says. “But they both made the conscious decision to make this a generational family business. That’s where the true legacy will be—with the second generation.”

Pilots for the presidents

BY LARRY CLARK

Their brotherhood took off from the Sigma Nu chapter house in Pullman to careers as Marine Corps helicopter pilots flying two presidents of the United States.

Jeff “Cliffy” Tontini (’89 History) and Dan “Dano” Ircink (’89 English) were pledge brothers to Sigma Nu fraternity as freshmen at Washington State University in 1985, but they couldn’t foresee that their parallel paths would take them to the skies and around the world.

Ircink went to WSU for the ROTC program, knowing he wanted to continue the family flying tradition. His father was a US Army helicopter pilot until the late 1960s, when he became a teacher in Spokane and flew helicopters in the summers, sparking the younger Ircink’s interest.

Flying for the US Marines was a direction that neither Ircink nor Tontini expected, though.

“As it turned out, we had a fraternity brother who went into the pilot program with the Marine Corps,” Ircink says. Dan McGough (’86 Math.) “convinced both Jeff and I that was the way to go.”

The two decided to pursue the career, but it wasn’t easy right off the bat, beginning with a tough six-week officer candidate school at Quantico, Virginia, during the two summers of their junior and senior years.

“My junior year we had 80 candidates start, and we graduated 35 or 37,” Tontini says. “It’s boot camp on steroids because they hope that the officers are not only as strong as enlisted, but mentally stronger to lead men and women.”

“They wire-brush you to see if you’re going to fall out or stick to the program,” Ircink agrees.

Tontini says they averaged two to three hours of sleep. “I lost 10 to 15 pounds. You couldn’t eat enough because you’re burning through calories. It’s part of the crucible.”

The pair successfully emerged from the testing ground and, after graduation, accepted their commissions. Both attended The Basic School in Quantico for officers, but in different platoons. Their next stop was the Pensacola, Florida, flight school, where they were roommates.

“Dan had a leg up,” with some flying lessons and his father, Tontini laughs. “I didn’t know the front end from the back end of an aircraft.”

They were trained not only on helicopters but on fixed-wing aircraft as well. Moreover, all pilots-in-training endure rigorous physical tests, including swimming, aerodynamics, and running. Approximately 30 percent leave the training.

Again, they made it through, and Tontini was designated as an AH-1W “Cobra” pilot.
five o’clock in the morning, the sun’s coming up, and you’re about to fly the president,” Tontini says.

Tontini retired from the Marine Corps in 2013 with more than 23 years of service. He lives in Wenatchee with his wife, Kari, and two daughters, Sierra and Denali.

Ircink also retired in 2013 after 24 years in the Marine Corps, and now lives in Nine Mile Falls near Spokane with his wife, Keri, and children Jessica, Noah, and Hannah.

An enterprise in fertility

BY WENDA REED

She’s a matchmaker and mother figure, an advocate and an avid interviewer.

Julie (Riggs) Rash (’86 Comm.) helps couples who want a baby, but cannot conceive naturally, find a match with their ideal egg donor. She’s president of Egg Donor Select, an egg donor and recipient matching company based in Redmond and primarily serving the West Coast and Hawaii.

Rash opened Egg Donor Select in 2005 and subsequently created Donor Egg Network, dedicated to answering questions from potential donors. Since her company’s start 16 years ago, an estimated 600 babies have been born with its assistance.

“I love the joy of seeing people succeed in becoming pregnant after many years of disappointment,” Rash says. “Egg donation truly is a gift for all involved.”

In her more than thirty years in the fertility field, egg donation has evolved from experimental to mainstream. Its prevalence is growing as more couples delay having children and more gay couples wish to start families. In its latest National Survey of Family Growth, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention concluded that one in eight couples in the United States have trouble conceiving.

In the midst of this, she became a patient herself. She and Tom Rash married in 1995 and began trying to start a family, without success. In their case, they were able to achieve pregnancy through a relatively low-level procedure known as intrauterine insemination.

Rash experienced some of what egg donors go through because she had to inject hormones to stimulate growth of more eggs to give the introduced sperm more targets for fertilization. “At first the injections were horrible, with huge needles that made me black and blue,” she recalls. “Then, with the advancement of recombinant follicle-stimulating hormone technology, the needles became thinner, more like those used by diabetics.”

Son Fred was born in 1997. Triplets Sean, Maggie, and Lucy were born in 2000. The girls are now sophomores at WSU.

Rash became sympathetic with couples who have trouble conceiving and go through in-vitro fertilization. In IVF, egg and sperm are fertilized in a test tube, then transferred into the uterus. “I fell in love with the field of egg donation because once the egg side of the equation is solved, the success rates for pregnancy increase significantly,” Rash says.

She recruits women in their 20s, guiding potential donors through questions about risks, side effects, ovarian stimulation, and egg retrieval. After an extensive in-person interview and medical, genetic, and psychological testing, about 10 percent of applicants are accepted.

A match is made when prospective parents select a candidate after reviewing her online profile. “Sometimes it’s the weirdest thing that makes a match—one recipient chose a donor because her favorite food was chicken fingers, which was also her favorite. We called it the chicken-finger match.”

COVID-19 slowed business for a while as clinics performing the fertility procedures were shut down. But now that they are reopened with stringent safety measures in place, demand is back up and increasing. Says Rash of her chosen career, “This is where I was meant to be.”

While Ircink was designated a CH-46E “Phrog” pilot.

Although the two brothers-in-arms received orders around the world from Afghanistan to Okinawa to California, their paths crossed often. They first served together in Somalia flying from the deck of the USS Peleliu.

When they were stationed at the same place or nearby, the pair would get together and watch the Cougs play football.

One assignment in particular sticks out. Both men had the privilege of flying two US presidents, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, as well as other heads of state, for four years as members of Helicopter Marine Experimental-One (HMX-I), known more commonly as Marine One.

Among many other memories, Ircink recalls landing on the South Lawn of the White House when dropping off President George W. Bush.

Tontini remembers one tricky flight escorting Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin from the Waco, Texas, airport to President Bush’s ranch for a summit. “Putin wasn’t a big guy, but his six KGB bodyguards were 230 pounds and built like linebackers. The weight and balance was definitely off.”

The pilots say they often had friendly interactions with the presidents. “President Bush would always slap you on the shoulder,” or ask you to go for a run at Camp David, Tontini says. Vice President Dick Cheney, though, would nod and say hello, but was generally all business.

Both men say it was a pretty special assignment.

“It’s so memorable, flying down and seeing the Jefferson and Lincoln Memorials. It’s five o’clock in the morning, the sun’s coming
The book pairs narratives with recipes that are often accompanied by stories of their own, almost a book within a book, activities to try, challenges to take on like she did. “In essence,” she writes, “these recipes are invitations. Try this at home.”

She laces recipes for dishes and desserts with instructions for things you shouldn’t consume; durian lip balm, yuzu bath and body oil, and whipped vanilla body cream are offered up alongside vanilla bean cake with vanilla buttercream, gooseberry elderflower frozen fool, and huckleberry pie.

Lebo is the author of A Commonplace Book of Pie (Chin Music Press, 2013) and Pie School: Lessons in Fruit, Flour, and Butter (Sasquatch Books, 2014), and coeditor with her husband Sam Ligon of the anthology Pie & Whiskey: Writers Under the Influence of Butter and Booze (Sasquatch Books, 2017). She also teaches pie-making workshops through the Arts Heritage Apprenticeship Program from the Washington Center for Cultural Traditions, and is an apprenticed cheesemaker to Lora Lea Misterly of Quillisascut Farm, who studied cheesemaking at Washington State University and has advised WSU’s Small Farms program.

Lebo finished writing this collection, which the New York Times called “dazzling,” while working part-time as the HEALWA outreach coordinator for Eastern Washington, based out of WSU Health Sciences Spokane. In the book, she references Native and pop culture, literature, and Pacific Northwest places as well as the works of other food writers. Sharp, poetic, enchanting, and chockfull of precise language, insight, and wit, Difficult Fruit is as well-researched and recipe-tested as it is intimate—contemporary food writing at its finest.

—Adriana Janovich

The Whaler and the Girl in the Deadfall
MAHLON E. KRIEBEL ’58 ZOOL.
RAVEN PUBLISHING: 2019
Gray whales are migrating from Baja to the Bering Sea, and Quanah—a mixed-race, blond-haired member of the Makah Tribe intent on finding a pod—takes his late father’s old boat into the Strait of Juan de Fuca one overcast morning. He doesn’t tell his mother, but he’s scouring for a hunt. He believes harvesting a whale will strengthen his Native identity and help unify regional tribes. He gathers a crew, sets out in a hand-hewn canoe, and succeeds in his mission only to be arrested and jailed.

Defending him is young environmental lawyer Alana Svoboda, who recently moved to Seattle from Syracuse. She’s on a quest of her own: learning the fate of her grandfather, who disappeared 40 years ago at 26, the same age Alana is now. Along the way, she endures a string of dramatic events and learns about the customs and beliefs of coastal tribes, including the Circle of Life and water-beast Wasgo. Her newfound knowledge leads her to persuade the whaler, now a friend as well as a client, to help her test her theory about her long-lost relation.

Influenced by real events of fall 1998 to spring 1999, when the Makah harvested their first whale in seven decades and made headlines worldwide, Mahlon E. Kriebel blends fact with fiction and explores the history of the whale hunt as well as complex cultural issues and tensions past and present. He provides historical context peppered with references to Native works of art, fiction, films, museum exhibits, and more.

Kriebel, a neurophysiologist, displays his expertise of brain function in a couple of chapters of almost entirely direct discourse. A professor for more than 30 years at the State University Health Science Center in Syracuse, New York, he published some 70 papers in his field as well as developed educational materials for chaos theory. Born and raised in Garfield, he returned to the family farm in retirement in 2002. His familiarity with the natural world of the Pacific Northwest
is evident in his writing, which offers a keen sense of place, particularly of the northwesternmost region of the contiguous United States where the Makah call home.

—Adriana Janovich

**Mother of Modern Evangelicalism: The Life and Legacy of Henrietta Mears**

**ARLIN C. MIGLIAZZO ’82 PHD HISTORY**

EERDMANS: 2020

Besides his wife and mother, evangelist Billy Graham called Henrietta Mears the greatest female influence on his life. Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, crafted his life’s work according to her principles. So did Jim Rayburn, creator of Young Life, and dozens of other “Mears boys.”

As director of Christian education at First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood, Mears persuaded generations of young people and adults alike to put their faith in Christ. She spoke in front of crowds of hundreds at Christian conferences around the country, authored Sunday school curricula used by thousands of churches, created a nonprofit to bolster Christian education programs around the world, founded her own publishing house, and helped bring music and movie stars into the evangelical fold.

She did all this and more with a particular “generosity of spirit,” writes Arlin C. Migliazzo, professor emeritus of history at Whitworth University, in his academic but approachable biography of one of the most influential but largely underappreciated engineers of modern American evangelicalism. His deeply researched account offers historical context along with the chronology of events that shaped the pioneering Sunday school teacher’s rise to power in the Presbyterian Church.

Migliazzo portrays Mears as a charismatic, forthright, and formidable character who transformed Christian education in mid-century America. He examines her involvement with the National Association of Evangelicals, creation of the Forest Home Christian Conference Center, and connection of prominent conservative Protestants to each other and the wider community and culture. At the time of her death in 1963—35 years after her arrival in Hollywood in 1928—her Sunday school was the largest in the country. Perhaps more than anything, Mears was a bridge builder, coaching and connecting future leaders of the evangelical movement for generations to come.

—Adriana Janovich

**Random Perfect Plan**

**TOVA AND RICHARD TILLINGHAST ’11 PSYCH.**

2020

All 13 songs on this eclectic, poetic, folky album are written and performed by a husband and wife who have been married for 10 years and making music together since 2005. He’s a bluesy guitar-playing singer-songwriter with an evocative voice. She’s a classically trained soulful cellist who also sings, whistles, and plays violin and accordion. Their new rootsy Americana offering explores themes of heart and home, roaming around and settling down, bucking societal norms and finding one’s place in the world. Both wistful and whimsical, Random Perfect Plan and its accompanying series of “backyard music videos” serve up a sense of nostalgia along with a celebration of family, relationships, and life’s simple pleasures.

—Adriana Janovich

**BRIEFLY NOTED**

**The First-time Gardener: Growing Plants and Flowers: All the know-how you need to grow and tend outdoor areas using eco-friendly methods**

**ALLISON AND SEAN MCMANUS ’01 HORT.,’04 MS HORT.**

COOL SPRINGS PRESS: 2021

Gain a basic understanding of plants and flowers, and learn what to grow when in this easy-to-follow introduction to gardening. A practical and approachable guide, The First-time Gardener offers hopeful green thumbs a crash course in plant growth—from composting to avoiding common problems and mistakes. Allison McManus was a middle-school science teacher and her husband Sean owned a landscape maintenance and consulting company. Now, they run The Spoken Garden podcast and blog at spokengarden.com.

**Field Guide to Grasses of Oregon and Washington**

**RICHARD BRAINERD, BARBARA WILSON, NICK OTTING, CINDY (TALBOTT) ROCHE (’78 FOREST & RANGE MGMT., ’87 MS FOREST & RANGE MGMT.), AND ROBERT KORFHAGE (’72 FOREST & RANGE MGMT.,’74 MS FOREST & RANGE MGMT.)**
Identifying grasses—from rare native species to invasive weeds—can be difficult. Differences are often subtle and minute. Macrophotographs in this 488-page comprehensive field guide show otherwise hard-to-see features up close. Detailed descriptions, range maps, field photos, and identification keys for the 376 species, subspecies, varieties of both native and introduced grasses that grow wild in Washington and Oregon are also useful. Last fall, their effort won the Council on Botanical and Horticultural Libraries’ 2020 Annual Literature Award, recognizing “a work that makes a significant contribution to the literature of botany or horticulture.”

Watch “Dauntless Dick” Miralles talk about his World War II experience in a short documentary film: imdb.com/video/vi1648344089

All in a Garden Green
PAUL J. WILLIS ’80 MA, ’85 PHD ENGLISH
SLANT: 2020
Piano lessons were never like this—at least not in the twenty-first-century life of thirteen-year-old Erica Pickins, who walks through a door and into an accidental adventure in Elizabethan England in this lively young adult novel. Suddenly, it’s 1578. Queen Elizabeth I is slated to arrive at Hengrave Hall, and Erica, an American teen and two children.

Scout the Mighty Tugboat
CHARLES BEYL ’84 FINE ARTS
ALBERT WHITMAN & COMPANY: 2020
This playful picture book, written and illustrated by Charles Beyl, follows Scout the Mighty Tugboat as she pulls ships into port and pushes them out to sea—all by herself. When an oil tanker is too heavy for her to pull alone, she learns an important lesson: It’s OK to ask for help. This charming story, aimed at 4- to 8-year-olds, is Beyl’s first kids’ book.
Hey!! How have things been since your virtual commencement?

Good, just miss the Coug family!

The Alumni Association has a lot of ways to connect with Cougs. Use your membership!

Really?

They host a ton of events, I go to at least a few a year. Check them out on social media too!! They have groups wherever you end up around the country.

I’ll definitely check it out. Anything else I should look into?

The discounts are great! Being a member has been lots of fun, keeps that Coug Spirit going and the Coug family close

Sounds awesome! thanks! do I just go to their website?

That works, they have a mobile app too. Search Coug Alumni and you’ll find it.

Thanks again Butch, I’m excited to check everything out!

Go Cougs!

Go Cougs!
The new Ruth Wyile Head House at WSU’s Northwestern Washington Research and Extension Center is named for RUTH WYILE (’50 Busi.), who broke ground in public service as Skagit County’s first woman commissioner and treasurer. The building, which supports research into soil health and improved practices for agriculture in northwest Washington, was partly funded through a $150,000 donation from her daughter, NANCY KERCHEVAL (’79 Ag. Econ.). Wyile, former business manager for United General Hospital (now PeaceHealth United General) in Sedro-Woolley, was elected Skagit County treasurer in 1979 and served 13 years in that role before becoming Skagit County’s first female commissioner.

PHYLLIS J. CAMPBELL (’73 Busi.), senior executive for JPMorgan Chase & Co. in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho, has joined the board of directors of Air Transport Services Group. Campbell was previously president and chief executive officer of The Seattle Foundation and U.S. Bank of Washington. She serves on Toyota’s North American Diversity Advisory Board, chairs the US-Japan Council, and is a member of the American Diversity Advisory Board, chairs the board of directors of Air Transport Services Group. Campbell was previously

TIAA Bank has promoted ELLEN Comeaux (’90 Busi.) to senior vice president of commercial division sales. She joined TIAA in 2015. ✦ RUSSELL A. MILLER (’91 English), the J.B. Strombock Professor of Law at Washington and Lee University, won a 2020 Humboldt Research Award. An expert in constitutional law, he is now carrying out research projects in cooperation with specialist colleagues in Münster, Germany. ✦ FA’AMOMOI MASANIAI (’92 Crim. Jus.) is the first judge of Samoan heritage to serve on the bench anywhere in the state, according to King County. He was recently appointed to fill a vacancy in its district court. Before that, he worked as a pro tem judge at numerous courts, including at the Regional Justice Center in Kent. ✦ TROY BOUTTE (’93 Ph.D. Food Sci.) is vice president of innovation and bakery ingredients at AB Mauri North America. He started as director of innovation in 2019. Now, he oversees the development and implementation of new products as well as leads the baking ingredient innovation team. Boutte previously spent eight years at Dupont Danisco as principal scientist and group manager for the bakery, sales, and application group. He also spent 12 years as director of bakery and emulsifier ingredients and senior scientist at Caravan Ingredients. ✦ VINCENT JUNE (’93 MBA, ’96 PhD Ed.) is the new chancellor of South Louisiana Community College. ✦ DAVID ARRINGTON (’94 Lib. Arts) recently joined Freeline Therapeutics Holdings as vice president of investor relations and corporate communications. Arrington previously served as vice president of investor relations and corporate affairs at Coherus BioSciences, where he supported commercialization of the company’s first product. He has more than 20 years of experience in life sciences, including leadership roles at small- to mid-cap biotechnology companies, Stanford Medicine and UC California San Francisco, and 10 years at Genentech and Bristol Myers Squibb. ✦ JIM HORNER (’96 Crim. Jus.) has joined the Pittsburgh Pirates as bench coach. From 2006 to 2015, he served as a manager for three different affiliates in the Seattle Mariners organization, with a brief stint at Texas Tech University in 2011 and 2012. From 2016 to 2019, he was assistant coach at WSU. Homer spent nine seasons as a catcher in the Mariners organization, reaching as high as Triple-A. He played varsity baseball for four years at WSU. ✦ JOSEPH C. GUERRERO (’97 Busi.), is the new president of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce. Guerrero, co-owner of Naked Fish Bar & Grill and Hafa Adai Realty, is one of four nominees for the chamber’s 2020 Small Business of the Year Award. His restaurant, established in 2004, won the chamber’s 2020 Small Business of the Year Award. Guerrero has been a member of the chamber for nearly 20 years. ✦ Grays Harbor County’s first female prosecutor, KATIE SVOBODA (’97 English) recently became the county’s first female superior court judge. ✦ BRIAN G. MORGEN (’99 Civ. Eng.) has joined Thornton Tomasetti as vice president and director of the Seattle office. He’s also a member of the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat and the Structural Engineers Association of Washington.
doesn’t often post photos of himself on social media. But, he says, “I have this really cute dog.” And, whenever he would post pics of his beloved golden retriever on his Facebook page, “they’d get a really good response.”

Edlund really had no plans to do anything else with the dog’s popularity. In fact, when a college classmate suggested creating an Instagram account for the animal, he asked, “What’s that?”

Today, Dash the dog has an Instagram account with more than 36,000 followers. He’s done social media account take-overs for the Washington State University Alumni Association and The Coug, where he’s the only canine member of the Mug Club. And he gets recognized on walks and at coffee shops and taprooms from Redmond to Pullman and points in between.

“T’m under the radar, but he’s recognizable. He’s become an unofficial mascot for WSU,” says Edlund, who created the dash dog Instagram account in 2015. It’s written in the dog’s voice about things a dog might talk about if dogs could talk: squirrels, cats, hot dogs, dog treats, the dog park, and—because his human’s a Coug—palling around with WSU’s official mascot Butch T. Cougar.

Although Dash and Edlund live in Redmond, the pup is popular in Pullman. Dash was adopted as an honorary Coug by the WSUAA. He’s been featured in the Daily Evergreen student newspaper and Chinook yearbook. He’s also partnered with Cosmic Crisp® apples and Butch’s Britches on social media posts. He’s even helped fill the stands at Martin Stadium during the pandemic with his own cardboard cutout.

Ten-year-old Dash also has his own wall calendar benefitting charity. He has his paws on Facebook and Twitter, too. “Social media allows me to be creative and to share Dash with the world,” Edlund says, noting he and Dash can’t wait for their next visit to Pullman. “Being famous in Pullman is the best kind of famous.”

**BY ADRIANA JANOVICH**

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**KRISTIN O’SULLIVAN** (’00 Crim. Jus.) is a new municipal judge in Spokane. She had served for two years as an appointed commissioner in municipal court, which handles civil infractions and criminal misdemeanors. Before that, she worked as a prosecutor both in municipal court as well as Spokane County District Court. While a member of the county prosecuting team, she handled cases involving involuntary commitments and cases put forth by the Washington Gambling Commission. **ERIC PETRACCA** (’04 Hum.) is the new marketing director at Apple Tree. Shales joined Stemilt as a communications specialist in 2008. She became communications manager in 2010 and was promoted to senior marketing manager in 2019. **ELIZABETH “BETH” ADAN** (’13 Anthro. and Comm.) is the marketing director at Moxxy Marketing. **JAKE BLAYLOCK** (’16 Food Sci.) has joined BumbleBar to lead its new co-manufacturing division, Clean Copack, as quality food safety manager. He previously led quality assurance and food safety operations at Archer Daniels Midland’s milling facility in Spokane.
TOCCARA JULE (‘16 Nursing) has joined Delta Care Rx as its new national nursing education director. She previously served as senior quality facilitator at PeaceHealth Whatcom Hospice and, at Hospice of the Northwest, she was an admissions nurse, nurse case manager, referral center manager, and clinical services manager. She has also worked as a site visitor for Community Health Accreditation Partners in Washington, D.C. and at Skagit Regional Health’s Wound Center as a wound nurse. ☀ KENNY MCMAHON (‘16 PhD Food Sci.) has joined the behavioral research firm InsightsNow as senior research director. ☀ The Saskatchewan Roughriders have signed quarterback LUKE FALK (‘17 Soc. Sci.). Falk spent two seasons in the NFL, starting in two games for the New York Jets in 2019 and completing 47 passes for 416 yards. He was selected in the sixth round, 199th overall, by the Tennessee Titans in the 2018 NFL draft. At WSU, he played five seasons as a walk-on. He played 43 games for the Cougs, earning 14,486 passing yards, averaging 327.6 yards per game and 7.1 yards per pass, and throwing 119 touchdowns. Falk set numerous Pac-12 and WSU records and was a three-time All-Pac-12 selection. In 2017, he won the Burlsworth Trophy, awarded to America’s top former walk-on.

IN memoriam


Everett Gibbons, pharmacy class of 1956, and his wife, Dolly, recently reached a major milestone of philanthropy: 50 years of giving to the WSU College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences!

Everett, who owned Gibbons Pharmacy in Toppenish, Washington is part of what will soon be three-generations of pharmacy alumni at the college. His son, Greg Gibbons graduated in 1982 and is now the owner of Gibbons Pharmacy as well as three other independent pharmacies in the Yakima, Washington area. Everett’s grandson and Greg’s son, Seth Gibbons, is currently a third-year pharmacy student.

Congratulations to the Gibbons family on becoming “Diamond Donors,” and on behalf of the college, please accept our heartfelt gratitude for your generosity.

Learn more about philanthropy at the College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences:
pharmacy.wsu.edu/give
**INmemoriam**

**LORI JEAN ANDERSON** (’98 Nursing), 63, November 1, 2018, Yakima. **VICTOR VASKELIS III** (’98 Civ. Eng.), 47, October 21, 2020, Maple Valley.

**ELAINE A. JASON** (’00 MPA Public Affairs), 60, November 25, 2019, Kalamazoo, Michigan. **SETH ROBERT WILSON** (’00 Intl. Busi.), 38, June 30, 2015, Quincy. **JAMES COLMAN BARGELT** (’01 Soc. Sci.), 50, September 16, 2018, Lakewood.

**ANDREA (YORK) BARKSTROM** (’02, ’04 MS Speech & Hearing Sci., Kappa Alpha Theta), November 22, 2020, Spokane.


**FACULTY AND STAFF**


**DAVID PRIEUR**, 78, Veterinary Microbiology, 1974–2020, December 19, 2020, Pullman.


**Paul Johnson:**

A remembrance

“IT SURE MADE A DIFFERENCE with all the equine neck problems I worked on,” Grant says. “And, later, for developing a technique to put artificial hip joints in horses.

“Paul also learned how to do cryopreservation and made great freeze-dried specimens so we could clearly see and identify things like the lungs and heart.

“At that time, WSU was one of the first to really get going with diagnostic ultrasound,” he says. “Paul helped create a cross-sectional display set in plexiglass where the sections could be pulled out for inspection. By examining these sections, we could better measure and analyze ultrasound images.”

Professor and College of Veterinary Medicine dean emeritus Bryan Slinker (’80 DVM, ’82 PhD Vet. Med.) says, “PJ learned and adapted as times changed and his innovations helped students learn in ways previously unavailable. His contributions were as important as those of the faculty to the education of many generations of veterinarians.”

Johnson’s work is also prominently displayed in the Middle East. In 1997, Johnson prepared a horse skeleton and helped install it at the Dubai Equine Hospital for Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum. In 2014, Johnson came out of retirement to help prepare a camel skeleton for the Emir of Qatar.

Beyond the anatomy lab, Johnson was a natural athlete who often invited students to run the stadium stairs at noon. He helped organize the WSU 100K run and was cited as the fastest runner on his WSU Corporate Cup team in Spokane’s Bloomsday Run.

“We must’ve run 15,000 miles together,” says Grant who teamed up with Johnson to win some of the toughest races in North America. “We did a lot of ride ‘n’ ties and also competed in the Western States 100 ultramarathon.” A ride ‘n’ tie is a team endurance race that combines running and horseback riding.

“He was a gift to me,” Grant says. “Running a hard race and then having a cold beer with somebody like Paul. Just the simple pleasures of life. If you hadn’t done it together, you wouldn’t appreciate how good it really was.”

—Rebecca Phillips
It’s a place of calm and quiet, a shrine of spirituality and stability, a sacred space for people of all creeds to come to contemplate and connect. With time. With history. With one’s self.

The oval-shaped metal structure, inherently peaceful and protective, is designed to help visitors turn inward, reflect, and find tranquility. A gangway leads guests through an industrial-looking door—and into a different environment and mindset.

The Meditation Pavilion at Washington State University’s award-winning Elson S. Floyd Cultural Center resembles a sort of rocky outcropping in relation to the main building’s undulating form, inspired in part by the earth shelters and mat houses of the Palouse region’s Nez Perce Tribe. Inside, the sparse, dimly lighted, chapel-like space contains a Sacred Earth Ring, made of soil from Nez Perce land—a reminder of their historical connection to this place.

“Designing a building such as this compels us to think and to ask why,” says J. Philip “Phil” Gruen, an associate professor in the School of Design and Construction at WSU’s Voiland College of Engineering and Architecture. “It helps us to recognize what has been done and who has been excluded. At the same time, it asks us to slow down and think about what could be, and I think that’s the strength of this space. It is asking us to be more introspective.”

Gruen sees the entire complex, completed in 2017, “as a symbol of our times.” Its overall design, sustainable elements, and motifs and other references to marginalized groups “allow us to confront the history of the land that the University sits on in a way that no other building on campus does.

“When this building was built, 2020”—with the coronavirus pandemic, political unrest, and Black Lives Matter protests—“had not happened yet. In many ways, it almost seems to now serve an even greater purpose: for contemplating ideas of stability, and where we’ve been, where we are, and where we might go.”

BY ADRIANA JANOVICH

Of place and history

The cultural center photo gallery: magazine.wsu.edu/galleries/#ESFCC