

UB

UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE

MAGAZINE • FALL 2019

LIFE ON THE PAGE

UB Writers' Reflections
on the Creative Process



PROJECTING A PROFESSIONAL IMAGE

This image was photographed in UB's Career Closet, located in the Career and Internship Center. The Closet is stocked with clothing and accessories, provided at no cost to our students, to help them project a professional image for job searches and career advancement. This project is entirely supported by donations from the UB community and our neighbors.

The Career Closet initiative aligns with a new framework of educational resources we are offering our students as they plan for their futures. We have identified five "Professional Pathways" that encompass our signature areas of concentration. Each Pathway is linked to specific course suggestions as well as career options and services that students may want to consider. For more information, access ubalt.edu/academics/pathways/.



One thing I'm still learning about UB is just how multifaceted our university is. Our tagline is "You Know Us" and yet, the list of things we are known for is always expanding.

We continue to receive significant national recognition for the ways we serve our students, from working adults of all ages to undergraduates who come to us fresh out of high school. (Some of the many kudos we've received this year are highlighted in the

"Braggs" sections of the magazine.) But beyond our traditional areas of excellence, we're also delighted to be able to shine a spotlight on exciting new achievements.

In this issue we feature a team of seven undergraduates who took a leap to help develop the spacesuits of the future. The "Poegrammers," students from our Applied Information Technology and Simulation and Game Design programs, were selected to attend a competition at NASA in April. UB was part of an elite group of universities that included schools specializing in science and technology. The Poegrammers' accomplishments are a source of great pride for us, and we hope you enjoy learning more about how they translated their classroom education to tackle real-world technological challenges.

We also highlight talented UB professors and alumni who influence the world using the power of words. And true to our pledge to be the University *for* Baltimore, our students are making a difference in the community. Our Real Estate Venture Fellows are developing new housing options in middle market neighborhoods. Our alumni are also instrumental in providing services for those who are dealing with homelessness and addiction, as well as contributing to life-changing advances in organ donation via delivery drone.

As our view of UB expands, so does our view of what is possible for each of us. Together we can help each other along the way to our brightest and most fulfilling futures, full of new experiences and perhaps some surprises.

Sincerely,

Kurt L. Schmoke
President, University of Baltimore



Fiction writer and poet Christine Lincoln, M.F.A. '11, photographed by Chris Myers in one of her favorite writing spots, the lake at Cousler Park in York, Pennsylvania.

Cover: Writer and UB professor D. Watkins, B.A. '09, M.F.A. '14 photographed by Chris Myers at R. House

Right: Photo of Poegrammer William Hyland courtesy of NASA

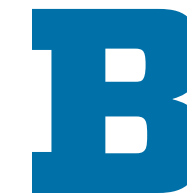
Previous spread: Career Closet photo by Justin Tsucalas

DONOR DOLLARS AT WORK

The gift icon highlights UB programs that are possible thanks to the generosity of UB's alumni, friends and community partners.

WEB EXTRA

Don't forget that anytime you see the Web Extra icon, it means we've added related bonus content to the magazine website, ubalt.edu/ubmag.



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BIO

MATTHEW SCASSERO

- M.P.A., University of Baltimore
- University of Maryland Director of Unmanned Aircraft Systems Test Site

A Very Special Delivery

BY TIM PAGGI, M.F.A. '15

In the early hours of April 19, a single drone aircraft flew over Baltimore City destined for the University of Maryland Medical Center. The drone carried time-sensitive, life-saving cargo: a donated kidney. For the patient, a 44-year-old former nurse at The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs who had been on dialysis for eight years, her successful kidney operation represented a second chance. But the debut of the medical-delivery drone is proving to be a historic milestone.

Director of the University of Maryland's Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UMD UAS) Test Site **Matthew Scassero, M.P.A., '17**, has been involved in the development of this special delivery since its inception. "It all started with a phone call," Scassero recalls, when two and a half years ago, renowned transplant surgeon Dr. Joseph Scalea contacted him to ask if it was possible to send organs for donation using a drone.

Scassero says he barely blinked before responding. "Even without looking at all the technology regulations or how long it was going to take, my instinct was to say yes," he recalls.

Scalea reached out to the UMD UAS due to its reputation for cutting-edge drone technology. Still, flying an organ directly to a patient had never been attempted before, and would require extensive problem solving.

In organ donation, "Time is of the essence," explains **Anahita Masoumi, MBA '15**. Masoumi



COURTESY MATTHEW SCASSERO/UMD

"Every single person we proposed the idea to, their first response was 'yes.' That helped us with big problems we had, like flying over the city. People wanted to make this happen."

MATT SCASSERO

became chief administrative officer and executive director of the Transplant Institute at the University of Chicago in early 2019, after years in the field as both a medical administrator and a transplant nurse. "The success of organ transplants is strongly influenced by the amount of time the organ is out of the organ donor's body and kept on ice. For every six hours a kidney is out of the donor's body, the long-term outcome of the kidney declines," she explains.

Using delivery drones could transform lives, realized Scassero. "So the mission became about that big target: How many more patients can we save?" Scassero says.



DRONE PROJECT AWARDED INVENTION OF THE YEAR

The team that made it possible for an unmanned drone to deliver an organ for transplant was named *Invention of the Year* by *Technical.ly* in October. *Technical.ly* connects organizations and people in technology communities all over the Northeast corridor, via news, events and stories. Congratulations to **Matt Scassero and the UMD engineering school team, Dr. Joseph Scalea, and all of the researchers, surgeons and other contributors who made this exciting project a reality.**



LEFT: **Matt Scassero (far left) and the team from UMD's A. James Clark School of Engineering guide the transplant delivery drone through the stages of its historic journey.**

In order to make Dr. Scalea's vision a reality, Scassero drew on his considerable experience—from his early career in the Navy and nonprofit work, all the way through earning his M.P.A. from UB. Multiple groups needed to be connected, from engineering and aviation experts to transplant physicians to the Living Legacy Foundation (an organization that facilitates organ donation and transplantation in Maryland hospitals).

"They made it happen. My biggest job as director is to take credit for what they accomplish," Scassero jokes.


Step one for the team involved inventing a durable, temperature-controlled vessel with the capability to communicate the condition of the kidney to the ground team. Next, they needed to determine the best way to pilot the drone, all while negotiating for use of airspace with the Federal Aviation Administration.

The successful April delivery was a one-time demonstration of what is possible, not yet a fully implemented system. "Transplant professionals are realistic that use of drones will require a period of development and adjustment, but all agree this is the future,"

says Masoumi. She praises drone technology for its potential to ship other critical lifesaving medical supplies, such as equipment, medications and blood.

To Scassero, this flight was a demonstration not only of technology, but of effective public administration skills he strengthened through his experience at UB. "This is policy being flowed down through the technical approaches, the regulatory approaches, and taking something from an idea to a solution that will be part of the healthcare system one day," he explains. "Every single person we proposed the idea to, their first response was 'yes.' That helped us

with big problems we had, like flying over the city. People wanted to make this happen."

To Scassero, one moment of the historic night stands out, "being there both on launch and recovery and seeing the nurses waiting on the roof. When you see those people cheering and faces lighting up, that's the moment you realize, wow, this is something big." 

Tim Paggi, M.F.A. '15, is a writer based in Baltimore.

TOP MARKS!

UB IS RANKED

#1

IN MARYLAND FOR STUDENTS' EARNING PERFORMANCE 10 YEARS AFTER ENTERING COLLEGE

(#7 nationally)

SOURCE: *Washington Monthly College Guide and Rankings*

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Helping the Underserved

BY TIM PAGGI, M.F.A. '15

Third year law students **Katelyn Kirk** and **Ryan Frace** say they want to contribute to a more culturally informed and equitable society. Over the summer, they worked in non-traditional internships to learn more about the needs of underserved populations and how they could make a difference.



Kirk spent ten weeks in Window Rock, Arizona, helping to address legal issues facing residents of the Navajo Nation. Roughly the size of West Virginia, the Navajo reservation is rural and remote and has culture-specific challenges and its own system of law.

For example, says Kirk, in the 1950s and 1960s many Native children were assigned Anglicized names in population records. This means that the names on their birth certificates may not match those on

later documents. Kirk worked to help revise these records to prepare wills for residents. “The Navajo are very tied to their land,” Kirk says. “We want to make sure everything is in order for them to keep their land in their families.”

Kirk also immersed herself in Navajo culture, attending events like the annual Eastern Navajo Fair. “Every member of the Navajo Nation belongs to a chapter of those to whom they are related. Chapters can be 60-80 miles apart, so these families are huge and they get together for family reunion activities as well as to choose chapter representatives and celebrate the members who have passed on within the last year.”

Equal Justice Works (EJW), an organization that connects new lawyers with communities that need them most, funded Kirk’s work in Arizona. Through EJW, she hopes to continue to work with her mentor Kace Rodwell, a member of the Cherokee Nation, to help children stay with their custodial parents. (According to the National Indian Child Welfare Association, Native children are placed in foster care at a rate 2.7 times greater than that of other U.S. demographics.)

“It’s important to me to work under a Native woman who defends parents using the Indian Child Welfare Act,” says Kirk. “We hope to take our legal project to other Native areas in the country, and help to keep children in their homes.”



Frace’s work with Rising for Justice in Washington, D.C., focused in part on international human rights and immigration, issues about which Frace is particularly passionate.

“The first month I conducted intakes and consultation and provided legal resources and limited supervised representation for clients in the Civil Protection Order Project and Landlord-Tenant Court,” he explains. “The latter half of the summer was focused more on representing immigrants detained in ICE custody.”

“I represented two clients who fled from conflict and violence in Central America and sought refuge in the U.S.,” he continues. “That required intensive fact investigation, submitting briefs and appearing in front of the Immigration Court judge to argue for reasonable bond.” Frace was successful in securing bond for both clients. “They have since been reunified with their families, returned to work and their local communities, and are again actively contributing members of society,” he says.

This experience fuels Frace’s goal to center his legal practice

“I have strong aspirations to serve the public, from addressing issues of humanitarian crises... to national security.”

RYAN FRACE

around social justice. Currently, he is on a semester abroad at Pepperdine University in London, taking classes in international law. He will also intern for the U.S. Department of Justice at the U.S. Embassy, which helps satisfy his international and comparative law concentration at UB.

“I have strong aspirations to serve the public, from addressing issues of humanitarian crises and forced migration to national security and the protection of domestic amity,” he says. “I believe we must open our eyes and hearts as far as they will reach.”

Tim Paggi, M.F.A. '15, is a writer based in Baltimore.

Moving Forward Together

BY JARED BREY

Kari Lindemann, M.A. '09, used to compete in triathlons. When she was UB’s assistant director of annual giving, she would often arrive at the office on a bike or fresh off of a training run. Ten years ago her colleague **Bill Cole, M.A. '96**, then associate vice president of institutional advancement, told her about a new nonprofit called Back on My Feet (BoMF). The group, which organizes runs with residents in transitional homeless and addiction and treatment facilities, was encouraging him to become a volunteer.

“Bill had small children at the time, and it was hard for him to make a 5:30 a.m. run. He said, ‘You should give it a try and let me know what you think,’” Lindemann recalls.

Lindemann signed up, attended orientation and joined a run with volunteers and members of BoMF at The Baltimore Station, a homeless shelter and residential treatment program in South Baltimore. Soon she was running four times a week and helping to plan events.

“I saw our members working hard, transforming their lives and breaking the cycle they had been in,” says Lindemann, who now lives in Newark, Delaware. “I created personal bonds with a lot of members and volunteers—ultimately it was my central community in Baltimore.” Now Lindemann is the national marketing director for BoMF, which has 13 chapters in



U.S. cities that include Baltimore, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Dallas and New York.

Here’s how the program works: participants begin by joining groups for early morning runs (or walks) three times a week, perhaps initially covering just a few city blocks. Gradually they advance to longer distances (over 400 have run marathons), while making commitments to set personalized running and professional goals.

After participating on two morning runs, members get a free pair of new shoes and new running clothes. If they continue for a 30-day period with 90 percent attendance, they can join the group’s “Next Steps” program, which gives them access to resources such as financial literacy training and resume building. They may also receive financial aid for transportation, housing costs, books for school, GED classes, etc.

Lauren Lake, B.A. '13, J.D. '16, has also seen how BoMF helps its members move forward. Lake is an associate in the litigation practice at Gordon Feinblatt in Baltimore. A cross-country runner, she began volunteering for BoMF during her

senior year of high school. Lake planned to work in publishing until her experiences with the organization showed her how participants’ lives could be improved by things like legal expungement clinics.

“Our executive director at the time was a lawyer, and she was able to help navigate many difficult situations for our members,” Lake recalls. “That made me realize how valuable that skill set and knowledge is. Whether you’re working in a nonprofit or on a nonprofit board—which is something that a lot of attorneys do—there are so many ways to give back.”

Both Lindemann and Lake say that setting and achieving incremental goals in their running practices has led to improvements in other areas of their lives. BoMF staff and volunteers hope that participating in the program can similarly motivate members who may be struggling. It doesn’t always work; people may relapse and try again. But at 5:30 a.m. as CEOs, college students and young and retired professionals run alongside members through the streets of Baltimore, they’re all just focusing on putting one foot in front of the other.

“No matter where you are and what you’re doing, if you run those miles side by side, you’ve accomplished something together.”

LAUREN LAKE

“The organization is an amazing equalizer and provides a wonderful, supportive safety net,” Lake says. “When times are tough, you’re going to have people who are there to catch up with you and check in to make sure everything is okay. No matter where you are and what you’re doing, if you run those miles side by side, you’ve accomplished something together.”

To date, says Lindemann, BoMF members’ achievements add up to more than 6,500 jobs and homes. “Our members have the capacity to achieve the extraordinary, but sometimes they just need a hand up to do it,” she says. “Celebrating with them as they succeed in running a certain distance, getting a degree, getting promoted or starting their own business is incredibly rewarding. Seeing their self-confidence grow, to see them realize they can achieve, all while the volunteers are cheering them on, that’s really magical.”

Jared Brey is a writer based in Philadelphia.

STATS

- Eight Real Estate Venture Fellows
- Ten weeks of study
- Five plans for new development in Baltimore
- Nearly \$2 million in funding for proposed real estate projects

THANK YOU

Sponsors of Pitch for a Million and the Fellows program include Baltimore Community Lending, M&T Bank, The Cordish Companies, Seawall Development and the UB Real Estate and Economic Development Advisory Board.

A Venture for Good

BY PAULA NOVASH

Imagine conceiving a plan to revitalize a Baltimore neighborhood and provide access to modern, affordable housing—and then getting the resources, support and potential financial backing to make your project a reality. That was the experience of the inaugural class of UB’s Real Estate Venture Fellows, a program that addresses critical development needs in Baltimore’s middle market neighborhoods.

Seema Iyer, director of UB’s Real Estate and Economic Development program, says providing training to people who are interested in building their own entrepreneurial real estate businesses serves the community in several ways.

“We have students and alumni at UB who have bought one or two homes to renovate and flip, but haven’t made the successful transition into making that a viable development company,” Iyer explains. “Giving students the expertise to develop a plan, as well as connecting them with possible sources of capital, benefits them because they have the potential to start a business. It benefits investors who are looking for projects, and it helps Baltimore and the neighborhoods we’re serving.”

The first cadre of Fellows included students and alumni **Olusegun Aje, M.S. ’17; William Casey; Joao David Garcia Ferraz; Tiffany Green; Janna Holmes, M.P.A. ’13; Nikolay Ratajczak, B.S. ’14; Haydon Wyatt** and **Leslie Wynn**.

The intensive 10-week program took them through all aspects of developing a project.

“Among other topics, we covered concept and design, choosing a site, typical pitfalls and problems developers encounter, and how to complete applications for financing,” explains Iyer. “Our board of advisors for the Real Estate program served as mentors to the students, as did other volunteers from the Baltimore real estate industry.”

The Fellows also toured neighborhoods to learn about community-specific goals and needs. “It’s very important that these projects be community-oriented, instead of the residents feeling like someone is coming in from the outside and projecting a vision onto them,” Iyer explains.

The capstone of the Fellows’ experience was the “Pitch for a Million” competition. Individually or as teams, Fellows presented their development plans at a public event in June. Judges, including representatives from M&T Bank and the Cordish Company, among others, decided which teams would be awarded up to \$1 million in a Guidance Line of Credit from Baltimore Community Lending (BCL). BCL is a community development financial institution that invests in underserved neighborhoods in the city.

Iyer and William Ariano, President of BCL, conceived of the competition over several years to connect would-be developers with the kind of alternative financing that BCL provides. Three of the Fellows’ five proposals were selected to

move forward to a vetting process, for a total pledge of nearly \$2 million in potential funding.

Fellow Tiffany Green, who is a candidate in UB’s Master of Public Administration program, had her \$350,000 plan to rehabilitate three homes in Forest Park approved. During her training, she was particularly struck by the impact that becoming embedded in a community has on a project’s success: “We worked with residents to get their perspective on how best to invest in their neighborhoods. I learned so

much from members of the Forest Park Neighborhood Alliance.”

When Green learned about the opportunity to become a Fellow, she says she was determined to participate. “I’ve been aided by affordable housing, and members of my family have too,” she explains. “Having that access changes people’s lives.”

A supervisor in Frederick County public schools who works with disadvantaged youth, Green says her friends and her young daughter can see how passionate she is about development. “My supervisor said to me, ‘Tiff, you just light up when you talk about this,’” she recalls.

Fellow Nikolay Ratajczak, B.S. ’14, has been developing real estate

“My idea is to create a development system for townhouse clusters, one-block areas that use scalable strategies and provide different solutions for mixed-income housing options.”

NIKOLAY RATAJCZAK

since he graduated and also owns a small mortgage company and a title company. Ratajczak’s \$1 million proposal to rehabilitate 10 townhomes in the Upton neighborhood, based on an award-winning white paper he wrote during his time at UB, was another plan that was approved to move forward.

“My idea is to create a development system for townhouse clusters, one-block areas that use scalable

strategies and provide different solutions for mixed-income housing options,” he explains. “Ideally this model can be applied to dozens, if not hundreds, of clusters in multiple locations.”

Ratajczak says he has always been interested in what he calls “areas of opportunity” in Baltimore, blighted neighborhoods that are located next to more successful ones. “As someone who has been involved in development work, I know the various silos of legal, financial and neighborhood considerations can be daunting,” he says. “The Fellows program provides a great prototype to tackle these real-world challenges.”

Iyer is also associate director of UB’s Jacob France Institute and oversees the Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance,

BRAGS

UB IS RANKED

#1

IN MARYLAND FOR ADVANCING THE SOCIAL MOBILITY OF OUR STUDENTS

(#28 nationally)

SOURCE: *Washington Monthly College Guide and Rankings*

which conducts and shares comprehensive research on the health of Baltimore’s neighborhoods through its Vital Signs report. Vital Signs evaluates more than 150 quality-of-life indicators, describes economic and social issues, and supports positive policy change.

“The Real Estate Fellows program is the perfect way to connect our students’ passion about Baltimore into meaningful change and a long-term business,” Iyer said. “I can’t wait to see the transformation over time in both their businesses and in our neighborhoods.”

It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the passing of Fellow Joao David Garcia Ferraz. David was pursuing his B.S. in Real Estate and Economic Development. His professors and fellow students knew him as smart, driven, hopeful and someone who always had a smile. We offer our sincere condolences to David’s family and friends.

Paula Novash is managing editor of the magazine.

DONOR DOLLARS AT WORK

WEB EXTRA



UB CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

A Path to Possibilities

Want to enhance your expertise and prepare for new opportunities? Consider a UB certificate program. Whether you are transitioning to a different profession or seeking to advance in your chosen one, certificate programs provide the most up-to-date skills and information in specialty areas.

Each of our four schools offer certificates, with flexible schedules for on-campus and online courses. Visit the UB website to learn more about how these programs can help you stay current in your field, expand your knowledge or discover new areas that interest you.

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BRAGS

UB IS RANKED

#1

PUBLIC MASTER'S UNIVERSITY IN MARYLAND

(#33 among the top 200)

SOURCE: Washington Monthly College Guide and Rankings



Castell Abner, Jr., CERT '19

I'm a seasoned student and want to learn from the best. In the family law certificate program, almost all of my professors had at least a decade of experience in the field. I thought, what better way to learn than from people who are doing this work every day?

The program takes you through every phase of family law, from preparing all aspects of a case to presenting in front of a judge to the steps for setting up a practice. Having that detailed, specialized knowledge post-JD just confirmed my opinion that UB is where I need to be. Now I'm pursuing the certificate in estate planning with the goal of better advocating for clients who are in danger of losing assets.

Castell Abner, Jr., LL.M., J.D., MBA, M.S., CERT '19, has had a varied career that includes positions at a Big 8 accounting firm, a Fortune 500 corporation, and as a university professor. He also spent 30 years in Special Enforcement at the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, specializing in tax law. Since his retirement from the public sector, he has served as a consultant in labor law and is doing pro bono work in family law for Maryland Legal Aid.



Kiyona Miah, M.P.A. '10, CERT '14

I had planned a career in counseling psychology but changed direction and now work in the public sector. My graduate certificate in strategic management and public accountability systems provided a variety of course offerings to prepare me for a role in project management.

I was impressed with how I was able to immediately implement what I was studying. Plus I had a network of professors and classmates as sounding boards as I grew in my new position and balanced the demands of my courses with working full time. I credit the Certificate program for helping me advance and become a leader in my organization.

Kiyona Miah, PMP, CSM, BRMP, M.P.A. '10, CERT '14 is an information technology specialist at the U.S. Census Bureau. She serves as a liaison between different IT divisions and business partners to align services and strategy for the organization. Miah is currently detailed to the U.S. Department of Commerce, serving in a similar role.

The Advantages of Being Prepared

As a law clerk for Baltimore Circuit Judge Julie R. Rubin, **Adanna Smith, J.D. '19**, routinely juggles the preparation of as many as 16 hearings in a week. “We do significant work to give the judge as much information as possible on the cases she has scheduled,” Smith explains.

She has seen the advantages of being prepared in her own life, Smith says, from as far back as elementary school when she was a regular participant in oratorical competitions. And at UB, she further developed her ability to gather and synthesize reams of information while pursuing another goal: competing in Moot Court competitions.

In Moot Court, law students gain experience at litigation by preparing substantive briefs and arguing before a judge. And here's a twist: the students don't know which side of the case they are representing until they are taking part in the competition. “We write a 35-page brief and develop arguments for one side—and at the same time, look for weak spots to counter it,” Smith says.

Smith has clearly mastered these challenges: she won Best Oral Advocate at the National Black Law Students Association's Thurgood Marshall Moot Court Competition in March, as well as first place and Best Oral Advocate at the regional competition in February. She says that her Moot Court experience has honed skills that will help her with her goals moving forward.

“UB did a wonderful job of helping me become well versed in legal authority, and my professors always encouraged me to pursue out-of-the-classroom experiences,” she says. “I know that if I prep enough, I am able to solve any problem.”

Smith was able to participate in Moot Court thanks to alumni generously supporting the School of Law Annual Giving Fund. Your gift to the school, college, or program of your choice through the Annual Fund provides opportunities for UB students to participate in a variety of activities. By supporting these programs, you make it possible for students to pursue their dreams and benefit our society in myriad ways.

To invest in UB students, visit ubalt.edu/support or send your gift in the postage paid envelope included in this magazine.

For more information, contact the Office of Philanthropy at 410.837.6217 or annualgiving@ubalt.edu.

DONOR DOLLARS AT WORK



At UB, Smith developed her ability to gather and synthesize reams of information while pursuing another goal: competing in Moot Court competitions.

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There's a simple way to benefit UB students when you shop through Amazon.com. Visit smile.amazon.com and select “University of Baltimore Foundation” from the list of eligible charities. When you shop through the smile.amazon.com portal, a portion of the sale of items designated as “Eligible for Amazon Smile donation” will be sent to the University of Baltimore Foundation at no cost to you.

Your Amazon Smile donations are combined with our Annual Fund to provide direct financial support to UB students. It's another great way to boost the power of your purchases and contribute to a variety of programs that help students to a brighter future.

MICHAEL BRONFEIN

- B.S., University of Baltimore
- Entrepreneur in finance, health care and technology
- Chief executive officer, Curio Wellness
- Established Bronfein Scholars Fund, Merrick School of Business

Leading the Pursuit of Wellness

MICHAEL BRONFEIN, B.S. '77

BY PAULA NOVASH

Michael Bronfein, B.S. '77, says he's always made up his own mind. "I had a strong will as a kid," he recalls with a laugh. "My mother would say to me, 'Don't you ever listen to anybody?'" The answer to that is yes, now that I've gained some wisdom—I care a lot more about being effective than being correct."

His approach is clearly effective: over several decades Bronfein has spearheaded highly successful entrepreneurial ventures in industries that include health care and technology development. "I like being a decision-maker," he says. "Taking responsibility for success or failure is important to me."

Bronfein began his multifaceted career in finance, earning his UB degree in accounting while newly married and working full time. "I never intended to be a practicing accountant, but the degree and my CPA license proved valuable in commercial banking and gave me options for the future," he says.

While on track to become a bank president in the early 1990s, Bronfein and his wife Jessica (the couple have been married 44 years) decided he should embrace a new opportunity. Together with his brother-in-law, he founded Neighborcare, which pioneered the integrated model of pharmacy service for long-term and managed care patients. Within seven years the company grew from \$12

million in revenue to \$1.1 billion. Bronfein moved on to co-found the private equity fund Sterling Partners and Remedi Senior Care, among other ventures.

Bronfein was semi-retired and living in Florida in 2013 when his daughter Wendy, a television producer, suggested that he consider becoming a part of the fledgling medical cannabis industry in Maryland. "Initially I was reluctant, but then I thought, this is a hypergrowth industry that can improve peoples' lives, and it could be a lot of fun working with my daughters," he recalls.

After several years of due diligence, extensive international research and competing for licensing, Bronfein is now chief executive officer of Curio Wellness, the market-leading medical cannabis brand in Maryland. Curio cultivates, processes and dispenses medical cannabis from its 60,000-foot plus facility in Lutherville. Besides organically growing more than 24 varieties of cannabis plants and transforming the flowers into forms such as tinctures and tablets, the company sells its products to over 80 medicinal cannabis dispensaries across the state. Curio also dispenses directly to patients through its Wellness Center in Timonium, in addition to offering holistic treatments that include vitamins, supplements, acupuncture, yoga and therapeutic massage.

"We see the merits of both Eastern complementary medicine and the more research-based Western approach," says Bronfein. "Our credo is 'Leading the pursuit of wellness'

and we want to make certain this product is used safely and responsibly to improve quality of life." Recent innovations from Curio's team include a line of medicated chews, and the list is growing rapidly.

Curio is a family business, with co-founder Wendy Bronfein serving as marketing director and her sister Rebecca Raphael director of sales. Bronfein's son **David, J.D. '17**, a lawyer in private practice, provides legal services to the company. But, says Bronfein, the culture at Curio is family oriented in another important way. "Our team is 80 percent millennials, and our stated goal is to develop people to their highest potential and promote from within," he explains. "We want our Curio family to grow and develop their careers so they can remain with the company and benefit from its success."

In 1999, the Bronfeins established the Arthur G. Bronfein Scholars Fund (renamed the Bronfein Scholars Fund in 2015) in the Merrick School of Business. "It's a tribute to my father's dedication to diversity and empowering economic success through accounting," he says.

The scholarships are also a way to give back, Bronfein continues. "UB was instrumental in giving me the raw material to become what I've become. When you look around Baltimore today, many of the most successful lawyers and business people are UB graduates. Perhaps there's a reason for that?" **B**

Paula Novash is managing editor of the magazine.

"We see the merits of both Eastern complementary medicine and the more research-based Western approach."

RIGHT: Michael Bronfein and his daughter Wendy Bronfein at Curio Wellness.





**STUDENT TEAM
WINS A PRESTIGIOUS
SPOT AT NATIONAL
AERONAUTICS AND
SPACE ADMINISTRATION
(NASA) TO HELP
DESIGN THE SPACE-
SUITS OF TOMORROW**

BY CHRISTIANNA McCAUSLAND

The classic 1970 call from the Apollo 13 astronauts, “Houston, we’ve had a problem,” alerted NASA staff at the Johnson Space Center (JSC) in Texas to an issue with a spacecraft. But the NASA call that came to UB in March was, in contrast, an exciting surprise. The UB Poegrammers, a team of seven students who were working on a design challenge for a new type of spacesuit, had earned a coveted spot to compete on-site at the JSC in Houston.

“We were very excited, we were shocked, and we knew we had to devote all of our free time and resources to creating a prototype and programming everything,” says Larysa Paliashchuk, a member of the Poegrammers team. It was the chance of a lifetime, and the team had less than a month to make their ideas a reality.

UB’s Poegrammers were among 12 university teams who would be traveling to NASA, alongside schools including Harvard University, the University of Michigan and Virginia Polytechnic Institute. Many of the other teams were comprised of graduate students, including Ph.D. candidates in engineering, and the Poegrammers were all still in their undergraduate programs. There was no way to know what solutions the other teams had prepared and how UB would shape up against their peers. >>

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF NASA

ONE SMALL STEP FOR UB

“WHAT THE PARTICIPANTS CREATE GOES INTO A REPOSITORY OF CONCEPTS THAT NASA CAN REFERENCE WHEN THEY ENTER THE DESIGN PHASE OF A NEW SPACESUIT.” GIOVANNI VINCENTI

THE POEGRAMMERS’ ROLES

Each of the Poegrammers had specific responsibilities as they collaborated to create Project A.R.G.O.S. for NASA SUITS.

Karl-Heinz Gilbert-Wason, B.S. '19
UI designer/
programmer

William Hyland
programmer/
interaction designer

John Manlucu
programmer/
systems manager

Osman Martinez
systems and
communications

Larysa Paliashchuk
UI designer/
programmer

Eric Ra, B.S. '19
UI designer/
3D animator/modeler

Juan Pablo Soto, B.S. '19
programmer/
project manager

PICTURED LEFT TO RIGHT:
JP Soto, John Manlucu,
Professor Greg Walsh,
Karl-Heinz Gilbert-Wason,
Professor Giovanni Vincenti,
Larysa Paliashchuk
and Eric Ra.



WHY NOT?

The Poegrammer’s mentor and advisor Giovanni Vincenti is an associate professor and the director of UB’s Applied Information Technology program. Vincenti is always on the lookout for contests, internships and other opportunities that allow his students to apply their classroom knowledge. When the NASA competition popped up in his inbox, it stood out from the rest.

“NASA can’t explore all possible technologies so they put out this call to crowd source ideas for future spacesuits,” says Vincenti. “They want many ideas and not necessarily from people who are trained in the field.”

Called Spacesuit User Interface Technologies for Students (SUITS), the challenge asked students to create an augmented reality (AR) system that would help an astronaut conduct a task while on a spacewalk. Simply put, AR overlays computer-generated technology onto real-world environments. Familiar examples include video games such as Pokémon Go and navigation systems like Google Glass.

The Poegrammers’ task was anything but simple. But when Vincenti sent the opportunity to his students he gained an enthusiastic team.

“When I saw it was NASA I thought, of course this is something we’re going to do,” says **Juan Pablo (JP) Soto, B.S. '19**, then a student in the Applied Information Technology program. “This is something that doesn’t happen to people like me, like us, but I thought, why not try? ‘Why not?’ became like a mantra for us.”

Soto took on the role of project manager and pulled together a team of undergraduates from the Applied Information Technology and Simulation and Game Design programs. The team included **Karl-Heinz Gilbert-Wason, B.S. '19, William Hyland, John Manlucu, Osman Martinez, Paliashchuk and Eric Ra, B.S. '19**. The group called themselves the “Poegrammers” as a nod to author Edgar Allen Poe’s statue in Gordon Plaza.

In addition to Vincenti, Sujan Shrestha, associate professor in the Division of Science, Information Arts and Technologies and director of the Simulation and Game Design program, provided essential mentorship and support to the team. Greg Walsh, associate professor in the Division of Science, Information Arts and Technologies and director of the Information and Interaction Design program did as well.

The team’s “mission control” at UB was the Digital Whimsy Lab, where Walsh is director; the lab provided a large, secure room where the Poegrammers could hash out their ideas, secure their technological equipment and bring their concept to fruition.

“THIS IS SOMETHING THAT DOESN’T HAPPEN TO PEOPLE LIKE ME, LIKE US, BUT I THOUGHT, WHY NOT TRY? ‘WHY NOT?’ BECAME LIKE A MANTRA FOR US.” JUAN PABLO SOTO



THE DIGITAL WHIMSY LAB

For the Poegrammers to create a high-tech solution that could succeed at NASA, they needed some low-tech support. Enter Greg Walsh, director of the Digital Whimsy Lab where the Poegrammers worked out the solution that earned them a place at the JSC for the design test.

Walsh explains that while there are a few computers and 3D printers in the lab, it’s mainly a room with a massive, 32-foot-long white board and “low-fidelity prototyping tools.” (Think cardboard and sticky notes.)

“The background story is super important when we design things,” says Walsh. “We want to make sure that when we are teaching our students about technology design, we are focusing on all the things to consider before we start applying any technology solutions. That’s what ensures success in the end.”

Walsh explains that if you just throw on the AR goggles and start programming you miss the important questions like: Who is my user? Why would they need this specific solution? Scrap paper and a big white board provide the space to do the essential design thinking before going straight to the technology.

“The Poegrammers really thought those questions through and I think, in the end, being user-centered was their greatest strength,” says Walsh.

ABOVE LEFT: Poegrammers William Hyland and Osman Martinez in the Digital Whimsy Lab at UB.

MEETING THE CHALLENGE

The SUITS challenge involved creating a way for an astronaut who does not routinely work on a specific activity to be able to efficiently complete that task. For example, if an engineer is sick, how could a medic fulfill a repair on a spacecraft that would normally be completed by that engineer? The solution could be built into a newly-designed spacesuit.

“The genesis of this activity came from a technical need for solutions within what’s known as the spacewalk or Extravehicular Activity office,” explains Brandon Hargis, NASA STEM activity manager and the manager of the SUITS program. “The need arises when we look at the future of spacesuit design for deep space exploration.”

Hargis explains that currently, astronauts rely on task cards and verbal communication with the ground and mission control to provide them with information as they work through a spacewalk task. As NASA looks toward the future of deep space exploration, where communications could be delayed, astronauts will need to be more autonomous and less earth-dependent.

“What we’ve asked students to do is design user interfaces (UI) that can be incorporated into the spacesuit’s helmet in a way that the astronaut could view information in an AR platform,” Hargis explains.

Soto says the easiest way to think of the challenge is to recall the movie *Ironman*. From his suit, Ironman is able to see an interactive hologram screen overlaid on the actual environment he’s viewing. The helmet of the spacesuit would similarly have an overlay of data that would efficiently transfer information to astronauts without overwhelming or distracting them.

The Poegrammers’ first step was to complete a proposal to submit to NASA. Team member Paliashchuk, a student in the Applied Information Technology program, says the task was large but each member brought specific expertise. Her job was to help design the UI.

“We were fortunate to have a great team that was capable of dealing with such a diverse set of challenges,” says Paliashchuk. “We started the project with a clear directive and each member uniquely contributed to the design of the project.”

A SURPRISING DEVELOPMENT

The Poegrammers developed a SUITS entry they named the Augmented Reality Guidance and Operations System, or project A.R.G.O.S. The A.R.G.O.S. prototype utilizes a system called Magic Leap, which can superimpose three-dimensional images over real world objects using a digital light field.

“WE GOT A LOT OF INSPIRATION FROM THE OTHER SCHOOLS, AND IT WAS VERY HELPFUL TO SEE HOW EACH UNIVERSITY CAME UP WITH SUCH DIFFERENT SOLUTIONS.” LARYSA PALIASHCHUK

NASA SUITS

SUITS is one of several design challenges NASA has available for students in K-12 and in higher education. “SUITS is highly regarded by the NASA Headquarters Office of STEM engagement as a flagship national design challenge,” says Brandon Hargis, SUITS manager.

Hargis explains that it’s impossible for NASA to fund everything it wants to explore, thus the idea was born to give students at the collegiate level the opportunity to provide technical solutions to the mission directorate. The students get priceless mentoring and training in exchange.

“We’ve been wowed by the ideas that the students bring forth,” says Hargis. “And all the work they do is being compiled in an open-source environment and will be available when there’s funding for new, future spacesuits.”

A.R.G.O.S.’ interface includes the capacity to provide data on oxygen levels and other important measurements astronauts might need through an automatic wireless connection. It also allows for voice assistance to guide an astronaut through a task, and offline support in case online communication is interrupted, among other features.

The A.R.G.O.S. prototype used off-the-shelf hardware, as did all the SUITS entries. But the programming and design of the UI would be unique to each team. The Poegrammers submitted their proposal and were initially selected to participate in the project virtually.

“We were fine with that, especially since this was our first time trying this,” says Soto. The team continued to work on A.R.G.O.S. as they waited for their presentation date. “Every day we were discovering new things and trying to put things together in a new way,” Soto continues. “People were always stopping by the lab to see how things were going and to offer help.”

DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEXAS

But after the call came from NASA, the team’s mission entered a new phase. Paliashchuk explains that the Poegrammers’ biggest challenge was dealing with the massive amount of data that astronauts are required to monitor. They needed a UI that was straightforward and intuitive and didn’t overload the astronaut. She explains that the UB team’s design was distinct in that it had an online and offline mode to ensure completion of the task if communications were interrupted, and also a “remote assistant” application that made it possible for an astronaut to communicate directly with crew members inside the spacecraft.

Soto adds that the Poegrammers from the game design program added an element to their prototype that some teams may not have focused on. “They sometimes forget about how beautiful the UI is going to look, the functionality, the experience,” he says.

The design challenge at the JSC took place over a week in April. On-site, the teams needed to demonstrate that their technology was nimble enough to adapt to different uses. Hargis says the teams were asked to reenact an actual spacewalk that took place on the International Space Station (ISS) to replace a piece of equipment called the Bearing, Motor and Ring Roll Module (BMRRM), also known as “the broom.” The broom is part of a system that allows the use of

solar power for the electrical systems aboard the ISS.

Each team received the data and the telemetry stream (telemetry refers to the communications process by which data is collected remotely, then transmitted to receiving equipment for monitoring) that they could use to adapt their graphic interface to the challenge scenario. After a day of design review, teams took their prototypes to the Space Vehicle Mock-Up facility at JSC, a building most space enthusiasts could only dream of entering. It’s the same facility where actual NASA astronauts train on simulators.

Each team in the competition was assigned a NASA design evaluator to work with them on their SUITS solution. The Poegrammers’ evaluator put on the mock “helmet” headset that was linked to their A.R.G.O.S. prototype, received training from the team and then conducted the task test. Afterward the evaluator provided essential feedback that the Poegrammers were encouraged to use to fine-tune their design before testing again at the end of the week. On the final day of the challenge, each team presented their prototype solution to NASA management, as well as to administrators from Microsoft.

Paliashchuk says that along with the excitement of joining the other competitors in Texas, the Poegrammers were a little nervous. “But when we got there it was more of a collaboration with collective feedback,” she says. “We tried each other’s projects and got a lot of inspiration from the other schools, and it was very helpful to see how each university came up with such different solutions.”

Hargis says that collaborative environment is no accident.

“There’s no losing team because everyone is getting a unique NASA experience they can’t get anywhere else,” he continues. “We encourage them to do peer review and to change their design based on what they see that works with other designs.” And the collaborative environment continues: after the SUITS challenge is completed, all of the teams upload their code to the cloud so it can be open-sourced for future students and engineers.

Hargis notes that some of the most elegant solutions have been those from teams that not only know the technology but also understand human nature. “The biggest thing that will determine whether a team can produce the quality of design we’re looking for will be their use of 21st century skills—critical thinking and problem solving; communication, collaboration and teamwork; creativity and innovation,” he says.

“WE WANT THIS TO BE A COLLABORATION, NOT A COMPETITION—THERE’S NO LOSING TEAM BECAUSE EVERYONE IS GETTING A UNIQUE NASA EXPERIENCE THEY CAN’T GET ANYWHERE ELSE.” BRANDON HARGIS



UB FOR THE WIN

Although no prize is awarded at the challenge, there’s no doubt in Vincenti’s mind that all the Poegrammers are winners.

“It was beautiful to see the team gain confidence throughout the week and to see how strong their solution was, and how in line it was with what NASA requested,” he says.

He sees this experience as a win for UB as an institution, as well.

“Higher education has gone under fire for being detached from the job world or the skills relevant to the workforce,” he says. “But here you have a clear demonstration that students could apply what they studied and were able to secure a spot in the design challenge and the in-person test week. And while they were there, they were able to work collaboratively with engineers who are at the very top of their field.”

Both Paliashchuk and Soto say the experience was a great career booster. Not only will it be a boon to a resume, but the experience of speaking at presentations

and tours to staff at both NASA and Microsoft was, according to Soto, “like a constant interview!” It made him feel more confident going into a job search, he says, and the experience of managing a large project and taking a group of undergraduates to a design challenge featuring some of the nation’s most prestigious schools was also great practice for workplace life.

One small step for UB students really could translate into a great leap for NASA. Perhaps one day, a piece of the technology the Poegrammers placed into the NASA repository will be refined and applied to a spacesuit that will travel to the moon—or even into the deepest reaches of space. Says Hargis of NASA, “It’s always been the plan to take these student designs and incorporate them into the actual spacesuits of the future.”

Christianna McCausland is a writer based in Baltimore.

ABOVE: The Poegrammers demonstrating Project A.R.G.O.S. at NASA.

WEB EXTRA

DONOR DOLLARS AT WORK



MARION WINIK

“Writing is really a way of thinking— not just feeling but thinking about things that are disparate, unresolved, mysterious, problematic or just sweet,” said author and Nobel laureate Toni Morrison. In our UB community, we are fortunate to have many, many wonderful professors, students and alumni who are exploring the complexities of life through words.

Life on the Page

**UB Writers’ Reflections
on Working in Words
and the Creative Process**

In this feature we bring together five thoughtful and talented writers to discuss their work and the creative process. Their publications span different genres but they share a belief in the power that the pen—or laptop—can wield. We hope you enjoy their stories.

BY PAULA NOVASH
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS MYERS

1 | MARION WINIK

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Reading the works of professor Marion Winik is like being with a friend you don’t see often—but when you do, it seems no time has passed. For almost three decades Winik has shared essays and memoirs about motherhood, marriage, loss, divorce, dating in her fifties and other aspects of a life well-lived. They are intimate, often funny, sometimes heartbreaking and always relatable. >>

Winik's memoir *First Comes Love*, about her years with husband Tony who died of AIDS at the age of 37, was a *New York Times* Notable Book of the Year. She is the author of nine other books, contributor to a variety of publications, a book reviewer and the host of a public radio book club. "Pretty much all I do is read and write," she says. "And teach."

"A good approach to writer's block is not to believe in it. Instead, think of writing as just typing."

MARION WINIK

Finding the form that suited her was what launched her career, says Winik. "I did not know you could write true stories about your life in first person," she recalls. "This was the 1980s, 10 years before creative nonfiction began to be taught in writing programs. But out of the blue I wrote a humorous true story about being pregnant with my first child, and it just felt natural."

In her creative process, Winik deems herself a minimalist. "I can write pretty much anywhere—usually it's on the sofa with my pets," she says. "Sometimes I feel a little jealous of people who have magical objects and rituals they rely on, but I'm just the opposite of that."

For her students who become stuck, Winik offers this advice: "A good approach to writer's block is not to believe in it. Instead, think of writing as just typing," she says. "Once you've reached a goal of, say, 400 words, you have something to work with." Winik



CHRISTINE LINCOLN

shows her essays in progress to trusted readers, and always shares with those she's writing about: "Nobody should first read something about themselves in print. If they remember it differently, you learn more and it usually makes the piece better."

Winik's latest publication is *The Big Book of the Dead*, a compilation of two previous collections about people who have touched her life in different ways and at various stages, along with new work. Those memorialized include her mother, the stillborn baby of a second cousin and the musical artist Prince, among 122 others. "In 400 words you get to know a person, how they were a part of my life and how they died," she says.

"People appreciate talking about those they have lost—there's a lot of sorrow, but also celebration," she continues. When recording the audio version of *The Big Book*, she realized she'd created a memoir "with me on the sidelines. It was very exciting to hear myself reading aloud and live my whole life again in six hours."

Among Winik's current projects is the working-titled *Cats and Dogs of Evergreen*, stories about people and their pets (she says it's mostly about her relationship with her beloved dachshund, Beau) accompanied by her own sketches. "I would never call myself an artist, so this feels new and exciting," says Winik. She's taking a class at the Baltimore Academy of Illustration this fall.

Winik urges her students to take leaps, too. "I've had projects not work out—I have a novel and a young adult book that never sold—but you have to trust that something good is coming out of it in the long run."

"Reading and writing create an intimacy that is profound—often deeper and more honest than relationships in the real world. Personal essays and memoirs can make you feel less shame and less alone," she continues. "If you have a topic that makes you think, 'oh I could never write about that,' it usually means you should definitely write about that."

2 | CHRISTINE LINCOLN

Fiction writer and poet Christine Lincoln, M.F.A. '11, explores the nuances of a human life through her writing. "We are so quick to judge the value of a person, what they can and cannot do," she says. "Through my characters, I experience the complex nature of truth, and the power of forgiveness and love."

Writing is how she makes sense of her own life, says Lincoln, though it took her some time to embrace that path. She'd never forgotten a favorite elementary school teacher who told her, "Chris, you're a writer." But through her teens and twenties she struggled with challenges that included an abusive marriage and addiction. She enrolled in Washington College with no idea of how she would pay her tuition—and graduated at age 34 with a GPA of 4.0 and a novel written in stories, her acclaimed *Sap Rising*.

In *Sap Rising*, African American characters in a rural southern town are revisited in various phases of life and from the points of view of different narrators, giving them the complexity Lincoln values. "When we see that someone can do monstrous things and not be a monster, we may be kinder not only to that person, but to ourselves. We realize that we are not alone," she says.

"One of my life missions is to use writing to help others heal and see themselves in a new way."

CHRISTINE LINCOLN

Lincoln remembers a particular reader who touched her deeply: "At a reading for *Sap Rising*, a white gentleman in his late fifties came up to me and said, 'you wrote my story.' I will never forget that—it's what story allows you to see, that our experience is universal."

Making regular space for writing is vital to her process, says Lincoln. "I sit and wait, and begin by hearing my characters' voices. For the story I'm working on now, I heard the words, 'He sold rain for a living.' I had no idea what that meant, but it is changing everything about the way I'm seeing grief and suffering. When you listen and allow your characters to surprise you, you know you're telling their truths."

Lincoln is Poet Laureate emeritus of York, Pennsylvania. "I had never written poetry until my Master's program at UB," she says. "When I tried, it opened up something inside of me." Still, when she applied for the laureate position, she didn't expect to get it. "I told them I was a fiction writer, and they chose me anyway! It's been a wonderful way to give a voice to every person I come across who doesn't have one."

"I tend to do things that are scary and difficult—that's how I find out I am capable of more," she continues. Lincoln is helping others embrace new narratives as well; she is moving to Ghana to work with women and girls who have survived trauma and rape. "One of my life missions is to use writing to help others heal and see themselves in a new way," she says. "Once they have let go of their old story, their lives become more than they ever could have imagined."

"Writing is a series of judgment calls, and with practice you become more adept at them."

JOHN BESSLER



JOHN BESSLER

3 | JOHN BESSLER

Pages of unbroken text in a tiny font cover the chapter title pages and end sheets of law professor John Bessler's *Writing for Life: The Craft of Writing for Everyday Living*. If you look more closely, you realize that each block of tightly packed copy is actually more than fifty quotations about writing, artfully juxtaposed.

That adds up to well over a thousand different quotes in a book that combines writing tips, skills and techniques with Bessler's personal story of becoming an observer and communicator. Part guide and part memoir, it was written while Bessler was completing his M.F.A. after obtaining his law degree.

"I had thought a lot about the writing process and what it meant to me, and I wanted to write the book I wished that I had had in college," he explains. His perspective has developed in part from the demands of legal writing versus writing essays, fiction and poetry—although, Bessler maintains, there are more commonalities than people might suppose.

“Even in legal writing, it’s specific detail that brings the narrative alive,” Bessler says. “Writing is a series of judgment calls, and with practice you become more adept at them. Sometimes I see my students get discouraged and think to themselves ‘I’m just a bad writer.’ But then they realize: good writing just requires multiple rounds of revision.”

“That’s why I love teaching first-year law students,” Bessler continues. “Seeing people’s work improve over time and having them gain confidence is very rewarding.”

In addition to *Writing for Life*, Bessler has written or edited nine other books, six about capital punishment. He urges his students to be open to what they discover during their legal research; his ninth book, *The Celebrated Marquis: An Italian Noble and the Making of the Modern World*, is a biography of eighteenth-century Italian philosopher and economist Cesare Beccaria. Bessler learned about Beccaria while studying the history of the U.S. Constitution’s Cruel and Unusual Punishments Clause. “Beccaria had a fascinating life, and his writing had a profound impact on the way America’s founders wrote the laws that influence our society today,” Bessler explains.

In *Writing For Life* Bessler mentions that, as a child, his daughter Abigail preferred a peaceful “writing bubble.” While he too enjoys a quiet setting to write, he says, “I’m flying a lot these days,” while accompanying his wife, Senator Amy Klobuchar, on the presidential campaign trail. “My laptop is always with me and I’m often writing when I find an hour in an airport or hotel,”



JANE DELURY

“What I love about fiction is how generous it can be to humanity.”

JANE DELURY

says Bessler, who proposed to Klobuchar in a bookstore. “You don’t have to have a perfect environment, and once you start, you will get yourself in the mood to write.”

For Bessler, writing hones his thinking, and it’s impactful as well. “Whenever you write,” he says, “you are partaking in a creative and dynamic activity that has changed, and can still change, the world for the better.”

4 | JANE DELURY

Stories, professor Jane Delury says, start with questions. “To understand who we are, what are we doing, where are we going—those are central mysteries,” she says. “As I write I start to discover my characters’ answers.”

In her debut novel-in-stories *The Balcony*, Delury addresses questions of identity and history, among many others. *The Balcony* centers around an estate in the French countryside and the people who have lived there for more than a century. Its interconnected chapters are stand-alone tales and also combine to create a larger and more complex narrative. “When I realized I’d written a number of stories set in a forest in France, I could see the structure across them, and across time,” she says.

The Balcony won the 2019 Sue Kaufman Prize for First Fiction from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. (Delury’s husband, acclaimed fiction writer Don Lee, is a previous Kaufman prize winner. “Forever joined on Wikipedia,” she jokes.) In addition, Delury’s fiction has appeared in venues that include *Glimmer Train*, *The Southern Review* and *Prairie Schooner*.

Delury started writing short stories while completing a Master’s degree in France in the 1990s. “I missed the English language,” she says. She began publishing in literary journals in the U.S. and eventually returned to Maryland to begin her Master’s program at the Johns Hopkins Writing Seminars, working with mentors such as Stephen Dixon and Alice McDermott.

“I learned to revise my work, one of the most important skills to attain,” she recalls. “Now when I draft something new, it tends to go quickly. I see the whole thing through in a big spurt, but it’s once I get into revision that I see if it has some potential.”

Delury has a few writing rituals: she says she works best in the morning and often sets a writing goal for the day, a word count or task to complete. “I have a chair that was my father’s, and I usually work on drafts there, or in my garden,” she says. “I revise at my desk. When I’m not seeing any snags as I work through the piece, I

print it and read on paper. That gives me a degree of distance that helps me identify areas of change.”

In the classroom, she encourages students to help each other view their work in fresh ways. “The workshop is there to ask questions; it’s up to the writer to find solutions,” Delury explains. “In my classes we stay away from prescriptive advice, which can lead the writer to ‘fix’ the story according to comments, instead of seeing it anew.”

Delury says her students inspire her to stay on a voyage of discovery. “What I love about fiction is how generous it can be to humanity,” she says. “We can’t see through everyone’s perspective, but if I spend an afternoon looking out of one of my character’s eyes, trying to understand her, I develop empathy. And if you write consistently and seriously about what matters to you, you are part of that beauty.”

5 | D. WATKINS

“I have always been a curious person,” says professor D. Watkins, B.A. ’09, M.F.A. ’14. “Whether a person is a renowned expert or someone I meet on the street, my perspective is that I’m supposed to listen.”

One of Watkins’ greatest gifts is that he gets others to listen, too. From his 2014 viral essay, “Too Poor For Pop Culture” through *New York Times* bestsellers, he’s changing how we view those most affected by systemic inequality by sharing their stories. “I’ve had the luxury of understanding multiple realities,” he says of growing up in East Baltimore and becoming editor-at-large at Salon, a frequent contributor to national and international publications, and a regular commentator and guest in the media.

Watkins wrote his first book of essays, *The Beast Side: Living (and Dying) While Black in America*, “in my car, in coffee shops, in the UB Academic Center at night,” he recalls. “I knew I had things to say that nobody else was saying.” It was while working on his second book, *The Cook Up: A Crack Rock Memoir* that Watkins felt confident he’d found his voice. “Memoirs are so important because they can debunk our assumptions,” he says. “They show us there’s not just one black voice, or one women’s voice, or one Asian or Hispanic voice. From reading memoirs I’ve found I might have more in common with Joan Didion than with some guys who write in my genre.”

In his most recent collection, *We Speak for Ourselves: A Word from Forgotten Black America*, Watkins acknowledges feeling at home everywhere—and also nowhere. “For me, it’s either dry chicken and connecting with



D. WATKINS

elites who have the power to further my career or amazing chicken and being back on my block,” he writes. He sometimes uses humor to “take the edge off,” he says. “Humor kept me out of trouble with grown-ups and teachers when I was young, and now it helps me express ideas.”

In Watkins’ writing process today, “I have systems that work for me,” he says. “In an essay, often I give the reader a historical context, then personalize and analyze the issue, then move forward to a call to action. But I’m always still developing and trying new things.”

To help his writing students become more comfortable on the page, Watkins encourages them to explore their own experiences. “We do free writes about love, what’s in the news, issues in society. So their confidence is up before I ever grade them,” he explains. “They get used to expressing themselves.”

Watkins has spoken at more than 300 schools and jails, and he’s proud that he’s provided 1,000 copies of *We Speak for Ourselves* to public schools in Baltimore. “I started doing book giveaways because multiple teachers told me that students were stealing *The Beast Side* and *The Cook Up*,” he says. “I think if we can build their home libraries, that’s great. As my friend Kerry Graham, who’s an English teacher at Patterson High School, says, ‘If you’re going to steal something, steal books.’”

Watkins says one of his goals is to build a tradition of mentor-artists in Baltimore. “People like Marion Winik, one of my first writing teachers, encouraged me and helped me with connections,” he explains. “I’d like to build a culture to do for others what people did for me.”

Watkins’ current projects include a young adult book. “I like getting my ideas out there,” he says. “Writing doesn’t feel like a job. I learn a tiny bit about everything, and am always searching for more.”

Paula Novash is managing editor of the magazine.

WEB EXTRA

“Writing doesn’t feel like a job. I learn a tiny bit about everything, and am always searching for more.”

D. WATKINS

If you are a UB legacy family and would like to share your story, contact the Office of Alumni Relations at 410.837.6131 or alumni@ubalt.edu.

All In The Family

THE VAN VLIETS

BY PAULA NOVASH

The van Vliets all have a ready sense of humor and share, among other things, a commitment to service and to family. And four of them—father **Frank van Vliet, MBA '08**, mother **Wendy van Vliet, B.A. '08**, son **Drew van Vliet, B.A. '11**, and daughter **Elise Smith, B.S. '18**—have something else in common: they've all earned degrees from the University of Baltimore.

The van Vliet's alumni legacy begins with Frank, executive in residence and holder of the G. Maxwell Armor Chair and Professorship in the Merrick School of Business. Frank began his career as a sales and marketing executive in his native Ontario, Canada, where he and Wendy met and married 38 years ago. (The couple's oldest son, Chris, still lives in Canada.) As he was offered new opportunities the family relocated to New York and then to Baltimore, where Frank joined the Baltimore AirCoil Company.

He chose to attend UB when his company offered to sponsor his MBA. During his program, Merrick professor Tiggy Mersha asked Frank if he was interested in becoming an adjunct. For the last seven years he's taught courses in marketing, strategic planning and entrepreneurship.

"I was in the right place at the right time—teaching is the most fun I've ever had," he says. This fall he debuts a new online course in digital marketing and social media, which dovetails well with his other venture: running a small sales

and marketing consulting firm, SalesBrewers LLC.

Frank is also an instructor in UB's Second Chance program, in which incarcerated men at Jessup Correctional Institute are earning their undergraduate degrees. He was recently awarded the University System of Maryland Board of Regents Faculty Award for excellence in public service for his work in the program.

"I didn't need to get my MBA, but it opened new doors for me."

FRANK VAN VLIET

Drew and Wendy's UB stories are intertwined—Wendy, who is lead pastor at Davidsonville United Methodist Church, decided to register for classes while on a campus visit with her son. "I was waiting for Drew and a counselor came out and said, 'Are you my next appointment?'" Wendy recalls. At the time she had a three-year degree from a Canadian university; Canada has a different higher educational system than the United States.

Wendy's Canadian degree is in computer sciences, and she worked as a program analyst there. "But I had also been involved in volunteer organizations and knew I was called to serve," she says. "The counselor showed me how my credits could transfer so I could complete my undergraduate degree

FRANK VAN VLIET, MBA '08
WENDY VAN VLIET, B.A. '08
DREW VAN VLIET, B.A. '11
ELISE SMITH, B.S. '18

to U.S. standards and prepare for seminary."

Wendy says she had some self-doubt about returning to school. "I had to learn to be a learner again, and I wanted to be an A student," she recalls. "I found that my professors held me accountable, but also provided feedback and resources so I knew what was expected."


When Drew (the funniest member of the family, according to the others) and Wendy selected their courses, they unknowingly registered for the same psychology class. "My mother sat right up front and I sat in the back," Drew, a sales development manager at cybersecurity firm Tenable, says. "It took the professor pretty much the whole semester to figure it out." After reaping the benefits of studying together, the two later registered for the same art history class.

Drew decided to transfer to UB after beginning his degree at the University of Maryland, College Park. "I discovered I didn't enjoy classes in lecture halls with 300 other students," he recalls. He was working full time in retail management during his time at UB, and says he appreciated not only the "vibe of being right in the city with older, more experienced classmates, but the flexibility of having online and evening options for classes."

When she enrolled at UB, Elise had completed her associate's degree and was also working full-time; she is a benefits manager at defense contractor AVIAN, Inc.

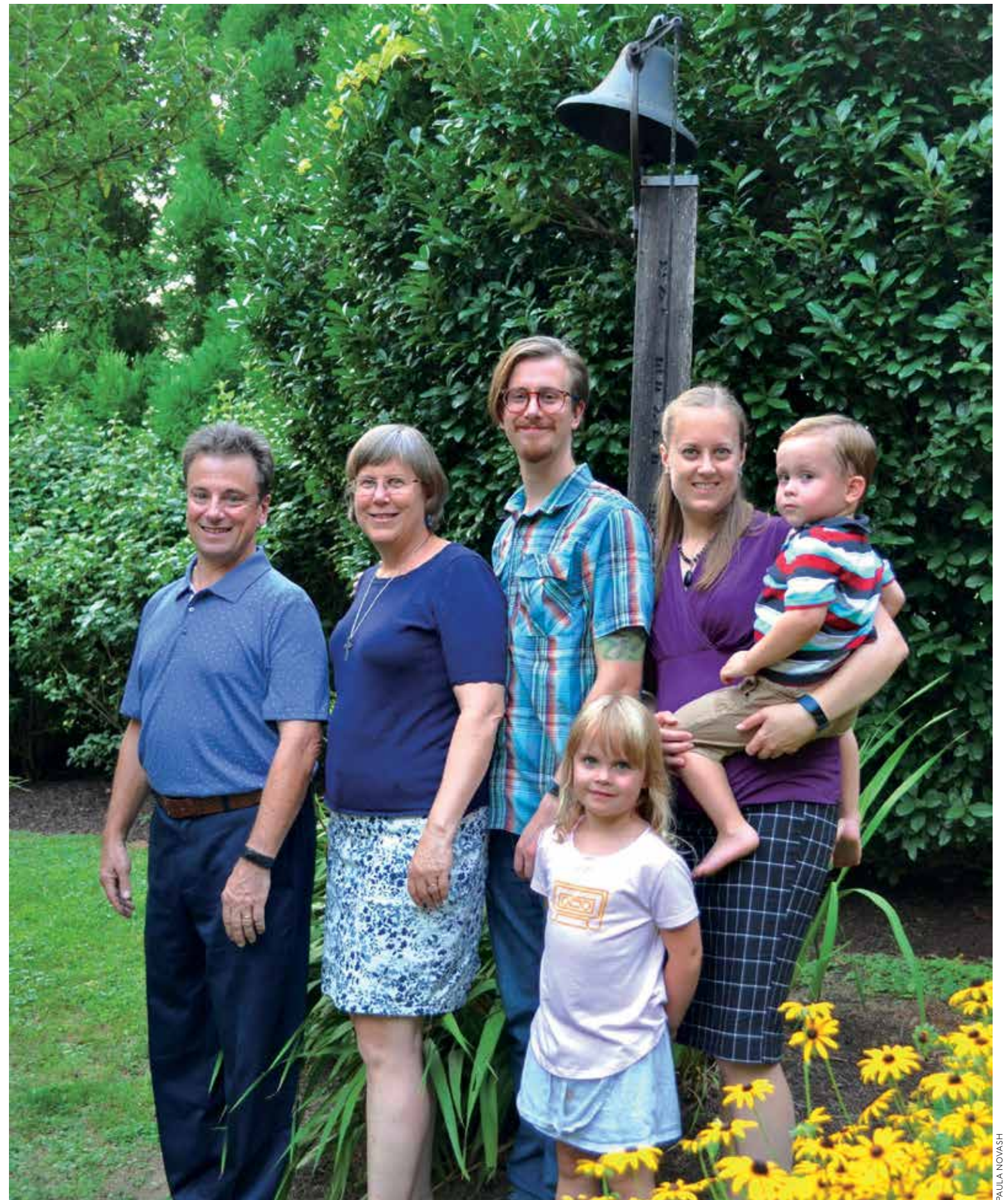
"I wanted to enhance my career but was a little uncertain about juggling everything," the mother of five recalls. "My father reminded me of the story of eating an elephant, taking it just a little bit at a time." Elise completed her business degree entirely online, and was even able to travel to Thailand on a study abroad program for an upper-level marketing course. "I didn't expect that to happen and it was one of the coolest things I did—especially since I was able to share it with my Dad, who came along as a faculty member," she says.

Elise points out that the van Vliets have another UB legacy: her fifth child, Merrick's, name was inspired by the business school. "I was pregnant with him during the journey, so we decided it was appropriate," she says.

Frank reflects on how his family's different educational goals and experiences reflect larger trends: "I didn't need to get my MBA, but it opened new doors for me. And for my students—many of them may have 7 or 8 career changes, not jobs, but entire career changes—in the course of their working lives. So it's great that their educational options are constantly morphing, and that UB is, too." 

Paula Novash is managing editor of the magazine.

RIGHT: The van Vliet clan—Frank, Wendy, Drew and Elise, with Elise's daughter Matilda and son Merrick—in the outdoor chapel at Davidsonville United Methodist Church, where Wendy is lead pastor.



TOKYO DIREKSTON

- B.A., M.S., University of Baltimore
- Leads center for adults experiencing homelessness
- Activist and visionary

The Right Place To Be

TOKYO DIREKSTON, B.A. '13, M.S. '16

BY PAULA NOVASH

Tokyo Direkston, B.A. '13, M.S. '16, is the homeless services site and program manager for the Downtown Day Services Center in the District of Columbia, an organization that supports adults who are experiencing homelessness. "It's right where I'm supposed to be," she says. The Center is a bright, upbeat space, housed in the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in the business district. "I want our guests to feel welcome and have a sense of normalcy," Direkston continues. "I know what they are going through to survive."

Direkston can appreciate her guests' struggles because she's been there: for a decade she was homeless and addicted to crack cocaine. She recently acknowledged 20 years of sobriety. "Every day I remember something I thought about when I was homeless, something that was especially hard for me. It helps me serve our guests better," she explains.

Daily, an average of 150 people access Center resources that include meals, laundry services, computers, case managers, peer specialists and harm reduction specialists. Direkston is concerned with every little detail, making sure everyone hears "We're so glad you're here," when they enter, and that each receives fresh towels and hygiene kits, as well as privacy, for showers. "We treat people with dignity and respect," she says.

Direkston grew up in the Philadelphia area and was living in New York when she was recruited by a DC-area program to teach carpentry skills to former inmates. "I didn't want to move away from friends and family," she recalls. "But I had the qualifications in construction, and they wanted more women, especially women of color, in nontraditional roles, so they persuaded me."

Direkston liked the work, but she was lonely. One weekend, she says, "I made some bad decisions and tried crack cocaine. That's where my life took a different path. It took me five years to admit I had a problem, and another five to decide to do something about it."

Her own experience with hitting rock bottom gives her a greater understanding of others' struggles. "You have to stop for you. If you do it for me, then I'm the problem and I'm the reason you begin using again," she explains. After going through a recovery program, Direkston settled in Maryland and went back to school, eventually transitioning from construction management to human services.

She credits her then-partner, who has since passed away, with helping her believe she could be successful in higher education. "I was told for years that I wasn't smart enough, and that's hard to overcome. I'd come home from class and cry, 'I can't do this.' And then I'd wind up getting an A. After a while she would just look at me and say, 'You got this.'"

Direkston says she loved her experience attending UB. "I call it my big girl school," she says. "My professors expected a lot, but they supported me, too." One of her goals is to teach, but, she says, "I don't just want to teach, I want to teach at UB."

In Direkston's vision of the future, she's developing a Baltimore nonprofit to tackle homelessness. "I just want a city block of abandoned homes," she says, where she would renovate a few houses at a time with the hands-on help of those who would eventually live there. She'd also build a commercial kitchen to provide food service training. With her combined background in construction, human services and developing programs, she's more than ready to begin. For now, though, Direkston spends her commutes strategizing about how to better provide for the Center's guests.

Direkston shares that 20 years ago, she attended a 12-step meeting in a historic sanctuary known for its social justice mission—the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, where the Center is located today. "How is that for a clear message from a higher power?" Direkston says with a laugh. "Now I have a job here I love. There are more things I need to do—but I know my starting point for that next step is here." **B**

Paula Novash is managing editor of the magazine.

"I want our guests to feel welcome and have a sense of normalcy. I know what they are going through to survive."

RIGHT: Tokyo Direkston outside the Downtown Day Services Center (the spire of New York Avenue Presbyterian Church is reflected to the right).



CLASS NOTES*

*Class notes featured were received from June 1, 2018 through May 31, 2019.

1970s

Richard G. Lubinski, B.S. '70, was elected Region III Vice President for the Association of Energy Engineers for 2019.

Nathaniel C. Fick Jr., J.D. '75, received the third annual Dean's Award at the Law Alumni Association Dinner in May for his contributions to the UB School of Law and the legal community.



John C. Wilson, M.A. '80, and Robert Hitz were married in August 2018 in Pikesville, Maryland.

1980s

Wendy G. Rothstein, J.D. '82, was elected Judge of the Court of Common Pleas in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, in November 2017.

Raymond J. Brusca, J.D. '84, retired in December 2018 after a 38-year career, most recently as the chief human resources officer for Techtronic Industries, a manufacturer of power tools and vacuum cleaners. Ray and his wife will split their time



Michael, Peter, and Kathleen O'Neill

Siblings and law school graduates **Kathleen O'Neill, J.D. '81**, head of the Civilian Personnel Law and Special Projects Section in the Office of Counsel at the Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA), **Michael O'Neill, J.D. '82**, general counsel and chief legal officer for Avnet, a global technology company, and **Peter O'Neill, J.D. '84**, a partner at Murnane and O'Neill, a general practice firm in Glen Burnie, Maryland, participated in a panel discussion hosted by the Law Career and Development Office in November 2018 about forging their own career paths. They noted that although they grew up together and attended the School of Law around the same time, their personal experiences led them on their own distinct paths in the legal field. They encouraged students to always be willing to work hard and try something new.

between homes in Naples, Florida and Nantucket, Massachusetts.

Daniel J. Clifford, J.D. '84, was appointed in 2018 by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania as vice chair of the Supreme Court Domestic Relations Procedural Rules Committee for a three-year term.

John J. Varley, J.D. '84, was named senior vice president/chief administrative officer and general counsel at ExpressJet Airlines in January 2019. Previously, he was senior vice president and general counsel at Virgin America.

Raymond L. Bolger, B.A. '86, had his book, *Operation Devil Horns: The Takedown of MS-13*, published in October 2018.

Joseph F. Clocker, M.P.A. '87, retired in December 2018 as director of parole and probation at the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services after 41 years of service.

George L. Salis, M.A. '88, was promoted in 2018 to principal economist and tax policy advisor at Vertex, Inc., a global tax software and technology company. He is also a graduate of the Harvard Kennedy School Executive Certification Program in Trade Policy and Comparative Tax Policy and Administration.

George F. Shevlin IV, J.D. '88, joined American International Group as vice president, government affairs in June 2018.

1990s

R. Steven Redding, J.D. '90, was appointed circuit court judge of the 23rd Judicial Circuit by West Virginia governor Jim Justice in February 2018. He was elected to retain the position in May 2018.

Philip P. Lloyd, B.S. '91, is the information technology program manager for the Ordnance

Information System (OIS) for the U.S. Navy at the Naval Supply Systems Command (NAVSUP). He has been with NAVSUP for 19 years.

Jill P. Carter, J.D. '92, was elected to the Maryland State Senate, representing Legislative District 41, in November 2018.

Catherine Fischer, B.S. '92, married Robert W. Vincent of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in July 2018.

Valentine A. Brown, J.D. '95, received the Cheryl Bryson Leadership Award, which recognizes significant professional development, leadership and mentoring contributions by a lawyer to women in the legal profession, from the Duane Morris Women's Impact Network for Success (WINS) in October 2018. Brown was selected for her work as an advocate and mentor to women at Duane Morris and beyond.

David C. Jordan, MBA '95, joined Stevenson University as vice president of Human Resources and Title IX coordinator in January.

Charles J. Acquisto, J.D. '96, was named partner at the Law Offices of Stephenson, Acquisto & Colman in Burbank, California, in June 2018.

Greg Derwart, M.A. '96, joined Maller Wealth Advisors in Hunt Valley, Maryland, as chief operating officer in January.

David A. Weiskopf, J.D. '96, was appointed county attorney for St. Mary's County (Maryland) in December 2018.

Claude de Vastey-Jones, J.D. '98, joined Carney, Kelehan, Bresler, Bennett & Scherr, LLP, in Columbia, Maryland, in January.

Melissa M. Boyd, J.D. '99, spoke at the 11th Annual Montgomery Bar Association Family Law Section Toby L. Dickman Seminar in Pennsylvania on November 9, 2018. The seminar focused on the legal steps to make it through the custody battle process

as efficiently as possible, with the main goal being the relief of any unnecessary suffering for the child involved. Speaking at the seminar with Boyd was fellow School of Law graduate, the Honorable **Daniel J. Clifford, J.D. '84**.

David F. Katz, J.D. '99, joined the Atlanta, Georgia, law office of Adams and Reese in February. He specializes in the area of privacy law and compliance, data security, information governance, vendor management, corporate governance, crisis management, regulatory compliance and ethics.

John M. Putman, B.A. '99, joined Vintun, LLC, in Columbia, Maryland, as a senior consultant in September 2018.

2000s

Joseph H. D. Solomon, J.D. '00, assumed command of the United States Coast Guard's Maritime Law Enforcement Academy (MLEA) in North Charleston, South Carolina. As MLEA's commanding officer, Captain Solomon also serves as a member of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Accreditation Board.

Suzanne C. Johnson, B.A. '01, J.D. '04, was named and sworn in as clerk of the Maryland Court of Appeals in December 2018.

Christopher G. Marasco, B.S. '02, joined Revere Bank in Ellicott City, Maryland, as senior vice president in June 2018.

Shelby A. Kinnaird, M.A. '03, recently had two books published. *The Diabetic Cookbook for Electric Pressure Cookers: Instant Healthy Meals for Managing Diabetes* was published in March. *The Pocket Carbohydrate Counter Guide for Diabetes: Simple Nutritional Strategies to Lower Your Blood Sugar* was published in June 2018.

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Berke Attila, MBA '04, a budget analyst with the City of Baltimore, was included on The Daily Record's 2018 Very Important Professionals List as a Successful Professional Under 40.

Matthew F. Penater, J.D. '05, LL.M. '06, and Ashley E. (Wagner) Penater, J.D. '10, welcomed a baby boy in January 2018. Matthew opened The Penater Law Firm, LLC, located in Lutherville, Maryland, a few months later in May.

Lauren R. Quesada, B.S. '05, was promoted to marketing manager at OneBlood, an organization in Florida that encourages blood donation, in October 2018.

Simone J. Christian, B.S. '07, M.A. '10, is an instructional designer at Notre Dame of Maryland University in Baltimore.

Benjamin A. Kelley, J.D. '07, was named partner at Ballard Spahr, effective July 2018. Kelley is also a member of the firm's Real Estate Department and is co-leader of the Insurance Company and Institutional Investments Team.

Katherine M. Noonan, J.D. '07, a real estate attorney with Ballard Spahr, served as lead writer for the 2018 update to the Building Owners and Managers Association's *Green Lease Guide: A Guide for Landlords and Tenants to Collaborate on Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Practices*.

LaNette N. Parson, M.S. '07, published her book, *Chasing the Skinny: Transforming My Life Despite Adversity*, in August 2018.

Paul T. Sellers, B.S. '07, joined Masters Title & Escrow in Towson, Maryland, as an account executive in August 2018.

Christopher D. Wright, J.D. '07 joined the Law Offices of Evan K. Thalenberg, P.A. as an attorney in January.

Philip A. Dacey, J.D. '08, was elected to an at-large seat on the Frederick County (Maryland) Council in November 2018.

Marie K. Thomas, B.A. '08, M.A. '13, is the director of creative services for Washington College in Chestertown, Maryland. Thomas manages all of Washington College's graphic design projects in addition to developing and implementing strategic communication and marketing plans for undergraduate admissions.

John A. Butler, M.A. '09, J.D. '14, joined the Baltimore office of Tydings & Rosenberg LLP as an associate in October 2018.

Abioye E. Mosheim, J.D. '09, became the assistant general counsel at the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission in January 2018. She is also a government member of the Freedom of Information Act Committee at the U.S. National Archives and Record Commission.

Jonathan P. Novak, J.D. '09, joined the Dallas, Texas, law firm of Fears Nachawati in October 2018. His focus is on litigation related to the opioid epidemic. He played a key role in the 2017 investigation featured in *The Washington Post* and on CBS' *60 Minutes* that exposed how opioid distributors lobbied several members of Congress to limit the authority of the Drug Enforcement Agency.

Dawn M. South, J.D. '09, established DeBoerSouth, PLLC, a family law firm in Richmond, Virginia, in February.

Alicia D. Stewart, J.D. '09, was elected partner at Niles, Barton & Wilmer, LLP, in Baltimore, in January.

Matthew J. Youssef, J.D. '09, was elected partner at Niles, Barton & Wilmer, LLP, in Baltimore, in January.



Regina T. Boyce, M.P.A. '14, was elected to the Maryland House of Delegates in November 2018 to represent District 43. The 15-year Waverly resident has served the N/NE Baltimore community as an advocate and community leader and credits "knowledge that works" for allowing her to represent and work for Baltimore City and state residents in Annapolis.

2010s

Heather M. Arbogast, J.D. '10, was elected partner in January at McGuireWoods in Baltimore.

Andrew N. Illuminati, J.D. '10, joined Webb, Cornbrooks, Wilber, Vorhis, Douse, Leslie & Mathers, LLP, in Salisbury, Maryland, in January as an associate attorney. His practice focuses on criminal defense and civil litigation.

Kevin A. Fields, M.P.A. '11, a Roman Catholic priest, serves as parochial vicar of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Rockville, Maryland.

Lynette M. Lewis, B.A. '12, M.S. '16, is attending Ashford University in California seeking her doctorate in Human Services. She is also a published author of 11 books.

Molly M. Martin, M.P.A. '13, was named senior director of program operations for the Arc Northern Chesapeake Region in October 2018.

Jennifer L. Burroughs, J.D. '14, and **Jeffrey Toppe, J.D. '14**, helped coach the University of Baltimore's Black Law Student Association's Moot Court Team for two recent competitions. The team took first place in the Thurgood Marshall Moot Court Competition held in Annapolis in February and advanced to the national competition in Little Rock, Arkansas, in March.



Michelle Richardson, B.S. '15, assignment desk editor at ABC7-WJLA in Washington, D.C., and her news team won an Emmy award in June. The Emmy was presented for their coverage of the June 28, 2018 *Capital Gazette* shooting in Annapolis. Richardson said, "The grit and tenacity our team showed that day was to honor our colleagues, and this Emmy is dedicated to the five journalists we lost that day."

Katherine M. Furek, M.P.A. '14, was hired as the assistant district attorney for Hale County, Alabama, in January.

Elizabeth A. Paige, B.A. '14, M.A. '17, won a prestigious Newman Civic Fellow Award in March. The award honors student leaders dedicated to creating lasting change and building a better world. Paige, a current student in UB's School of Law, was recognized for her work to establish a food pantry on campus, as well as her commitment to ensuring access, equity and inclusion for all UB students.

Juarez R. Lee-Shelton, B.A. '15, M.A. '18, is a historian, writer and transit professional in Baltimore. He also began teaching Constitutional Law at St. Frances Academy in Baltimore in January.

Sean E. DeSchepper, B.S. '15, is a distribution designer at Shah and Associates in Forest Hill, Maryland. He also reports he was recently married and moved into a new home.

Lauren S. Ellison, J.D. '16, joined Tydings & Rosenberg LLP as an associate in December 2018.

Clayton D. Zook, M.S. '16, was promoted to technology coordinator at Towson University in July 2018.

Ashley E. Plack, MBA '17, founded Strategist Marketing in February 2018. It is a digital consulting firm based in Baltimore and a Google Partner agency.

Tova Z. Brody, J.D. '18, joined Council Baradel as an associate in its family law practice in December 2018.

Bethany D. Graham, M.P.A. '18, began a full-time position as an entry-level analyst with the U.S. Government Accountability Office in February.

Bryana K. Spann, J.D. '18, served as a law clerk to the Senate Judiciary Committee during the September 2018 congressional confirmation hearings for U.S. Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh.



Darryl L. Tarver, J.D. '14, is the chair of Maryland Legal Aid's (MLA) Equal Justice Associates, a group of young lawyers who support MLA through fundraising, advocacy and pro bono legal work for low-income clients. Tarver recently received a 2019 Leadership in Law: Generation J.D. award from *The Daily Record* and notes "At UB, I not only got a great legal education, but I also built lasting relationships through my volunteer work. Both of those are key components of what I've been able to accomplish early on in my career."

Let us know when your little one arrives, and we'll send you a Baby Bee bib. Share the buzz at 410.837.6131 or alumni@ubalt.edu.

Baby Bees



Jessica Maimon, B.S. '02, MBA '04 is happy to announce the birth of her third child, a daughter, Luna Olivia

Maimon, on April 2, 2019. Welcoming Luna to the family are proud grandfather **Alan S. Weisman, B.S. '71, M.A. '91**, and aunt **Lisa N. Zajdel, B.S. '05, M.S. '07**.



Christina Watts, MBA '03 welcomed a son, Logan Christopher Watts, on January 16, 2019.



Jana Baird Wiener, J.D. '05, husband Scott, and big brother SJ welcomed their newest addition, Tyler, to the family in March 2018.

In Memoriam

Shirley B. Jones, J.D. '46, LL.D. '80
 Daniel I. Long, B.S. '47
 Eugene A. Kefauver, B.S. '50
 Clifford I. Lewis, B.S. '50
 Harvey B. Weeks Jr., B.S. '50, J.D. '72
 Harold G. Applegarth, LL.B. '51
 Gerald J. Faulstich, B.S. '51
 Bernard Siegel, A.A. '51
 Paul G. Wist, A.A. '51
 Kenneth R. Glauber, B.S. '52
 Robert J. Pfeffer, CERT '52
 John B. Watkins, B.S. '53
 Jerry Marlow Covey, B.S. '56
 Philip D. Hale, J.D. '56
 Carroll W. Files, B.S. '58
 Milton E. Hucke, B.S. '59
 John N. Lallas, CERT '59
 Vernon R. Miller, B.S. '59
 Edward J. Swietkoski, B.S. '59
 Douglas S. Trower, B.S. '59
 Richard P. Harmon, B.S. '60
 Max H. Levenson, LL.B. '60
 Thomas D. Walsh, LL.B. '60
 Gerald K. Berenbrok, B.S. '61
 Louis R. Kemp, LL.B. '61
 William J. Redmon, B.S. '61
 Frank L. Calhoun, LL.B. '62
 Antonio Ferrara, LL.B. '62
 Philip F. Restivo, B.S. '62
 Kenneth A. Wilcox, J.D. '62
 Richard P. Sawicki, B.S. '63
 William R. Adair, B.S. '64
 William C. Bausman, J.D. '64
 Walter Dell, B.S. '64
 Kenneth E. Greenhorn, B.S. '64
 Howard D. Jones III, B.S. '64
 John R. Plum, B.S. '64
 Thomas Toporovich, CERT '64
 Paul P. Botwinik, B.S. '65
 George L. Carter Jr., J.D. '65
 John E. Hennessey, J.D. '65
 John T. Murray, B.S. '65
 Joseph E. Thomas, B.S. '65
 Roger M. Windsor, LL.B. '65
 Walter J. Beal Sr., B.S. '66
 John T. Carr, LL.B. '66
 George E. Chance Jr., B.S. '66
 Lawrence G. Dixon, B.S. '66
 Wayne K. Million, B.S. '66
 John G. Turnbull II, J.D. '66
 Frederick F. Everhart, J.D. '67

Morton D. Goldman, B.S. '67
 James C. Porter, B.S. '67
 Ronald L. Spahn, LL.B. '67
 David E. Baker, LL.B. '68
 Phillip A. Borgmeier, B.S. '68
 William C. Bowers, B.S. '68
 Michael M. Goodman, J.D. '68
 John S. Houser, B.S. '68
 James P. Legory, J.D. '68
 John L. Meehan, B.S. '68
 William H. Seiple, B.S. '68
 Austin X. Wallace, B.S. '68
 Melvyn E. Fowler, B.S. '69
 Robert T. Richardson, B.S. '69
 Bernard J. Smink, B.S. '69
 Worthington B. Hubbard, B.S. '70
 Michael Jabo Jr., J.D. '70
 Deacon Michael J. Kulas, B.S. '70
 Robert E. Lyston, B.S. '70
 Michael J. Mazzuca, B.S. '70
 Charles M. Preston, J.D. '70
 Alan M. Wolf Jr., J.D. '70
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 Mark J. Einstein, B.S. '71
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"Catherine had an uncanny ability to ask the right questions. She was an effective listener and wonderful at guiding you to navigate your own path."

UB PROVOST DARLENE SMITH



DR. CATHERINE GIRA
1932-2019

A beloved member of the University of Baltimore community for more than 25 years, Dr. Catherine Gira passed away in March at age 86. Gira joined UB in 1965 as a professor of English. Later she became dean of the College of Liberal Arts, then provost. Gira was the inaugural recipient of the Yale Gordon Endowed Chair for Teaching Excellence, among many other accomplishments.

"We're all better for having known her," UB Provost **Darlene Smith, B.S. '78, MBA '80**, says, adding that she felt fortunate to have Gira as a mentor. "Catherine had an uncanny ability to ask the right questions. She was an effective listener and wonderful at guiding you to navigate your own path."

Along with Baltimore attorney and philanthropist LeRoy Hoffberger, Gira founded UB's Hoffberger Center for Professional Ethics in 1987 to promote ethics across the curriculum. UB professor Fred Guy, director of the Hoffberger Center and a longtime colleague of Gira's, says "Catherine combined assets and virtues

that might be a contradiction in someone else. She harmonized a steel will with kindness and empathy—and she always wanted our students to know what was valuable about them, valuable about an education and valuable about being at UB."

In 1991 Gira was named president of Frostburg State University, a post she held for 15 years. **Alexander Giles, J.D. '97**, is a Baltimore litigator who specializes in maritime law. He met Gira when he was a member of Frostburg's student government association (SGA) and ultimately worked closely with Gira when he served as the SGA president.

"Catherine was a consensus builder who very much valued the student perspective," Giles recalls. He says Gira was instrumental in his attending UB law school, and they stayed close as part of a regular lunch group. "I had a wonderful time with Catherine, driving to those lunches," he says. "She had a great sense of humor, and she was very dedicated to staying in regular contact with her many groups of friends and former colleagues."

Adds Smith, "Hers was an unconventional path to becoming a university president and, at the time, the only woman president in the University System of Maryland. Catherine was such a respected scholar, teacher, and advisor—and incredibly successful at them all." 📖

WEB EXTRA

CHRISTIE FISHER

- MBA, University of Baltimore
- Chief of Staff, Commerce CPU Team, Microsoft
- Board Secretary and Director of GEaR
- Global Adventurer

Adventures in Leadership

CHRISTIE FISHER, MBA '06

BY ABIGAIL GREEN, M.A. '01

Whether she is mushing a team of huskies in Alaska, speeding down the track at 150 mph at drag racing school or figuring out how to bathe in a bucket in a remote village in Greenland, **Christie Fisher, MBA '06**, makes the most of her time away from her corporate executive position.

Fisher has a history of forging her own path. A native of the Seattle area, she was a pioneer in the world of online MBAs, enrolling in the University of Baltimore's program in 2004 when online degrees were not as widely known or respected. She knew that earning a business degree would open up doors in her career, but says "I didn't want to go get an MBA to become a high-finance Wall Street-type of person. I was looking to build my business acumen, find ways to give back, those kinds of things." During her second year at UB, Fisher was hired by Microsoft.

For conferences and to conduct trainings, Fisher traveled to such exotic places as Thailand, the south of France, Ireland and Prague. "That really started in me the desire to explore and have adventures," she says. After a couple of beach vacations in Hawaii and Mexico, "I realized I'm much more of an adventurous traveler, and to travel with purpose is even better." With that goal in mind, she planned a trip to Scotland and Iceland for her 40th birthday.

In Iceland, Fisher made a fateful connection: she met a team of explorers with an organization called Global Exploration and Recovery (GEaR), who were traveling to Greenland to find the remains of three WWII servicemen who had disappeared in 1942. (The amazing story of the U.S. military cargo plane crash, followed by the subsequent crashes of two other planes sent on rescue missions, was the subject of the bestselling book, *Frozen in Time*, by Mitchell Zuckoff.) Several search missions have attempted to find the final crash site; all have failed so far.

Fisher thought, "I wish I could be a part of something like that." In fact, she was ideally positioned to do so. "Microsoft has this amazing commitment to philanthropy and giving back," she explains. The company provides support to employees who volunteer time or donate money to nonprofits.

The first order of business was finding out if GEaR was a nonprofit. They were not, but expressed interest. "I thought, 'Well, here's my in,'" says Fisher. Armed with her MBA skills, she had created a 501(C)3 at the barn where she rides horses. She offered to help turn GEaR into a nonprofit. Over the next few years, Fisher's role grew from informal business consultant to include fundraising and expedition planning.

"There is something universal about leadership, whether you're doing it in Alaska or in Greenland or in the boardroom."

Last summer, Fisher accompanied the GEaR team on a second expedition to Greenland, where she coordinated basecamp operations and communications. During the three-week trip, Fisher lived with a local family in a small Inuit village with a population of 250. As part of her preparation, she traveled to Alaska for a two-person overnight mushing expedition to acclimate herself to the cold and solitude.

Once in Greenland, Fisher found her biggest challenges included trying to buy cold medicine when she couldn't speak or read Greenlandic, hiking while avoiding polar bears and figuring out how to bathe in a house with no running water. While the GEaR expedition did not uncover the WWII wreckage, it was a success in other ways. Through social media, Fisher connected with a teacher in the Wisconsin hometown of one of the missing men, and later traveled to the school to give students her firsthand account of the expedition. Fisher also wrote three articles about her experience for her local paper.



Abigail Green, M.A.'01, is a writer based in Baltimore.

ABOVE AND RIGHT: Christie Fisher with huskies in Alaska and on a mountaintop in Greenland.

WEB EXTRA



COURTESY: CHRISTIE FISHER/GEaR

WEB EXTRAS

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