RACISM, SEXISM, AND THE BLACK WOMEN'S HEALTH CRISIS

We go inside the largest and longest-running study of Black women’s health, led by BU
Scholarships create a ripple effect.

“It’s mind-blowing how much the scholarship has been a stress reliever, and I greatly appreciate it. It’s put much less pressure on me to find the most lucrative internships and gives me hope for my future.”

–Syndia Iglesias (Questrom’24)

Syndia is studying management information systems and data science and looks forward to putting her education to work in the tech industry. With family roots in Spain and Cuba, she especially appreciates BU’s diverse community of international students and its rich variety of programs.

You could be the start of something big.
Support students today with a gift toward scholarships at bu.edu/scholarships24.

Boston University Annual Giving
FEATURING

BU Names New President: Melissa L. Gilliam
Ohio State University Provost, Physician, and Scholar, Brings a Deep Love of the Humanities and Passion for Adolescent and Teenage Health

Racism, Sexism, and the Crisis of Black Women’s Health: BU Leads a Large and Long-Running Study That Shines a Light on Tragic Disparities

Golden Age of Genealogy: Alum D. Brenton Simons Is a Champion of One of the World’s Most Popular Activities—Tracing Your Family Tree

Don’t Say Gay (in Print): Three Alumni Authors Speak Out on Book Bans, and What Censorship Means for All Readers

“I’m Going to Kill Jim Crow”: A New Biography Brings to Life the BU Experiences of Martin Luther King, Jr. (GRS’55, Hon.’59)

EXCERPT BY JONATHAN EIG
The US and the AR-15

KUDOS TO Ms. Molly Callahan for her remarkable story based on the research of Cari Babitzke (GRS’22, ‘22) (“How the AR-15 Divided a Nation,” Summer 2023). She took one of the most contentious and perplexing subjects of our time and made it comprehensible. That was no mean feat, and it is a tribute to her gifted talent as a writer.

A special note of thanks to Professor Babitzke for her integrity, courage, and, quite simply, her guts in researching this deeply troubling schism regarding the AR-15, which has, as the title so perfectly denoted, “divided a nation.”

Patricia Lukwack Bloom (CAS’65) | Blaine, Wash.
THE CUTE and charismatic clownfish had its close-up in the 2003 Disney film Finding Nemo. But the bright orange and white fish are the stars of more serious work at BU: the research of Peter Buston, director of the BU Marine Program, who has been studying the reef dwellers for 25 years. While Buston, a College of Arts & Sciences associate professor of biology, and his team occasionally travel to Papua New Guinea to study clownfish in the wild, he houses about 60 pairs in his lab on campus—like the one that was kind enough to pose for us here. Clownfish live in social groups made up of two breeders—a female and a male—and up to four nonbreeders. Buston and his lab are investigating why some individuals forgo their own reproduction and help others to reproduce, waiting peacefully for many years to become breeders. The lab’s work has provided new insights into the evolution of animal societies. Buston says clownfish are one of the easiest marine fish to work with in the field and in the lab—and he finds their biology fascinating.

PHOTO BY CYDNEY SCOTT
After departure from Harvard, Joan Donovan to hold joint appointments in journalism department and Division of Emerging Media Studies

BY MOLLY CALLAHAN

NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED EXPERT IN MISINFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION JOINS BU FACULTY

JOAN DONOVAN, a renowned expert in online misinformation and disinformation campaigns, joined Boston University this fall as an assistant professor in the College of Communication. She holds joint appointments in the Division of Emerging Media Studies and in the journalism department.

A social scientist by training, Donovan was most recently research director of the Technology and Social Change Project at the Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School.

“I was looking for a place that would offer me the most academic freedom, where they were also at a turning point in their own march through history, and I found BU very exciting,” Donovan says of her move to the University.

During a pivotal and tumultuous time in global politics, University leaders say it’s critically important to understand—and overcome—online misinformation and disinformation campaigns that threaten real-world consequences.

“People are looking for someone to help them make sense of what is happening online,” Donovan says. “I want to work with students and faculty to understand the impact of online misinformation and disinformation campaigns.”

Donovan’s work in misinformation and disinformation puts her in the middle of a dark web of online vitriol. She wades into cynical and sometimes downright violent posts by extremists and conspiracy theorists, often picking up on nascent movements and bad actors even before they gain mainstream attention.

“One of her first projects at the University will be to build out an internet observatory of everything nationally elected politicians post online. Together with a collaborator at McGill University, she hopes to create this living online archive for elected politicians around the world, beginning in the United States, Canada, India, and New Zealand.

“My hope is that in a couple of years we can get a law passed so that the National Archives will take this over and do it permanently,” she says. “And what that’s going to teach us is manifolds about online civic engagement—digital democracy, as it’s called—as well as the behaviors of politicians themselves, especially around particular wedge issues.”

Upending Democracy in America (Bloomsbury Publishing), which explores the political adoption of memes and how the internet is changing political campaigns. Donovan will begin teaching in the spring, and says she’s eager to work with budding journalists at BU.

“I feel like this work is just going to be that much more invigorating,” she says, “because journalists are more and more becoming the front lines of the information war.”

Joan Donovan’s most recent book explores the political adoption of memes and how the internet is changing political campaigns. 

Joan Donovan’s most recent book explores the political adoption of memes and how the internet is changing political campaigns.

MISINFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION JOINS BU FACULTY

Upending Democracy in America (Bloomsbury Publishing), which explores the political adoption of memes and how the internet is changing political campaigns.

One of her first projects at the University will be to build out an internet observatory of everything nationally elected politicians post online. Together with a collaborator at McGill University, she hopes to create this living online archive for elected politicians around the world, beginning in the United States, Canada, India, and New Zealand.

“My hope is that in a couple of years we can get a law passed so that the National Archives will take this over and do it permanently,” she says. “And what that’s going to teach us is manifolds about online civic engagement—digital democracy, as it’s called—as well as the behaviors of politicians themselves, especially around particular wedge issues.”
Sociologist and Scholar Wants to Create a More Welcoming Campus

Anthony Abraham Jack joins Wheelock faculty, BU center for first-gen students

**THERE IS A LITANY** of identifiers Anthony Abraham Jack uses to introduce himself to the world: Researcher, Educator, Honorary degree recipient, Student advocate. Home chef. Award-winning author. But Jack prefers to use the fear that he says matter most: Sociologist. Keynote, First-gen. Knitter. He has two more for consideration: associate professor in the Wheelock College of Education & Human Development, educational leader and policy studies program and faculty director of BU’s Newbury Center—which serves and celebrates first-generation students on campus.

Jack, a well-known higher education researcher and author of the groundbreaking *The Privileged Poor: How Elite Colleges and Universities Shortchange America’s Most Promising Students* (Harvard University Press, 2019), started at BU in the fall, after working for the past seven years at Harvard. Maria Dykema Erb will continue as Newbury Center director; she and Jack will run the center jointly.

“[Jack’s] scholarship focuses on elite universities having a history of not making higher education accessible to first-generation students, but have not always understood the specific needs of these students, particularly if they are poor or scholars of color,” says David Board, Wheelock dean. “His work has both added to our knowledge about marginalized college students, and transformed policies and practices on university campuses.”

A former first-gen college student, Jack says, “I lived the experiences that the people whom I learn from are going through. My life goal is not just to address problems in higher ed, but rather to use my research to (also) provide a framework for universities to line up to the missions they love to put in Latin on their seals and diplomas.”

As a sociologist, he says, “I study education, but I’m fundamentally interested in how inequality and poverty shape young people’s life chances. I study universities because I believe that they are, quite frankly, the greatest shot at not only creating mobility, but also creating a more equal society.”

—Alone Bouranova

---

**BU ECOLOGIST WINS MACARTHUR “GENIUS GRANT”**

Lucy Hutrya is an expert on urban climate

**PHYSICIAN AND SCIENTIST**

Drew Weissman, who earned both an MD and a PhD at Boston University, and his research collaborator, Katalin Karikó, won the 2023 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine on October 3 for their pioneering work developing the technology that powers the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines. Those two vaccines are among the most widely distributed coronavirus vaccines worldwide. They are being used in more than 200 countries to help contain the spread of the deadly virus that upended global society in early 2020 and has so far killed nearly 7 million people and infected nearly 770 million worldwide.

“The laureates contributed to the unprecedented rate of vaccine development during one of the greatest threats to human health in modern times,” the Nobel committee said in a statement. The committee praised the scientists for their “groundbreaking finding” that “fundamentally changed our understanding of how mRNA interacts with our immune system.”

“It’s an incredible honor,” says Weissman (CAMED ’87; GRS ’87, Hon.’23). “We couldn’t have come to the result without both of us being involved.” He adds, “This is just so incredible. We’ve been thinking for years about everything that we could do with RNA, and now it’s here.”

Weissman, 64, who grew up in Lexington, Mass., did his undergraduate work at Brandeis University and his graduate work at BU, focusing on immunology and microbiology. He is a professor of medicine and the Robert W. and Nancy M. King Professor in Vaccine Research at the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine.

Weissman and Karikó, 68, a biotech executive, researched so-called messenger RNA, or mRNA, a molecule essential in protein production. While Weissman’s research dates back to the 1990s, the breakthrough by the two came in 2005, when they discovered that we could do with RNA, thus providing protection against the virus responsible for COVID-19 struck in late 2019, and the rest became Nobel history.

Speaking to *Bostonia* in December 2021, Weissman reflected on the day when he and Karikó received their own vaccine shots together, in December 2020: “It was an emotional moment. There was a lot of down times, a lot of soul-searching, a lot of figuring out why things weren’t working. But we never lost hope because we both saw the incredible potential that mRNA had.”

The Nobel Prizes, including prize money, will be awarded December 10, 2023, in Stockholm. The *Associated Press* contributed to this article.
FRUITFUL FIRST YEAR FOR CENTER ON FORCED DISPLACEMENT

Seed grants, a conference, a workshop, and other programs, plus two $1 million gifts

BY JACOB STRAUTMANN

BY ALL MEASURES, Boston University’s Center on Forced Displacement (CFD)—founded in July 2022 to foster interdisciplinary research and engagement on one of the most pressing challenges of our time—had a banner first year.

The CFD began providing seed grants to BU faculty researchers across multiple disciplines in arts, humanities, law, social work, and public health, hosted a first artist-in-residence, recorded podcasts, and held a workshop to prepare STEM students to address forced displacement challenges. This past spring, the center held the first of what will be an annual conference, with keynote speaker and renowned Nobel Prize–winning novelist Abdulrazak Gurnah, who won the 2021 Nobel Prize in Literature. It continued its Borders Studies Program at the US-Mexico border, and launched its first Interdisciplinary Summer School on Forced Displacement at the University of Belgrade.

Now, the CFD is the recipient of two new $1 million gifts. One is from Feyza A. Shipley and Richard G. Shipley (Questrom’08, ’72, Hon.-22), a BU trustee emeritus; the other was given anonymously. The gifts will be used to fund experiential learning opportunities for students, as well as fieldwork and ethical research projects with communities that have experienced forced migration issues.

“We take great pride in the interdisciplinarity of our work,” says Muhammad Zaman, CFD cofounder and director and Howard Hughes Medical Institute Professor of Biomedical Engineering and International Health. “Grants are often designated for a specific activity, but the center’s activities are often working at the intersection of different fields. We believe a chemistry student should be working with a history student who should be working with someone who studied art and theater. You cannot separate health from the political aspect, the political aspect from the policy angle, or the historical aspects, and they all interweave. So, the flexibility that comes with these gifts is extraordinary, and allows us to really bridge and traverse these disciplinary boundaries.”

Carrie Preston, CFD cofounder and associate director, says the effect of the gifts will ripple outward. “Because of these gifts, we were able to create a postdoc position, someone who will be working in Turkey, within the community, says Preston, a College of Arts & Sciences professor of English and of women’s, gender, and sexuality studies. “Because of that posting, we were able to connect with students here at BU who had been living as refugees, or witnessing the refugee crisis in their home countries, who reached out to us because they wanted to do something to help.”

Shipley says his wife, Feyza, who has a passion for supporting displaced people, was a driving force behind the gift. “As all of us know, the challenges of forced displacement are huge,” he says. “We have over 100 million people affected, and the number is increasing. It’s a huge issue. So, when Feyza and I first met with Dr. Zaman and Dr. Preston, we were most interested in whether they could scale their mission on a global basis, and whether they could produce results. We were not interested in just an academic exercise. “We never had to ask those questions,” Shipley adds. “It became clear, as Dr. Zaman and Dr. Preston described the mission, that it was all about results and they were going to be able to leverage what they did on an international and a global scale.”

New Deans Appointed at School of Social Work and Sargent College

SSW’s Barbara Jones is a scholar of health affairs, Dennerlein an expert in workplace safety

A BOSTON UNIVERSITY school and college both have new leadership this year. Barbara Jones is the new dean of the School of Social Work and Jack Dennerlein helm the Sargent College of Health & Rehabilitation Sciences.

Jones comes to BU from the University of Texas at Austin, where she was associate dean for health affairs at the University of Texas at Austin Steve Hicks School of Social Work and chair of the Department of Health Social Work at its Dell Medical School. She succeeded Jorge Delva, who will join the SSW faculty after a sabbatical. One of the nation’s top scholars in the field of psychosocial oncology and palliative care, she has held a number of national leadership roles. Her research focuses on finding better care for children, adolescents, and young adults with cancer and their families. More recently she has focused on palliative care, pediatric oncology social work interventions, and adolescent and young adult cancer survivors.

Jones says BU, routinely ranked among the top social work programs in the country, has long impressed her. Another draw, she says, was that two research centers here align with her own areas of interest and research: the Center for Health & the Center for Aging & Disability Education & Research.

Dennerlein came to BU by way of Northeastern University, where he was a professor and interim chair of physical therapy, movement, and rehabilitation sciences at its Bouvé College of Health Sciences. Previously, Dennerlein spent 15 years on the faculty of the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health environmental health department, leading the Occupational Injury Prevention Research Training program.

He succeeds Christopher A. Moore, who retired at the end of the 2022–2023 academic year. In Dennerlein, the University has hired a scholar with a national profile in improving workplace safety and creating best practices for employer health. A mechanical engineer by training, his research has informed the design of workplace ergonomics and improved safety for construction, healthcare, and transportation workers.
WHEELOCK COLLEGE OF EDUCATION & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

WHEELOCK DEAN DAVID CHARD TO STEP DOWN

DAVID CHARD planned to serve as dean for only two years after the historic 2018 merger of Wheelock College and BU’s School of Education. But as his term lead- ing the newly formed Wheelock College of Education & Human Development as interim dean began to draw to a close, Chard realized he had more work to do in the role. In 2023, he was appointed permanent dean.

In the two years since, he’s done what he set out to do. “In some ways, I wanted to get the college into a position that would be very attractive for the next dean to want to be here,” he says. “I feel like I’ve accomplished almost everything I wanted to accomplish.”

Chard will step down from his leadership position at the end of the 2023–2024 academic year. A faculty advisory committee will conduct a na-tionwide search for his successor.

Among Chard’s accomplishments are increasing the college’s student and faculty diversity, growing its graduate enrollment, expanding research funding, and raising the institution’s international profile through programming in locations like Lesotho and Bahrain. He created a graduate program in emergency management and risk analysis. He also created a profile through programming in locations like Lesotho and Bahrain. He created a graduate program in emergency management and risk analysis. He also created opportunities for students in setting the strategy and vision for the college’s academic programs.

WHEELOCK, QUESTROM LAUNCH NEW DEGREES

BU’S NEW Social Impact MBA-MIS in Energy & Environment dual degree pro-

gram aims to prepare a new genera-
tion of leaders to help the energy indus-
ty navigate the massive transformations required to combat climate change, including moving away from fossil fuels.

The program is run jointly by the Wheelock College of Education & Human Development and the Questrom School of Business.

The program’s dual degree program dates back several years, but its promotion was delayed by the pandemic and other factors.

Chororian & Avedian School of Medicine

SHRUTI MISRA (CAMD’27) (front left) and Michelle Surets (CAMM’27), first-year BU medical students, are helped into white coats by Angela Jackson, an associate professor of medicine and associate dean of students, and Bonnie Woolluck (CAMD’10, SPH’10), an assistant professor of obstet-

rics and gynecology and associate dean for diversity and inclusion. Misra and Surets were among 346 students who attended the White Coat Ceremony on August 1, an an-
nual rite of passage where each student is presented with a white lab coat as “visible evidence that you are joining this profes-
sion, taking your first steps along this path to a demanding, but so rewarding, career in medicine,” Jackson said at the ceremony.

A RETROSPECTIVE ON THE WHITE COAT CEREMONY

—Amy Laskowski

Your Schools & Colleges

COM STUDIOS GET MAJOR UPGRADES

WHEN COM students returned to campus in the fall, they found transformed studio spaces at the college and modern amenities that rival professional television stations. Mariette DiChristina (COM’16), dean of COM, earmarked more than half a million dollars this year for renovations to the studios and postproduction facilities.

The most dramatic changes can be seen in Studio West, used most frequently by BUTV20 but also by broadcast classes. Studio West—the scene of news and weather reports, interviews, and more—now features a new anchor desk, movable sets, monitors, and colored lighting to give students multiple angles and options to create customizable views. The overhauled control room has a new audio mixing board.

On one wall is a large screen that can be set to show a live look at the campus and foot traffic on Comm Ave, or switched to display graphics. There’s a green screen, where reporters will present weather reports or other graphics.

“These studio upgrades put our students in a state-of-the-art broadcast environment,” says Tina McGuire, a COM associate professor of the practice of journalism and co-adjutor for BUTV20. “We are setting them up for newsrooms and broadcast studios when they graduate. The more fluid they are with technology, the more prepared they are to step right into internships and jobs.” —Amy Laskowski

AN HONOR FOR OUTSTANDING LGBTQ+ HEALTHCARE

BU’S CARL STREED was honored with the 2023 Excellence in LGBTQ Health Award from the American Medical Association. The award recognizes physicians who are dedicated to patient care for underserved communities and who show compassion and altruism through their work.

Streed is an assistant professor of medicine and the research lead for the GenderCare Cen-
ter at Boston Medical Center, the University’s primary teaching hospital. The GenderCare Center provides gender-affirming care to help patients transition from the gender designated at birth to the gender they align with. It also works to advance education, research, and advocacy efforts across the state.

Streed’s work as a clinician aims to improve healthcare and well-being for LGBTQ+ individu-

als, especially transgender patients. “I chose to join the GenderCare Center because providing gender-affirming care brings joy to my patients’ lives,” he says. “It’s what nourishes my soul.” —Jessica Colarossi

DEGREES

NEW LIGHT ON AMERICA BEFORE AND DURING WORLD II

IN HER new book, BU historian Brooke L. Blower recounts the 1943 tragedy of Pan Am Flight PAV03 and the quest on board the famed flying boat, named the ’Yankee Clipper.’ But this book, Americans in a World at War: Intimate Histories of the Crash of Pan Am’s Yankee Clipper (Oxford University Press, 2023), is about more than one deadly incident: it’s a story of the intricate ways Americans were shaping—and shaped by—World War II, even before the United States officially entered the conflict.

“Since around the 1920s, Americans have really whittled down their depictions of World War II to focus overwhelmingly on combat sol-
diers stormsing beaches or Churchill, Stalin, and Roosevelt—the high diplomacy,” says Blower, a CAS associate professor of history. “This is an attempt to help readers see the war in a new way, to remind them of the geographical, tem-
poral, and political scope of the engagements Americans were involved with.”

“It’s a Casablanca World War II story rather than a Saving Private Ryan story.”

The Yankee—then a plane that inaugurated scheduled transatlantic passenger flights and that was chronicled by a Lady Eleanor Roosevelt—the High Diplomacy story rather than a Saving Private Ryan story. The Yankee—then a plane that inaugurated scheduled transatlantic passenger flights and that was chronicled by a Lady Eleanor Roosevelt—the High Diplomacy story rather than a Saving Private Ryan story. Blower picks six globally connected passen-
ger stories to focus on, charting their lives, weaving their personal histories into the world’s story from one conflagration to another. She divides her narrative into four parts: World I War and its aftermath, two decades of relative peace, the start of World War II, and the year before the crash—breaking up the story with a short interlude to plot the Yankee Clipper’s faithful journey. Along the way, she busts some sepia-tinged myths, starting with America’s Pearl Harbor isolationism.

Carol Stroud

Your Schools & Colleges

Shruti Misra (CAMD’27) (front left) and Michelle Surets (CAMM’27), first-year BU medical students, are helped into white coats by Angela Jackson, an associate professor of medicine and associate dean of students, and Bonnie Woolluck (CAMD’10, SPH’10), an assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology and associate dean for diversity and inclusion. Misra and Surets were among 346 students who attended the White Coat Ceremony on August 1, an annual rite of passage where each student is presented with a white lab coat as “visible evidence that you are joining this profession, taking your first steps along this path to a demanding, but so rewarding, career in medicine,” Jackson said at the ceremony.
IN THE BIBLICAL book of Matthew, near the end of his famous Sermon on the Mount, Jesus asks his listeners to “consider the birds of the air.” But few readers of Matthew truly do, says Rebecca Copeland, a School of Theology assistant professor of theology. Taking time to consider birds, their behavior, and their place in the food chain can offer readers of the Bible alternate ways to understand this well-known passage, Copeland argues in a paper in the journal Biblical Interpretation. Paying attention to the nonhuman characters in the Bible, she says, can also help individual Christians and their congregations incorporate a concern for the environment into their daily lives.

In her research and teaching, Copeland focuses on the intersection of ecology and theology: she examines Christian texts and doctrines through an ecological lens, and explores ways Christian teachings can influence environmental activism. Her 2020 book, Created Being: Expanding Creedal Christology (Baylor University Press), is about the relationships among God, human and nonhuman creatures, and nature. In peer-reviewed papers, she’s studied human responses to animal suffering and the ancient cultural, economic, and ecological significance of fig trees (which Jesus curses as part of a lesson in the book of Matthew).

“When I started my theological studies,” Copeland says, “it bothered me that the rest of the world kind of gets ignored in most theological work—that Christian theology has a tendency to focus on human beings and human salvation and neglect everything else.” But the idea that Christians should be paying attention to the natural world has been around for centuries, she says. Augustine of Hippo, a theologian and philosopher born in AD 354, for example, wrote of two ways to learn about God: through Scripture and through nature. This focus on nature isn’t often emphasized in modern American Christianity, Copeland says, but she believes today’s Christians should care about the natural world—and use their social and political influence to protect it.

“John 3:16 says that God loves the whole cosmos,” says Copeland, who also directs STH’s Faith & Ecological Justice Program, which helps students prepare to do faith-based ecological work. “And Genesis 1 repeatedly says that creation is very good. So, the idea that we can just destroy it, or use it up, or neglect it seems irreligious to me.”

Many Christians do care deeply about the environment. Interfaith Power and Light, Creation Justice Ministries, the Evangelical Environmental Network, and other such groups mobilize Christians around environmental issues, including climate change. A recent survey by the Pew Research Center, however, paints a complicated picture of American Christians’ environmental views: while 82 percent of Christians completely or mostly agreed that God gave humans a duty to protect and care for the Earth, only 50 percent agreed that climate change is an extremely or very serious problem, and only 45 percent agreed that the planet is warming mostly because of human activity. (NASA reports 97 percent of actively publishing climate

WHAT CAN THE BIBLE TEACH US ABOUT FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE?

Christian teachings are full of lessons about caring for the planet and nature, and more American churchgoers should heed them, says BU theologian Rebecca Copeland.

BY CORINNE STEINBRENNER

OPPOSITE: TRIGGA/ISTOCK.COM; JACKIE RICCIARDI

The idea that we can destroy the natural world…seems irreligious to me.”
DOES THE COVID VACCINE AFFECT MENSTRUATION?

BU study found an average one-day shift in period cycle length, but no strong link between vaccination and cycle regularity, bleed length, or pain

BY ANDREW THURSTON AND JESSICA COLAROSSI

SOON AFTER COVID vaccines first started getting into arms, anecdotal reports began to suggest that they were changing people’s periods. Many said their cycles were earlier, shorter, and heavier, and blood pain after receiving the shot. But a new School of Public Health–led study has found that the vaccines are likely not to blame for any major change to the menstrual cycle; people did notice a slight increase in the length of their periods. Researchers tracked 1,137 people for six months after vaccination. The findings were published in the medical journal Vaccine.

“We found that menstrual cycles immediately after vaccination may be slightly associated with earlier and shorter menstrual cycles, and that these effects are not statistically significant,” the researchers told BU. “However, our study does not rule out the possibility that some women may experience changes in their menstrual cycles due to the vaccine.”
NEW ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE PROGRAM COULD HELP TREAT HYPERTENSION

Model helps match people with high blood pressure to the medication that’s most likely to work for them | BY MAUREEN STANTON

FOR THE NEARLY half of Americans with hypertension, the condition is a potential death sentence. Close to 700,000 deaths in 2021 were caused by high blood pressure, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It also increases the risk of stroke and chronic heart failure. While it’s relatively easy to prevent or moderate if caught early—eat well, exercise more, drink less alcohol—it can be tough to treat. Although physicians have a bevy of potential hypertension medications to choose from, each has pros and cons, making prescribing the most effective one a challenge: beta-blockers slow the heart, but can cause asthma; ACE inhibitors relax blood vessels, but can lead to a hacking cough. A new artificial intelligence program may help doctors better match the right medications to the right patients. The data-driven model, co-developed by BU data scientists and physicians, aims to give clinicians real-time hypertension treatment recommendations based on patient-specific characteristics, including demographics, vital signs, medical history, and clinical test results. The model has the potential to help reduce systolic blood pressure—measured when the heart is beating rather than resting—more effectively than the current standard of care. According to the researchers, the program’s approach to transparency could also help improve physicians’ trust in artificial intelligence–generated results.

Currently, when choosing which medication to prescribe a patient, a doctor considers the patient’s history, treatment goals, and the benefits and risks associated with specific medications. Selecting which drug to prescribe when there are multiple options—and of those options, no drug is better or worse than any other—can be a bit of a coin toss. The BU-developed model generates a custom hypertension prescription using an individual patient’s profile, giving physicians a list of suggested medications with an associated probability of success. The researchers’ aim was to highlight the treatment that best controls systolic blood pressure for each patient based on its effectiveness in a group of similar patients.

The model was developed using deidentified data from 4,792 hypertensive patients of Boston Medical Center, BU’s primary teaching hospital. Patients were sorted into affinity groups based on similarities of clinically relevant characteristics, such as demographics, past blood pressure records, and past medical history. During the study, the model’s effectiveness was compared to the current standard of care, as well as three other algorithms designed to predict appropriate treatment plans. The researchers found it achieved a 90.3 percent larger reduction in systolic blood pressure than standard of care and performed 7.08 percent better than the second best model. The algorithm was clinically validated, with the researchers manually reviewing a random sample of 350 cases.

Using the BU-developed model, there was a 70.3 percent larger reduction in systolic blood pressure than standard of care. Giving to Boston University in your will is a simple way to make a real difference.

It’s easy—and rewarding. Take the time now to make sure that your will reflects your intentions to care for your family and the people and causes that matter most to you.

If you include a gift for BU in your estate plans, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that future generations of students will benefit from your generous legacy.

To learn more about how you can make a gift in your will to support BU, contact Boston University Planned Giving at 800-645-2347 or opg@bu.edu, or visit bu.edu/plannedgiving.

Download a complimentary copy of our Estate Planning Guide at bu.edu/estateguide.
TELLING HIS WHITE SHARK STORY

By Joel Brown

The Name: Greg Skomal has become synonymous with white sharks in New England. Skomal (GRS’06) is senior fisheries biologist with the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, directs the Massachusetts Shark Research Program, and works in partnership with the Atlantic White Shark Conservancy and its Sharktivity app. He pops up all over local TV whenever there’s a shark incident on Cape Cod. Locals may know him best for the videos of him tagging sharks from the pulpit of a small research boat, including one in which a shark tried to strike back.

New Skomal’s written a book, Chasing Shadows: My Life Tracking the Great White Shark (William Morrow, 2023), with science journalist Ret Talbot, that braids several storylines together, including research into the resurgence of white sharks on the Cape, the fatal attack on 26-year-old Arthur Medici off Wellfleet in 2018, and Skomal’s longtime fascination with the animal. He’s mindful that many beachgoers get up in arms over sharing the waters with such a predator. And, yes, there might be a Jaws reference or two.

Skomal has been drawn to white sharks—their speed and power and overall wow factor—since he was a boy watching undersea explorer Jacques Cousteau’s TV specials in the late 1960s and the 1970s. We asked him about his career studying this awesome predator and that time one of them tried to eat him.

Bostonia: You talk about a balance between nature and public safety. Things seem quiet on the Cape, but there are plenty of sharks around, right?

Greg Skomal: That balance can be referred to as perhaps coexistence, with a predatory shark overlapping with human activities. Maybe this is simply because we haven’t had a negative event since 2018, and so everybody seems to be getting along. The players are basically human beings recreating in nearshore areas and sharks feeding in nearshore areas. Some people have accepted levels of risk; these tend to be surfers and boogie boarders, and we still see them out every day that we go out on the water. They tend to be a little bit further from shore.

Others have adapted their behavior: I see a lot of swimmers stay fairly close to the beach, particularly along the outer Cape. Many people don’t go in over their waist. But the beaches remain crowded. That means we’re in a good place. But I’ll also caution that if we do get a bite, all that’s going to change, and from some folks we’re going to see pitchforks and torches again.

This year, there have been several attacks on Long Island, and they’re deploying a lot of drones and other sorts of technological methods of keeping people safe. Reporters ask why aren’t we doing more of that kind of stuff up here?

The towns are forever evaluating options. They try to work in concert, but each one takes a different approach to some extent. Wellfleet is, in my opinion, the single town that wants to embrace some of the newer technologies. They really like our real-time reporting receivers, for example, which will tell those lifeguards when there is a tagged white shark in their swimming area. I also know that they deployed at least one drone this summer.

I still pinch myself... I’m still that little kid sitting on a couch going, ‘What’s that cool-looking shark doing now?’ I’m fascinated by it.”
Other towns, Orleans for example, basically operate like there are always sharks in the swimming area. And those are the guarded swimming areas. Their premise going into beach safety is, there could always be a shark swimming in this area, so we have to act accordingly. Other towns are pretty much hands-off. And, keep in mind, many of these beaches are managed by the National Park Service, and they’re completely hands-off, swim at your own risk. I think the fear is the towns have—and I don’t know whether they’ve consulted with their legal counsel—is the liability associated with giving a false sense of security. There’s also concern that if you start doing some sort of new technique, you’re going to have to stick with it, and proven not to be very effective. And so one of the things that I’m doing with the conservancy is trying to evaluate, for example, the efficacy of drone use. Will it work, and under what conditions will it not work? Other technologies are pretty much off the table. We haven’t seen much movement at all on, for example, underwater sonar systems. I think that’s for the most part cost-prohibitive and untested.

How has climate change affected this whole situation? We believe that right now climate change isn’t doing much with regard to shark movements, or seals at that stage, even though perhaps it could be a factor. It’ll be interesting to see how climate change influences the sharks in the coming years, and we’ll be able to do that because we have so many tagged.

I’m gonna overreact and have a heart attack on the pulpit because I’m not safe. And I wake up some time later, and I’m thinking—and certainly got my wife thinking. The kids were fascinated by it. But I keep assuring people, I was really pretty safe. What I think about is not the shark maybe coming straight up at the pulpit, because I’m protected there. I really am. But what about a breaching shark that comes over the side of the pulpit and lands on me?

These are 1,000-, 2,000-, 3,000-pound animals; they have incredible power and momentum. “What’s that cool-looking shark doing right now?” I’m fascinated by it, and I always tell my wife that one of these days, if I don’t know where this shark is, how do I know what it’s going to do? They are unpredictable. But the dreams I have—actually, I had one last night, another white shark dream, with me and my wife sitting on a couch going, ‘What’s that cool-looking shark doing right now?’”

Skomal briefs state the apex predator on Cape Cod. Shabbat’s magic, aware of how my family’s life revolved around this sacred bubble, she writes. “In my childhood home in Palo Alto, California, our weekly days were a mere prelude to Shabbat.” Her relationship with the holiday has evolved over the years. At BU, when she moved to New York City for a job and gradually stopped observing Shabbat, she felt “unsurrounded, empty, and exhausted” and longed for the opportunity it provided to relax and recharge, she writes in the cookbook. Sussman, who moved to Israel almost a decade ago, explored its cuisine

Shabbat’s magic, aware of how my family’s life revolved around this sacred bubble, she writes. “In my childhood home in Palo Alto, California, our weekly days were a mere prelude to Shabbat.” Her relationship with the holiday has evolved over the years. At BU, when she moved to New York City for a job and gradually stopped observing Shabbat, she felt “unsurrounded, empty, and exhausted” and longed for the opportunity it provided to relax and recharge, she writes in the cookbook. Sussman, who moved to Israel almost a decade ago, explored its cuisine in her previous cookbook, Sababa (Avery, 2019), which was named to the New York Times’ “13 Best Cookbooks of Fall 2019” list. After Sababa, “I was looking for another organizing principle that would allow me to continue to explore the intersection of my new citizenship in Israel and my Jewish culture,” she says from her home in Tel Aviv. Sussman finds Shabbat because of its ubiquity in Israeli life—but she notes that her experience with the holiday has been different in Israel than in the United States.

“I feel like my Shabbat experience in the US is maybe a little more tradi- 

Savoring the Cooking Experience

Shabbat, the weekly Jewish day of rest, and its meals have long been a central part of Adenea Sussman’s Jewish and culinary identities. In her latest cookbook, Shabbat: Recipes and Rituals from My Table to Yours (Avery, 2023), she ruminates on her relationship with the Jewish Sabbath at different phases of her life and presents 130 recipes inspired by the foods she has eaten over time, such as White Shabbat Matzo with Roasted Crispy Eggplant, Moroccan Carrot Salad, and Chicken Thighs with Toasted Figs & Grapes.

In the book, Sussman (COM ’15) recalls the Shabbat dinners of her childhood, with her mother preparing on Wednesdays. (Shabbat runs from sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday.) “I grew up enveloped in Adenea Sussman’s recipe for Fig & Pomegranate Brûlée at.”

I grew up enveloped in Sababa’s magic, aware of how my family’s life revolved around this sacred bubble,” Adenea Sussman said of her new cookbook

The book weaves together several stories, including research into the resurgence of the apex predator on Cape Cod.

“arrows” and “longed” and “opportunity” and “processes” and “to put” and “get” and “together” and “cooking” and “experience” and “to be” and “relaxing” and “even potentially restorative, for the cook.”

The book weaves together several stories, including research into the resurgence of the apex predator on Cape Cod.

For Sababa’s magic, aware of how my family’s life revolved around this sacred bubble,” Adenea Sussman said of her new cookbook

Savoring the Cooking Experience

Alum Adenea Sussman encourages readers to slow down in her new cookbook, Shabbat: Recipes and Rituals from My Table to Yours by Mara Sadowski

“arrows” and “longed” and “opportunity” and “processes” and “to put” and “get” and “together” and “cooking” and “experience” and “to be” and “relaxing” and “even potentially restorative, for the cook.”

The book weaves together several stories, including research into the resurgence of the apex predator on Cape Cod.

For Sababa’s magic, aware of how my family’s life revolved around this sacred bubble,” Adenea Sussman said of her new cookbook

Savoring the Cooking Experience

Alum Adenea Sussman encourages readers to slow down in her new cookbook, Shabbat: Recipes and Rituals from My Table to Yours by Mara Sadowski

“arrows” and “longed” and “opportunity” and “processes” and “to put” and “get” and “together” and “cooking” and “experience” and “to be” and “relaxing” and “even potentially restorative, for the cook.”

The book weaves together several stories, including research into the resurgence of the apex predator on Cape Cod.

For Sababa’s magic, aware of how my family’s life revolved around this sacred bubble,” Adenea Sussman said of her new cookbook

Savoring the Cooking Experience

Alum Adenea Sussman encourages readers to slow down in her new cookbook, Shabbat: Recipes and Rituals from My Table to Yours by Mara Sadowski

“arrows” and “longed” and “opportunity” and “processes” and “to put” and “get” and “together” and “cooking” and “experience” and “to be” and “relaxing” and “even potentially restorative, for the cook.”

The book weaves together several stories, including research into the resurgence of the apex predator on Cape Cod.

For Sababa’s magic, aware of how my family’s life revolved around this sacred bubble,” Adenea Sussman said of her new cookbook

Savoring the Cooking Experience

Alum Adenea Sussman encourages readers to slow down in her new cookbook, Shabbat: Recipes and Rituals from My Table to Yours by Mara Sadowski

“arrows” and “longed” and “opportunity” and “processes” and “to put” and “get” and “together” and “cooking” and “experience” and “to be” and “relaxing” and “even potentially restorative, for the cook.”

The book weaves together several stories, including research into the resurgence of the apex predator on Cape Cod.

For Sababa’s magic, aware of how my family’s life revolved around this sacred bubble,” Adenea Sussman said of her new cookbook

Savoring the Cooking Experience

Alum Adenea Sussman encourages readers to slow down in her new cookbook, Shabbat: Recipes and Rituals from My Table to Yours by Mara Sadowski

“arrows” and “longed” and “opportunity” and “processes” and “to put” and “get” and “together” and “cooking” and “experience” and “to be” and “relaxing” and “even potentially restorative, for the cook.”

The book weaves together several stories, including research into the resurgence of the apex predator on Cape Cod.

For Sababa’s magic, aware of how my family’s life revolved around this sacred bubble,” Adenea Sussman said of her new cookbook

Savoring the Cooking Experience

Alum Adenea Sussman encourages readers to slow down in her new cookbook, Shabbat: Recipes and Rituals from My Table to Yours by Mara Sadowski

“arrows” and “longed” and “opportunity” and “processes” and “to put” and “get” and “together” and “cooking” and “experience” and “to be” and “relaxing” and “even potentially restorative, for the cook.”

The book weaves together several stories, including research into the resurgence of the apex predator on Cape Cod.

For Sababa’s magic, aware of how my family’s life revolved around this sacred bubble,” Adenea Sussman said of her new cookbook
CREATIVES

JESS RULIFFSON’S first nonfiction graphic novel focused on a dozen veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, now back home and dealing with what combat had done to them, inside and out. The book, *Invisible Wounds* (Fantagraphics Books, 2022), was nominated for a prestigious Will Eisner Comic Industry Award in 2023. Publishers Weekly praised its “sensitivity and unflinching honesty.”

Now, Ruliffson (GRS’22) and her husband, Ernesto Barbieri, a writer and registered nurse, are collaborating on a new project with the working title *Saint in the City*, about his experiences as a hospital intensive care nurse, during the COVID pandemic and beyond.

In the new work, the words are her husband’s and those of his coworkers and patients and their families, with names and appearances changed to protect their identities. Barbieri was grappling with a memoir, and Ruliffson, who teaches the College of Arts & Sciences course The Graphic Novel, didn’t know what project she wanted to tackle next. They had “a lightbulb moment,” she says. “Luckily we collaborate pretty well, and I’m biased, but I think his writing is really wonderful.”

This year, *Saint in the City* has been excerpted in the Boston Globe, under the title *Tenderness and Brutality*, and in the Nib, then publisher of political cartoons and nonfiction comics. For *Invisible Wounds*, she interviewed veterans who talked about race and identity at home, as well as on the battlefield.

“Listening is—it’s going to sound corny—but I feel like it’s how we save each other,” says Ruliffson, who has a BFA in illustration from the School of Visual Arts in New York and a master’s degree in creative writing from BU.

The two projects explore conflicts between duty and humanity, the unpredictable fallout from life-or-death decisions, and the effects on those who do the deciding and may suffer what she calls “moral injury.”

Both in the ICU and on the battlefield, there can be “a gap between what you’re asked to do and what that really looks like,” she says. “There’s this idea, particularly during the pandemic, that there’s this huge thing that I don’t have any power to stop, where I can’t help the people I love who are suffering. Or maybe you don’t even know the people very well, but you’re confronted by their suffering. What do you do with it?”

An excerpt from *Saint in the City* by Jess Ruliffson (GRS’22) and Ernesto Barbieri, courtesy of the creators.

Alum Jess Ruliffson’s first book was an Eisner Award nominee | BY JOEL BROWN

CARTOONIST EXPLORES STORIES OF VETERANS OF THE BATTLEFIELD—AND THE COVID ICU

An excerpt from *Saint in the City* by Jess Ruliffson (GRS’22) and Ernesto Barbieri, courtesy of the creators.
CREATIVES.

READING LIST

ALUM’S TRUE-CRIME BOOK NOW A CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED HBO SERIES

By Sophie Yeh

I’ll be seeing you

In all the familiar places

That this heart of mine embraces

All day through...

EVERYONE AT THE Five Oaks bar knew Michael Sakara’s favorite song. The 26-year-old frequented the Manhattan piano bar in its heyday in the early nine-
ties. An out gay man during a time when the AIDS crisis, Sakara and fellow patrons—most of whom were closeted—felt that queer-friendly bars like the Oaks were a haven of under-
standing and kindness. Each night, the bar was identified in 2001 as a
sweeping history of anti-gay violence. Sakara and fellow patrons—most of whom werecloseted—felt that queer-friendly bars like theOaks were a haven of under-
standing and kindness. Each night, the bar was serving two consecutive
life sentences in New Jersey.

I didn’t know, when Last Call was published, if it was going to resonate,” says Green. “When the book was sold, the market was not clamoring for true crime, and it was especially not clamoring for a victim-
centric approach.” The book did resonate, and its acclaim is paralleled by the success of HBO’s adaptation, Last Call: When a Serial Killer Stalked Queer New York, a four-part docuseries released in July 2023. It netted 100 percent on Rotten Tomatoes and won high praise from Rolling Stone, the New Yorker, Vanity Fair, and Entertainment Weekly.

Green says he appreciated the series’ commitment to portraying LGBTQ+ activ-
ism during the AIDS era. Former LGBTQ+ community leaders and members of the New York City Anti-Violence Project, a queer victim intervention organization, feature prominently in the docuseries, as does a sweeping history of anti-gay violence in the city. The Last Call killer was identified in 2002 as 43-year-old Richard Rogers; he was convicted of two of the murders in 2005, and served two consecutive life sentences in New Jersey State Prison. Rogers moved anonymously from gay bar to gay bar in the early 1990s, when queer-bashing in New York was at a high and bolstered by AIDS panic, anti-gay legislative policies, and a prejudiced metropoli-
tan police force.

But Last Call is not a story of anti-gay hatred any more than it is a story of a serial killer. Part of Green’s commitment to a steady lens on the victims meant portraying them in one of the most vibrant queer scenes on the planet, a city of infinite joy and infinite danger. "It was an incredible period in the history of New York City nighttime,” Green says, “and one of the reasons why there hadn’t been much written about it before is that, to the degree that the bars and clubs were mentioned, it was always through the prism of AIDS. People could lose sight of the fact that people had a great time there... They were a refuge. I wanted the reader to understand that."
Gilliam will come to Boston from a sprawling midwestern university, one of the largest public institutions in the country, with 15 colleges, more than 7,500 faculty members, and over 60,000 students across 6 campuses.

“I’m really excited about how engaged Boston University is in the city and how engagement has been a hallmark of BU,” Gilliam says. “I’m looking forward to hearing from people, learning and listening. I lead by listening, collaborating, and empowering other people. That is the best way to run big organizations, to get everyone excited and engaged and empowered and doing more than they think they’re capable of doing. This philosophy is core to shared governance, an essential component of a thriving university.”

But she continued to seek greater engagement and listening. As vice provost, she developed and led the university’s faculty development and hiring programs, while creating new diversity and inclusion programs, international affairs, and more partnerships.

In a world that needs more collaboration and more partnerships, Fakahany says he was struck by Gilliam’s ability to lead by listening, to move people and propel BU forward. “She is sharp and decisive. But her ability to listen meant that you weren’t walking in their shoes, we were not writing prescriptions, we were not talking to each other in the way that people talk about teen pregnancy,” she says. “We were creating new diversity and inclusion programs, while creating new diversity and inclusion efforts, fellowship programs, and workshops. She left the university in 2021 after five years as vice provost.

In her role at Ohio State, she has served as the chief academic officer and chief operating officer. She oversees the Office of Academic Affairs, including undergraduate education, graduate education, international affairs, diversity and inclusion, external engagement, online learning, and information technology. She developed the Academic Plan, providing an overarching strategy for academic excellence.

Melissa L. Gilliam’s appointment as the next Boston University president was announced as the magazine was going to press. Read the complete profile, and watch a video interview with Gilliam, at bu.edu/bostonia.

Melissa L. Gilliam’s appointment as the next Boston University president was announced as the magazine was going to press. Read the complete profile, and watch a video interview with Gilliam, at bu.edu/bostonia.

“I’M LOOKING FORWARD TO HEARING FROM PEOPLE, LEARNING AND LISTENING. I LEAD BY LISTENING, COLLABORATING, AND EMPOWERING OTHER PEOPLE.”

MELISSA L. GILLIAM

BOSTON UNIVERSITY NAMES MELISSA L. GILLIAM 11TH PRESIDENT

The Ohio State University provost, physician, and scholar brings to BU two decades of higher education leadership

BY DOUG MOST
RACISM, SEXISM, AND THE CRISIS OF BLACK WOMEN’S HEALTH

BU leads the largest and longest-running study of Black women’s health, shining a light on tragic disparities and showing women their lives matter.
Charlene Coyne often thinks back to how her mother, Donna, struggled with severe hypertension for most of her life, battling complications that led to a heart attack and stroke by the time Donna was in her thirties.

She also recalls the dismissive response from a doctor when her mother voiced concerns about the severe side effects—blurry vision, severe headaches, dizziness, nausea, fatigue—of her blood pressure medication.

“I noticed a physical transformation and could see how toxic the drugs were for her,” says Coyne, now a New York-based biopharmaceutical executive. When Donna mentioned her symptoms to her doctor, he refused to change her treatment plan. “He insisted that he knew what he was doing, and that she just needed to give the medication time to work. But she had already done that.”

At age 43, Coyne’s mother passed away from hypertension complications. “She suffered unnecessarily,” Coyne says, “and it breaks my heart to this day.” Her family’s health history—her mother voiced concerns about the risk of poor health—and good health—of her blood pressure was in part what motivated Coyne to join Boston University’s Black Women’s Health Study (BWHS) 28 years ago and become part of a group of 59,000 women in the largest and longest-running study in the United States focused entirely on the health of Black women.

Founded in 1993 at BU’s School of Public Health, BWHS aims to understand the underlying causes of poor health—and good health—among Black women, and, with this knowledge, raise awareness and spur action to reduce the long-standing racial disparities and inequities in health. Black women are more likely than other racial and ethnic groups to die from cardiovascular disease, hypertension, stroke, lupus, and several other conditions. They are twice as likely to develop diabetes over age 55 or have uncontrolled blood pressure. Black women also face greater challenges in accessing affordable and quality healthcare, including a lack of health insurance, higher medical debt, and longer travel times to hospitals.

In the past 25-plus years, BWHS has published more than 320 papers, often in collaboration with external researchers from other cohort studies, such as the BU-based Framingham Heart Study, the longest-running heart disease study in the US. The heaviest emphasis has been on breast cancer, but the findings span diabetes, obesity, autoimmune diseases, insomnia, and other conditions.

Many of these papers mark the first time these relationships were evaluated among a scientifically meaningful—in other words, large, population—of Black women. These studies, often published in prestigious journals, not only fill a significant void in research, but also serve as long-sought acknowledgment that these stark racial disparities exist—and that Black women and their health matter.

“I’m truly proud to be part of a study that has prioritized the health of Black women,” says Julie Palmer (SON’80, SPH’96), a BU Choupanian & Avedisian School of Medicine professor of medicine and director of the Stone Epidemiology Center. Palmer co-founded BWHS, and is one of three lead investigators. “There are behavior changes that individuals can make to improve their health, but to dismantle racial disparities in health, we also need institutional change.”

Tracking Health Trajectories

Despite their disproportionate health burdens, Black women historically have largely been excluded from clinical research, which has focused primarily on white males.

“Women were just starting to be included in studies when I became an epidemiologist, and Black women weren’t included at all,” says Lynn Rosenberg (CBS’85), a School of Public Health professor of epidemiology who co-founded BWHS. She previously co-led the study and remains part of the core research team. “We knew there was a dire need for this research.”

She and her team—which also included Lucile Adams-Campbell, then-director of Howard University Cancer Center and now at Georgetown University’s Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center—secured the massive cohort of participants for BWHS by inviting subscribers of Essence magazine to participate.

The National Institutes of Health has renewed funding every five years. The study launched with participants ages 21-69, on average 38, from all regions of the US. Most are highly educated; only 3 percent of the women have not completed high school. More than half of the women have provided saliva, blood, or cancer tissue samples for genetic research.

Every few years, the participants complete confidential questionnaires about their demographics, health conditions, and lifestyle, as well as the impact of consequential moments in society, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The team publishes newsletters and holds educational webinars and community events to share findings, engage with participants, and gather feedback on health topics that interest the women. They hope their findings help patients make informed choices about their health, and arm healthcare providers and policymakers with the necessary data and insight to combat long-standing racial inequities in health.

By examining the same group of women over decades, researchers can comprehensively track the health trajectories of thousands of women as they grow older.

“Women were just starting to be included in the Black Women’s Health Study, I said, ‘Thank goodness—someone finally cares,” says Kim Rausser, Kilwe, a Jersey City, N.J.-based participant and retired attorney. “We’re not all the same. There are many experiences that differ from one culture to the next.”

At age 69 years old, Kilwe still wonders if the major surgery she received to remove uterine fibroids as a college student was medically necessary. Black women are two to three times more likely than white women to develop fibroids, according to BWHS research, and 14 percent of participants reported they developed fibroids within the study’s first decade.

Kilwe says she never questioned her doctor’s recommendation to remove one ovary and both fallopian tubes, nor his warning that she may become unable to have children.

That possibility turned into reality. “After the third time I tried to have children, at age 29 or 30, I said it just wasn’t meant to be,” she says. “But I knew I could have been addressed to my medical issues and preserve my health.”

The Role of Racism

The overarching question for the researchers is: Why? Why are Black women less likely than white women to get breast cancer, but 40 percent more likely to die if they do develop it? Why are they more likely to be diagnosed with diabetes and high blood pressure? And what role does racism play in Black women’s health?

Some of the study results align with broadly accepted knowledge: obesity increases the risk of type 2 diabetes; exercise improves physical and mental health.

“Some findings may seem like common sense, but policymakers need actual evidence to make decisions and inform policies that will improve the health of their constituents,” says Patricia Congan (SPH’97, ’96), a BWHS investigator and an SPH research professor of epidemiology. She joined the team in 1996.

One observation is becoming increasingly clear: racism and other stressors may be much stronger predictors of poor health than individual choices or genetic differences.

“The psychological trauma of racial discrimination increases acute stress (the body’s stress hormone) and weaken the immune system, potentially leading to inflammatory conditions, cognitive problems, and other conditions,” says Rosenberg. “When I first heard about the Black Women’s Health Study, I said, ‘Thank goodness—someone finally cares,” says Kim Rausser, Kilwe, a Jersey City, N.J.-based participant and retired attorney. “We’re not all the same. There are many experiences that differ from one culture to the next.”
past experiences with interpersonal racism, including daily, one-on-one encounters of perceived slights—such as poor service in a store or restaurant—as well as discriminatory treatment at work or in school, health care, housing, and interactions with police. The researchers are also measuring the impact of structural racism, a relatively new term in the research that refers to the ways in which historically racist systems that remain embedded within societies foster discrimination in policies or practices, perhaps less overt than “daily” racism, but still a reflection of the historically racist systems that remain embedded within societies. “Structural racism affects where people live, how they can exercise, the foods they eat, and the resources available to them,” says an SPH professor of epidemiology. “We didn’t have a name for it 20 years ago, but we have always acknowledged its influence on health, and we are continuing to examine how these race experiences uniquely affect Black women.” Experiences of racial discrimination may lead to increased weight gain, for example, and that is exactly what Sally Brickers, a postdoctoral fellow in the Rosenberg lab, and her colleagues identified recently in a study funded by the National Institute on Aging. In this study, the researchers credit the success of the BWHS to the dedicated participants who are still involved. Some have passed away or stopped following the study, but 40,000 women continue to share updates about their health. “The researchers credit the success of the BWHS to the dedicated participants who are still involved. Some have passed away or stopped following the study, but 40,000 women continue to share updates about their health.

Social Structures

A close look at racial disparities reveals another major predictor of poor health among Black women: zip code. Historically racist policies, such as slavery and redlining, have led to decades of neighborhood disinvestment that remain embedded within societal structures. “What we’ve come to realize is how much one’s neighborhood environment and social structures, rather than genes, prescribe health outcomes,” says Cozier, an early BWHS investigator who now coleads the study. She studies how psychosocial stressors—from divorce and job pressure to assault and natural disasters—influence the development of autoimmune and immune-mediated diseases, such as the difficult-to-diagnose sarcoidosis, which can affect the lungs, skin, kidneys, muscles, nervous system, and other organs. “We all have the same genes, but those genes are expressed differently across different groups of people, particularly in hyperstressful or low-resource environments,” Cozier says.

Participant Simona L. Brickers, who lives in Trenton, N.J., observes this exposure to health threats time and time again as an organizational leader and development consultant who has grappled with seeking and supporting organizations in developing antiracist community initiatives. “When I travel to other states, I can tell automatically which areas are deemed less desirable, and they are the Black communities,” Brickers says. “Growing up in BWHS has made her more aware, more vigilant, and more proactive” about her health. Black women who live in low-socioeconomic status neighborhoods are more likely to develop a number of conditions, including an aggressive subtype of breast cancer called estrogen receptor-negative (ER–), which has been the focus of some of BWHS’s most prominent research.

In 2014, Palmer led a landmark study that revealed Black women have more than one child, but who have never breastfed, were more likely to develop ER+ breast cancer, and this risk increased with each additional birth. The findings debunk the common belief that only women who do not have children are at increased risk of developing breast cancer. This risk is only true for ER+ (estrogen receptor- positive) diagnoses, which are seen at higher rates in published studies of Black women compared to white women.

Kimberly Bertrand (SPH ’03), a BWHS leader and a Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine associate professor of medicine, led a subsequent study that reinforced these results and showed a similar increase in risk for women who had their first child at older ages and had greater abdominal fat. “We still don’t know why having babies without breastfeeding may cause this increased risk of breast cancer, but we can rule out genetics as the main cause,” Palmer says. “It is likely a combination of stressors that raise inflammation in the body, as well as some biological differences. And not everyone has the same opportunities to breastfeed, Bertrand notes. Poorly adequate health care can make it difficult to breastfeed in the first place.”

Breast Cancer Risk Prediction

When breast cancer is identified quickly, treatment can be very effective. So, knowing an individual’s risk can inform appropriate screening and even effective treatment. But traditional breast cancer risk prediction tools were only designed based on data from white women. That changed in 2021, when Palmer led another pivotal study that developed and evaluated a breast cancer risk prediction model specifically tailored toward Black women.

“Many young Black women are dying of breast cancer in their thirties and forties, in part because they didn’t know about it until it was too late for the treatments to be successful,” Palmer says. “The new tool, designed as a questionnaire, is more effective than previous models, and it works best for women under 50. Our findings and our study results allow individuals to input information about a woman’s personal and family medical and reproductive history to calculate the five-year risk for developing breast cancer. The tool is accessible on the Sloane website (bu.edu/slope).” Bertrand hopes to enhance the tool with data from a major study in progress to examine whether mammographic density (dense breast tissue) and other features on mammograms are useful predictors of breast cancer.

“There is well-established evidence that having denser tissue is a predictor of future breast cancer risk,” she says. “If we can more precisely quantify these associations in the Black population, we can help women make well-informed decisions about how frequently they want to screen, whether they need supplemental screening, or whether they’re eligible for clinical trial enrollment.”

The Work Continues

Nearly 30 years after the launch of the study, the team’s work is far from over. Researchers are continuing to assess the short- and long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Black women. Early analyses of COVID-19 pregnancy complications as a risk factor and whether they’re eligible for clinical trial enrollment.

BLACK WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN OTHER RACIAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS TO DIE FROM CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE, HYPERTENSION, STROKE, AND SEVERAL CANCERS.

The researchers credit the success of the BWHS to the dedicated participants who are still involved. Some have passed away or stopped following the study, but 40,000 women continue to share updates about their health. “If we can more precisely quantify these associations in the Black population, we can help women make well-informed decisions about how frequently they want to screen, whetherthey need supplemental screening, or whether they’re eligible for clinical trial enrollment.”

The studies published by BWHS are a significant void in research. The lead investigator Kimberly Bertrand (far left), Julie Palmer (second from left), and Yvette Cozier (far right), Palmer and Lynn Rosenberg (second from right) reflect on the outcomes of the study.

“DO DEVELOP IT. LIKELY TO DIE IF THEY BLACK COMMUNITIES, ‘Brickers says. We all have the same genes, but those genes are expressed differently across different groups of people, particularly in hyperstressful or low-resource environments,” Cozier says.

Participant Simona L. Brickers, who lives in Trenton, N.J., observes this exposure to health threats time and time again as an organizational leader and development consultant who has grappled with seeking and supporting organizations in developing antiracist community initiatives. “When I travel to other states, I can tell automatically which areas are deemed less desirable, and they are the Black communities,” Brickers says. “Growing up in BWHS has made her more aware, more vigilant, and more proactive” about her health. Black women who live in low-socioeconomic status neighborhoods are more likely to develop a number of conditions, including an aggressive subtype of breast cancer called estrogen receptor-negative (ER–), which has been the focus of some of BWHS’s most prominent research.

In 2014, Palmer led a landmark study that revealed Black women have more than one child, but who have never breastfed, were more likely to develop ER+ breast cancer, and this risk increased with each additional birth. The findings debunk the common belief that only women who do not have children are at increased risk of developing breast cancer. This risk is only true for ER+ (estrogen receptor- positive) diagnoses, which are seen at higher rates in published studies of Black women compared to white women.

Kimberly Bertrand (SPH ’03), a BWHS leader and a Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine associate professor of medicine, led a subsequent study that reinforced these results and showed a similar increase in risk for women who had their first child at older ages and had greater abdominal fat. “We still don’t know why having babies without breastfeeding may cause this increased risk of breast cancer, but we can rule out genetics as the main cause,” Palmer says. “It is likely a combination of stressors that raise inflammation in the body, as well as some biological differences. And not everyone has the same opportunities to breastfeed, Bertrand notes. Poorly adequate health care can make it difficult to breastfeed in the first place.”

Breast Cancer Risk Prediction

When breast cancer is identified quickly, treatment can be very effective. So, knowing an individual’s risk can inform appropriate screening and even effective treatment. But traditional breast cancer risk prediction tools were only designed based on data from white women. That changed in 2021, when Palmer led another pivotal study that developed and evaluated a breast cancer risk prediction model specifically tailored toward Black women.

“Many young Black women are dying of breast cancer in their thirties and forties, in part because they didn’t know about it until it was too late for the treatments to be successful,” Palmer says. “The new tool, designed as a questionnaire, is more effective than previous models, and it works best for women under 50. Our findings and our study results allow individuals to input information about a woman’s personal and family medical and reproductive history to calculate the five-year risk for developing breast cancer. The tool is accessible on the Sloane website (bu.edu/slope).” Bertrand hopes to enhance the tool with data from a major study in progress to examine whether mammographic density (dense breast tissue) and other features on mammograms are useful predictors of breast cancer.

“There is well-established evidence that having denser tissue is a predictor of future breast cancer risk,” she says. “If we can more precisely quantify these associations in the Black population, we can help women make well-informed decisions about how frequently they want to screen, whether they need supplemental screening, or whether they’re eligible for clinical trial enrollment.”

The Work Continues

Nearly 30 years after the launch of the study, the team’s work is far from over. Researchers are continuing to assess the short- and long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Black women. Early analyses of COVID-19 pregnancy complications as a risk factor and whether they’re eligible for clinical trial enrollment.

BLACK WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN OTHER RACIAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS TO DIE FROM CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE, HYPERTENSION, STROKE, AND SEVERAL CANCERS.
"This is the golden age of genealogy."

By Amy Laskowski

D. Brenton Simons, who heads the Boston-based American Ancestors/New England Historic Genealogical Society, is a “champion” of one of the world’s most popular activities—tracing your family tree.
ELEANOR Simons has spent his career helping people build out the branches in their family trees, but he discovered some colorful surprises when he put a magnifying glass up to his own. His illustrious forebears were part of the infamous Dalton Gang, who in the 1890s robbed trains and banks. He’s written books, including *Witches, Rakes, and Murder and Mayhem in Boston, 1630–1775* (Commonwealth Editions, 2005). Historian and author Doris Kearns Goodwin says Simons’ dedication to the study of family history not only helped educate and inspire countless historians and authors like me, but has also had an measurable impact on millions of people who seek to learn about their past and make connections to today.

Bostonia spoke with Simons about why people are fascinated by their family histories, the field’s brazen roots, and how genealogy combined with DNA results can lead law enforcement to big breaks in previously unsolved cases.

**Why was the NEHGS formed, and why in Boston?**

Genealogy is one of the most popular activities in the world. Recordkeeping started here in New England, at the very first moment; town records of births, marriages, and deaths proliferated. So, if you have New England ancestry, it is generally because those records provide a very fruitful experience. In other parts of the country and other parts of the world, record sets are sometimes missing, damaged, or destroyed, or were not kept. So, it was natural that this area realized first that we could use those records to create lineages, and that was really the founding of the institution.

There were great institutions in Boston, such as the Boston Athenaeum, the Massachusetts Historical Society, and universities. But Boston was a center of learning and a natural place for an institution like this to spring up. And our founders realized that records were not being preserved and that people were curious about their roots.

It’s important to note that this is not just a white Anglo-Saxon activity. I’ve been excited to help research Irish, Italian, Jewish, and African American ancy histories and do all the fact-checking for much work with Henry Louis Gates, Jr., who is a board member of the society, and do all the fact-checking for finding your roots with Henry Louis Gates, Jr. What “Skip” Gates does so well is show the unlikely pairings of how people are related to each other, how we are all related to each other. We love being a part of something like that.
As we approach our bicentennial [in 2045], we’re communicating with people of different backgrounds. And one of the things happening now is that we purchased the adjacent building on Newbury Street and are reconstructing that building. Our new “discovery center” will have families and children come to learn something of their history, aimed at an ethnically diverse audience. The new building will show the science and technology aspects of what we do, because we do so much work involving DNA.

How has the field changed, with the development and expansion of DNA testing?

Obviously, that’s huge. DNA tests are phenomenal for genealogy and genetic genealogy, which is used in solving crimes. I give talks on it all the time. It was used in solving the Golden State murder case [the serial killer who murdered more than a dozen and raped more than 50 people in California in the 1970s and 1980s] and in many, many other cases. And for the average genealogist, it’s an important tool in your tool kit because it can help solve problems, even those centuries or generations old.

One of the things that my staff does work on special projects. You might have the proverbial three brothers who came to the US together, and their descendants want to figure out whether they actually came together. Were they brothers? And about half the time, these things are correct. And the other half of the time, we find out that something else happened. We can use DNA testing as a diagnostic tool when it comes to questions in genealogy. Obviously, another use is for paternity questions.

So, I call this the golden age of genealogy. Today, records are available that you couldn’t have put together in a whole lifetime of going around to courthouses and other repositories. Now, vital records, probate, deeds, DNA results—the things that are online are so amazing. And one of the ways in which we’ve responded to this is as an organization is to provide services to help people find these [records]. If they want to figure out whether this was a myth, we’re able to help. We provide services and are not just a passive library, which we were 20 years ago.

If someone tells you they’re going to take a DNA test, do you ever say, “You might want to think first about what you’re going to find”? In my experience, most people are fascinated by those things. Unless [a finding] involves them personally or a parent, and they feel they have to be discreet about the information or reveal something they don’t like, people usually are fascinated. I’m thinking of an example—a lot of people discover their mother or father married and divorced someone and just never mentioned it. So, after their death, they find out that their parents had another marriage or even another family. That is the kind of thing that can stir up emotions.

But what I tell people is kind of the opposite: if there are things that are potentially embarrassing for your family, it’s better to tell them now. A DNA test will reveal things, and you can’t control whether someone else is taking a test or not [and your family discovers the outcome]. Better to have these conversations rather than someone being surprised through a DNA test.

The NEHGS collection, one of the largest in the country, includes manuscript from the 14th century and many primary source documents, like this family record.

Simons holds an antique edition of the New York Times magazine with his great-grandfather, Ashbel P. Fitch, on the cover.

Simons’ lithographed family tree was created by his great-great-grandfather.
The norm on DNA testing, in the vast percent of cases, is just to discover your maternal or paternal haplogroup [a genetic population with a shared ancestor]. Then the ethnic and national numbers are based on probability models. And I tell people also to go back every six months and look, because your numbers are based on probability. Then the ethnic and national numbers are based on probability models. And I tell people also to go back every six months and look, because your numbers will have shifted.

Oh, that’s interesting.

You’ll be more Scottish this month and more French next year. You just don’t know because, obviously, the results are being refined; the more people take a test, the more data is collected, and it does shift things. A lot of modeling goes into what the results will be. In some cases, I give lectures about around the country where some long-standing mystery has been solved using DNA and genealogy. You can’t just do the DNA without genealogy. Both disciplines come into play.

Tell us about the 10 Million Names project.

What we plan is the most ambitious African American research project of its kind ever undertaken. And it is essentially this: to take the approximately 10 million individuals enslaved in America from the end of the 16th century through emancipation, document them, and trace their descendants. There has never been a systematic study like this. The idea behind it, at least in part, is to provide heritage, legacy, and history to people who are disenfranchised from it. The feeling used to be that African American research was so difficult that you would hit a brick wall right away. By turning it around and going from the enslaved person downwards, we actually can bring a lot of people their family history.

Genealogy is used to solve decades-old mysteries—like the Golden State murders. Yes. For instance, my staff worked on the Lady of the Dunes murder case in Provincetown, Mass., was solved in 2023, after almost 50 years. [One of the 10 Million Names [honorary] board members is Ketanji Brown Jackson (Hon.’23), an associate justice of the US Supreme Court. When Jackson was nominated [to the Supreme Court], she made a speech at the White House about presumably being the descendant of slaves. Sarah Dery on my research team jumped on this and started looking at her ancestry, and we were able to confirm that there are enslaved individuals in her ancestry.

Why do you think people want to learn more about their family histories?

I think there is an innate curiosity in every woman and man about where they come from and what their legacy will be. Grandparents like to do this with their grandchildren in mind, and people like to do it to explore their self-identity. People do it for connection; they do it for joy. They do it because they like detective work.

For older people, it keeps them mentally engaged and very active doing research. That has many health benefits. And there is data that show that when young people are exposed to family history, it gives them a greater sense of self-purpose. So, as history is taught less in schools, we see this as a great opportunity, and really a duty, to try to put it back. We have an active education program funded by the authors Tabitha and Stephen King; we offer a curriculum to teachers, and kids love this.

As history is taught in schools, it gives them a greater sense of self-purpose. So, as history is taught less in schools, we see this as a great opportunity, and really a duty, to try to put it back. We have an active education program funded by the authors Tabitha and Stephen King; we offer a curriculum to teachers, and kids love this.

The other thing is it’s in no way political; people on both ends of the spectrum see the value in young people learning about history. We don’t color it with opinion, politics, or angles. We simply provide data, and [teach] how to collect it and how to engage in it in ways that we think are constructive. So, there’s this wonderful social benefit to history and to genealogy that is now getting much more attention. And we love that.

The NEHGS 10 Million Names project aims to document and trace the descendants of the approximately 2 million individuals enslaved in America from the end of the 16th century through emancipation.
BOOK BANS HAVE REACHED A RECORD HIGH OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS.

The number of demands to remove books from library shelves topped 1,200 in 2022—more than double the total from 2021 and marking a 20-year high, according to the American Library Association. PEN America’s Index of School Book Bans listed 1,477 instances of book bans in schools across the country, representing almost 900 different titles, from July 1 to December 30, 2022. The targets were overwhelmingly titles by and about people of color and LGBTQ+ individuals, according to PEN America.

It all marks a major shift from when Sarah Prager published her first book, in 2017.

Prager (CAS’08) is the author of several queer history books for children and young adults. Her titles Quest, There, and Everywhere: 27 People Who Changed the World (HarperCollins, 2012) and Rainbow Revolutionaries: 30 LGBTQ+ People Who Made History (HarperCollins Children’s Books, 2017) have been placed on “restricted” lists or singled out by legislators for removal from schools.

When Quest, There, and Everywhere came out, Prager says, “I was so heartened by the inspiring reception it received from queer youth and grateful teachers, librarians, and parents. I think I got one’s chromosome email in years.” Now, every time she gets a Google alert about her work, “instead of a book review, it’s another ban.” And when she checks her social media mentions, “I’m getting called a groomer and a pedophile, like other authors of queer children’s literature. I dread alerts now.” Prager no longer shares where she lives—for safety reasons, she says.

Of course, book bans aren’t new. Classics like The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn and Uncle Tom’s Cabin have long faced bans from classrooms over their use of racist language and stereotypes. But the recent ban attempts are more and more the result of parents’ rights coalitions—such as the conservative juggernaut Moms for Liberty—targeting books with antiracist or LGBTQ+ themes as inappropriate for children. What’s more, they increasingly have local legislation to support them.

One example is Texas House Bill 900, which requires book vendors to assign ratings based on the prevalence of references to sexual activity. In school libraries, books with “sexually relevant” ratings (containing sexual material that is part of a school’s mandatory curriculum) would require parental permission to check out. Books with “sexually explicit” ratings (containing sexual material that is not part of a school’s mandatory curriculum) would be removed from shelves. (Texas law defines “patently offensive” as materials that are an affront to “current community standards of decency.” It does not define the community standards.)

Besides Texas, book bans are most prevalent in Florida, Missouri, Utah, and South Carolina, PEN America has found.

“I still want people to discover my work,” Prager says. “But the more people who discover it, the more it’s at risk of them trying to censor it.” Bostonia spoke to Prager and fellow queer authors—Jillian Abby (Quest’17), who wrote the memoir Perfectly Queer: Facing Big Fears, Living Hard Truths, and Loving Myself Fully Out of the Closet (Hay House Inc., 2012), and Christopher Castellani (GIR’99), author of the novel Leading Men (Viking, 2010) and artistic director of the creative writing nonprofit GrubStreet—about the current state of censorship and what book bans mean for readers of all identities.

CHRISTOPHER CASTELLANI: Writers—novelists, fiction and nonfiction writers, poets, children’s authors—are all truth tellers. We’re revealing literal and emotional truths; we are mirrors back to the culture. It actually makes sense to me why some people are afraid of reading LGBTQ+ books, because a lot of people don’t want to challenge their assumptions [about the world]. It’s way more comforting to be angry and make a hasty judgment of a culture than it is to really investigate that culture or a person in their full humanity. That takes work—and most people don’t want to do that work. We’ve all guilty of that on some level.

But the irony, of course, is that if people actually read these books and read about the experiences that are told by these truth tellers, they would start to break down their fears and be liberated from them. But they don’t want to do a deep investigation of their own lives and their own comfort and the marginalization of others. The main thread here is that people are afraid. They’re going to read these books and feel like they’re complicit and being held accountable, and that’s not pleasant a lot of the time.

SARAH PRAGER: What I’ll say is this: I believe that many people who work to ban my books do not have the experience of reading them. What would happen if they read my books? I think I would certainly change their minds. I think they would be more open to learning about people like me and how awesome Pride is? That’s strange to me.

But I would also say to parents who may be scared of those people who are reviewing the themes that books get banned over: your middle schoolers and teenagers are already discussing these themes. For them to read books that discuss those topics in age-appropriate ways—that, by the way, have been vetted by major publishers, teachers, and librarians, who are all trained professionals—is an excellent way for youth to explore topics that they and their peers are already talking about. They help youth to further explore topics that they will come across anyway. It’s impossible to

But the irony, of course, is that if people actually read these books and read about the experiences that are told by these truth tellers, they would start to break down their fears and be liberated from them. But they don’t want to do a deep investigation of their own lives and their own comfort and the marginalization of others. The main thread here is that people are afraid. They’re going to read these books and feel like they’re complicit and being held accountable, and that’s not pleasant a lot of the time.

SARAH PRAGER: What I’ll say is this: I believe that many people who work to ban my books do not have the experience of reading them. What would happen if they read my books? I think I would certainly change their minds. I think they would be more open to learning about people like me and how awesome Pride is? That’s strange to me.

But I would also say to parents who may be scared of those people who are reviewing the themes that books get banned over: your middle schoolers and teenagers are already discussing these themes. For them to read books that discuss those topics in age-appropriate ways—that, by the way, have been vetted by major publishers, teachers, and librarians, who are all trained professionals—is an excellent way for youth to explore topics that they and their peers are already talking about. They help youth to further explore topics that they will come across anyway. It’s impossible to
try to deny the existence of LGBTQ+ people by trying to pull every single book in existence with a single mention of them off the shelf, especially when the internet exists.

What's the value of having access to books written by people with marginalized identities? CASTELLANI: So, I write novels. It’s great that there’s so much more LGBTQ+ representation in film and TV now. But when it comes to representation in film and novels. It’s great that there’s So, I write people with margin-

The thing is, if we talked about what the “problem” is—having inappropriate or graphic content in our classrooms— I think all parents could come together and agree: no parent wants pornography in the classroom. We could create definitions of what pornography is. We could create standards to evaluate books by. Where it’s getting confused is that people are making up their own definitions of what they consider to be inappropriate or pornographic. Anything LGBTQ+ that becomes pornographic, Tini Morrison sharing her real, lived experience becomes pornographic. Any men-
tion of anatomy becomes pornographic. If we clearly identified the problem then it would be easy to find solutions—but the goal is not to actually solve a problem. It’s to remove information about LGBTQ+ and BIPOC populations and certain religions. We’re not actually making up their own definitions of what they consider to be inappropriate or pornographic. Any mention of anatomy becomes pornographic. If we clearly identified the problem then it would be easy to find solutions—but the goal is not to actually solve a problem. It’s to remove information about LGBTQ+ and BIPOC populations and certain religions.

That felt like the worst time at the time; there was a lot of antity violence happen-
ing, because the freedom to marry cause was at the top of minds. Books like Rainbow Revolutionaries, says that someone “loved men and women”—not slept with men and women. It’s nothing more than that, depending on the age. A book for older teens might have a teen-appropriate level of discus-
sion that another young adult book at the same level would also have.

ABBY: The thing is, if we talked about what the “problem” is—having inappropriate or graphic content in our classrooms— I think all parents could come together and agree: no parent wants pornography in the classroom. We could create definitions of what pornography is. We could create standards to evaluate books by. Where it’s getting confused is that people are making up their own definitions of what they consider to be inappropriate or pornographic. Anything LGBTQ+ that becomes pornographic, Tini Morrison sharing her real, lived experience becomes pornographic. Any men-
tion of anatomy becomes pornographic. If we clearly identified the problem then it would be easy to find solutions—but the goal is not to actually solve a problem. It’s to remove information about LGBTQ+ and BIPOC populations and certain religions.

We’re not actually making up their own definitions of what they consider to be inappropriate or pornographic. Any mention of anatomy becomes pornographic. If we clearly identified the problem then it would be easy to find solutions—but the goal is not to actually solve a problem. It’s to remove information about LGBTQ+ and BIPOC populations and certain religions.

We’re trying to deny the existence of our own experience or
guish whether something was our own experience or
tics that LGBTQ+ young people in particular need to experience—getting to know characters on an intimate level, and feeling the emotions and the hearts and souls that they have in common. It’s sort of a cliché to talk about seeing yourself reac-

So, banning a book about a prince loving a prince while saying another book about a prince loving a princess has “nothing to do with sexual orientation” is so clearly just discrimi-
nation. These bills and bans are not asking to ban the mentions of sexuality. They’re only asking to ban the mentions of LGBTQ+ identity. They’re not actually asking to protect children from being sexualized or not hearing about sexuality too young. It’s all based on thinking that LGBTQ+ identity is inherently sexual while straight identity is inherently not.

My focus is teaching queer history. I’m not trying to talk about what these historical figures did in bed. I’m just mentioning the identity label that they had and what they did for their historical accomplishments, like you would for any historical figure. A book might mention that a man had a wife; I just want to mention that a man had a male partner. My middle-grade book that gets banned, Rainbow Revolutionaries, says that someone “loved men and women”—not slept with men and women. It’s nothing more than that, depending on the age. A book for older teens might have a teen-appropriate level of discus-
sion that another young adult book at the same level would also have.

ABBY: The thing is, if we talked about what the “problem” is—having inappropriate or graphic content in our classrooms— I think all parents could come together and agree: no parent wants pornography in the classroom. We could create definitions of what pornography is. We could create standards to evaluate books by. Where it’s getting confused is that people are making up their own definitions of what they consider to be inappropriate or pornographic. Anything LGBTQ+ that becomes pornographic, Tini Morrison sharing her real, lived experience becomes pornographic. Any men-
tion of anatomy becomes pornographic. If we clearly identified the problem then it would be easy to find solutions—but the goal is not to actually solve a problem. It’s to remove information about LGBTQ+ and BIPOC populations and certain religions.

We’re not actually making up their own definitions of what they consider to be inappropriate or pornographic. Any mention of anatomy becomes pornographic. If we clearly identified the problem then it would be easy to find solutions—but the goal is not to actually solve a problem. It’s to remove information about LGBTQ+ and BIPOC populations and certain religions.
In this excerpt from Jonathan Eig’s acclaimed new biography, Martin Luther King, Jr.’s days as a BU graduate student come to life.

“I’m Going to Kill Jim Crow”
In 1951, Martin Luther King, Jr., with degrees from Morehouse College and Crozer Theological Seminary under his belt, steered his Chevy north from Atlanta to begin his PhD studies in systematic theology at BU. At the time, he was thinking about a career in academia, perhaps after working as a preacher in a small town, writes Jonathan Eig in his new biography, King: A Life (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2023).

During his time at BU’s Graduate School of Arts & Sciences, King (GRS’55, Hon.’59), known then as M.L., was recognized as a leader. He attended sermons by Howard Thurman (Hon.’67), dean of Marsh Chapel from 1953 to 1965 and the first Black dean at a mostly white American university, who became his mentor. (The two watched Jackie Robinson play in the 1953 World Series on TV at Thurman’s home, according to Eig.)

“King found lasting inspiration in Thurman’s beliefs on integration, community, and the interrelatedness of all life,” Eig writes. “There is but one refuge that one man has anywhere on this planet,” wrote Thurman. “And that is in another man’s heart.”

He would also meet his future wife, a New England Conservatory of Music opera student named Coretta Scott (Hon.’69), in Boston. After King finished his studies, he and Coretta left the city for Montgomery, Ala., “soon to be the crucible for the civil rights movement,” Eig writes. “After saying he wanted a job that would place him on the front lines of the fight against segregation, the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. had been granted his wish.”

The following is an excerpt from Eig’s book, described as the first definitive biography of King in decades.

King earned a bachelor of arts degree in divinity from Crozer and graduated as valedictorian, winning a $1,200 scholarship for graduate study. His parents rewarded him with a car, a green Chevrolet with Powerglide, the new two-speed automatic transmission that allowed for quick, smooth acceleration without the use of a clutch.

But if Martin Sr. and Alberta King had hoped to see their son driving the Chevy around Atlanta, smoothly accelerating from home to church, and perhaps soon hauling grandchildren in the back seat, they were disappointed. In the fall of 1951, King took the car from Atlanta to Boston, where he enrolled at Boston University in pursuit of a doctorate.

Daddy King hadn’t been happy with his son’s decision to go to seminary. He had more reason to complain now that his son seemed intent on an academic career. M.L. knew better than to argue with his father. “Oh, yes,” he would say vaguely when listening to something he didn’t want to hear and didn’t wish to debate. He knew by now that he didn’t need to persuade his father to get his way. If there were any doubt that M.L. had his mind on a career beyond the pulpit, he confirmed it in his application to Boston University. “For a number of years, I have been desirous of teaching in a college or school of religion,” he wrote. “It is my candid opinion that the teaching of theology should be as scientific, as thorough, and as realistic as any other discipline. In a word, scholarship is my goal.”

Boston University was a historically Methodist school, with a predominantly white faculty and student body. Daddy King, despite reservations about his son’s decision, agreed to pay all of M.L.’s graduate school expenses not covered by his scholarship. Perhaps he was relieved that M.L. had chosen Boston University and not the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, which had been among his top choices, and which might have set his life and career on a dramatically different path.

King chose BU, in large part, for the chance to study with Edgar S. Brightman, known for his philosophical understanding of the idea of a personal God, not an impersonal deity lacking human characteristics. [Brightman (STH’30, GRS’32) was the...
Borden Parker Bowe Professor of Philosophy at GRS. "In the broadest sense," Brightman wrote, "personalism is the belief that conscious personality is both the supreme value and the supreme reality in the universe." To personalists, God is seen as a loving parent, God's children as subjects of compassion. The universe is made up of persons, and all personalities are made in the image of God. The influence of personalism would support King's future indictments of segregation and discrimination, "because personhood," wrote the scholars Kenneth L. Smith and Ira G. Zepp Jr., "implies freedom and responsibility."...

... In Boston, where he began to introduce himself as Martin, he didn't take long to find new romances. His approach to women at times resembled a competitive sport, according to Dorothy Cotton [Wheelock'60], the civil rights activist who would later become close to King. He would "try to make sure he could win the girlfriend of the tallest...handsomest guy on campus," Cotton said. "And that became a bit of a habit, I feel." One day, while he was eating lunch at a Harvard's Cafeteria, he spotted a fair-skinned African American woman, seated alone. King got up from his seat and approached her.

"You're not eating your beets," he said. The young woman looked up and said she hated beets. King said he felt the same way and asked if he could join her for lunch. Her name was LaVerne Weston, and she was a Texas native who studied Music. She and King bonded over the New England Conservatory of Music. She and King bonded over the cafeteria's failure to offer an alternative to beets with the chicken platter. LaVerne admired King's natty wardrobe and warm personality. He talked a lot and bragged a bit, but he asked good questions, and he listened, too. It was obvious that he was flirting, but LaVerne wasn't interested. King was too short for her taste.

"I'm going to kill Jim Crow," King told her.... After his first semester at BU, King and one of his friends from Morehouse, Philip Lenox, a student at the Crane Theological School, affiliated with Tufts University, rented an apartment at 392 Massachusetts Avenue, a South End rowhouse. The place was piled high with books. Morehouse pennants hung on the wall above the sofa. Lenox, an Alabama native, did most of the cooking; King washed the dishes. King made frequent phone calls home, reversing the charges. The apartment became a hub for young intellectuals and artists. King hosted a weekly potluck supper for a group he called the Dialectical Society or, sometimes, the Philosophical Club. The men smoked pipes. Graduate students read their papers aloud. Spirited discussions followed. They recorded the minutes and reviewed them at subsequent meetings. At first the meetings were attended exclusively by Black men, but they diversified over time, accepting women and the occasional white person. King was more than comfortable taking a leadership role. With the Philosophical Club, peers saw King already as a leader and a charismatic figure, urbane, sociable, and pleased to be at the center of attention.

"Martin was the guru," said Sybil Haydel Morial [Wheelock'52, '55], who grew up in New Orleans, attended Boston University, and went to parties as well as casual gatherings at King's apartment. She would become an educator, an activist, and wife to the first Black mayor of New Orleans, Ernest N. "Dutch" Morial. "He was the leader of it," she said of King. "He was so even-tempered and so self-possessed and so humble.... And he had a car!" Boston was not free from racism by any stretch. The Red Sox would not integrate their team until 1959, although Sam Jethroe integrated the Boston Braves in 1950, before that team moved to Milwaukee. Public schools remained segregated in practice. But it was far better than in the South, Sybil Morial said. Boston had art and artists. King hosted a weekly meeting of the Dialectical Society or, sometimes, the Philosophical Club. The men smoked pipes. Graduate students read their papers aloud. At subsequent meetings. At first the meetings were attended exclusively by Black men, but they diversified over time, accepting women and the occasional white person. King was more than comfortable taking a leadership role. With the Philosophical Club, peers saw King already as a leader and a charismatic figure, urbane, sociable, and pleased to be at the center of attention.

Excerpted from King: A Life (Parrav, Strauss and Giroux, 2023) by Jonathan Eig with permission from the publisher.

Feature Story

King returned to Boston in 1964 to donate his personal papers to BU, a collection that’s housed at the Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center. Below, a massive crowd gathers on Marsh Plaza for a memorial service for King on April 5, 1968, the day after he was assassinated.
endowed me, may put a little extra blessed me in many ways, and I hope on it at the age of 98. God has academic year—and a totally self-Festival, which thrilled me. Altogether, hometown), for concerts and opera, feasting on many cans of Heinz beans, by finding a cheap restaurant and by Symphony Orchestra, at fifty cents such as Betty Smith and Elizabeth ringer, and made wonderful friends, Smith, Everett Titcomb, and Karl Gei-professors, including H. Augustine the next nine months…. I loved all my a week, which became my home for the century flies by: Around the beginning to give the forties some representa-

He's Keeping the Ancient
Art of Fly
Tying Alive

> Master fly tyer and alum Scott Biron meticulously creates flies by hand

**THEY COME IN PATTERNS** of brilliant red, yellow, aqua blue, and soft grays, and have evocative names, like Commander, Brookie's Regret, and Gray Ghost. We're talking about the flies that Scott Biron meticulously creates by hand to be used in fly fishing—and each one is as colorful, intricate, and unique as any painted canvas.

“Fly fishing and fly tying are ancient arts,” says Biron (Wheelock’79), who retired in 2017 after 20 years in phys-ed and coaching and is now a master fly tyer. “References to fly fishing appear as early as 200 AD. In the United States, there are references to Native Americans tying feathers to hooks that were fashioned out of bone.”

These days, fly tyers still use feathers—along with synthetic and natural materials like animal hair or fur, thread, and wire—in their flies, which are meant to imitate the insects that fish like to eat.

It’s a secretive art, says Biron. Fly tyers have been known to take their patterns to the grave, he says. But Biron is working to keep the tradition alive. The New London, N.H., resident learned to tie flies and fly fish in the 1960s; in 2017, he was awarded a New Hampshire Traditional Arts Apprenticeship grant to study fly tying. Today, he’s a fly-tying instructor for New Hampshire Fish and Game, and he teaches classes, writes, speaks, and conducts demonstrations around the world.

“A lot of this history was passed down [by] word of mouth. So, I’ve tried to go back and re-create their patterns and educate people about them before no one remembers any of it.” — Cindy Bucchi
A Nonprofit in Kenya Helps Break the Cycle of Abuse

Alum Esther Kisaghu’s Rose Foundation offers education, training, and a support group for survivors.

TO ESTHER KISAGHU, BU was more than just a place to obtain a world-class education. It was also a refuge after leaving an almost decade-long-abusive marriage in her native Kenya. And, it was a launching pad for a life’s work to help others escape such abuse.

The foundation also has a support group for survivors; members live in informal settlements and work in the nonprofit’s income-generating project, a tea and snacks kiosk. In many cases, Kisaghu says, “women in sub-Saharan Africa are financially dependent on the very abusers they’re living with.” The work translates to economic independence, “which we know is a social determinant of health,” she says. “We are targeting the low-income population to bring them into a place where they can access resources and generate an income. Helping others live outside abusive situations results in being healthy and building healthy relationships, and this, in turn, helps build a healthy nation.”

Death, and the Journey Between (Tom Robbins, 2022), an intimate account of his cancer diagnosis and the amazing new immunotherapy treatments that extend patients’ lives.

1973
NHL DANELLA (COM’73) of Tamarac, Fla., published The Orange Apartment (Papu Publishing, 2022), the story of a teenage love triangle set in the 1960s in his hometown, the Whitestone neighborhood of Queens, N.Y. Hall is a professor of English and acting at Miami Dade College. Send all Email him at halina@mdc.edu.

1983
HERMANN G. KELLY (STH’83) of Baton Rouge, La., was in April granted a 2023 George A. Dean Distinguished Teaching Award, which recognizes fac- ulty members who have developed a sustained record of excellence in teaching. Kelly is an associate professor at the University of Central Florida.

1984
MICHAEL BARZIZ (COM’84) of Ryadh, Saudi Arabia, a US Foreign Service officer, was sworn in as the US ambas- sador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in March.

2023
PHYLIS ZAGANO (CAS’64) of New York, N.Y., coauthored The Last Impresario (Happy Productions, 2023), with her husband, Ken Klein. The Last Impresario is a memoir of Peter’s exuberant die-hard life, chronicling his journey from childhood in communist Romania to his emigration to Israel to his long career as an impresario working with dance, opera, and musical performers. Email Phyllis at urman.klein@gmail.com.

By Alene Bouranova

Read a Q&A with Esther Kisaghu (SPH’06) at bu.edu/bostonia.

By Lisa F. Smith
Terriers Run, Walk, Cruise, Party, Learn, and Celebrate at Alumni Weekend 2023

Scores of events aimed at bringing together alumni from across the University

TERRIERS OF ALL ages returned to campus in September for Alumni Weekend 2023. They had a lot to celebrate, including the 150th anniversary of the College of Arts & Sciences. The three-day event offered some 90 activities—the presentation of Distinguished Alumni Awards, a special reunion of Black alumni from the Class of 1973, a 5K fun run, and a festival on the BU Beach, along with trivia night at Fuller’s BU Pub, tours, lectures, panels, and mixers—all designed to bring the BU universe together.

Black alumni from the Class of 1973 turned out by the dozens to celebrate their 50th reunion, including organizers Alva Baker (CAS’73) (from left), Linda Keene (Questrom’73), Beverly Headen-Moss (CFA’73), and Manfred Hayes (Questrom’73). The tight-knit community of alums has maintained relationships over the decades—within their class and with Black graduates a few years ahead and behind them. “We had our own newspaper, our own student union, our own sororities and fraternities, our own choral groups,” says Keene, who spearheaded the reunion.

The Favorite Poem Project and the BUAA hosted a poetry reading in celebration of the project’s 25th anniversary and the CAS 150th anniversary. Maggie Dietz (GRS’96), a poet and former director of the project, reads “The Snow Man” by Wallace Stevens. The project was founded by Robert Pinsky, the 39th poet laureate of the United States and a BU William Fairfield Warren Distinguished Professor.

Joining the 5K run (and walk) on the Charles River Esplanade: Elman Leung (Sargent’24) (from left), Sargent College Dean Jack Dennerlein, and Kelly Pesanelli (CGS’94, Sargent’96, ’98).

Carolyn Collins (ENG’94, ’00) (left) and Angela Gomes (CAS’01, LAW’05) at the Menino Scholars 50th anniversary reception. The scholarship is a full tuition merit scholarship awarded to graduates of Boston Public Schools.

The Back to BU Beach Festival was a family affair for Jon Burstein (Wheelock’97) and Christina Rice (CAS’13, ’15), assistant dean of graduates, international, and online programs at the School of Law, and their kids, Amarellie, 7, and Owen, 3.

The BU Alumni Association (BUAA) bestowed its annual Distinguished Alumni Awards on six exceptional alumni. At the ceremony (from left): Jenny Gruber (ENG’99, ’99), president of the BUAA; awardee Danielle De La Fuente (CGS’04, Pardee’06), founder and CEO of Amal Alliance; Kenneth Freeman, BU president ad interim; awardee Mitchell Garabedian (CGS’71, CAS’77), an attorney and a longtime advocate for survivors of sexual abuse; awardee Santiago Levy (CAS’73, GRS’78, ’80), an economist and founder of the Progresa-Oportunidades program; and Erika Jordan, BU vice president for alumni engagement. Not pictured: awardees Richard G. Farineau (Wheelock’53), a former CIA operative and former BU assistant athletic director; Janet E. Petro (MET’88), director of the Kennedy Space Center; and Daniella Pierson (CGS’15, Questrom’17), CEO of The Newsette, cofounder of Wondermind, and the 2023 BU Young Alumni Award winner.

Connell Tar (Questrom’73) (from left), Anthony Williams (CAS’75, Questrom’78), Jim Skrekas (Wheelock’73), and Ellen Skrekas at the Golden Terriers reception at the Dahod Family Alumni Center.

The EU Alumni Association (BUAA) bestowed its annual Distinguished Alumni Awards on six exceptional alumni. At the ceremony (from left): Jenny Gruber (ENG’99, ’99), president of the BUAA; awardee Danielle De La Fuente (CGS’04, Pardee’06), founder and CEO of Amal Alliance; Kenneth Freeman, BU president ad interim; awardee Mitchell Garabedian (CGS’71, CAS’77), an attorney and a longtime advocate for survivors of sexual abuse; awardee Santiago Levy (CAS’73, GRS’78, ’80), an economist and founder of the Progresa-Oportunidades program; and Erika Jordan, BU vice president for alumni engagement. Not pictured: awardees Richard G. Farineau (Wheelock’53), a former CIA operative and former BU assistant athletic director; Janet E. Petro (MET’88), director of the Kennedy Space Center; and Daniella Pierson (CGS’15, Questrom’17), CEO of The Newsette, cofounder of Wondermind, and the 2023 BU Young Alumni Award winner.

The Favorite Poem Project and the BUAA hosted a poetry reading in celebration of the project’s 25th anniversary and the CAS 150th anniversary. Maggie Dietz (GRS’96), a poet and former director of the project, reads “The Snow Man” by Wallace Stevens. The project was founded by Robert Pinsky, the 39th poet laureate of the United States and a BU William Fairfield Warren Distinguished Professor.

The Back to BU Beach Festival was a family affair for Jon Burstein (Wheelock’97) and Christina Rice (CAS’13, ’15), assistant dean of graduates, international, and online programs at the School of Law, and their kids, Amarellie, 7, and Owen, 3.

The BU Alumni Association (BUAA) bestowed its annual Distinguished Alumni Awards on six exceptional alumni. At the ceremony (from left): Jenny Gruber (ENG’99, ’99), president of the BUAA; awardee Danielle De La Fuente (CGS’04, Pardee’06), founder and CEO of Amal Alliance; Kenneth Freeman, BU president ad interim; awardee Mitchell Garabedian (CGS’71, CAS’77), an attorney and a longtime advocate for survivors of sexual abuse; awardee Santiago Levy (CAS’73, GRS’78, ’80), an economist and founder of the Progresa-Oportunidades program; and Erika Jordan, BU vice president for alumni engagement. Not pictured: awardees Richard G. Farineau (Wheelock’53), a former CIA operative and former BU assistant athletic director; Janet E. Petro (MET’88), director of the Kennedy Space Center; and Daniella Pierson (CGS’15, Questrom’17), CEO of The Newsette, cofounder of Wondermind, and the 2023 BU Young Alumni Award winner.
Alum Mike Grier Is Hockey’s First Black General Manager

The retired NHL player, now with the San Jose Sharks, tapped a fellow alum as coach.

BY JOHN ROSENGREN (GRS’94)

Mike Grier never backed down from a challenge. As a six-foot-one, 235-pound forward, he won a national championship with the BU men’s hockey team and had a 14-year career in the National Hockey League by pounding opponents into submission. He was named to all-star teams, had a 14-year playing career in the NHL, and coached the younger generation to compete at the highest level.

Grier retired as a player in 2011, scouting for the Chicago Blackhawk; was an assistant coach for the New Jersey Devils, and was working as a hockey operations advisor for the New York Rangers when the Sharks tapped him to become general manager. Three days after he was hired, on July 4, 2022, he shepherded the team through the amateur draft. Before the month was over, Grier hired a new coach, David Quinn (CAS’89, MFT’90), who played for BU from 1984 to 1988 and coached the team from 2013 to 2018.

Grier had known Quinn since his playing days, when Quinn ran preseason skates for the Terriers. Quinn was a like-minded Terrier, influenced by then head hockey coach Jack Parker (Questrom’68, Hon.’99). “He definitely shaped the way we see the game,” Grier says. “Hopefully, I’ll be able to open the door for Black people behind me so owners and others can see that they can do the job.”

As BU’s hockey head coach, Grier’s play helped the Terriers win the national championship to cap the 1994-95 season, and earned him All-American honors. In 1996-97, his rookie season with the Edmonton Oilers, Grier became the first US-born Black player who had trained exclusively in the States to play in the NHL. He stayed for 14 seasons, playing 3,010 games with four teams (the Oilers, Washington Capitals, Buffalo Sabres, and San Jose Sharks).

After Grier retired as a player in 2011, he scouted for the Chicago Blackhawk, was an assistant coach for the New Jersey Devils, and was working as a hockey operations advisor for the New York Rangers when the Sharks tapped him to become general manager. Three days after he was hired, on July 4, 2022, he shepherded the team through the amateur draft. Before the month was over, Grier hired a new coach, David Quinn (CAS’89, MFT’90), who played for BU from 1984 to 1988 and coached the team from 2013 to 2018.

Grier had known Quinn since his playing days, when Quinn ran preseason skates for the Terriers. Quinn was a like-minded Terrier, influenced by then head hockey coach Jack Parker (Questrom’68, Hon.’99). “He definitely shaped the way we see the game.”

1990
Elizabeth Nordberg Stokes (COM’70) of Cambridge, Mass., published New American Funerals (8th andFarfor Press, 2002), a comprehensive guide to non-traditional religious ceremonies. “As a professional humanist celebrant, I have been designing and delivering funerals and eulogies for 15 years. I have now lived in the Boston area for a number of years,” she writes. “There was a complete lack of up-to-date and practical guidance on how to create meaningful and non-religious American funeral ceremonies, so I decided to write the book.” Learn more by visiting www.cremationfishandbird.com.

1991
Jorge Bosch (COM’13) of Palm Springs, Calif., published Dear Gosei: A Young Man Confessing His Past (Jorge Bosch, 2022). “Dear Gosei is the story of a young man who suffered traumatic abuse during his young age and, when he turns 25, embarks on a journey of self-discovery to find out about his past and confront the people who hurt him,” Jorge writes.

1995
Sean Sweeney (COM’95, CAS’95, CAS’99) of Orchester, Mass., is a clinicaladjunct instructor of speech, language, and hearing sciences at BU’s School of Health & Rehabilitation Sciences. In January 2023, he appeared on Jeopardy!, fulfilling a lifelong dream. Friends and former classmates can email Sean at sweeney@bu.edu.

1996
Javier Ortega (CAS’94, CAS’96) of Zurich, Switzerland, published Proud Student (Sage-Crowe Press, 2023), a collection of nature poems that express on a lifetime of experiences of life, acceptance, discovery, and a search for identity.

1997
David Penning (COM’97) of Taipei, Taiwan, published his third book about Taiwan, Transnational Taiwan: Crossing Borders into the 21st Century (Palgrave Macmillan, 2022). David is an associate professor in the department of applied linguistics at the National Taipei University of Business.

Dear Gosei:

Springs, Calif., published Dear Gosei: A Young Man Confessing His Past (Jorge Bosch, 2022). "Dear Gosei is the story of a young man who suffered traumatic abuse during his young age and, when he turns 25, embarks on a journey of self-discovery to find out about his past and confront the people who hurt him," Jorge writes.

ESTHER (GIAMMARCO) DUBE
(FA'63) of Harwich, Mass., said out very soon after graduation that the two things that I need to assume a wonderful mood, stay in day and out day, are classical music and dogs. In 2023, she celebrated 60 years of canine rescue and was awarded the honor of Game Changer of the Year by Karen Becker, a best-selling author and animal and health wellness advocate. Esther also celebrated 65 years of classical piano study and is still performing, mostly in organ-piano duets at the First Baptist Church of North Kingston. She taught private lessons for 25 years before getting involved as an accompanist for soloists and choral groups. Esther was also a freelance graphic designer for NBC for seven years and once met a certain red-haired late-night host at a celebration given by the network’s corporate division (picture). “I am now 78 years old, but stay 30 in my brain,” she writes.

DO YOU SPEAK BU?

BELOW IS A GUIDE TO HOW WE ID ALL THE SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES. OLDER COLLEGES/EARLIER NAMES ARE IN PARENTHESES. CLOSED COLLEGES ARE SHOWN IN GRAY.

CAS College of Arts & Sciences (CUL—College of Liberal Arts)
CFA College of Fine Arts (FIA—School of the Arts)
CGB College of General Studies (CBS—College of Basic Studies)
COM College of Communication (SFC—School of Public Communication) (SPRC—School of Public Relations and Communications)
CDE Division of General Education (CGE—College of General Education) (CSE—General College)
ENG College of Engineering (CEI—College of Industrial Technology)
GRS Graduate School of Arts & Sciences
LAW School of Law
CAMED School of Oceanic and Atmospheric Studies (MED—School of Medicine)
MET Metropolitan College
PARDPE Frederick S. Pardee School of Global Studies
QUESTRON Quantum School of Business (SMB—School of Management) (SGSM—Graduate School of Management) (CBA—College of Business Administration)
SARGENT Sargent College of Health & Rehabilitation Sciences
SDM Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine (GGSD—School of Graduate Dentistry)
SHA School of Hospitality
SOM School of Nursing
SPE School of Public Health
SRE School for Religious Education
SSW School of Social Work
STH School of Theology
UBU University Preparatory Program
WHEELLOCK Boston University Wheelock College of Education & Human Development (SED—School of Education)
They Created a More Hygienic Toilet Seat. Here's the Poop.

Alums launch Cleana, a new company that seeks to make dirty toilet seats a thing of the past.

BY SAM THOMAS (COM'24)

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN once said that “the only certainties in life are death and taxes, but we might add a third: dirty public bathrooms. Three BU alums may be on their way to eliminating one of those certainties. They’ve created a new kind of mechanical toilet seat designed to help prevent common everyday messes.

Kevin Tang (Questrom’22), co-founder and CEO of their tech start-up, Cleana (cleana.co), has been working on the project since 2019. The team also includes COO Max Pounanov (ENG’23) and CPO Andy Chang (Questrom’21, CAS’21). The three met through start-up events hosted by BU’s BUID Lab DG Capital Student Innovation Center and MIT’s Entrepreneurship Center. (Their chief technology officer is an MIT graduate.)

“Our mission statement is: ‘we just want to make dirty toilet seats a relic of the past,’ Tang says.

Cleana isn’t the first company to make and market automatic toilet seats, but unlike competitors, there are no complications or costs. You attach the seat—treated with an antimicrobial coating—to a toilet bowl like any other and then you’re ready to, well, go. After use, the seat raises or lowers (after a customizable time) without batteries or electrical input, using a pneumatic system.

Cleana offers two models: a commercial seat and a residential seat, which automatically lowers both seat and lid after each use. The commercial seat, made for public bathrooms, automatically raises after every use, eliminating unwanted splashes. A user can lower the seat by hand or foot, and once a person has done their business and stands up, a timer kicks in and the seat goes up after 30 seconds.

As part of their research, the team conducted a self-report survey of several hundred people; 75 percent of men responded that they never raised the seat before using a public toilet. In testing the commercial seat at Lucky Strike Fenway, a Boston entertainment venue, Tang says, the auto-lift feature kept the seat about 88 percent cleaner.

“It’s one of those things that touches everyone’s life—from behind, if you will,” Tang says with a laugh.
2023 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARDS

Danielle De La Fuente (CGS’04, Pardee’06)
Founder & CEO, Amal Alliance

Richard Fecteau (Wheelock’51)
Former CIA operative; former BU assistant athletics director

2023 YOUNG ALUMNI AWARD

Daniella Pierson (CGS’15, Questrom’17)
Founder & CEO, The Newsette; cofounder, Wondermind

Santiago Levy (CAS’77, GRS’78,’80)
Economist; founder, Progresa-Oportunidades program

Mitchell Garabedian (CGS’71, CAS’73)
Attorney and advocate for victims and survivors of sexual abuse

We are proud of these outstanding members of the alumni community.

To nominate an outstanding BU alum for a Distinguished or Young Alumni Award:
Targeting Animal Cruelty in Farming

Animal rights activist and alum Nirva Patel, who got fur sales banned in her town, is eyeing factory farming  

BY RICH BARLOW

YOU CANNOT BUY fur in Weston, Mass., largely because of Nirva Patel. The zesty hamlet 15 miles west of Boston outlawed the sales in 2021, making it one of a half dozen Bay State communities with such an ordinance.

“Fur is extremely cruel,” says Patel (R’100), who petitioned for the ban. “When trapped in the wild, animals are literally to be sliced off their legs from fur traps in order to attempt to return to their babies. In fur farms, animals are in overcrowded cages and suffer from infectious diseases, only to be skinned for their fur.”

Patel says she started filing a citizen petition in Weston. “Town members enthusiastically voted to pass the law in Weston,” she says. She later worked with her father-in-law and children to pass a similar ban in Lexington. “The Lexington ban is much stronger, because it sets a precedent to restrict the online sale of fur,” she says. “I hope to support other citizens in other towns to work together to end such a cruel and unnecessary trade.”

Patel’s current crusade involves the federal farm bill—which sets national policies for agriculture, forestry and is renewable every five years—and its rules and subsidies regarding factory farming. Inhumane conditions for animals destined for the dinner table have long been a flashpoint for animal rights activists, including Patel, a global policy fellow at Harvard Law School’s Animal Law & Policy Program. She’s the emeritus chair of Farm Sanctuary, an advocacy group against factory farming animal abuse.

“The bill has great potential to directly impact what we eat on our plates,” Patel says, “but is limited due to its continued impact what we eat on our plates,” Patel says. “When trapped in the wild, animals are literally to be sliced off their legs from fur traps in order to attempt to return to their babies.”

Patel hopes to gain federal support to curb the practices.
It all started in 2005, when Lynch met writer Wuyeh “Willy” Drammeh, who was interested in getting some pointers from an American author. Lynch has published eight books, nearly all of them focused on Steinbeck’s life and works. She talked with Drammeh a couple of times a month, sharing her writing knowledge and experiences.

Their working relationship soon grew into a bona fide friendship. When an injury landed Lynch in the hospital, he showed up with a bouquet of roses. Drammeh, who has since been named one of the Gambia’s 100 most influential writers, even dedicated one of his books to her.

During one of his trips back to his hometown of Soma, he met Bakary Baldeh, a teacher at the local secondary school who oversees a burgeoning English-language writer’s club. “I told him about Audry Lynch, and I suggested that we dedicate the writer’s club in her name,” Drammeh says. “And he said, ‘Let’s do it.’”

Until recently, according to Baldeh, school attendance in Soma has been low, especially among young girls. However, almost all of the writer’s club members are female. “Girls today want to seize that opportunity to make their lives better,” Baldeh says, “and when they see that Audry Lynch is female, they think, why not them also? In the Gambia, men always have the advantage. But it’s not like that in the writer’s club.”

The Audry Lynch Writer’s Club was approved in spring 2022, and is now the most popular extracurricular at the school. Lynch was floored when she heard the news. “I’ve never been so delighted,” she says. “I was absolutely honored.”

She plays an active role in the club, serving as a long-distance writing coach. She reviews student manuscripts and offers corrections, revisions, and writing tips by air-mail. She also hopes to travel to the Gambia and visit them soon.

The students may be 6,500 miles away, but their pursuit—and their promise—is familiar to Lynch. “I know how it feels to aspire to something big,” she says. “This is a lovely challenge for me, to tell them to persist, and that their work is worthwhile.”

**One Good Deed**

**AUDRY LYNCH (WHEELock’67)**

**MENTORING YOUNG WRITERS FROM THE GAMBIA**

By Sophie Yarin

AFTER GRADUATING from Radcliffe College in 1955, Audry Lynch took her first step toward a life that defied convention by becoming the first female reporter hired by the Berkshire Evening Eagle.

“It was all kinds of distressing to me, who were from a generation who said a girl should stay at home until she gets married,” says Lynch (Wheelock’67). “But I really wanted the job.”

She worked there as a reporter for a short time, then went on to become a teacher, a school counselor, and an award-winning author and expert on the writer John Steinbeck.

Today, the 90-year-old great-grandmother is living in Saratoga, Calif. Her chance meeting with an author who said a girl should stay at home until she gets married, “gives one hope and ignites a spark of what’s possible,” Lynch writes. “It was all kinds of disturbing to me, who were from a generation who said a girl should stay at home until she gets married,” she says. “I was absolutely honored.”

It’s not like that in the writer’s club.”

The Audry Lynch Writer’s Club was approved in spring 2022, and is now the most popular extracurricular at the school. Lynch was floored when she heard the news. “I’ve never been so delighted,” she says. “I was absolutely honored.”

She plays an active role in the club, serving as a long-distance writing coach. She reviews student manuscripts and offers corrections, revisions, and writing tips by air-mail. She also hopes to travel to the Gambia and visit them soon.

The students may be 6,500 miles away, but their pursuit—and their promise—is familiar to Lynch. “I know how it feels to aspire to something big,” she says. “This is a lovely challenge for me, to tell them to persist, and that their work is worthwhile.”
in May 2023, Sawsan (Meihi) Zahara, Wheelock’08 (third from left) and her daughter, Karen Zahara (CAS’23) (the new grad), of East Taunton, Mass., each submitted class notes in celebration of their family’s long-standing relationship with BU. “When [Karen] was accepted and decided to attend BU, I picked with my children that I ought to paint our driveway scarlet and call it Comm Ave,” writes Sawsan, who matriculated in 1986 as an international student from Lebanon and whose studies were sponsored by the Hariri Foundation, a nongovernmental organization. Sawsan earned a master’s and a doctorate from the BU Wheelock College of Education & Human Development. “I got married and had my first child, William,” she writes. “I had worked on my dissertation while pregnant with him, and had him on my arm when I graduated in 1994 [inset]. I guess William was destined to go to BU!” William (CAS’14) (above right) did just that, double majoring in political science and Latin. His younger brother, Adam (CAS’18) (above left), followed, majoring in chemistry. That left Karen. “Now, I’m joining my mom and siblings in bringing a fifth BU degree to our family of Terriers, making it a family affair,” Karen writes. For Sawsan, just one question remains: “Where can I find that scarlet paint?”

2023. Brittany came to Indiana from Bowling Green State University, where she was an assistant professor of trombone. Previously, she was a faculty member of the Boston University Tanglewood Institute and principal trombone for the Detroit Opera Orchestra. You can email her at brittanylasch@gmail.com.

2020. ALEX (CAS’20; Pardee’20) of New York, N.Y., produced Unconditional, a documentary following three families as they care for members with mental health challenges. An early cut of the film screened at the Kennedy Center in 2022, and was an official selection at four independent film festivals in the year of its release. Unconditional has aired on PBS and received a theatrical release at AMC theaters. In May 2023, First Lady Jill Biden invited cast and crew members to the White House for a screening, where she praised the filmmakers for their “passion and persistence.”

Jo Farkas, a retired school psychologist who, in her sixties, fulfilled her childhood dream of becoming an actor, died May 28, 2023. She was 96.

Farkas (Wheelock ’50) was born on May 4, 1927, in Boston and was raised in Newton Center, Mass. She earned a bachelor’s degree and later a master’s in school counseling at BU. She was a clinical psychologist in the Baltimore City Schools—she’d done theater on the side—before retiring.

“I decided I wasn’t going to grow old watching the whales go by, so I spoke,” she said in a 2018 BU Today profile. She moved to California and costarred in a San Francisco stage production of Kudzu, which seemed to launch a second career for her. She went on to land roles in nearly 50 films and television series, including the daytime soap The Young and the Restless, her TV debut. She appeared in a variety of dramas and comedies, including Shameless, Brooklyn Nine-Nine, Southland, and American Horror Story.

In 2008, she played Bubble, a sickly Jewish grandmother, on the soap Days of Our Lives. “I had no words except one burst of Yiddish,” she told BU Today. “It was incredibly boring—I laid in a bed all day. Whenever I was on camera I was in bed. And I was on camera a lot. But the food was great—they had great craft services.”

She also appeared in films such as Boxing Day, My Best Friend’s Wedding, Forget Paris, and Tank Girl, as well as a Super Bowl ad and the Pharrell Williams music video for “Freedom.” Farkas was 91 and starting to slow down when BU Today caught up with her in 2018. “I was always a compulsive worker,” she said at the time, “but I’m starting to be happy doing my crossword puzzles, hanging out, watering my plants. I’m amazed I’ve finally gotten to that point.”
President Emeritus Aram Chobanian, Who Helped Stabilize BU at a Tumultuous Time, Dies at 94

**RECORD GIFT RENAMED THE MEDICAL SCHOOL IN 2022 IN HONOR OF CHOBANIAN AND HIS LIFELONG FRIEND**

KENNETH FREEMAN, BU president ad interim, says Chobanian’s achievements as a physician and an academic leader are legendary.

“By every account he was an amazing leader, deeply appreciated for his kindness and his devotion to the great calling of medicine,” Freeman says. “He was called to serve Boston University at a crucial moment, and Boston University is better for his service.”

A cardiologist, Chobanian joined the medical school faculty in 1962. He served as BU’s interim president, then ninth president, between 2003 and 2005. (He preceded Robert A. Brown, who was president from 2003 until stepping down this year.)

Chobanian was interim president of Boston University during particularly challenging times.

“When the next history of Boston University is written,” Freeman says, “I believe the author or authors will affirm that among our presidents, none had a greater impact over a shorter term.”

Chobanian’s presidency capped years of service to the University. He had led major changes as dean of the medical school, a position he assumed in 1988. In 1996, the University added the title of provost of the Medical Campus. During his tenure, he oversaw the merger of Boston City Hospital, the city’s public hospital, and the University’s Medical Center Hospital, resulting in the creation of Boston Medical Center (BMC). The Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine’s affiliated teaching hospital. Today, BMC continues as the city’s safety net hospital, with a special mission of serving indigent patients.

He was also instrumental in creating BioSquare Research Park, a partnership of BU, BMC, and the developer Spaulding & Slye Colliers. The South End park is home to state-of-the-art life sciences laboratories.

While on the School of Medicine faculty, Chobanian led the division of medicine’s hypertension and atherosclerosis section. He was also vice chair for cardiovascular affairs in the department of medicine.

He was the founding director of the Whitaker Cardiovascular Institute, created in 1973 “to foster advances in research, treatment, and education in the broad area of heart and vascular disease,” according to its website. And when the National Institutes of Health decided to finance a National Hypertension Specialized Center of Research at BU for two decades, starting in 1975, Chobanian was its director.

After stepping down as BU’s president in 2005, Chobanian returned to his work as a University Professor and the John I. Sandson Distinguished Professor of Health Sciences.
Celebrated Abstract Artist and BU Alum Brice Marden Dies

IN THE DAYS AFTER acclaimed abstract painter Brice Marden died, appreciations and superlatives poured in. He was “one of the most admired and influential artists of his generation” (New York Times), a “visionary” (Vogue), and “a master of color, light and texture” (Washington Post). Marden (CFA ’61, Hon. ’07) “produced a body of work of profound beauty and intelligence” (Museum of Modern Art) and “pathbreaking explorations of gesture, line, and color that put him in a category of one” (Artforum).

Marden’s career spanned nearly 60 years, and his works are held in museum collections around the world, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Art Institute of Chicago, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., the Tate Gallery in London, and the Kunstmuseum Basel in Switzerland. In 2009, the New York Times proclaimed him “America’s grand old master painter.”

Marden died of cancer August 9, 2023. He was 84.

Dana Clancy, director of the BU College of Fine Arts School of Visual Arts, says she last saw Marden’s paintings in 2019, at a powerful exhibition at Gagosian Gallery in New York, which represented the artist. “It’s hard to use words to describe such materially rich abstract paintings as Marden’s, and it is even difficult to understand their power when only seeing them online or in a book,” says Clancy (CFA ’99), a CFA associate professor of art. “I went to see the exhibition because the works really function as they are meant to only when seen in person.”

“With Marden’s paintings, a viewer doesn’t stand still looking—the paintings suggest that one move from far to near to look more closely,” Clancy says. “Our movement as viewers in the gallery seems invited—or echoes—the painter’s quite physical process. Marden painted and moved across his studio space as he worked, using long-handled brushes or sticks as tools, as well as working the surface by scraping it.”

Clancy says she perceives a change in the paintings as she edges closer: “Layers of added and scraped-away wax-based encaustic paint reveal new relationships in paint, color, mark. The longer you look at this work—that at first glance can seem as simple to describe in language as colors and lines—the more you see.”

Born in New York, Marden attended Florida Southern College for a year before transferring to BU. In 1998 Bostonia profile, he told art critic and writer Phyllis Tuchman (DGE ’66, CAS ’68) that he received a grounding in the fundamentals at CFA, and was “made aware of the tradition of being a painter.”

Tuchman wrote, “One of America’s most accomplished abstractionists still remembers how thorough his education was, including drawing from the model and other kinds of figure studies.” But, she wrote, he stopped making nudes when they were no longer required. “I always wanted to make abstract art,” Marden told her.

After graduating from BU, Marden earned a master’s degree at Yale. He moved to New York and took a job as a guard at the Jewish Museum, where he was able to study Jasper Johns’ work during a museum retrospective. It was “an influential moment for the young Marden,” according to Artnet News.

Not long after, he had his first solo show, in 1966, at the Bykert Gallery in New York. “With painting decidedly out of vogue, reviews for this inaugural outing, featuring thickly painted surfaces blended with turpentine and beeswax, were mixed,” according to Artnet News. “Undeterred, Marden, by now working as a studio assistant for Robert Rauschenberg, slowly made a name for himself with large, often monochromatic canvases featuring flat, rectangular panels of color.”

Marden was credited with rejuvenating painting at a time when the art world had largely shifted its attention to pop art and conceptual art.

His technique shifted in the 1980s. Influenced by Chinese calligraphy, he began painting with longer brushes, from farther away. In a 2015 conversation with his daughter Mirabelle for Interview magazine, he described his technique: “When you’re using a long brush, you have your arm at full length. Basically, it exaggerates the movement of your body. But I always start far away and end up really close. Usually, when I am drawing, say with a brush from a distance, I always close in on it and I end up working it with a knife, so every inch of surface gets touched by this little knife. It’s like going from the vague to the specific—closing in on it, focusing.”

Tuchman described Marden as “unimpressed by his recent critical successes.” She noted in the 1998 Bostonia profile that one of his drawings, purchased for $300 in 1969, had sold for $3,960,000 at a Christie’s auction. Later in his career, his works sold for millions; in 2020, his painting Complements went for $30.9 million at auction. At the time, the New York Times wrote, “Such are the dynamics of the market for contemporary art that auction prices for Mr. Marden are now almost as high as those for an old master like Rembrandt.”
Charles Lindholm: “An Inspired Teacher and an Unsurpassed Mentor”

In memoriam.

Due to space constraints, we are unable to publish only a small number of names of ID alumni who have passed away. If you would like to be noted by the name of someone listed on our In Memoriam page, please send us their name, school and year of graduation, place of residence (city and state) and a link to a published obituary. Thank you.

Robert P. Weller, a College of Arts & Sciences professor of anthropology, pays tribute to Charles Lindholm, a CAS professor emeritus of anthropology. He joined the BU University Professor Program in 1990, after teaching at Columbia and Harvard. When UNI ended, he moved to the CAS anthropology. He joined the college's Social Science Committee, and was eventually beyond his intellectual loves, a scientist, an artist, and a child, all at the same time... Then I see his smile. It was a sense of acceptance, forgiveness and genuine interest. The warmth in that smile makes people feel seen, touched and included.

The second is an invocation from Fallon Ngon (a CAS professor of anthropology): "I am saddened by the news about Chuck’s passing. I used to refer to him as the Shaykh due to his virtues, especially his decency, which I admired. Below is my last message to him on 2021. May his great soul rest in peace.... Your disciples miss you for your retrenchment on the path of wisdom and active in ourselves, and in all those we may influence in turn."

Robert P. Weller, a College of Arts & Sciences professor of anthropology, pays tribute to Charles Lindholm, a CAS professor emeritus of anthropology. He joined the BU University Professor Program in 1990, after teaching at Columbia and Harvard. When UNI ended, he moved to the CAS anthropology department and helped to develop and teach the college's Social Science Committee, Lindholm died June 30, 2022, at 77.

CHUCK WAS AN influential and prolific scholar. He was the author of eight books, and his works are available in six languages. His initial field research was in the Swat Valley of Northern Pakistan, where he conducted a graphic study that resulted, Generosity and Jealousy (Columbia University Press, 1982), established himself as a leading scholar of the Middle East, and as a pioneer in the anthropology of emotion. He continued to publish on the region, but at the same time his interest evolved toward work in the United States, and toward broad theoretical issues.

His work on idealization and leadership tied to the publication of his well known Charisma (Wiley Blackwell, 1990), to an edited book on the topic in 2013, and to a number of articles on charismatic leadership and romantic love, as well as comparative studies of emotion. He also wrote textbooks on the Middle East, on identity, and on the concept of authenticity.

His influence at Boston University extended far beyond his intellectual renown. He was an inspired teacher and an unsurpassed mentor to generations of graduate students and colleagues. Each of us who knew him gained so much from our conversations—sometimes because of the intellectual inspiration he brought, sometimes because of his wide-ranging personal interests (photography, painting, music, and gardening), sometimes because of the wisdom he imparted about how to overcome some hurdle, and always because he was such a generous soul.

Four dozen remembrances from colleagues and students were posted within a few days of his death. These are available online (on the anthropology department’s Facebook page, Anthropology in the Works). Let me quote just two examples. Keeping Up (GIRSon, 2022) wrote, “I thought of all the pictures he sent us after his retirement, pictures of nature and of his own paintings. They were so full of appreciation and curiosity: a scientist, an artist, and a child, all at the same time. Then I see his smile. It was a sense of acceptance, forgiveness and genuine interest. The warmth in that smile makes people feel seen, touched and included.”

The second is an invocation from Fallon Ngon (a CAS professor of anthropology): “I am saddened by the news about Chuck’s passing. I used to refer to him as the Shaykh due to his virtues, especially his decency, which I admired. Below is my last message to him on 2021. May his great soul rest in peace.... Your disciples miss you for your retrenchment on the path of wisdom and active in ourselves, and in all those we may influence in turn.”
Everyone’s BU experience is different, and we want to hear about yours.

The Boston University Alumni Association is surveying all alumni to find out more about who you were as a student, who you are now, and how you want to engage with the BU community today.

Watch your inbox, or simply scan the code to take the five-minute survey now:

Complete the survey by December 31 for a chance to win some great Terrier swag!

Boston University Alumni Association
Red Sox photographer.
Chocolatier.
NASA engineer.
Believe it or not, they have something in common:
a BU degree.

Introducing the third season of the Proud to BU podcast, showcasing the career journeys of some of Boston University’s most interesting and accomplished alumni.

Listen today at bu.edu/proudtobu.