

Bostonia

THE ALUMNI MAGAZINE
OF BOSTON UNIVERSITY
SUMMER 2026

Leading a Historic School into Its Third Century

At Perkins School
for the Blind—
Where Helen
Keller Learned—
Alum David Barth
Wants to Offer
Children with
Disabilities a
Joyful Journey



HOW A BU-BASED
TOOL HELPS TRACK
DEADLY INFECTIOUS
DISEASES GLOBALLY

25 YEARS LATER,
AN ALUM WORKS
TO PRESERVE THE
HISTORY OF 9/11

A JAZZMAN
GOES BACK TO
CLASS—AT BU



YOU ARE
WHY.



BU LAUNCHPAD: HELP OUR STUDENTS SOAR

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tip sheet

FACTS, FIGURES, AND HUMBLEBRAGS

Q:

WHY ARE BU ENGINEERS STUDYING THE WORLD'S BIGGEST CITRUS FRUIT?

A: The grapefruit-like pomelo, native to Southeast Asia, can fall from great heights when ripe—up to 50 feet—without smashing into pieces. Researchers are honing in on the hefty peel that protects the delicate flesh inside—and that could help inspire more shock-absorbent cell phone cases, packaging, and even the hulls of naval ships.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP CENTER: MATT WOOLVERTON; CHARLES MANN/SHUTTERSTOCK; COURTESY OF VISIV MEDIA/US FIGURE SKATING; CYDNEY SCOTT; JANICE CHECCIO; PHOTOGRAPHY/SHUTTERSTOCK



SOX TIP THEIR CAPS TO BISHOP

Penny Bishop, dean of BU Wheelock College of Education & Human Development, received the Red Sox Most Valuable Educator award during a pregame ceremony at Fenway Park on May 2. She was joined by team mascots Wally (left) and Tessie. The Red Sox honor local educators at home games on Saturdays throughout the season.

POWER PLAYERS

Several members of the BU community are among *Boston* magazine's 2026 "Most Influential Bostonians" list:

Reshma Kewalramani (CAS'98, CAMED'98, Hon.'26), CEO and president, Vertex Pharmaceuticals

Bruce Percelay (Questrom'77), founder and chair, Mount Vernon Company

Melissa Gilliam, president, Boston University

Brooks Tingle (Questrom'91), president and CEO, John Hancock

Margaret Low, CEO, WBUR
Alastair Bell, president and CEO, Boston Medical Center Health System

Lindsey Butler (SPH'15; '21), executive director, Boston Green Ribbon Commission

Tye Brady (ENG'90), chief technologist, Amazon Robotics



MELISSA GILLIAM

TYE BRADY



TOP OF ITS CLASS

For the fifth year in a row, **Sargent College of Health & Rehabilitation Sciences** has retained its nation-topping ranking for occupational therapy instruction in *U.S. News & World Report's* 2026 evaluation of graduate school programs. Other BU programs to crack the top 10 in their respective disciplines:

School of Law, health law program: second best in the country.

Sargent's speech-language pathology program: sixth best.

School of Public Health: epidemiology (seventh), biostatistics (eighth), public health (ninth), and social behavior (also ninth).



CHAMPS AGAIN!

BU's Figure Skating Club won their ninth team title at the US Figure Skating 2026 National Intercollegiate Finals (NIF) in Salt Lake City, Utah, on April 12. The Terriers hold the record for the most NIF titles by a single school.

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BOOMERS AND ZOOMERS
CONNECT

COVER PHOTO BY JACKIE RICCIARDI



► Infectious diseases experts Nahid Bhadelia (right) and Britta Lassmann head a BU-based system that monitors pathogens around the world and informs the public health response (see page 36).

CYDNEY SCOTT

+ ON THE WEB

bu.edu/bostonia

Find our coverage of BU's 153rd Commencement, including an interview with speaker Reshma Kewalramani (CAS'98, CAMED'98, Hon.'26). Also, watch a video about the CAS Community Writing class, which brings together BU students and older adults at the Brookline Senior Center.

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feedback.

Remembering the Dugout

Editor's Note: We received lots of emails from the BU community after we published a story, online and in print, on the closing of the Dugout last winter. These pages are dedicated to some of them; more of your emails are online at bu.edu/bostonia. Thank you for sharing your memories!

THE DUGOUT wasn't just a place to grab a drink—it was a special third space. It was where we went after long days of classes, where friendships grew over shared pitchers of beer and deep conversations in cramped wooden booths. You didn't need an occasion to go to the Dugout; you just went and it felt safe and comfy.

Some of my favorite memories are the simplest ones—hanging out with friends and playing late 1990s and early 2000s pop hits on the jukebox. We made our own dance floor, and it was so much fun. I remember that our senior year, my friends and I purposely scheduled no Friday classes so that we could all meet on Thursday nights and hang out at the Dugout or Le Dugout (said with a bad French accent) until closing time.

I haven't been to the Dugout since we had an informal class reunion there about 10 years ago, but it will always hold a special place in my heart of a time when the world was simpler and

the possibilities of who I could become and what I could achieve felt limitless. I'm grateful I got to experience it during my time at BU, and I know I'm not alone in feeling that way.

Erica Stocks (COM'01, Wheelock '12)

THE DUGOUT, during my undergrad years, was a joyous place—dark, dingy, stinky. Abrupt hard-working owners. It was a sweet spot to tell stories,

pretend to be comics, just be wholesome happy college kids enjoying a short precious time in life. I remember my “boy-friend” coming out of the Dugout after his final, final exam; he saw me crossing the trolley tracks so I could get to a class at SMG [now Questrom School of Business]. He grabbed me, kissed me wildly while holding up the trolley. I admired the trolley driver for

not running us over and bowed to the audience applause.

Long live the Dugout. If I ever get another cat, her name will be Dugout.

Mary (Leary) Lindstrom-Swenson (Questrom'67)

THANK YOU, *Bostonia*, for the wonderful, albeit bittersweet, walk down memory lane. Given its proximity to the College of Communication and my dorm (Myles Standish Hall), it was a place my classmates/dormmates and I frequently



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Letters are edited for clarity, style, and length. Please include your full name and address.

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at bu.edu/bostonia.



one moment.

PHOTO BY CYDNEY SCOTT

AFTER NEARLY A CENTURY OF SERVING, the Dugout has poured its last pint. With most students still away on winter break, the beloved dive bar closed with little fanfare, an unceremonious ending for a place that loomed so large in the social lives of generations of learners. The owner, who inherited the bar from his father, who inherited it from his brother, boss-sold the liquor license to the Canadian chain Eagle Kitchen + Bar. The public learned of the sale during a Boston Licensing Board meeting on January 8.

For Kimberly Norship (CAS'08, SPH'10), the Dugout was never just a bar. “For my groups of friends, there was never a question that we’d end our night at the Dugout,” she says. “We’d go after BU hockey games, for birthdays, the last day of classes, and Senior Week. The Dugout was like a comfort oasis.”



Read the full story about the Dugout's closing.

attended. (Some may suggest perhaps too frequently? LOL)

While I am among the legions of alumni who “...held milestone birthdays, toasted the end of classes, celebrated hockey wins, and gathered even when there was nothing in particular to celebrate,” I have one more memory. While it would be incorrect to say that the Dugout was ever a substitute for a graduate studies COM classroom, legend has it that several classroom discussions and studies during my senior year that began at 640 Commonwealth Avenue eventually concluded at the DO.

Requiescat In Pace.

Bill Harris (COM'71)

AT THE END of finals in the spring of 1971, several of us in the MBA program went to the Dugout after the last exam. Six of us huddled in a booth. Five men

“Many of my anthropology seminars had informal post-class discussions (with the professor) at the Dugout. I graduated in 1975. Grad school at Penn had nothing to match it.”

Lou Carreras (CAS'75)

and a woman—the most beautiful one in our class. I had spied her at that fall's orientation and tried all year to engage with her. Nothing happened. Actually, I sat behind her in graduate economics and still no great level of recognition from her.

At the Dugout, I was finally able to break the ice, and she focused on conversing with me almost exclusively! At the end of the evening, after beers (which was all we could afford), I asked to see her again. She said yes! I graduated with academic honors and she graduated with high honors—Number 1 in our MBA class. She also did the groundbreaking in 1993 for the Questrom building. On June 20, 1973, we were married and still are, almost 53 years later. Now that's a Dugout story for the ages!

Matthew Barry Smith (CAS'70, Questrom'72)
Merle Sloss Smith (Questrom'72)

one moment.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL D. SPENCER

► **PAYTON HARVILL (CAS'26)** (center) gets a round of applause from Boston Pops musicians and conductor Keith Lockhart (Hon.'04) (left)—and Rhett—after guest-conducting “Stars and Stripes Forever” at the 111th BU Night at the Pops on May 16 at Symphony Hall. Alumni, family, friends, and members of the Class of 2026 gathered for the performance, one of the University’s oldest Commencement traditions. Student conductors, part of the program in recent years, are chosen by the BU Office of the Dean of Students.





Watch videos of Reshma Kewalramani (CAS'98, CAMED'98, Hon.'26) delivering the Commencement address, BU President Melissa Gilliam giving the President's Charge to the Graduates, and John Ward (LAW'76, Hon.'26) delivering the Baccalaureate address at bu.edu/bostonia.

BU CELEBRATES THE CLASS OF 2026

► About 5,000 graduates and 20,000 guests gathered on Nickerson Field for BU's 153rd Commencement | BY JOEL BROWN

COURAGE, PERSISTENCE, AND BOLDNESS were the themes at Boston University's 153rd Commencement on May 17.

"Through my journey, I found that my different identities and roles don't undercut each other. They make each other stronger," said Commencement speaker Reshma Kewalramani (CAS'98, CAMED'98, Hon.'26), CEO and president of Vertex Pharmaceuticals, the global biotechnology company (*see page 48*).

Kewalramani described for the 5,000 members of the Class of 2026 the different roles and identities that have defined her: immigrant, physician, mother, and business executive.

"For a long time, I believed life's biggest decisions demanded an 'or,'" she said. "Career or family, ambition or presence, boldness or caution." But instead, she said, she came to believe in "and" instead of "or"—in what she called "abundance."

The Class of 2026 enjoyed their big moment May 17 on Nickerson Field.



MICHAEL D. SPENCER



BU PRESIDENT MELISSA GILLIAM told the graduates, “At matriculation, you entered as individuals. And today, at Commencement, you leave as part of a global network of alumni of this great institution.”

“Abundance is not naive optimism. It doesn’t pretend competition doesn’t exist or that effort isn’t required,” she said. “People with an abundance mindset share information, build teams, mentor generously, and collaborate relentlessly. Scarcity often feels safer in the short term, but abundance always wins in the long run.”

During the ceremony on Nickerson Field, BU President Melissa Gilliam presented Kewalramani with an honorary Doctor of Science, citing her as a trailblazer whose leadership has led to the development of breakthrough drugs, including a novel treatment for sickle cell disease—the first to use CRISPR-based therapy.



RESHMA KEWALRAMANI (CAS’98, CAMED’98, HON.’26), the Commencement speaker and CEO and president of Vertex Pharmaceuticals, talked about the roles that have defined her: immigrant, physician, mother, and business executive.

Honorary degrees were awarded to four others: Patricia K. Donahoe MD (Sargent’58, Hon.’26), a pediatric surgeon, researcher, and trailblazer for women in medicine, who taught Gilliam at Harvard Medical School; Denise Hinton (MET’13, Hon.’26), a nurse, public health executive, and former US deputy surgeon general;

Hubert Jones (SSW’57, Hon.’26), dean emeritus of BU’s School of Social Work; and John Ward (LAW’76, Hon.’26), a pathbreaking civil rights lawyer and LGBTQIA+ rights advocate. Earlier in the day, Ward, founder of GLAD Law—and the first openly gay male lawyer in Boston and first openly gay man to argue before the US Supreme Court—delivered the Baccalaureate address at Marsh Chapel.

Also during the Commencement ceremony, this year’s Metcalf Cup and Prize was awarded to Julie A. Dahlstrom, associate dean of experiential education, clinical professor of law, and director of the Immigrants’ Rights & Human Trafficking Program at the School of Law. The Metcalf Award for Excellence in Teaching went to Monica Ann Pessina (Sargent’90, CAMED’05), a clinical associate professor of anatomy and neurobiology at BU’s Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine. The Metcalf Awards are the University’s highest honors for teaching.

Blake Hanrahan (Questrom’26), the Commencement student speaker, told the crowd, “We came to BU expecting answers. Instead, BU gave us better questions. That kind of mess—it’s not a flaw. It’s the mark of a real education.”

CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT: DAVE GREEN; MICHAEL D. SPENCER; DOUG LEVY; HANNAH OSOFSKY

COURTESY OF COLIN DUCKETT; COURTESY OF GABRIELA ARAGON (INSET)

BU’s New Provost a Renowned Scholar

COLIN DUCKETT, an internationally renowned scholar, immunologist, and molecular biologist and a respected academic leader from Duke University, is BU’s new provost and chief academic officer.

Duckett succeeds Gloria Waters, a longtime BU senior leader who announced last fall that she would step down at the end of the 2025–2026 academic year and return to the faculty.

At Duke, Duckett was executive vice dean for basic and preclinical science, serving as the liaison between the dean’s office and the science community at large. He oversaw biomedical graduate programs, the postdoctoral office, the animal care program, core facilities, and the Duke University School of Medicine’s research lab spaces.

One of his signature achievements at the Durham, N.C., institution was

coleading the Duke Science and Technology initiative. A \$100 million effort to expand interdisciplinary collaboration in areas such as quantum computing, artificial intelligence in education, and health innovation, the initiative connected Duke scholars across multiple fields to take on complex challenges.

Prior to joining Duke in 2018, Duckett was the chief scientific officer at the Baylor Scott & White Research Institute at Baylor College of Medicine in Dallas, Tex. And before that, he spent 15 years at the University of Michigan as a professor of pathology and internal medicine and director of the Cancer Biology program in the Comprehensive Cancer Center (now Rogel Cancer Center).

Duckett’s first day at BU was July 1. —Doug Most



HELPING BU GRADS SAVE ON A MASTER’S DEGREE

WHEN SHE GRADUATED from BU in May with a bachelor’s degree in economics, Gabriela Aragon (CAS’26) wasn’t done with the University. She just turned the page to her next chapter: pursuing an online master’s in applied business analytics at Metropolitan College.

That step, she says, might not have been possible without BU’s recently launched Double Terrier Scholarship. Graduating seniors and alumni holding BU bachelor’s degrees are able to receive a guaranteed 25 percent award toward eligible master’s programs at the University. The scholarship is automatically awarded upon admission—no separate application is required. Students are eligible if they’ve earned a bachelor’s degree from BU or the former Wheelock College and were admitted to an eligible BU master’s program beginning in summer 2026 or later.

According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, people who achieve a master’s degree can earn up to \$11,000 more annually than those with a bachelor’s degree. And recent studies have predicted that entry-level jobs that require master’s degrees may grow by 17 percent through 2026.

“Learning about the Double Terrier Scholarship definitely made the idea of continuing my education at BU more realistic,” Aragon says. “Graduate school is a big investment, so knowing there was a 25 percent tuition discount for BU alumni made a big difference. It also made staying connected to the BU community even more appealing.” —Joel Brown



GABRIELA ARAGON (CAS’26)

Learn more about the Double Terrier Scholarship here.



PRESTIGIOUS
BREAKTHROUGH
PRIZES GO TO
CAS SCIENTISTS

TWO BU FACULTY members were honored with 2026 Breakthrough Prizes—among the world’s most prestigious science awards—at a ceremony this past April in Santa Monica, Calif.

Lee Roberts, a College of Arts & Sciences professor of physics, received a Breakthrough Prize in Fundamental Physics, one of six top prizes awarded annually for transformative achievements in life sciences and fundamental physics.

Dillon Brout, a CAS assistant professor of physics and astronomy, received a New Horizons in Physics Prize, which recognizes outstanding early-career researchers for major advances in the field.

Often described as the “Oscars of Science,” the Breakthrough Prizes were cofounded by leading technology philanthropists, including Priscilla Chan and Mark Zuckerberg.

“BU is proud to have Lee Roberts and Dillon Brout as faculty members,” says Kenneth Lutchen, vice president and associate provost for research. “This is an extraordinary testimony to the innovative and breakthrough nature of Lee’s work in particle physics, and a terrific acknowledgement of the extraordinary work that Dillon has done so far in cosmology and supernova datasets.” —Sydney Gross



DILLON BROUT,
a CAS assistant
professor of physics
and astronomy.

LEE ROBERTS,
a CAS professor
of physics.



COM's AYSE
LOKMANOGLU is
one of 24 Andrew
Carnegie Fellows
in 2026.

BU Scholar Wins
Andrew Carnegie
Fellowship

AYSE LOKMANOGLU is studying a key crossroads in our cultural moment: political polarization and how it’s fed by online images, including those generated by artificial intelligence (AI). Her timely research has won her admission to a select group, as one of 24 Andrew Carnegie Fellows for 2026.

Lokmanoglu, a College of Communication assistant professor of emerging media studies, will spend two years investigating how images “spread online during politically charged moments like elections, and whether seeing those images actually makes people more polarized and distrustful,” she says.

The Carnegie Corporation of New York whittled down hundreds of nominations to select this year’s two dozen fellows, based on “originality and potential impact

of the [research] proposal, as well as the capacity to communicate the findings to a broad audience,” according to the fellowship’s website. Industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie established his namesake corporation in 1911 to fund the development and dissemination of knowledge.

The fellows program provides each honoree with \$200,000 for their research.

Lokmanoglu will publicize her research beyond academia. She also plans to host a workshop at BU for journalists, educators, and students. “Ultimately, I hope this gives people better tools to think critically about the images they encounter online, especially during politically tense periods,” she says, “and that it feeds into larger policy conversations around AI and information integrity.” —Rich Barlow

CYDNEY SCOTT (ROBERTS, LOKMANOGLU); COURTESY OF DILLON BROUT

JOANNE SMITH

Can AI Make Classrooms
More Joyful?

► BU Wheelock’s first Margaret McGuire Earl Career Development Professor says yes | BY LOUISE KENNEDY

MICHAEL ALAN CHANG’S work focuses on the collaborative design of AI tools for education—not surprising, given his background as a computer scientist who pivoted to education research after completing his PhD. What might be more surprising is how he describes that work: helping researchers “dream alongside students, teachers, and families about hopeful, joyful learning possibilities.”

Chang may have more opportunities to help such dreams become reality in schools with his recent appointment as the inaugural Margaret McGuire Earl Career Development Professor in BU’s Wheelock College of Education & Human Development. Chang, who’s also a Wheelock assistant professor of language and literacy education, a faculty fellow in the Faculty of Computing & Data Sciences (CDS), and assistant director of Wheelock’s Earl Center for Learning & Innovation, says he’s “humbled” that his work has been recognized as aligning with the Earl family’s vision.

For her part, Sylvia Tailby Earl (Wheelock’54) is delighted to support early-career faculty like Chang with the three-year career development professorship, named for her late mother-in-law. She sees it as a meaningful way of honoring Margaret McGuire Earl’s work as an educator. “I just felt that she deserved a great deal of recognition,” Earl says, for teaching mathematics at a time when few women did. This is Earl’s latest transformative gift to BU

Wheelock; she and her late husband, Jim, also established the Earl Center for Learning & Innovation.

Chang says the professorship will enable him to keep building relationships across BU Wheelock, CDS, and Boston Public Schools, which can lead to the collaborative design of AI-for-Education tools. In all of his work, the emphasis on designing collaboratively is key, as is his vision of going beyond current methods and approaches to reimagine what education can be.

“Rather than radically changing how we approach teaching and learning in schools, many of the most common uses of AI-Ed tools primarily seek to make existing instructional practices more efficient, individualized, and personalized,” Chang says. “I am

interested in understanding why it is hard to envision learning possibilities outside the status quo.”

That’s why his focus goes beyond efficiency to consider how successful learning feels. “This approach offers a new way to think about the role of technology,” he says, “in building on a large body of educational research that argues that learning necessitates forefronting learners’ joy and well-being alongside more traditional disciplinary learning.”

Chang’s current research builds on his postdoctoral work at the University of California, Berkeley, where he led the development of the Learning Futures Workshops, a three-year effort to design novel AI-based learning tools in collaboration with students, teachers, and families. The resulting tool, the Community Builder, has been deployed in public middle and high schools across the country.

Next, Chang plans to explore how practices from the arts and humanities can create opportunities for high school-age youth to participate in designing “AI-for-Education tools that challenge the status quo.” To support that work, he’s seeking PhD students who are interested in ethics and social justice in education, arts, technology—and, of course, learning together.

MICHAEL ALAN CHANG says the professorship will enable him to keep building relationships across BU Wheelock, the Faculty of Computing & Data Sciences, and Boston Public Schools, which can lead to the collaborative design of AI-for-Education tools.





Young says the fellowship, a prestigious grant from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, was a “joyful surprise.”

Harvey Young Is Awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship

► He’s stepped down as CFA dean, taking a sabbatical before returning to the BU faculty. Two other deans, Questrom’s Susan Fournier and CGS’ Natalie McKnight, also step away.

WHAT DO THE early 20th-century world’s fairs have in common with the concerts that studded Beyoncé’s Renaissance World Tour 100 years later? Both were big, popular entertainment events that drew enormous, diverse crowds. And both offered windows into the exploration of culture and race for people with an intrinsic curiosity about others, says Harvey Young, BU’s interim vice president for the arts.

“There’s an inherent curiosity and fascination and sincere interest in other people, other groups, other cultures,” says Young, who also is a professor of English, theater arts, American studies, and African American and Black diaspora studies at BU. Young stepped down as dean at the end of the spring semester, but will return to the College of Fine Arts faculty after a sabbatical. “I’m interested in exploring the curiosity,

fascination, and desire for individuals to learn about and experience race through select live and mediated performances,” Young says. His thesis, which is the subject of a forthcoming book, “argues that Blackness, as an idea, and Black folk, as individuals, proved sufficiently alluring, attractive, and inspiring across the 20th century that ideas of community and interpersonal relationships were premised on them,” he says.

Young’s exploration of this subject is also, in part, what earned him a Guggenheim Fellowship, a prestigious grant from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. Each year, the foundation awards fellowship grants to individuals making significant contributions in the natural sciences, the social sciences, the creative arts, and the humanities. Young’s research, supported by the Guggenheim Fellowship,



I’m interested in exploring the curiosity, fascination, and desire for individuals to learn about and experience race through select live and mediated performances.”

HARVEY YOUNG

will run concurrently with a sabbatical he had already planned to take at the end of the academic year.

Young says the honor was “a pleasant, wonderful, joyful surprise.”

Lynne Allen, a CFA professor of art and chair of print media and photography, was appointed the college’s interim dean. Allen served as director of the School of Visual Arts from 2006 to 2015 and as dean ad interim of CFA from 2015 to 2017.

QUESTROM, CGS DEANS

Two other BU deans stepped down on June 30. Susan Fournier, who was the first woman dean at Questrom School of Business and the first academic in the post in 40 years, led the school for eight years. Natalie McKnight, who joined the

College of General Studies’ faculty in 1990 as a Victorian studies scholar, was appointed dean in 2014.

Fournier will retire from BU in December. McKnight will take a year’s sabbatical, then return to the University to teach a course on global philosophical approaches to happiness.

Fournier became dean after 24 years in academia, including 13 as a world-leading marketing and management expert at the school, where she also was Allen Questrom Professor. She led the first major overhaul of its curriculum in decades, which redefined and moved up—earlier in students’ education—the classes and real-world experiences that businesses demand from interns and employees.

During her tenure, Questrom created its online MBA program, MS degree programs in business analytics and finance, and, starting this fall, an online MS program, AI in Business. Fournier also presided over the creation of the Ravi K. Mehrotra Institute for Business, Markets & Society, which produces curriculum, events, and research to inform how businesses should be governed and how markets should be designed and regulated to deliver real value in a complex business world.

Marcel Rindisbacher, the institute’s director and Questrom’s inaugural Ravi K. Mehrotra Professor of Business and professor of finance, has been appointed interim dean.

During McKnight’s tenure, CGS transitioned from the typical September start of studies for incoming freshmen to January, starting with one semester in Boston ahead of a summer session in London or New England. It’s the only University program offering study abroad in a student’s first year.

Her deanship also saw the introduction of the college’s first-ever minor, in interdisciplinary studies. McKnight says her

proudest accomplishment is the school’s growth in undergraduate research and professional internships, from one or two per year to about 80, thanks to donors and leadership from the Center for Interdisciplinary Teaching & Learning.

Lynn O’Brien Hallstein—assistant provost for general education, a professor of rhetoric, and a scholar of communications and motherhood studies—is interim dean. —Molly Glass and Rich Barlow



SUSAN FOURNIER



NATALIE MCKNIGHT

CYDNEY SCOTT

COURTESY OF QUESTROM SCHOOL OF BUSINESS (TOP); ZIYU (JULIAN) ZHU (CGS’23, COM’25)

Your Schools & Colleges

COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

WRITING CLASS
CONNECTS
TERRIERS WITH
OLDER ADULTS

STUDENTS IN THE College of Arts & Sciences course Community Writing can get to know their neighbors on a first-name basis. But these neighbors aren't from their dorms or apartments. They are older adults who gather weekly at the Brookline Senior Center. Over several weeks, BU upperclassmen in the writing course and the senior center visitors learn to write



LIANI DIAZ (QUES-
TROM'26) (left)
with Sandra Boris-
Berkowitz during a
visit to the Brookline
Senior Center in April.

creatively about their own experiences. Then they talk with each other, sharing their viewpoints on different topics and ideas.

The class, taught by Jessica Bozek (UNI'99), a master lecturer in the CAS Writing Program, focuses on "life writing." "The conversations give students the benefits of communicating with other people, but also exposure to more perspectives—often perspectives of people who they would not encounter in their daily lives," Bozek says.

"I love, love, love this class," says Sandra Boris-Berkowitz, a senior center visitor. "It's the third time I'm taking it. To be with college students is a real gift." —*Kayla Baltazar (COM'27)*

+
Watch a video of BU students and Brookline residents in the CAS writing class.



Emmy-winning documentary filmmaker Ken Burns received COM's Hugo Shong Lifetime Journalism Achievement Award in March.



COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATION

DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER
KEN BURNS HONORED

IN A SOCIETY seemingly obsessed with binaries—young or old, rich or poor, red state or blue state—even the best arguments in the world won't change someone's point of view. "The only thing that can do that is a good story," said award-winning documentary filmmaker Ken Burns, a keynote speaker at the College of Communication's annual Power of Narrative Conference on March 27.

Burns, who was paraphrasing a quote by novelist Richard Powers, was also summarizing his life's work: the pursuit of stories that bring some nuance back into the all-or-nothing thinking that has come to dominate our culture.

"Our obligation is to have a dedication to very, very complex narratives," said Burns, who received COM's Hugo Shong Lifetime Journalism Achievement Award at the

conference. "For many, many years, in the main editing room where I work, I have had a neon sign, in lowercase cursive, that says, 'it's complicated.' There are lots of layers to that, but essentially, it means that the facts have to win out over the art."

For almost 50 years, Burns has painstakingly created documentaries that prioritize the whole truth, in all its messy complexity, about a variety of American historical events and cultural touchstones, including the Brooklyn Bridge, the Civil War, baseball, jazz, country music, and, more recently, the Revolutionary War.

Also at the conference, Marcus Yam, a photojournalist and foreign correspondent with *The Globe and Mail*, received the Hugo Shong Reporting on Asia Award. The awards are named after Board of Trustees member Hugo Shong (COM'87). —*Molly Glass*

WHEELOCK COLLEGE OF EDUCATION & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

FORUM EXPLORES AI IN EDUCATION

IN THE past few years, artificial intelligence (AI) has infiltrated nearly every sector and industry. Now, many teachers, parents, and administrators are asking: What do teaching and learning mean in an AI world?

The question was at the center of the 2026 BU Wheelock Forum AI and the Future of Education, hosted by

Wheelock College of Education & Human Development last March. Approximately 250 people—including educators, administrators, and scholars—attended the event, which featured a keynote from Aaron Rasmussen (COM'06, CAS'06), cofounder of online education platforms Outlier.org and MasterClass, and a

faculty panel discussion moderated by Wheelock Dean Penny Bishop. "When we think about the way AI is changing education, we need to think about who is going to guide AI to make education better," Rasmussen said. "And it seems to me that educators would be the best people to do that." —*Steve Holt*

Pianist **CARLO BALMORIA (CFA'26)** plans to use the award to open a teaching studio in the rural Ohio town where his mother grew up.



COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS

PIANIST IS 2026 KAHN
AWARD WINNER

THE ESTHER B. and Albert S. Kahn Career Entry Award is given annually to a College of Fine Arts student completing their graduate or undergraduate studies to help them launch their career and make an impact on society. Pianist Carlo Balmoria (CFA'26) will use the \$20,000 he received as the winner of this year's Kahn Award to change the lives of young musicians in rural Willard, Ohio, population 6,100.

Balmoria, who graduated from BU with a Bachelor of Music in piano performance, will use the award to open a teaching studio in Willard and start a series of lectures and recitals. "My mother grew up there," Balmoria says, "and it's a place where I think there's a lot of possibility for a more vibrant art scene in a very rural part of the country, which you don't often see."

Balmoria has appeared as soloist on prestigious stages, including the Gijon International Piano Festival and the Malaga International Piano Festival, but he often performs at retirement homes, hospitals, and other places where music is needed the most. He plans to continue that work and to play and teach organ as well as piano.

Five other finalists each received \$5,000: Aija Reke (CFA'15'26), Doctor of Musical Arts in violin; Sydney Jackson (CFA'26), Bachelor of Fine Arts in acting, musical theater concentration; Nichole Man (CFA'26), Master of Fine Arts in production management, graduate certificate in project management; Tyler Best (CFA'26), Bachelor of Fine Arts in graphic design; and Kal Lee (CFA'26), Master of Fine Arts in sculpture. —*Joel Brown*

COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS

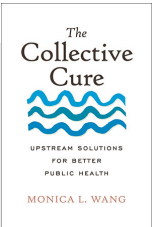
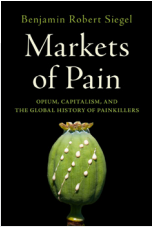
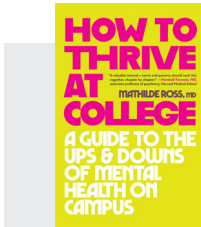
ACCLAIMED COMPOSER AND
CONDUCTOR JOINS CFA

MATTHEW AUCOIN, one of the most exciting and sought-after opera and classical music composers working today, has joined the CFA School of Music faculty.

A 2018 MacArthur Fellow and a Grammy-nominated composer, Aucoin is a visiting professor of composition and conducting. His work has been performed on stages across the globe, including at the Metropolitan Opera in New

York. While one of the most in-demand composers working today, with commissions years out, he has been leading one-on-one lessons with BU composition students and teaching graduate voice and conducting students in his opera performance workshop.

Aucoin is a cofounder of the American Modern Opera Company, known for producing new works, and his orchestral and chamber



BY THE BOOK

NEW TITLES BY BU
FACULTY AND STAFF

MATHILDE ROSS has been a senior staff psychiatrist in BU's Student Health Services for nearly 20 years. Her new book, *How to Thrive at College: A Guide to the Ups & Downs of Mental Health on Campus* (Diversio Books, 2026), is a practical primer for teenagers and young adults—and their parents—that seeks to demystify mental health, discuss risk factors, and highlight strategies for broaching difficult topics.

The rare earths so essential to our modern technology have become a new diplomatic weapon—used to leverage influence and wield power, reshape global alliances, and exert economic dominance. For centuries, says **BENJAMIN R. SIEGEL**, a **COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES** associate professor of history,

opium was used in much the same way. In Siegel's *Markets of Pain: Opium, Capitalism, and the Global History of Painkillers* (Oxford University Press, 2026), he "shows how this potent crop reshaped global trade, medicine, and geopolitics," according to his publisher.

MONICA WANG'S *The Collective Cure: Upstream Solutions for Better Public Health* (Beacon Press, 2026) outlines how we can all contribute to healthier communities. Wang, a **SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH** associate professor of community health sciences, argues that enhancing our shared well-being requires a collaborative approach that recognizes our interdependence and the roles we can all play in improving the health of our communities.

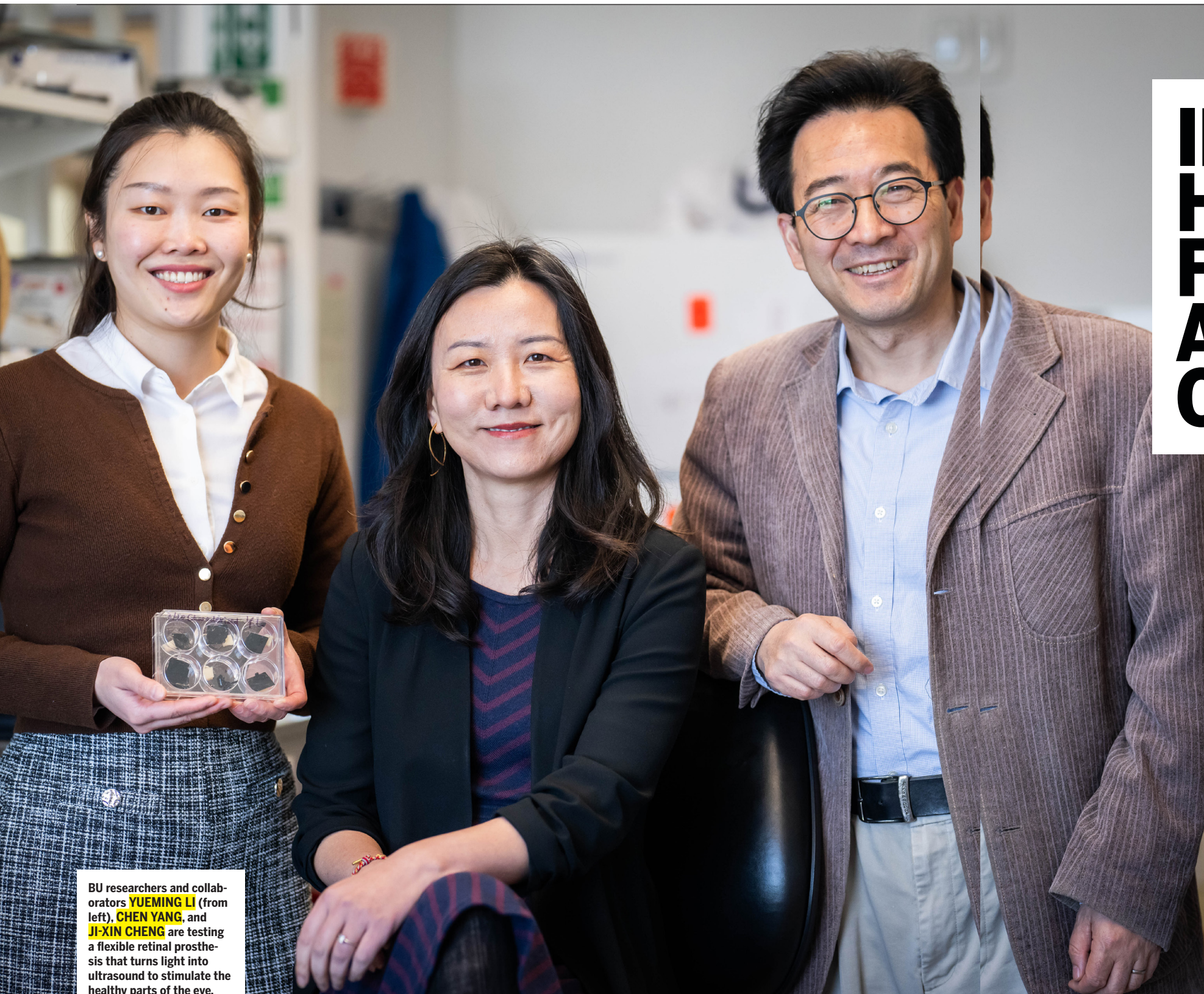


As a visiting professor, **MATTHEW AUCOIN** is preparing a new generation of musicians at BU.

music has been performed, commissioned, and recorded by Yo-Yo Ma, the Chicago Symphony, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and other leading artists and ensembles.

He sees teaching as a natural extension of his journey as a musician.

"Until now, I've never taught composition in a sustained way," Aucoin says. "I'd do workshops or visit a festival like Aspen or Tanglewood for two days and work with students. And I always felt, this is great, but when you do it for just a couple of days, you don't get a chance to build a deep connection." —*John O'Rourke*



BU researchers and collaborators **YUEMING LI** (from left), **CHEN YANG**, and **JI-XIN CHENG** are testing a flexible retinal prosthesis that turns light into ultrasound to stimulate the healthy parts of the eye.

IMPLANT COULD HELP RESTORE SIGHT FOR PEOPLE WITH A LEADING CAUSE OF BLINDNESS

► A BU-developed retinal prosthesis could bring hope to millions who have the eye disease age-related macular degeneration

BY ANDREW THURSTON

IN THE FIRST STAGES of age-related macular degeneration, patients can often see just fine. But then colors start dimming, reading becomes tougher; as the eye disease progresses, their central vision may turn blurry, or fade altogether.

The disease will eventually leave some people legally blind. Treatments can slow the deterioration, but for the nearly 200 million people globally with age-related macular degeneration (AMD), there's no cure.

In her lab at Boston University, chemist and engineer Chen Yang is testing and refining a flexible retinal prosthesis that she hopes could be implanted in the eye to help restore sight in people with severe AMD and a range of other retinal degenerative diseases. The prosthesis—a thin, soft polymer- and nanocarbon-based film—turns light into ultrasound to stimulate the healthy parts of the eye undamaged by disease.

“Lost vision has a huge impact on quality of life,” says Yang, a professor of chemistry in the College of Arts & Sciences and of electrical and computer engineering at the College of Engineering. “There is a critical need for so many patients—they need an alternative solution.”

Around 1.5 million people in the US are estimated to be in AMD's later stages; the disease is reportedly the most common cause of sight loss in those over 60 years of age. One of the most famous people with late-stage AMD is actor Judi Dench. In a 2023 interview with the UK's *Sunday Mirror*, the Oscar-winning star of stage and screen said she could no longer watch television or read scripts. “I can't see on a film set anymore,” she said.

Some of the BU team's patents for its prosthesis technology have already been licensed to a French company, Axorus, which is developing a contact

JACQUE RICCIARDI

lens to restore sight for people with the disease. Yang also plans to found a start-up to help commercialize the technology in the United States.

“Our next step is to get a first human study, validate the safety of the technology, then move on to a clinical trial for patients who are blind,” Yang says.

THE PHOTOACOUSTIC EFFECT

The retina is where the action happens in the eye, its cells transforming light into the signals your brain turns into images. Yang says the retina is structured a bit like a lasagna, containing layers of cells with different jobs to do. “We have a layer called the photoreceptor—that’s the layer that’s sensitive to light.” It’s also the one that AMD attacks, Yang says: “When patients become blind, that layer is gone.”

The prosthesis is designed to take that layer’s place. To do so, it takes advantage of a phenomenon known as the photoacoustic effect, which is when sound waves are produced by a material when it absorbs light.

“The implant will convert each pixel of light to a very tiny ultrasound,” a sound wave, says Yang. “Then this ultrasound will stimulate the rest of the ‘lasagna,’ those layers that have mechanosensitive proteins on their membrane, so they generate an electrical signal, which is then propagated to the brain.” According to Yang, the mechanosensitive layers—which turn physical input into an output signal—still function, even in severe AMD.

The team recently examined its prosthesis in test retinas and animal models, publishing the results in *Nature Communications*. They found the implant—a flexible, photoacoustic film—“efficiently generated acoustic waves,” which sparked the rest of the retina into activity, leading to “visual restoration.”

It’s not the first time a retinal prosthesis has been tested. Yang says a few previous efforts by other groups made it to clinics and patients, but have since been discontinued. One of



Our technology is made of polymer, so we can make large implants relatively easily. And it’s soft, so the surgical procedure is easier,” says Yang. She expects it to offer much higher acuity and improved field of vision compared to past technologies.

the discontinued versions, according to Yang, offered only 60 pixels (many smartphone cameras have millions of pixels, and some have estimated

your eye to have the resolution equivalent of hundreds of millions). It was also rigid, making surgery difficult and minimizing the field of vision it could restore.

“Our technology is made of polymer, so we can make large implants relatively easily. And it’s soft, so the surgical procedure is easier,” says Yang. She expects it to offer much higher acuity and improved field of vision compared to past technologies.

Yang has teamed up with Ji-Xin Cheng, an ENG distinguished professor who’s a precision medicine pioneer and an expert in potential applications of the photoacoustic effect. She’s also collaborating with Serge Picaud, a vision neuroscientist at Sorbonne Université and the Institut de la Vision in France. Both were coauthors on the recent *Nature Communications* study.

Yang hopes the retinal prosthesis technology will be in clinics and helping patients within the next few decades. “The science part we have—it’s possible to give artificial vision,” says Yang. “It’s going to be a long trajectory, but we’re highly motivated.”



The retinal prosthesis is a soft film made of polymer and carbon nanomaterials—so the color is black. Engineer Chen Yang says her team hopes to soon move the development of the device to the next stage—a first human study.



ELIZABETH BARNES. BU’s inaugural Dalton Family Chair in Environmental Data Science & Sustainability, and her team have found AI can be useful in predicting hurricanes across years and seasons and in improving multiyear climate predictions.

HOW AI HELPS PREDICT THE EARTH’S CLIMATE

► Researchers can crunch vast amounts of data, allowing them to look decades ahead | BY MOLLY GLASS

ANYONE WHO’S BEEN caught in a storm without an umbrella understands the importance of having reliable weather forecasts. But for many, this information is about more than avoiding an inconvenient soaking. Farmers need to know whether they’re getting one more frost before planting seeds. Emergency responders need to know when a hurricane is likely to hit, so they can evacuate people from the most dangerous zones.

The challenge is that these predictions rely on a vast—and constantly fluctuating—set of variables, including temperature,

atmospheric pressure, humidity, wind, and precipitation. A veritable fleet of surface balloons, satellites, radar, ocean buoys, ships, and aircraft are collecting and reporting a nonstop stream of information. And that’s just to get tomorrow’s forecast. Earth scientists have to wrangle all of this data and more to get an idea of what the weather—and the global climate—might look like a year, a decade, or a century from now.

Researchers such as Elizabeth “Libby” A. Barnes, BU’s inaugural Dalton Family Chair in Environmental Data Science & Sustainability, are

turning to artificial intelligence (AI) and its ability to crunch vast amounts of data.

Barnes and her team focus on understanding the Earth system—how our planet’s air, water, land, ice, and many life-forms might influence each other and change across time and place—all to improve our prediction of climate and extreme weather on time scales from days to decades.

TESTING WHAT-IF SCENARIOS

AI tools are making huge computational advances in highly complex Earth system models that are the bread and butter of Earth science research. These

models provide crucial insights for issues such as climate change, food security, human health, and resource management. Scientists can run experiments on these models to test what-if scenarios, such as volcanic eruptions or carbon dioxide increases. Policymakers can also use these models to guide resource stewardship decisions for the future.

Typically, these models have been labor-intensive and slow to make. Using AI, however, researchers can make them better and much faster—which means they can run more experiments in a shorter period of time.

Barnes’ team, for instance, has found large-scale data models can be useful in predicting hurricanes across years and seasons. They’ve also developed a way to combine machine learning and analog forecasting to improve multiyear climate predictions. And they’ve collaborated on a project that fused climate model simulations and trade data to assess how extreme weather in one country might ripple out and affect many others.

Barnes is especially interested in understanding how the algorithms that power AI programs make predictions, what data they use and how they learn from it, to illuminate possible pathways for new discoveries about our planet and artificial intelligence. That understanding, she says, is crucial for quantifying the level of certainty associated with a weather or climate prediction.



SMALL LIFESTYLE CHANGES IN YOUR 20s CAN SHAPE HEART ATTACK RISK FOR DECADES

BY SANGMIN SONG (COM'26)

FOR YOUNG ADULTS, cardiovascular disease is such a distant threat that most probably don't ever think about it. The average age for having a heart attack is around 65 for men and over 70 for women. But a new BU-led study suggests that making minor lifestyle changes early in life can significantly reduce your chances of cardiovascular disease (CVD) in your golden years.

The BU team examined 40 years of data from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute-funded Coronary Artery Risk Development in Young Adults (CARDIA) study, a decades-long project that has followed the health of thousands of adults who were between 18 and 30 years of age in the mid-1980s.

To track how heart health scores shifted over time, the researchers used the American Heart Association's Life's Essential 8 (LE8) scoring system, which measures a person's diet, physical activity, nicotine exposure, sleep, weight, blood pressure, blood sugar, and blood lipids. A higher LE8 score indicates a healthier lifestyle—and better cardiovascular health. The

researchers observed how those scores changed over participants' first 20 years in the study, and then how those patterns related to poor outcomes, such as heart attacks and strokes, in the subsequent 20 years.

"People who maintained high LE8 scores from ages 18 to 30 had the lowest risk for heart attacks and strokes, while those who remained at moderate levels had about twice the risk," says Donald Lloyd-Jones, a BU Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine professor of medicine and director of the BU-led Framingham Heart Study. "Participants whose scores declined from moderate to low had a tenfold higher risk of cardiovascular events in midlife. Even small improvements in LE8 during early adulthood were linked to better outcomes than staying stable or declining. Any improvement, even modest, can reduce future risk."

Lloyd-Jones adds that almost any behavior that young adults choose to improve will have a positive impact on the other behaviors: "I encourage young adults to begin with whatever they are most motivated to change."

STUDY FINDS VIDEO GAMES CAN HELP MENTAL HEALTH

BY ALENE BOURANOVA

VIDEO GAMES are massively popular, with an estimated 190 million-plus Americans plugging in or logging on to play their favorites—from *Fortnite* to *Roblox* to *Battlefield 6*—every year. All those hours spent solving puzzles, beating traps, and taking down enemies may be providing more than just entertainment—they could also be giving gamers a mental health boost, according to a BU study.

Researchers at the College of Communication found gaming can be an effective method of stress management and emotional regulation. And that may be why people game in the first place.

The study, published in *Frontiers in Communication*, explores individual motivations for gaming and how they relate to emotional outcomes. Researchers surveyed just under 350 undergraduate and graduate students, asking questions about their gaming habits, reasons for playing video games, and emotional states before, during, and after gaming.

Of the respondents, 64 percent used video games as a method of coping with stress. Almost 52 percent of respondents reported playing single-player games to cope, while around 57 percent reported playing multiplayer games. Turn-based strategy games, first-person shooter games, and role-playing games were the most popular. The study included games played on computers, on consoles like Xbox or PlayStation, and on handheld devices like smartphones.



ENG's Kamal Sen (left) and graduate student Sudan Duwadi (ENG'25,'27) work with a volunteer wearing a special cap that allows them to watch the brain in action as it processes competing noises.

A SOLUTION TO THE COCKTAIL PARTY PROBLEM—HIDDEN IN THE BRAIN

THE COCKTAIL PARTY PROBLEM is a phenomenon that makes it difficult to separate competing sounds in noisy environments. And it's a big issue for the hundreds of millions of people worldwide with hearing loss. At the College of Engineering, researchers Kamal Sen and David Boas are combining expertise from neuroscience, engineering, photonics, and computer science to better understand how our brains sift through different noises. They're using the knowledge to refine a new algorithm—inspired by the brain's sound-filtering approach—that could one day be used to power better, more effective hearing aids.



Watch a video of BU student Natalie Lett (COM'27) explaining the ENG professors' research and demonstrating the pioneering technology that lets them watch her brain's activity while she tries to tune in to some sounds and shut out others.

Tiernan Cahill (COM'16,'26), a PhD candidate in COM's emerging media studies division, conducted the study with James Cummings, a COM associate professor of emerging media studies, and Erin Wertz (COM'16,'23), now a researcher at the University of Warsaw in Poland.

Cahill says the study is "one of the first to look at the effect that video games have on well-being, not just in terms of the content of games, but also in terms of how that content interacts with the individual psychological needs of players—which is a much more potent way of understanding how games can affect us on an emotional level."



The study included games played on computers, on consoles like Xbox or PlayStation, and on handheld devices like smartphones and the Nintendo Switch Lite.

The researchers saw a positive association between individuals who report immersive tendencies—or a predilection to become absorbed with a mediated experience like a video game—and using gaming to regulate emotions.

Additionally, respondents who reported playing video games for a game's story, for social interaction, and for escapism were more likely to experience an increase in positive feelings after gaming. Those playing for a sense of autonomy and an ability to explore within a game experienced the greatest reduction in negative feelings post-gaming.

Victor Goines (CFA'27) performs with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra at Central Park in New York City in 2022.



GIANT STEPS FOR A LONGTIME JAZZMAN

► Musician and composer Victor Goines, who has collaborated with Wynton Marsalis and other greats, becomes a student again | BY SOPHIE YARIN

YOU COULD EASILY refer to Victor Goines by any of his pursuits. He's a jazz saxophonist and clarinetist. A composer. A blazing solo performer and a collaborator with the likes of Wynton Marsalis (Hon.'92), Diana Ross, and Ken Burns. An educator on the music faculty at Loyola University, the University of New Orleans, Northwestern, and the prestigious Juilliard School, where he helmed the jazz studies program. And now a student: Goines is pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts in music education at the BU's College of Fine Arts.

But the man is loath to be defined by any one thing.

"I'm trying to be a specialist at everything," says Goines (CFA'27). "I'm trying to resurrect the term 'Renaissance man'—someone who knows a lot about a lot."

Goines led the nonprofit music center Jazz St. Louis from 2022 until February 2026. Before that, he toured extensively with Jazz at Lincoln Center (JALC), playing for 30 years under

Marsalis, the orchestra's founder and managing and artistic director.

He describes Marsalis, whom he met in kindergarten in New Orleans, as an innovator: "He is a man who has been able to figure out how the universe comes together."

Since stepping down from Jazz St. Louis, Goines has recommitted to life as a full-time jazz musician and composer. It's a career that has taken him all over the world, from Cuba to New Zealand, France to South Africa, Australia to Spain. Throughout the decades, he has notched expertise in traditional New Orleans music, big band, bebop, and Latin jazz styles, as well as classical, soul, and rock and roll.

What remains constant in an ever-evolving menu of specialties, he says, is the bond shared by the international jazz community.

"We have a standing rule that you should never play on the bandstand with anyone that you don't know, so when I walk on a bandstand and sit in with musicians I don't know, the

first thing I do is introduce myself," he says. "The music has allowed us to come together and be part of the same community for generations and generations. I still know people I have met in 1993, who live in Europe, and I talk with them regularly. I have former students in Japan who call me every time someone [we both know] comes to play at the club."

His career has also introduced him to a wealth of collaborators—in a wealth of musical genres. In addition to his long-standing relationship with Marsalis and JALC, he's performed with musicians like Ross, Bob Dylan, Ray Charles, Dizzy Gillespie, Eric Clapton, and B.B. King. Goines has performed on scores for Ken Burns' documentary series *Jazz* with Marsalis and mentored Jon Batiste, the Grammy-winning former bandleader for *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, when he was teaching at Juilliard. It was Batiste who may have taught Goines the most important lesson of all: Every student needs room to improvise, experiment, and grow.

NANCY KASZEMAN/ZUMA PRESS WIRE/ALAMY



Goines (right) and Wynton Marsalis (Hon.'92) perform at Lincoln Center in New York in 2013.



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VICTOR GOINES (CFA'27)

“Most people would think that when they come to Juilliard, they would leave playing only a certain type of ‘straight-ahead’ jazz, but Jon Batiste was very eclectic in his music,” he says. “When I look at him, he becomes a very good example of what I learned as a teacher: People have to be themselves. Thelonious Monk said, ‘A genius is the one who is most like himself.’”

RESEARCHING INEQUALITIES IN MUSIC
At CFA, Goines appreciates the online program’s emphasis on equal exchange between teacher and student, bolstered by a reading of Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. He had already been thinking about power imbalances and overlooked perspectives in music, especially in the wake of criticism and protests against JALC in 2016.

“The orchestra had been all-male since its origin,” says Goines. “We did

have women coming in along the way to sub, but it was a predominantly male orchestra. It’s not that Jazz at Lincoln Center was not sensitive to it; they just didn’t have any guidelines in place to be able to address [the issue].”

The uproar settled following systemic changes at JALC—such as blind auditions, expanded outreach, and transparent hiring practices. And the experience gave Goines a vision for his doctoral thesis: to highlight the inequalities faced by women musicians. At CFA, he’s embarked on a long-term research project where he’s compiled interviews with women in the orchestra pit, the bandstand, and the music classroom.

“It has been revelatory,” he says of his work so far. “Orchestras are evolving and changing, but they’re not all the way there.”

In his interviews, Goines found that female musicians often face pressure at an early age to play more “feminine” instruments—flute and violin, as opposed to drums or trombone. Bandleaders often won’t hire a woman because they, in turn, may solely be looking for drummers and trombonists. Classical music is similarly seen as more feminine, and jazz more masculine. These rigid gender associations are very real, he says, and often hiding in plain sight.

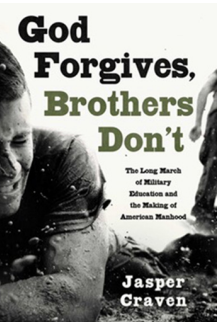
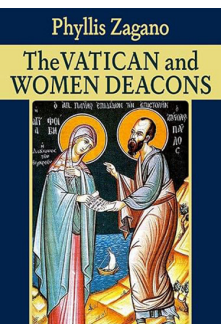
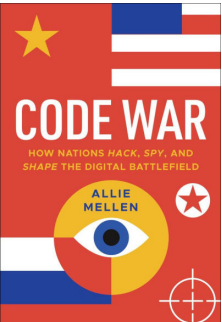
“Things are starting to change, but it is far from what many would call equitable, whether it be in classical music, in jazz, in rock, or in education,” says Goines. “Female [music] teachers tend to teach middle school, but high school band directors tend to be men. It’s right in front of our face, but we haven’t really recognized it.”

It may be nearly 40 years since Goines was a student—he has a Bachelor of Music Education from Loyola University and a Master of Music from Virginia Commonwealth University—but he’s happy to be among his fellow learners again.

“I’ve occupied some of the key positions in the country,” he says, “but it didn’t mean that I couldn’t learn more.”

SLAVEN VLASIC VIA GETTY IMAGES

AMY NGHE (INSET)



READING LIST

► Alumni books that caught our eye | BY BOSTONIA STAFF

BOOKS GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU: THE STORIED LIFE OF URSULA NORDSTROM, EDITOR OF EXTRAORDINARY CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Abrams Books, 2026
By Nancy Hudgins (CAS'75)
A biography of the editor of *Goodnight Moon*, *Charlotte's Web*, *Where the Wild Things Are*, and *Harold and the Purple Crayon*, among many others, describes a fierce defender of a child’s right to read.

CODE WAR: HOW NATIONS HACK, SPY, AND SHAPE THE DIGITAL BATTLEFIELD

Wiley, 2026
By Allie Mellen (ENG'15)
Forget the rogue hackers you see in movies. Mellen’s nonfiction book reveals how nation-states, including Russia, China, and the US, use cyberattacks to achieve their geopolitical goals.

EVENING BEGINS THE DAY

Koehler Books, 2026
By Jessica Keener (CAS'79)
Discovering her husband’s infidelity, Rachel escapes to a rental

house in a Boston suburb and becomes entwined in the family life of her colleague and now neighbor Cynthia. But Cynthia’s family life is not as perfect as it looks.

GOD FORGIVES, BROTHERS DON'T: THE LONG MARCH OF MILITARY EDUCATION AND THE MAKING OF AMERICAN MANHOOD

Simon & Schuster, 2026
By Jasper Craven (COM'16)
Craven’s work of nonfiction examines how the American military education system, from West Point to the Boy Scouts, has shaped American masculinity—and not for the better.

LAST SEEN

Penguin Random House, 2026
By Christopher Castellani (GRS'99)
Four young men disappear from separate locations on a winter’s night and turn up dead in local rivers. What’s happened to them? Among those who try to explain are the dead men themselves. *Last Seen* is a novel from the author of *Leading Men* (Viking, 2019).

NAMES HAVE BEEN CHANGED

Tiny Reparations Books/Penguin Random House, 2026
By Yu-Mei Balasingamchow (GRS'20)
Ophir tells her story, which begins with a petty crime in Singapore—leading to years on the run across the globe—and ends with a podcast about the cost of freedom and the pull of home.

THE VATICAN AND WOMEN DEACONS

Orbis Books, 2026
By Phyllis Zagano (COM'70)
Zagano is a scholarly authority on—and an advocate for—women deacons. Her book provides an examination of the future of the female diaconate.

WITCH SEASON

St. Martin’s Press/Macmillan, 2026
By Julia Bianco (COM'19)
Bianco’s debut novel follows Katherine, a member of a Los Angeles-based coven, who falls for Silas, her enemy from another coven, as an even greater threat rises in their world.



HEATHER ENG (COM'04)

TINY EXCERPT

DOUBLE HAPPINESS
Tiny Reparations Books/Penguin Random House, 2026
By Heather Eng (COM'04)

When Mei Li runs into Alexandre Brodeur at a family function, sparks fly. He’s grown more appealing than he was at their first meeting, years ago. But with a grueling tech job, an adoring fiancé, and a fast-approaching wedding, she has little time to decide what she really wants out of life.

“Mei pulled out the dress. Her breath caught. The top was a simple cheongsam, the bottom a soft tulle skirt, all brilliant red. The effect was sophisticated and romantic. Chinese and American.

‘Are you going to get it?’ Kaia asked.

‘Maybe for my next wedding.’

Kaia’s eyes went round. ‘You’re having two weddings?’

Mei snapped back to attention. ‘No, I was only kidding.’

She trailed her hand over the mandarin collar and delicate red buttons. A scene unfolded in her mind. She was stepping into the sunlight on a small roof deck. Her vibrant red dress reflected the joy and certainty in her heart. Sunshine obscured her husband-to-be’s face, but she could feel the delicious warmth radiating from him, his grin mirroring hers. He didn’t have Joey’s height. Nor his broad shoulders. He was shorter and trimmer, with tousled brown hair. As Mei approached, he turned toward her, his intelligent eyes shining with happiness.

Mei dropped the hanger.”





Bottles & Jars
XXX (2012),
oil on canvas,
22 in. x 36 in.

Gallery

PERI SCHWARTZ (CFA'73)

A SOLO EXHIBITION of works by the late artist Peri Schwartz (CFA'73) ran last spring at Gallery Naga on Newbury Street in Boston. The show, *Reverberations: Fifty Years of Still Lifes*, included the last etchings and watercolors Schwartz made during her lifetime. She died in 2021. "Making things up bored Schwartz; she wasn't interested in recording the imaginative associations of her own mind," writes Cody Upton, executive director of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, in the introduction to the show's catalog. "She craved the sustained attention required of direct observation. It is a marvel, almost a contradiction, that the finished work appears so spacious and free, like an improvisation. Within the rules she imposed on herself, Schwartz found creative liberation."



ADDISON GROOVE PROJECT REUNITES

WITH THEIR HALLMARK blend of funk, rock, and jazz, Addison Groove Project (AGP)—including **ANDREW KEITH** (CGS'00, CAS'03), drummer since the band's founding in 1997—fired up their fans at The Sinclair in Cambridge, Mass., on March 28, 2026. Making their name in the early to mid-2000s, AGP was a regular headliner around Boston, appearing often at the Paradise Rock Club on BU's West Campus. The band toured nationally, playing at clubs, colleges, and major festivals—such as Bonnaroo and the Gathering of the Vibes—and released five albums. Other alums in the band: **ROB MARSCHER** (CAS'01), keyboard and vocals, and **DAVE ADAMS** (CFA'11), alto sax and vocals. In 2004, AGP's founding bass player, John Hall, died of cancer at 25 years old, and his bandmates honored his memory by donating a portion of the show's proceeds to cancer research. 

JULIA FEATHERINGILL (TOP); MAX CROSS PHOTOGRAPHY

THE GIFT OF LIFELONG LEARNING



We love all that BU offers us. We want to give back to BU because it has enhanced our lives."

Brian Gula

Linda and Brian Gula were never BU students—at least, not in the usual sense. But that hasn't stopped them from learning a lot on campus.

The Gulas have lived near Kenmore Square for decades, enjoying the University's passing seasons as students returned each fall, crews cleared each winter's snow, and flowers bloomed afresh for Commencement every spring. They've also attended many plays and student concerts. But their relationship to the University really changed when they started taking courses through Metropolitan College's Evergreen Program, aimed to enable adult learners over 58 to audit BU courses and take part in activities.

Through Evergreen, the Gulas found a new community of professors and students who love to learn. "That's the thing about Evergreen," says Brian. "You're learning side by side with young people. It's a wonderful thing."

So wonderful, in fact, that the Gulas have now included BU in their estate plans. "Our enthusiasm for BU was so much a part of it," Linda says. "We're going to keep going for the rest of our lives."

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Boston University Advancement
Planned Giving

At the Helm of a Historic School



PARDEE ALUM DAVID BARTH, WHO LEADS PERKINS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND, WANTS TO OFFER CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES A JOYFUL JOURNEY

BY STEVE HOLT | PHOTOS BY JACKIE RICCIARDI

David Barth (Pardee'92), on the campus of Perkins School for the Blind, is the 11th leader in the school's 197-year history.



Traversing the leafy, 40-acre campus of Perkins School for the Blind, David Barth radiates pride and reverence as he points out the history, objects, and buildings of the renowned institution he's led for the past year.

A small museum in the campus' main Howe Building showcases nearly 200 years of history at the groundbreaking school in Watertown, Mass. On display are letters and other curios from prominent figures connected to Perkins: Charles Dickens, Henry David Thoreau, Alexander Graham Bell, and Julia Ward Howe. "Dickens comes over for his first trip to the New World, to America, and he just hates absolutely everything about America—except he loves Perkins," Barth (Pardee'92), the school's president and CEO, says with a laugh. "It's amazing."

A large tactile globe—with its raised country borders and mountain ranges—that taught blind children geography in the mid-19th century is here. "If you want luck, touch Tuscumbia,



Ala. That's where Helen Keller was from," Barth says of the school's most famous student.

Nearby is a modern braille, invented at the school in 1951. Despite the advent of far sleeker digital technology, the 11-pound, steel braille is still preferred in most places, and nearly a half million of them are in use around the world. Even the pathways across campus are designed with purpose. Each one has a different texture, "because that's how you learn your cane skills," Barth says as we walk. "The campus is a classroom."

Barth, the 11th leader in Perkins' 197-year history, was appointed to the position in September 2025. He has big plans to lead Perkins into its third century, calling on his background as a US diplomat and global development executive—and his own family's history. He and his wife, Sally, had a son, Andrew, who was born with multiple disabilities, including cerebral/cortical palsy and cerebral visual impairment, which left him paralyzed, blind, and nonverbal. Andrew died in 2023 at age 17.

In his first-floor office in the Howe Building—a Gothic structure with a 180-foot tower—Barth calls attention to an aerial painting of Perkins' South Boston campus from a century ago, before the institution moved to its current Watertown location. "We started out as a school [only], and that is the space [in South Boston] where we learned everything we could capably learn about this population we've chosen to serve—children with multiple disabilities, particularly with other disabilities connected to visual impairment," he says. "Spreading out from that school, at the center, is our ability to influence the way the world sees these children and the way the world provides for these children."

A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

In the early 19th century, specialized care and education for blind and deaf children was virtually nonexistent. That changed when physician John Dix Fisher chartered the nation's first school for the blind—modeled after a pioneering institution in Paris—in Boston in 1829.

Named for a benefactor who early on donated the use of his home for the school, Perkins soon formed a campus in South Boston, which Keller would call home each winter between 1888 and 1892. By the mid-19th century, the school was printing accessible books using its proprietary Boston Line Type, a braille alternative. In 1912, the school relocated to farmland on the banks of the Charles River in Watertown, the spires of its tower



Above: Each pathway on the school's Watertown campus has a different texture, which helps teach students cane skills. "The campus is a classroom," says Barth.

Left: This tactile globe, part of a small museum on Perkins' campus, helped blind children learn geography in the mid-19th century.

now a familiar sight for commuters along the Massachusetts Turnpike.

Today, Perkins teaches almost 200 students ages 3 to 22 on its campus and sends specialists to public schools across Massachusetts to work with hundreds more visually impaired students. But its work also extends across the globe: Perkins shares the teaching practices it's developed over the past two centuries worldwide, through teacher training, sustainable education programs, and the development of new technologies.

The school, in announcing Barth's appointment, cited his international experience and his "deep belief in the power of education to change lives." Barth's internationalism began in his childhood home. His father emigrated from the Germany-France border and became a dairy farmer in Wisconsin; his mother was born in Detroit to immigrant parents from Galicia, an independent community in northwest Spain that was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until 1918. Barth and his older brother were born in Detroit and raised in blue-collar Randolph, N.J., 40 miles west of New York City. He says his family's history instilled in the brothers an appreciation of the opportunities America offers that simply aren't replicated everywhere.

"[The 1980s] was an exciting time, but it was a time of a lot of geopolitical change, social upheaval," Barth says. "We were still in the Cold War, there was the anti-apartheid movement, the nuclear winter fears. My parents strongly encouraged both my brother and me to think about what it means to have a meaningful role in society, about being part of a community that gives value to life—not merely the act of acquisition, but the act of participation."

At BU, where Barth majored in international relations, he found many avenues for social participation. He spent his free time reading to older patients at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, mentoring young people through Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, and eventually coaching a basketball team with the Special Olympics. He recalls being immersed in the joy of the young people he coached, who were "dying to have you be in their lives and be supportive." To this day, he laments that his Special Olympics team advanced to the state finals, only to lose on the last play of the game. "It still replays in my head," he says with a smile.

After finishing BU in three and a half years, Barth earned a JD at the George Washington University Law School. He joined the US Foreign Service, where he would spend the next two decades—first working as an attorney, then



Left: Some Perkins students use tactile communication boards to say what they need or indicate what they want to talk about.

Below: Barth maintains a close connection with Perkins students and faculty, like Laurie Silva (left).

heading up global education programs with the US Agency for International Development (USAID), where he launched the agency's first Office of Middle East Programs. For 17 years, Barth lived overseas, in the Middle East, North Africa, the Balkans, and Central America. At USAID, where he rose to deputy chief of staff and deputy assistant administrator for legislative and public affairs, Barth's work always included launching and running programs that served people with disabilities.

Barth retired from the Foreign Service after 20 years. He moved on to the Ford Foundation in New York City, focusing on education and youth international work and directing its global grants program. After three years at the foundation, Barth moved back to Washington, D.C., in 2018 to serve as vice president of international programs with Save the Children US. Seven years later, he was presented with the "extraordinary opportunity" to take the helm at Perkins.

"You see it when you step on campus," he says. "Special doesn't begin to capture how rare this place is. It has a 200-year history. It has a pure, virtuous objective. It's staffed with unbelievable people who are where they belong, in all the right places, doing what they do best."



Barth's agenda includes maintaining the programming for which the school has become known and celebrated around the world, with operations in 42 countries and "deep engagement" with another 16. But as Perkins gears up for its big bicentennial celebration in 2029, he is applying lessons he's learned and connections he's made in his career working internationally to expand Perkins' research, teaching, and training



Helen Keller (left), with her teacher Anne Sullivan, attended Perkins from 1888 to 1892.

divisions in those countries. "The children we serve are the same everywhere," Barth says, even if the opportunities abroad are not equally distributed. "Ultimately, the attention, the discipline with which you can provide them care, the way you protect and create space for them, is enriching for entire communities. I want to see that multiply."

The disability community has made extraordinary progress over the last several decades, Barth adds. But he worries about decreasing funding for specialized education and a diminishing pipeline of qualified teachers and caregivers for children with visual impairments.

There's an underlying issue, however, that's harder to tackle, he says. "Most people simply don't think about disability until it enters their lives," he says. "That indifference isn't malicious—it's just human—and it's the thing Perkins has always been in the business of changing."

FINDING ANSWERS, AND JOY

When disability enters a family's world, it can be terrifying at first. That's when, as Barth sees it, Perkins' magic kicks in. Each Tuesday and Thursday morning, moms, dads, and children pile into a bright classroom for the school's

"Special doesn't begin to capture how rare this place is. It has a 200-year history. It has a pure, virtuous objective."

DAVID BARTH

infant-toddler play group for kids up to three years old. All of the children have been diagnosed with a visual impairment, which could include deaf-blindness or total blindness, and many of them have additional disabilities that will require lifelong care. They all gather to learn from Perkins teachers and staff who are trained to help the hardest cases, and also to meet other parents grappling with a difficult diagnosis. Barth says these structured settings are as vital for parents as they are for the children.

"It's really important for moms and dads, who a year ago had one set of expectations, and who now are feeling wholly unprepared for a journey that is going to be complicated and may feel sad some days," he says. "But it's also going to be really joyful. They don't know yet how it's going to go. We *do* know how it's going to go, because we've got 197 years of experience with blindness and visual impairment. So we can be among the first to take their hands and show them a path that will be different, but wonderful."

Barth knows firsthand what's in store for these families. He says leading the school for the last year has offered a sort of healing for him and his wife, Sally. And he believes their late son, Andrew, would be proud of him.

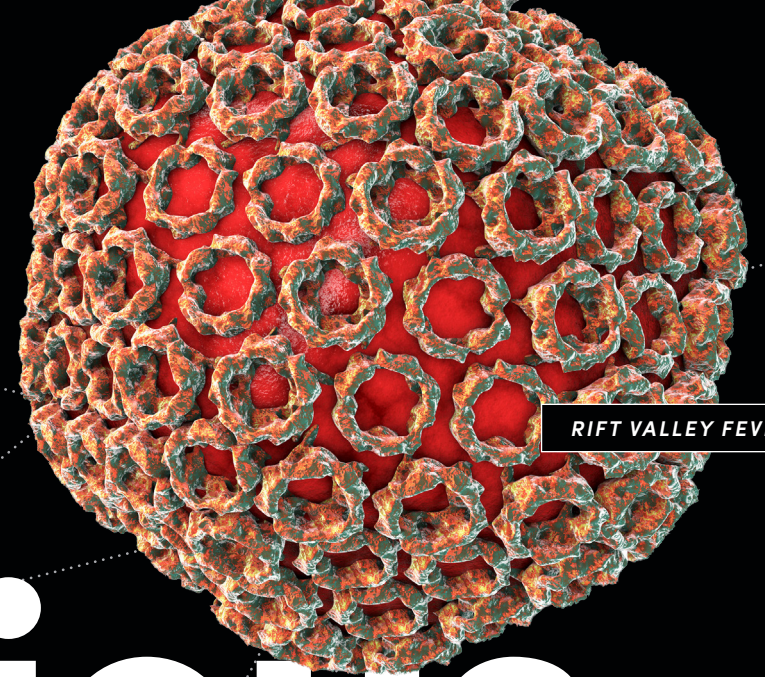
"It's not something I would tell people that they would choose," he says. "But when a child like Andrew comes into your life, your life becomes beautiful in whole different ways you didn't anticipate. We have children at Perkins who are very, very medically fragile, but their journey will be a joyful one if you allow it to be." ■

Tracking Deadly Infectious Diseases Around the Globe

CHIKUNGUNYA



RIFT VALLEY FEVER

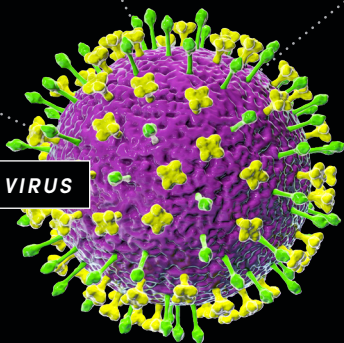


A BOSTON UNIVERSITY-BASED TOOL HELPS THE WORLD MONITOR
OUTBREAKS OF MEASLES, CHOLERA, EBOLA, AND OTHER THREATS

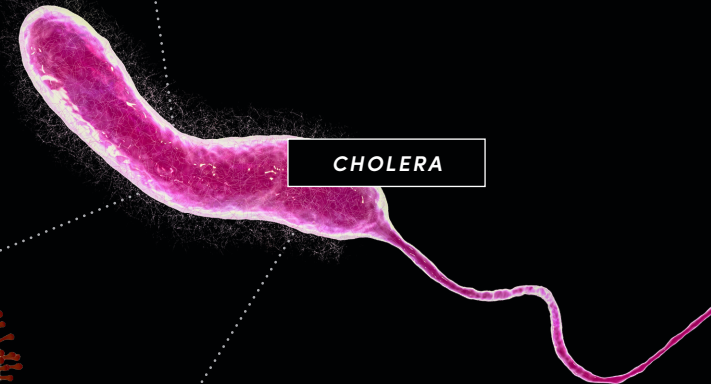
MEASLES



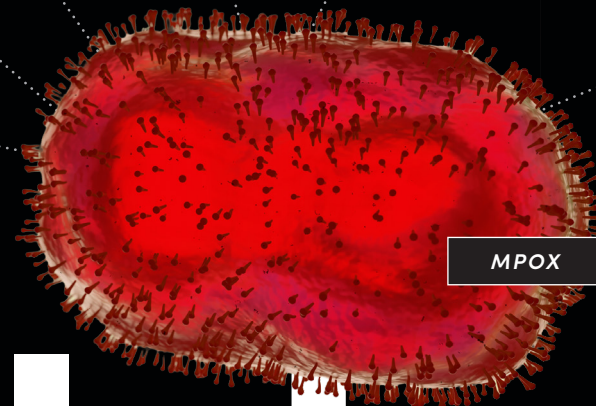
NIPAH VIRUS



CHOLERA



MPOX



BY ANDREW THURSTON

Last year alone, more than 500,000 people globally were sickened by cholera—and 6,500 died. Chikungunya, a mosquito-spread disease that can cause disabling joint pain, afflicted a similar number, though more patients survived. And measles, once considered eliminated in many countries, came roaring back, reaching levels in the United States not seen in over three decades.

Not all of these outbreaks made news. But in a connected world, tracking the threat of infectious diseases is essential: The earlier authorities can intervene, the higher the chances of restricting an outbreak and limiting its potentially devastating impact.

Since April 2025, that surveillance has been boosted by a global infectious diseases tracker based at Boston University's Center on Emerging Infectious Diseases (CEID).

In its first year, Biothreats Emergence, Analysis and Communications Network (BEACON) has tracked 181 pathogens in 169 countries and territories, providing crucial updates on each outbreak's progress—and even flagged newly discovered bacteria in China's space station. Designed to enable quick public health responses, BEACON has more than 34,000 active users that include national and international public health organizations,

foreign and state governments, journalists, doctors, and the public.

"Our goal was to create a program that democratizes knowledge about outbreaks," says Nahid Bhadelia, a BU infectious diseases expert and founding director of both CEID and BEACON. She says although other disease trackers are available, BEACON is the only open-source platform of its kind—free to use and designed with more than experts in mind.

"We have heard from multiple international governments that they use BEACON as part of their daily horizon scanning for threats," Bhadelia says. "But the best emails we get are from individual clinicians on the front line who tell us they use BEACON and thank us for the detail and assessment we put into our reports."

The tracker—which is run in partnership with BU's Hariri Institute for Computing and Computational Science

& Engineering and Boston Children's Hospital's automated disease surveillance tool, HealthMap—has informed rapid vaccine response, guided local doctors watching for unexplained symptoms in travelers, and helped keep athletes healthy at the Winter Olympics. This summer, it also helped to keep soccer fans and players safe at the World Cup.

Analyzing a Threat

Even before its official public launch, BEACON's experts were tracking a potentially dangerous situation: a case of mpox, formerly known as monkeypox, in a traveler returning to Switzerland from Africa in early April 2025.

Thanks to the Swiss authorities' speedy contact tracing and quick isolation of the patient, a major crisis was averted. But mpox would pop up again and again over the coming year, with BEACON reporting on around 100 incidents of the viral disease in just about every corner of the globe.

Whenever an outbreak pings on the radar, whether it's flagged by a public health partner on the ground, spotted in a media account, or part of a HealthMap alert, BEACON's team of experts—both at CEID and in 12 countries—analyzes the threat. The team verifies with local officials, then prioritizes those that require additional monitoring, publishing a report with information on the disease and context on the event. Their work is supplemented by artificial intelligence, with a large language model developed by the Hariri Institute helping to evaluate a source's quality, extract key information, score the severity of a disease, and inform the BEACON team's final reports.

In May 2025, the team shared confirmation that a bacterial species—not found on Earth—had been discovered on the Chinese Tiangong space station. The bacteria was found in samples taken from the station by astronauts, then studied by Chinese scientists on Earth. In their report, which featured the findings, BEACON experts said the

Britta Lassmann (left) and Nahid Bhadelia are infectious diseases experts and part of the BEACON leadership team.



bacteria didn't "pose a known threat to astronaut health" but raised "questions about the behavior of microbes in space and the need for biosecurity protocols in human space habitats."

Closer to home, BEACON has highlighted around more than 100 outbreaks and events in the United States alone, from headline grabbers, such as rising numbers of measles cases, to the more obscure—like a burst of Shope papillomavirus in South Dakota and Colorado that caused rabbits to develop hornlike growths.

According to Bhadelia, the uptick in vaccine-preventable diseases, most notably measles, is a phenomenon that

BEACON has played a particularly important role in tracking. In the past year, Canada, Spain, and the United Kingdom were among the countries to lose their measles elimination status, as the highly contagious disease took advantage of rising vaccine hesitancy. Elimination status is given to countries that have a year without large outbreaks or out-of-control transmission. Many experts predict the United States will soon also lose its elimination designation.

In its first year, BEACON has published 61 reports monitoring measles outbreaks in the US, from the death of a single child in Los Angeles to 789 cases

In its first year, BEACON...

Tracked

181

pathogens in 116 species

Recorded events in

169

countries, territories, and recognized autonomous zones—and 1 in outer space

Published

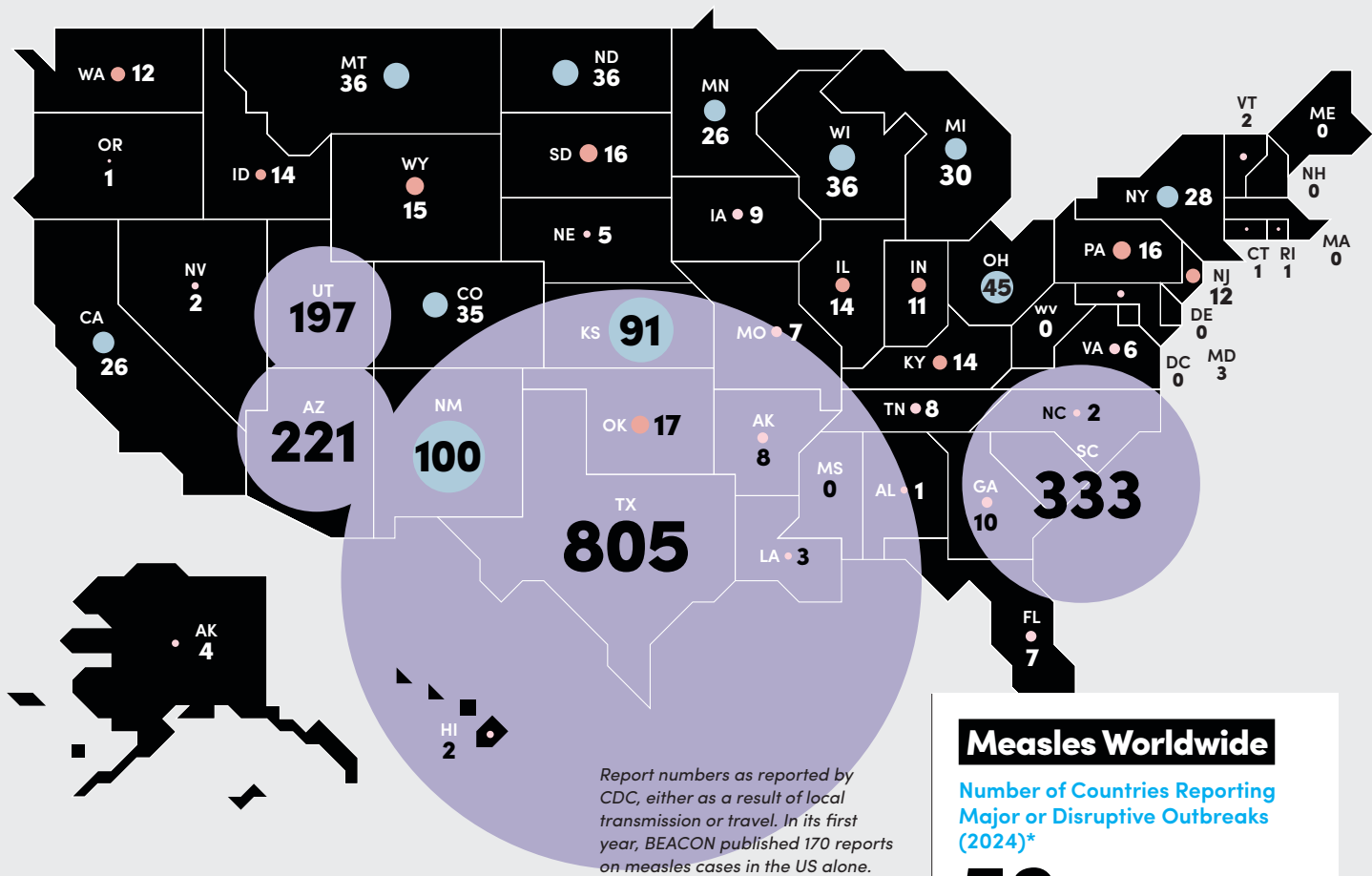
2,187

reports with updates on pathogens and emerging infectious diseases

BEACON statistics and graphics provided by Oona Moorhead (SPH'26), a CEID graduate student researcher.

Measles Cases in the United States

Confirmed cases 2025



in South Carolina—the largest outbreak since the disease was eliminated in the country.

“We have effective vaccines, but we’re seeing a pullback of public trust in these tools,” says Bhadelia, a BU Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine associate professor of infectious diseases. “That’s where the grander work of CEID plays a role.”

One part of CEID’s research is studying and raising trust in public health communication. Led by Traci Hong, a College of Communication professor of media science, an interdisciplinary team has analyzed the spread of misinformation and vaccine hesitancy, studied ways to improve health literacy, and looked at how social media shapes human behavior.

Bhadelia says that Hong’s team is working on a “big data analysis of what messaging works with community engagement,” and that BEACON has helped researchers “see the scale of what’s happening in real time.” The tracker itself, she adds, is an important tool for combating misinformation: Reports can contain a summary of a disease and the outbreak, the potential public health impact, and the outlook—all in everyday language and with sources listed.

“What we offer is not just awareness, we offer context, intelligence,” says Bhadelia. “Sometimes our role is not to raise an alarm but to tell people not to worry. For example, when media reports sparked panic after a cluster of Nipah virus cases, a viral hemorrhagic

illness, in Bangladesh, BEACON reports underscored the low risk of international spread.”

CEID launched in 2021 with a mission to make societies around the world more resilient to infectious diseases and to help health professionals, policymakers, and the public better prepare for future outbreaks. The center’s experts, drawn from across BU, study public health and disease policies, train health professionals, and partner with nations and organizations to strengthen monitoring and response capacity.

Bhadelia expects BEACON to become an increasingly valuable data source for the center’s researchers—like those in its One Health and Climate Change research core, who are studying how disease-carrying insects are expanding their range as global temperatures shift.

Launching and running the tracker has also given Bhadelia and her team fresh opportunities to create and cement relationships with partners around the world. One of those organizations—and a BEACON funder—is the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), a global social welfare foundation that supports the development of vaccines to protect against emerging viruses.

In fall 2025, Bhadelia says, CEPI used BEACON alerts to help direct novel vaccines to Senegal as the African nation battled Rift Valley fever, a mosquito-spread disease that can lead to vision problems and, in rare cases, brain inflammation and fatal bleeding.

“Of any of the monitoring systems, we were the first to report publicly on Rift Valley fever,” says Britta Lassmann, a research associate professor of infectious diseases at BU’s medical school. “That’s a very crisp example of an outbreak that we reported that brought a public health emergency to attention and led to downstream attention.”

Just under four months after flagging the Rift Valley fever outbreak, BEACON confirmed it was over.

Monitoring the World Cup

This summer, BEACON took on one of its toughest tests: the soccer World Cup. The planet’s biggest sporting event attracted millions of fans to its 104 matches in host nations Canada, Mexico, and the US. And that had authorities stepping up their disease monitoring, in case those supporters brought more than their soccer fever to North America.

BEACON reported on health threats, including measles and West Nile virus, near host cities. The team also connected with local departments of public health to provide proactive information on potential and emerging threats. Kayoko Shioda, a School of Public

to “address the issues around sexually transmitted diseases at mass gathering events,” says Lassmann.

“We also received requests from the local community to have a global [infectious diseases] snapshot, letting them know of any significant outbreaks happening around the world,” she says. “If a traveler presented to an emergency room, people would be aware they might need to think about a particular disease.”

Over the coming years, Bhadelia says, the BEACON team wants to add more layers of data—like local geographic information, from population density to land use to weather—and connect

“Our goal was to create a program that democratizes knowledge about outbreaks. We have heard from multiple international governments that they use BEACON as part of their daily horizon scanning for threats.”

Nahid Bhadelia, founding director of the infectious diseases tracker BEACON

Health assistant professor of global health, helped monitor wastewater—as authorities did during COVID—for signals of infectious diseases.

Many of the services BEACON provided during the tournament were first tested during the Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics.

“That was our first trial move into the mass gathering space,” says Lassmann, a BEACON cofounder and codirector, as well as its editor in chief. Although the influx of athletes didn’t spark many outbreaks—mosquitoes, for example, not being a major threat in the snowy Italian mountains—the team did post updates on cases of flu, COVID, and gastrointestinal issues. They even reported on a condom shortage in the Olympic Village—which was a chance

with more partners to expand the tracker’s reach. She also hopes it fosters more partnerships between CEID and other BU researchers, particularly students, whom she wants to involve in both managing the database and exploring its wealth of information. But the main goals match those of CEID: to help make our world better prepared for future outbreaks and ready to prevent them when possible.

“Our goals,” says Bhadelia, “are to continue to reduce the response time to outbreaks, which then reduces the human cost of these events; to raise awareness of threats that carry a big human cost, but which people don’t usually pay attention to; and to be a resource to our public health partners during this tough time with funding.” **B**

PRESERVING THE HISTORY OF SEPTEMBER

11

At the 9/11 Memorial & Museum in New York, which is marking the 25th anniversary of the terror attacks, alum **Kerith Koss Schrager** has an emotional task. “It’s a sacred space.”

By Joel Brown

RECOVERED FROM THE WORLD TRADE CENTER SITE AFTER SEPTEMBER 11, 2001. COLLECTION 9/11 MEMORIAL MUSEUM. COURTESY OF THE PORT AUTHORITY OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY. PHOTOGRAPH BY JIN S. LEE



A damaged steel remnant from the facade of the North Tower of the World Trade Center. As vice president, head of conservation at the 9/11 Memorial & Museum, Kerith Koss Schrager (CAS'01) works to preserve the artifacts that tell the story of the terror attacks—and the long aftermath.

K

Kerith Koss Schrager works every day around items that are a gut punch if you were alive on September 11, 2001. A crushed firetruck. A segment of the antenna from high atop the World Trade Center's North Tower. A 36-foot-tall piece of structural steel from Ground Zero covered with painted messages and stickers.

Smaller items are just as potent: a dust mask, eyeglasses, boots, credit cards, and other personal objects belonging to the first responders and victims. Many artifacts are covered with the toxic dust from the towers' collapse. The current exhibits, for example, include a section of a Broadway retail storefront, Chelsea Jeans, that was collected intact.

Schrager (CAS'01) is vice president, head of conservation at the 9/11 Memorial & Museum, built underground at the site of the World Trade Center in Lower Manhattan. Its mission is to honor the victims, survivors, and first responders of 9/11, as well as New Yorkers who faced the terror attack on the Twin Towers in 1993. Among its challenges is educating a generation of young people who weren't even born when the four hijacked jets crashed into the World Trade Center towers, the Pentagon, and a field in western Pennsylvania.

Schrager's mission is to preserve the artifacts that tell the story—and the long aftermath—of the terror attacks that took nearly 3,000 lives 25 years ago. It is as complicated and emotional a task as you would expect.

"We are one of the first organizations that has what we call a rapid response collection, where almost immediately after the events, there were people collecting for—it wasn't a museum yet—

some sort of custodial entity," Schrager says. "We have about 28,000 objects in the collection. Maybe a third of it is on view, and the rest is largely in storage, which is typical for a museum. We also have 50,000 digital assets. What makes our collection challenging is it was all largely ingested in two or three years."

Schrager arrived at her job in 2022 after several years consulting there. Previous work at the Brooklyn Museum—a project involving historic tin mercury mirrors—introduced her to hazardous collections. She went on to earn an occupational health degree and started her own business helping institutions, such as the Thomas Edison National Historical Park in New Jersey, deal with similar materials. The experience is critical in her current job handling thousands of artifacts containing that toxic dust.

This year, the museum is marking the 25th anniversary of the attacks with special exhibitions, public programs, and professional development for educators, along with its annual commemorations. *Bostonia* spoke with Schrager by phone about how she handles the work and the emotions that it stirs up.

***Bostonia:* This is a difficult job. Why did you take it on?**

Kerith Koss Schrager: Having this kind of purpose, where I am doing something that I love but also giving back in a way that I never expected I would—I've found it to be truly rewarding. We are preserving these artifacts for a greater purpose. Not that art conservation in general isn't a greater purpose, but we really have an emotional connection to this collection in a way that I haven't had in other museums.

Did the emotional power these objects hold make you pause before taking the job? How do you cope with it?

When I came in as a consultant, it was something that I had concerns about. I was friendly with some of the conservators who were already here [Jan Ramirez (GRS'76;85) is chief curator],



The museum's Foundation Hall houses a 58-ton, 36-foot-tall steel column from the South Tower covered with inscriptions, photographs, memorial and prayer cards, patches, stickers, and other tributes.



New York Fire Department's Ladder 3 fire truck, parked on West Street near Vesey Street, was crushed when the towers collapsed.



Kerith Koss Schrager (CAS'01) says the museum has 28,000 objects in its collection and 50,000 digital assets. "We really have an emotional connection to this collection in a way that I haven't had in other museums," she says.

A memorial button commemorating Lisa Anne Frost (COM'01, SHA'01), 22, a sales representative for *Where to Eat* in Boston who was transferring to San Francisco, where the magazine was planning to expand. She was on Flight 175 on September 11, 2001.



so I understood, sort of, what I was getting into. I had worked with challenging collections at other institutions. I did have a concern that I was going to be dealing with this material every day.

But when people ask me, "How do you get through the day?," this has really been probably one of the most rewarding and supportive work environments that I've ever been in. And we have a great camaraderie, which is really helpful in supporting our mental health, and we truly appreciate coming to work every day. Among my team [of five], I do try to make sure that they have the freedom if they need to take a day or take a moment or walk outside or invest in the types of activities they want to do to let them step away.

Conservation work can be tricky and complex anywhere, but this is a level up. What are the challenges?

It was complicated for me to come into this situation because it is different than how we are trained as conservators in a fine arts context. There is a preservation bias [in fine arts], where every element of an artwork is important, and exactly the way it was created is how it should be preserved. You're trying to preserve the artifact to its authentic moment in time—for example, for a painting, that's the moment the artist signs the painting. But that's not how we think about every object here.

For me—I watched the event on TV from Boston—the moment the buildings fell, that's the 9/11 moment, seeing things covered in that dust. But for items in our collection, there's a whole range of moments where that could be the case. There were nine months of recovery after that day. And now, 25 years of history that's happened since. And all of that history is important in the context of the storytelling that we're doing here.

That we would clean the fire trucks and remove all that dust from them so that we could display them in the gallery without having to put a vitrine [a clear glass container] over them was a difficult mind shift for me as a conservator. I was so focused on what I thought was the moment in time. But everybody knows



A memorial display consisting of a section of a debris-filled interior of Chelsea Jeans, a retail storefront on Broadway.



A wristwatch, recovered from Ground Zero, belonging to Rosemary A. Smith, 61, who lived in Staten Island with her daughter, son-in-law, and two grandchildren. She was a switchboard operator at Sidley Austin Brown & Wood on the North Tower's 57th floor.

what a fire truck looks like, so everyone recognizes that to see it bent and deformed means that that fire truck underwent some sort of physical transformative force. That is the story that this artifact represents, and we tell the dust story elsewhere.

The passage of time affects both memories and objects...

Even under the best care, you know, you've probably pulled out a pair of sunglasses or a pair of shoes, and the

plastic has just degraded over time. The issue that we now have is that we don't want our visitors to see the degradation that naturally occurs to materials and assume that it's 9/11 damage. It's a very difficult balance that we have to make, and trying to figure out how much intervention is appropriate is one of the things that we're dealing with.

What is particularly fraught and goes back to the emotional issue is that we have objects in our collection where the object was recovered, but the person

wasn't. So this object is the last thing that maybe they touched. When that's combined with the "inherent vice" that these objects are going to degrade over time, questions of preservation come to the forefront. So we've got a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to survey our plastics collection of nearly 9,000 objects and identify the most at-risk ones, conservation-wise. Among other things, we'll do 3-D digital models of some items, so a virtual copy can exist if the physical artifact can't.

Talk about the dust.

Dust was a concern from the very beginning. We have a very engaged stakeholder community that is first responders, victim families, and a group that's often sort of overlooked—local community members who live in the neighborhoods around the World Trade Center. They wanted to make sure that the dust was dealt with appropriately within the museum.

Very early on, they had specialists come in to identify a characteristic fingerprint of World Trade Center dust. Everything that was in a building that was pulverized there. The main components we use to identify 9/11 dust are asbestos, lead, and man-made vitreous fibers.

We have strict protocols in place, and staff has to be trained in order to handle dust-containing artifacts. We have about 4,000 of them in the collection. We have to make sure that the visitors coming in, the museum workers who were working with this material, would be safe.

A lot of the controversy on the health impact was the dust. And in the immediate aftermath, even the EPA declared the air safe to breathe. I think a lot of people knew it wasn't fine, and they were concerned that it would be overlooked. There are thousands of people who have died or now have health issues related to exposure.

The fire trucks, the ambulances, those big things underwent an abatement by people who have certifications to do those hazardous materials. Generally, for smaller things, we try not to

remove the dust because we do want to keep it as part of the story, and so we have to wear a respirator or handle them in the fume hoods.

There were concerns about human remains.

We do not knowingly display human remains. Anything that has an appreciable amount of dust needs to be looked at by the Office of Chief Medical Examiner to be cleared of distinguishable human remains. As far as I know, they have never identified testable traces contained within our artifacts.

Every day you're with all these objects. I'd think that, for three or four days, it's going to be OK, and then on the fifth day, there's some artifact or story that's going to hit you differently.

I'm getting better at recognizing what my triggers are. I learned pretty early that one of mine is handwritten notes [from victims]. For the most part, I can't read them. I can treat them as an artifact, but I have to really be in the right mental space to sit and read them, especially if it's a victim who wrote a letter to a loved one or something like that. And then, sometimes, I am completely caught off guard. The victims are so diverse that [often] there is something personally identifiable, whether it's that they share your birthday or they went to the same college or they have the same favorite sports team. So you never quite know when you're going to come across working on someone's artifacts that you might unexpectedly connect with.

And then, yes, occasionally, I'll be walking across the plaza and just the gravity of the situation hits me, even though for most of the time I can just think of it as a memorial space.... Then we talk amongst ourselves about the things that we're feeling. I have a very supportive family. I have a very supportive supervisor. We take moments.

Many of your visitors were not even born in 2001.

One of my son's best friend's dad is the AP history teacher at the high school in

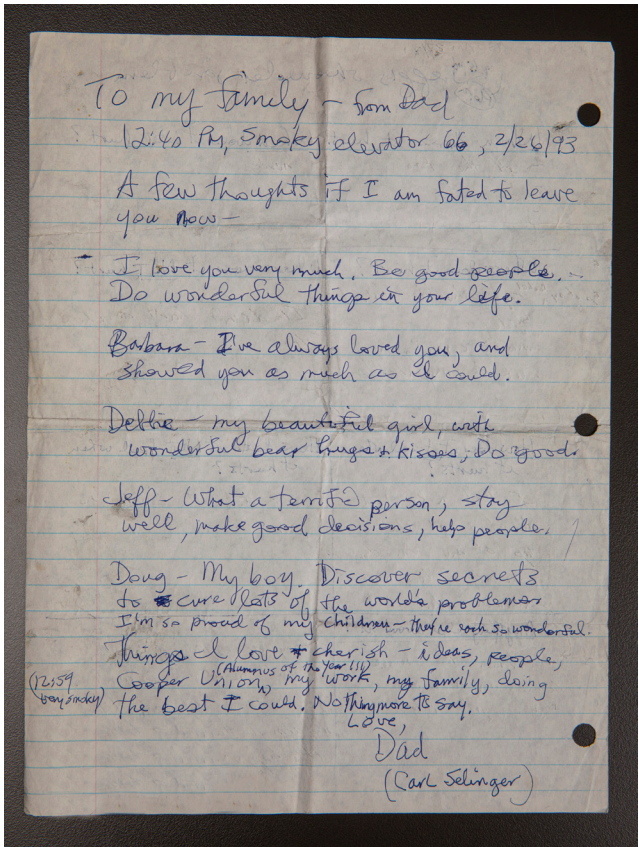
“
I'm getting better at recognizing what my triggers are. I learned pretty early that one of mine is handwritten notes [from victims]. For the most part, I can't read them.”

Kerith Koss Schrager

our town, and they were bringing the 10th grade class to the museum. It was optional to come, and so I thought maybe 20 kids would show up. It turned out the entire class came, 87 students. This is an event that they haven't experienced; they don't have the emotional connection to this in the way that people who have experienced it do. I was impressed that they were all engaged. I did not get any backs turned or eye rolls.

One of the things that we stress is that we're preserving the evidence. Why is it important that we're collecting these things? There are conspiracy theories that 9/11 never happened, that the Holocaust never happened. These artifacts are evidence of it that people can see. They're actually coming into this space where this event happened. This is a place where almost 3,000 people were murdered.

It's a sacred space. You can see it when people come into the museum.... As they descend into the space, even the kids become more reserved, quiet, and respectful. **B**



A note written by Port Authority employee Carl Selinger to his family while trapped in a smoke-filled elevator in 1993. The mission of the 9/11 Memorial & Museum is to also commemorate the victims of the terror attack on the World Trade Center on February 26, 1993.

+
BU alumni who lost their lives on September 11, 2001, are remembered here.

WHAT DRIVES VERTEX CEO AND PRESIDENT RESHMA KEWALRAMANI

BU alum is the first woman to lead a large, publicly traded US biotech company. She has dedicated her career to developing life-changing medicines.

BY AMY LASKOWSKI

As CEO and president of the global biotechnology company Vertex Pharmaceuticals, Reshma Kewalramani has spoken with many patients whose lives have been drastically improved by the company's treatments.

She recalls a conversation with a mother whose daughter died of cystic fibrosis before Vertex's breakthrough drug Trikafta turned the once-debilitating lung disease into a manageable condition for many.

"The mom would call and yell at me," says Kewalramani (CAS'98, CAMED'98, Hon.'26). "She said, 'I've already lost my daughter. I will not lose my son. You have to go faster than you think you can.'"

The company did move quickly. Trikafta was developed in just under 4 years, far faster than the typical 15-year industry timeline, Kewalramani says. "Every time we thought, 'This is a hard thing, how are we going to do this?' But you hear the mom's voice, and she's already lost one child, and she's not going to lose another. You find a way forward."

For Kewalramani, who's dedicated her career to developing life-changing medicines, the story

captures what's at stake in her work as a physician, scientist, and CEO.

"I think there is a very special responsibility and perspective that you bring to this role, if you happen to be a physician-scientist by background, because you have a very intimate knowledge and relationship to patients," she says. "You have a very deep understanding of what it takes to bring a potential idea, a potential molecule, from the lab all the way through preclinical development, clinical development through regulatory and manufacturing, and then eventually you have access for patients."

Kewalramani graduated from BU with a combined BA and MD through the now-ended seven-year accelerated undergrad and medical school program. She trained in internal medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital and completed a nephrology fellowship through the Massachusetts General Hospital-Brigham and Women's Hospital program.

While working as a transplant nephrologist studying kidney disease early in her career at Boston-area hospitals, she received a job offer from drug developer Amgen in California and moved across the country with her husband, Abhijit Kulkarni (ENG'93,'97), and their then six-month-old twin boys. She rose through Amgen's ranks and, in 2017, joined Vertex. There, she was chief medical officer and executive vice president of global medicines development and medical affairs before becoming CEO in 2020.

Based in Boston's Seaport, Vertex has several approved medicines that treat the underlying



"I think there is a very special responsibility and perspective that you bring to this role, if you happen to be a physician-scientist by background."

RESHMA KEWALRAMANI
(CAS'98, CAMED'98, HON.'26)

causes of cystic fibrosis, sickle cell disease, the genetic blood disorder transfusion-dependent beta thalassemia, and acute pain. *Fortune* has named the company one of the 100 Best Companies to Work For.

For her leadership and contributions to science and innovation, Kewalramani has received worldwide recognition, appearing on *Time's* 100 Most Influential People of 2025 and 2026 Women of the Year lists, *Fortune's* 100 Most Powerful People in Business list in 2025, and *Boston* magazine's Most Influential Bostonians 2026 list.

From BU, she's received a 2025 Distinguished Alumni Award, the highest honor the Boston University Alumni Association bestows on alums, and the 2023 Distinguished Alumni Award from the Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine.



Read our Q&A with
Reshma Kewalramani.

She's a member of the Dean's Advisory Board at the medical school and gave the keynote address at BU's 153rd Commencement on May 17 (*see page 8*).

When Kewalramani became CEO and president of Vertex, she was the first woman to lead a large, publicly traded US biotech company. But she doesn't consider herself a trailblazer.

"I think of myself as a mom, a doctor, a wife, a daughter," she says. "I'm a scientist, certainly, someone who has a lot of responsibility to patients, our employees, our stakeholders."

"I'm thinking about going home to walk my dog, the meetings I have tomorrow, and the data we'll be looking at," she says. "Are the medicines getting to patients? Are we doing enough to nurture our people and our culture? That's what's going through my mind." **E**

COURTESY OF VERTEX

With the help of campus spaces, programs, and contests, BU student entrepreneurs are reimagining the way we live

By Amy Laskowski

FROM IDEAS TO INNOVATION

A clothing company that turns recycled tennis strings into performance wear. A wearable device designed to suppress tremors in people suffering from neurological disorders. A better way to find places to sell your artwork.

These are just a few of the entrepreneurial ideas taking shape at BU, where students from all disciplines are building start-ups with the potential to change the way we live and work, eat and dress, recharge in our free time—and even treat one of the symptoms of neurological disorders like Parkinson's disease. Through a network of campus spaces, programs, courses, and competitions, BU helps students move their plans from concept to prototype.

At hubs like Innovate@BU and the Robotics & Autonomous Systems Teaching and Innovation Center, students can test ideas, solve problems, and build ventures. Each spring, many of these programs culminate in competitions, where students pitch their ideas for thousands of dollars in funding and mentoring support. Some hope to make meaningful social change. Others look forward to pitching their idea on *Shark Tank*. Many simply want to learn skills they can carry into their careers.

"I've had students say they chose BU because all intellectual property for undergrads is owned by the undergrads—we don't take a piece of that," says Siobhan Dullea (CAS'91), executive director of Innovate@BU. "Our mission is to help all Terriers develop innovation skills and an entrepreneurial mind-set so they can make change in their lives, careers, and communities."

That know-how is increasingly essential. "Students are going to be working in disrupted industries, in emerging or completely new technologies," Dullea says. "These skills we teach will help them adapt along the way."



MARK LUCAS (ENG'26) demonstrates his NeuroBrace system, which detects tremors and delivers targeted compression to affected muscle groups. The compression minimizes tremors in real time for people with Parkinson's disease and other neurological disorders.

AS A TEENAGER IN EASTMAN, GA., Mark Lucas cared for his mother, who lived with a neurological condition that impaired her cognition and motor skills. She died when Lucas was 14. "Watching and taking care of her as a child really opened my eyes to what people living with these conditions go through," says Lucas (ENG'26).

Not long after he entered the College of Engineering's biomedical

engineering program, he began working toward a long-held goal, inspired in part by his mother's decline in motor skills: developing a device to help people with tremors.

Approximately 30 million people worldwide live with tremors, which can interfere with eating, writing, self-care, and careers. That number will likely grow as the population ages, Lucas says. Existing treatments, such as medication and

surgery, can be invasive and costly, and are not always covered by insurance.

Lucas has developed multiple prototypes of what he calls the NeuroBrace, a device that uses machine learning to detect tremors and deliver targeted compression to affected muscle groups. The compression minimizes tremors in real time for people with Parkinson's disease and other neurological disorders. The NeuroBrace, which looks like a combined bracelet and arm brace and can be worn under clothing, is designed to help patients regain independence in their daily lives, says Lucas.

He's founded a medical device start-up, Antioch Technologies, and is preparing for clinical trials. He's also figuring out how to get the NeuroBrace covered by insurance.

After participating in Innovate@BU's Innovation Pathway program, Lucas was a finalist in the 2026 New Venture Competition, Innovate@BU's major pitch contest. He says he's received valuable advice through the program: "They taught me organizational knowledge around the business space and funding. It's been amazing."



JAKOB ESTEROWITZ (ENG'27), a member of the BU men's tennis team, recycles old tennis strings into polyester-blend performance clothing.



CLOTHING MADE FROM TENNIS STRINGS

AS A MEMBER OF the BU men's tennis team, Jakob Esterowitz (ENG'27) often needs to replace the strings in his racquet. Old strings lose tension. New ones promote peak performance (as a sophomore, he helped the Terriers reach the NCAA tournament). But there's a downside to replacing all those old polyester strings: They end up in landfills. In 2024, sidelined by an injury, Esterowitz had some extra time on his hands, and an idea. Could he recycle the strings into polyester-blend performance clothing?

Esterowitz—who'd always been interested in fashion and started designing his own clothes in 2022—along with teammates Jonah Dickson (COM'24, MET'25) and Ouwen Lu

(Questrom'21), began talking to professors to see if the idea was feasible.

They created a company, LET, which has partnered with more than 100 donation sites worldwide to gather used polyester tennis strings. Using a patented chemical recycling process, developed with a professor from Washington State University, they convert the strings into polyester fiber, the building block for the yarn, and, ultimately, the fabric. LET partners with a clothing factory in Asia to create shirts out of the recycled fiber.

The team plans to release its first line of performance T-shirts, priced between \$50 and \$60, this summer. They say their process uses 47 percent less water, 59 percent less carbon, and 75 percent less energy than petroleum-based polyester production. (The name LET is a reference to a tennis term—a let calls for a point to be replayed—that reflects their mission to give used materials a second life.)

"Innovate@BU has been so supportive," he says. "They connected us with professionals in the fashion and sustainability industry for advice, and they gave us specific ways to help grow our business."

JACKIE RICCIARDI

A PLACE TO SELL YOUR ART

FOR MANY ARTISTS, selling their work at a pop-up craft show or art fair can be an effective way to make some extra income. But it can also be a gamble. Traveling to a show and renting a table cost money, and there's no guarantee that their goods will sell.

Raheeq Ibrahim (CAS'25, ENG'25) learned about the problem from a cousin who runs a fragrance business and for years has spent time and money at underperforming markets. Ibrahim asked herself: Is there a way to predict whether setting up shop at an event would be worth it?

A past president of BU's chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers, Ibrahim tapped her own growing knowledge of artificial intelligence. She designed MarkitIt, a platform that helps small business vendors—like food truck owners, photographers, artisans, and fashion designers—find and apply to the right pop-up events. At the same time, event organizers can use the platform to discover and manage vendors more efficiently.

"We use AI to look at a vendor and tell them where they're going to make the most revenue," Ibrahim says. Their algorithm considers factors such as the seller's products—like fragrance or clothing—the average price of those products, the event's location, and the typical demographics of the seller's previous customers.

The financial stakes are significant. Vendors can lose \$150 to \$400 trekking to an unsuccessful event.

CYDNEY SCOTT



MarkitIt aims to reduce that risk by providing data-driven guidance. While a free version is available, its premium service charges vendors \$20 a month; event organizers pay a 5 percent fee on what they charge vendors to attend their markets and fairs, in exchange for tools that manage applications, curate vendors, and process payments.

In the platform's early stages, Ibrahim joined the BU Spark! XC475 innovation fellowship, where she collaborated with computer science students (all BU Spark! tech fellows) who helped build MarkitIt. She says the fellowship pushed her to conduct more interviews than she'd originally thought necessary, and she received invaluable feedback that helped her validate her idea.

"It was about being innovative and coming out with something tangible," she says. "I'm glad I got to be a part of that." **B**



During her time at BU, **RAHEEQ IBRAHIM (CAS'25, ENG'25)** designed a platform that helps small business vendors—like photographers, artisans, and fashion designers—find and apply to the right pop-up events.

Read about other BU student innovators, including the creator of a citrus replacement that has no lemon or lime but has the flavor and properties of the natural juices.



class notes.

WRITTEN BY SOPHIE YARIN

1964
ADAM CRESCENZI (ENG'64) of Concord, Mass., writes, "Sixty-one years ago, my class was the first to graduate under the name College of Engineering. Since then, I have lived a life beyond my wildest imagination. I have served on the ENG Dean's Advisory Board under three different deans. I have been an international executive management consultant for over 50 years. I have served on the board of directors of public and private corporations, and in the last decade I have dedicated myself to serving on the boards of nonprofit organizations." Adam is president emeritus of the Italian Cultural Society of Naples, Fla., chair of the Founders Scholarship Fund, a trustee of Dean College, and vice chair of Clough Global Funds. He is a former member of the Naples Botanical Garden board of directors and has consulted with businesses across Europe and New Zealand. He has served as the managing director of a research, education, and consulting services firm based in London. "My education at the College of Engineering is the foundation and catalyst for my life," he says. Email him at adcsimplytuscan2@gmail.com.

1968
JOHN TORDAY (CAS'68) of Philadelphia, Pa., published *Conscious Life: Bridging Cellular Origins, Quantum Realities, and Cosmic Connections* (Springer Nature, 2025). "It is an expansion of my work on the concept of cell consciousness, which was motivated by a groundbreaking experiment showing the necessity of the force of gravity on evolution, merging physical and physiologic for the first time empirically," he writes.

1969
IVAN GULAS (CGS'67, CAS'69) of Los Angeles, Calif., published *Changing the Odds: A New Understanding of PTSD and the Path to Recovery* (Salisbury & York, 2026). A former

Harvard Medical School faculty member for nearly 20 years, Ivan draws on decades of clinical experience, including work with Vietnam veterans before post-traumatic stress disorder was formally recognized—and his own childhood experience as a survivor of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. The book introduces an original framework for understanding how trauma disrupts the brain's threat assessment system. Learn more at www.changingtheodds-ptsd.com, and email Ivan at drgulas@gmail.com.

1970
JAMES PARADISE (COM'70) of Valley Glen, Calif., directed *What Opa Did* in its world premiere at Theatre 40 in Beverly Hills. The production ran from January through February 2026. *What Opa Did* is a Holocaust play that takes place in Germany in the years leading up to World War II and in 1990. "It is about the terrible personal choices people had to make in order to survive the exterminations," James writes. The Holocaust Museum LA collaborated with the production. Email James at jp@pikebishop.com.

JOHN H. PETITO (CGS'68, CAS'70) of Lumberville, Pa., wrote a short

memoir, *Among the Wards*, in which he describes his experience participating in the BU Psychology Club's 1966 Metropolitan State Hospital project. While working with patients at the hospital, he established a clinical focus on Joe R., who had been diagnosed with severe schizophrenia and had been in and out of institutions since the 1930s. In his memoir, John writes, "[Joe] talked to voices. He believed he had died in a bus accident. He remembered names and places that might or might not have existed. He spoke in fragments, in loops, in echoes. But when he laughed—when I could make him laugh—it felt like reaching through the fog to something real."

LUIS O. RUZO (CAS'70) of Orinda, Calif., published *Lives Without End* (Luis Octavio Ruzo, 2025), which was also released in Spanish through Editorial IMAGO in Lima, Peru. Luis lives in Lima for part of the year.

1971
RAYMOND JALETTE (ENG'71, MET'74) of Brookline, Mass., retired from Boston University in January 2025 after working in the fundraising office for 51 years.

1974
JOHN CROSS (LAW'74) of Tenants Harbor, Maine, published *From the Desk of Maine* (Publishinginc, 2025), a compilation of short stories. The book is all about "the follies and foibles of growing up in a small town outside of Chicago in the late 1950s and early 1960s," he writes. Email him at jbcross@aol.com.

MIRIAM MOSNER SUCHOFF (DGE'74, COM'76) of New City, N.Y., is celebrating 50 years since graduating from the College of Communication and meeting her husband of 50 years in the dining hall at West Campus. "I hope to visit this spring for a 50-year walk down memory lane," she wrote

in December. Friends can email her at miriamsuchoff@gmail.com.

1975
PETER BEIN (CAS'75) of Atlanta, Ga., published *Life with Parts* (Journey Home Press, 2025), a memoir of his lived experience with dissociative identity disorder. Learn more at peterbein.com.

MARC MORGENSTERN (LAW'75) of Cleveland, Ohio, is mentor-at-large for the University of California, Berkeley, House Fund, which oversees \$250 million of early-stage venture funds primarily concentrated in the artificial intelligence and robotics fields. Previously, Marc was chief executive officer and managing partner of Kahn Kleinman, now part of Taft, Stettinius & Hollister LLP. In January, *Forbes* selected his book, *The Soul of the Deal: Creative Frameworks for Buying, Selling, and Investing in any Business* (Rodin Books, 2022), as "One of the 25 Mergers and Acquisitions Books Every CEO, Founder, and Business Owner Should Read." The book is based on Marc's experience "selling encyclopedias door-to-door and following the Grateful Dead, and 400-plus transactions as C-suite, director, investor, or counsel."

1976
WILLIAM BLOCHER (CAS'76, GRS'85) of Amherst, N.H., completed a dissertation in 1985 that, while focused on laboratory experiments in psychology, was firmly rooted in the emerging field of computer science: operating systems, hardware/software integration, and distributed processing. Email him at wkb@bu.edu.

GERSHON BLUMSTEIN (CGS'74, CAS'76) of West Bloomfield, Mich., was honored with the Hospice Hero Award from Jewish Family Services of Michigan for his volunteer work supporting individuals in palliative and dementia care. His goal for his weekly



IARA THAIS RIVAS RIOS (MET'24) of Lima, Peru, writes, "Thank you, BU, for helping my dream of studying abroad come true. I hope you continue supporting many other students in bringing their projects and goals to life. These years have given me invaluable lessons, unforgettable memories, and the warmth of wonderful people who helped me through the winters. I hope to return one day as a teacher and become part of this family once again." Friends can email Thais at thais.rivas.rios@gmail.com.

visits is to "focus on dignity, presence, and compassionate companionship for clients navigating profound vulnerability." He writes that he is grateful for the recognition and remains deeply committed to community-centered service. You can email him at gershblumstein@gmail.com.

1977
NORMAN M. SHULMAN (Wheelock'77) of Lubbock, Tex., received national recognition for his debut book, *Love, Norm: Inspiration of a Jewish American Fighter Pilot* (Texas Tech University Press, 2nd ed., 2024). In 2025, *Love, Norm* was named a finalist in the IAN Book of the Year Awards, in the Non-Fiction: Military/War category. The memoir was inspired by a conversation Norm had with his stepson, who confessed to feeling

isolated during his Air Force training. Norm set out to encourage him by delving into the history of Jewish people in the military. The result, a series of 52 letters to his stepson, became the foundation for *Love, Norm*. Norm is a psychologist with more than 50 years of experience in the field and a lifelong scholar of Jewish history. His stepson, Captain Greg "Glick" Levenson, is a decorated F-16 combat pilot. Learn more about the book at www.lovenormmemoir.com.

1978
TRACY BURTZ (CFA'78) of Pleasantville, N.Y., a painter, exhibited her work in *Unspoken*, a solo show at Edgewater Gallery in Middlebury, Vt., from July through August 2025. In March 2026, she exhibited at the solo show *What She Knows* at the Painting

Center in New York. Her work is represented by Edgewater Gallery, the Painting Center, Thomas Deans Fine Art (Atlanta, Ga.), Nantucket's East End Gallery, and Nantucket Looms. Visit tracyburtz.com, and email her at tracyburtz@gmail.com.

1984
WILLIAM J. CONNELL (COM'84) of Forestdale, R.I., an attorney, writes frequently in professional and legal contexts. In the past few years, he has branched out into fiction. His stories have appeared in several short-story anthologies, and he has published two volumes in his Black Death Trilogy: *Mask of Death* (Wild Ink Publishing, 2024) and *Race with the Black Death* (Wild Ink Publishing, 2026). Learn more at williamjconnell.com.

NADENE STEIN (CAS'84, Wheelock'86) of Waltham, Mass., retired after 40 years as a teacher, building leader, and school administrator. In her honor, a retirement gift established the Dr. Nadene Stein Growth and Independence Scholarship, which reflects her dedication to resilience, self-advocacy, and progress. The scholarship will be awarded to students who demonstrate determination and perseverance, along with growth in areas such as independence, community

involvement, academic improvement, career readiness, and progress toward individual goals. You can email her at nadene.stein@comcast.net.

1985
DEBORAH FARONE (COM'85) of New York, N.Y., published *Breaking Ground: How Successful Women Lawyers Build Thriving Practices* (PLI Press, 2026). She distills lessons from 60-plus interviews with leading women in the field and academics worldwide, revealing how "the most successful women in law have built enduring, profitable, value-driven practices in an industry still grappling with gender parity," she writes. Deborah is founder and CEO of Farone Advisors LLC and a former chief marketing officer at Cravath, Swaine & Moore and Debevoise & Plimpton. She has built her expertise at the intersection of branding, business development, and leadership.

AMY (GETCHELL) SAFFORD (COM'85) of Saco, Maine, writes that her debut novel, *Goode Vibrations of the Wrestling Place* (Safford Communications, 2024), won three international literary awards in 2025: the Eric Hoffer Spiritual Fiction Award, the First Horizon Book Award, and the Independent Publisher IPPY Silver

bu.edu/bostonia/class-notes

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and make them
searchable by year
of graduation.

COURTESY OF IARA THAIS RIVAS RIOS



RICHARD A. SCRIBNER (CAS'61) of Fernandina Beach, Fla., writes, "During my undergraduate years, my mother, Carrie, then a librarian at BU, was a great support. I remember many people, especially my adviser and physics department chair, Robert S. Cohen. After graduating with an AB in physics, I earned a PhD in physics from the University of Florida. To my unfolding surprise, my career became more varied and rewarding than I dreamed. Within a few years, I was creating innovative new science policy programs for the American Association for the Advancement of Science and other scientific and engineering organizations. In 1973, I was the architect for the highly competitive, yearlong science policy fellowship program, which I designed and led for a decade. It continues today and has about 4,500 alumni. I was a State Department official dealing with nuclear nonproliferation and an international security associate professor at Georgetown University, and I set up and led a counterterrorism technology research institute at Dartmouth College. And that's only half the story. I'm 87 and each year, for the last several, I teach an eight-week innovative lifelong learning course on what the future may hold, and lead a seven-month-long set of weekly lectures on timely national and geopolitical issues that each draw more than 50 people. My personal life has been even more rewarding, with a loving, remarkable wife, Kaye, three accomplished children, and six amazing grown grandchildren pursuing their dreams. I'm active, healthy, and joyful in a full life. Thank you, Boston University! I would love to hear from friends and colleagues from my BU days." Email Richard at rscribnr@sover.net.



SARA NEALY BORG (CFA'75) of Kalaheo, Hawaii, married Lars Borg on May 18, 2025. Now retired from full-time work, Sara consults on the development of new works in opera. Previously, she ran two regional opera companies in the San Francisco Bay area and a performing arts center on Hawaii's Big Island. Lars, also retired, was a principal color scientist for Adobe Systems.

Medal in the category of Visionary/New Age Fiction. She was also named a finalist in the 2025 IAN book awards, the 2024 American Book Fest Best Book Awards, and the 2025 Maine Writers and Publishers Alliance Fiction Awards. In 2025, she published the sequel, *Goode Vibrations of the Dead River Valley* (Safford Communications). Amy's stories blend New England history with literary fiction, suspense, and the paranormal. She taught English composition at the University of New England and is a former executive director of the Maine Psychological Association. Friends can email her at safford.amy@gmail.com.

1986
TARA GOODWIN (COM'86) of Boston, Mass., founded the award-winning PR firm Goodwin Consulting. Her crisis communications services have been used by professional athletes, Fortune 500 companies, and celebrities. In fall 2025, Tara published *Manage the Message, Change the Outcome: An Executive's Guide to Crisis Management* (Routledge, 2025). "The book is a wake-up call that inspires leaders to take a proactive approach to crisis management and guides them step-by-step through a field-tested approach to be more effective during a crisis," she writes. It's also an entertaining tale of lessons from the trenches, including her collaborations with Bill Belichick (Hon.'04), Tom Brady, and Aerosmith's Joey Kramer. Tara is an international crisis preparedness speaker, a workshop leader, and a trusted field expert for outlets such as *Business Insider* and *Fast Company*.

DANA (WOLFE) NIEMEIER (Wheelock'86) of Melbourne, Fla., writes that she is "celebrating 14 years as a portrait and corporate photographer in sunny Florida. I've enjoyed the past year as president of Florida Professional Photographers and serving Professional Photographers of America on their nominating committee. Cheers to my 179 Bay State Road friends! Visiting

BU with my family was amazing—what changes in 39 years!" Email her at dana@dananphotography.com.

1987
BENJAMIN BAHAN (Wheelock'87, GRS'96) of Frederick, Md., played a key leadership role in the development of a monolingual American sign language (ASL) dictionary. The project was presented in July 2025 at the American Sign Language Teachers Association Conference at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. Benjamin co-edited the volume and contributed his years of experience in ASL linguistics, storytelling, and Deaf culture to its formation.

1988
STEPHEN PIZZELLO (COM'88) of North Hollywood, Calif., received the ASC Award of Distinction from the American Society of Cinematographers, recognizing his three decades of work as editor in chief of the organization's flagship magazine, *American Cinematographer*. The ceremony took place at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Los Angeles in March. Stephen's wife, ASC general manager Delphine Figueras, is one of the event's producers. *American Cinematographer* has won multiple Eddie Awards for editorial excellence from *Folio*, the publishing industry's magazine of record; several Maggie Awards for editorial and design excellence from the Western Publishing Association; and special recognition from the International Federation of Cinematographers. Stephen writes that his main source of career inspiration was a stint as film editor for *The Muse*, the weekly arts and entertainment supplement of the *Daily Free Press*.

KEITH TAVARES (CGS'86, COM'88) of Providence, R.I., published *An Azorean Family's History: Our Faria and Moitoso Roots* (Blurb, 2026), a genealogical deep dive into his ancestral origins among the Faria and Moitoso families of Portugal. His research took him to mainland Portugal, the island of Madeira, and the Azores. Keith has worked in higher education and the nonprofit sector for nearly 30 years. He is director of capacity building for the Rhode Island Foundation.

1990
JOHN STOMBERG (GRS'90;'99) of Williamstown, Mass., the inaugural Virginia Rice Kelsey 1961s Director of the Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth

College, retired in June 2026. During his 10-year tenure, he oversaw a \$50 million renovation and expansion of the museum and dramatically amplified its impact on campus. A specialist in American and European modernist art, he guided the museum through its expansion and an overhaul of the museum's brand, curated 14 exhibitions, selected more than 66 works for acquisition, oversaw the creation of 7 key museum positions, and led the museum in a successful effort to triple its teaching capability.

1992
DINA E. CONLIN (CAS'92, Pardee'94) of Newton, Mass., was named a 2025 "Go To Commercial Real Estate Lawyer" by *Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly*. Dina is cochair of the global law firm Greenberg Traurig, LLP's real estate practice in the Boston office.

COLIN ROCK (Questrom'77) of West New York, N.J., published *What Would Babu Do?* (Xlibris Publishing, 2024), a children's book written in honor of his first granddaughter. The book is aimed at readers up to age 5 and focuses on a little girl's quest—with the wisdom of her grandfather as her guide—to discover the best way to help others. Learn more at www.nuworldexpressions.com, and email the author at abovebelow@nuworldexpressions.com.



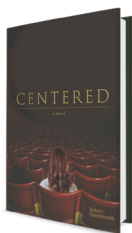
She advises clients on zoning and other land use matters and in many aspects of commercial real estate transactions, representing sellers and purchasers of commercial property.

1993
SHEA JUSTICE (CFA'93) of Jamaica Plain, Mass., is a mixed-media artist. From February through August 2026, he had three of his works featured in the exhibition *Say It Loud: AAMARP, 1977 to Now*, celebrating 40 years of the African American Master Artist-in-Residence Program at the Institute of Contemporary Art Boston.

1994
KIMBERLY MOFFITT (COM'94) of Owings Mills, Md., was appointed by Governor Wes Moore to serve on the state's public broadcasting commission, Maryland Public

Television's 11-member governing body. Kimberly was named dean of Howard University's Cathy Hughes School of Communications in 2025. She is a former dean of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences and professor emerita of language, literacy, and culture at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. She is president of the National Association for Media Literacy Education and is an advisor to Maryland Public Television's Maryland Center for Media Literacy & Education.

STEVEN WRIGHT (MET'94) of Marietta, Ga., is the author of four independently published books: *Blockchains, Smart Contracts and the Law* (2023); *Ethics, Law and Technology Adoption: Navigating Technology Adoption Challenges* (2023); *Market Research Math for Small Business: A Practical Guide to the Math You Need for Understanding Your Business' Customers and Competition* (2024); and *Securing Your Data Supply Chain: A Practical Guide to Data Governance in the Digital Age* (2025). His first publication was a finalist in the 2025 American Book Fest Best Book Awards, in the Business: Reference category. Friends and classmates can email Steven at drstevenawright@gmail.com.



ROBERT HENNEMUTH (LAW'80) of Harwich Port, Mass., published the novel *Centered* (Robert Hennemuth, 2026), which follows Mary O'Hare on her way to stage and film stardom. Eventually, she is led to an epiphany that surprises her: The key determinant of character is faith in God.



EMILY Y. ZHANG (COM'20) of West Palm Beach, Fla., joined Jones Foster in November 2025, in the firm's complex litigation and dispute resolution practice group. Emily focuses her practice on commercial litigation matters as well as employment issues and disputes.



JESSICA (CASAS) CHEW (MET'16) of Red Bluff, Calif., published *Images of America: Chinese in Tehama County* (2026) as part of Arcadia Publishing's Images of America series. The book brings together rare photographs, family archives, and community stories that document the Chinese communities' enduring contributions in Chinatowns throughout Tehama County. You can email her at jessica@redbluffchew.org.

An Alum Shares the Best of Boston

► Kate Weiser (COM'19) has built a popular travel and lifestyle platform
BY SANGMIN SONG (COM'26)

WHEN KATE WEISER arrived at BU from Westchester County, N.Y., in 2015, she assumed Boston would be “cute and nice for four years” before she returned home. But after wandering through neighborhoods between classes—choosing a different area of the city to explore—Weiser (COM'19) was entranced. She photographed everything on her phone: coffee shops, side streets, storefronts, small details that caught her attention. By the end of her first semester, her phone storage was full. Over winter break, Weiser created an Instagram account to share her photos. She applied to join a local Instagram community and was told her page did not feature enough of Boston. Undeterred, she began to build one that would. Sitting in her Kilachand Hall room, she searched for a word that began with “BU” and landed on “Bucket List.” In January 2016, she launched @bucketlistboston and began posting daily. Today, the account has more than 220,000 followers and has become a full-time business. Weiser, who runs



Kate Weiser (COM'19) built Bucket List Boston into a full-time platform spotlighting the city she started exploring as a BU freshman.



I've also described it as a love letter to Boston. If you scroll through the page, I hope it feels like someone showing you the most beautiful corners of the city and saying, 'You should go see this.'"

Bucket List Boston (bucketlistboston.com) with a small team, describes it as a curated guide to restaurants, events, and neighborhoods across the city and New England. “I’ve also described it as a love letter to Boston,” she says. “If you scroll through the page, I hope it feels like

someone showing you the most beautiful corners of the city and saying, ‘You should go see this.’” *Bostonia* spoke with Weiser about the business and why, a decade later, she still feels there is more to discover.

Bostonia: What are a few of the hidden gems you’ve highlighted?
Kate Weiser: One that’s always been special to me is the Boston Athenaeum. It might not be completely hidden, but it feels like a gem. It dates back to the 1800s, and I first became a member when I was a sophomore at BU. I use it as my office now. It feels like a home away from home and has been part of my Boston story almost from the beginning. I also love the Mapparium. For a long time, you were not allowed to take

HOPE ALLISON

photos inside, so when that changed in 2024, it was really exciting for me. I am such a visual person, and finally being able to show people what it looks like felt huge. The globe reflects the world as it was when it was built, so there are countries that do not exist today and others that had not yet formed.

What has been one of your most popular posts?
My video of Casa Romero in Back Bay has by far the most views I’ve ever had on a single post. It reached about 3.4 million views. I was completely shocked, as you can never really expect something to go viral like that. I obviously love that spot, which is why I highlighted it in the first place, but I did not anticipate that level of response. I was blown away by how many people watched it and engaged with it. It just shows that sometimes you really cannot predict what is going to resonate.

Are there parts of the city you want to explore more, or places that are currently on your own bucket list?
I would love to get to know Chinatown better. I have spent time there, but I feel like I could go deeper. The same goes for the North End. There are so many little spots beyond the obvious tourist stops that I would love to feature. I also pay attention to analytics, and North End content consistently performs well. That tells me people are curious and want more from that neighborhood. In general, Cambridge always feels like it has something new going on. I recently went to a shop called Glass Ripples that has beautifully curated home goods. I love discovering places like that and then building a mini itinerary around them, maybe pairing it with a nearby café or bakery. That process of stitching together a neighborhood experience is something I still genuinely enjoy.

1995
JEFF FLASTER (GRS'95) of Monroe, N.J., wrote *Following Jimmy Valentine*, an original audiobook-cum-musical based on the O. Henry short story “A Retrieved Reformation.” A recording of the performance—featuring a West End cast and a propulsive, genre-bending score—was released in February of 2026. Never before staged or filmed, *Following Jimmy Valentine* is a new way for audiences to take in musical storytelling: “a book that sings,” according to its author. At its heart is jewel thief Jimmy Valentine, the police detective hot on his trail, and the woman offering him a fresh start.

JULIE FOX (Wheelock'95) of Plymouth, Mass., was inducted into the Eastern Massachusetts Interscholastic Swim Coaches Association Hall of Fame in May. She is social studies curriculum coordinator for grades 6 through 12 at Norwell Public Schools, and coaches swim and dive for Norwell and Notre Dame Academy. She and her husband, **JONATHAN FOX** (COM'94), celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary this year; they met as members of the BU Band. “Our connection to BU remains as strong as ever,” she writes. “We are frequent fixtures at alumni band events and longtime season ticket holders for BU Hockey.” Their son **AARON** (CAS'24) was president of the Dog Pound as a student.

1996
ANTHONY DEMAIO (CGS'94, CAS'96, COM'98) of New York, N.Y., was promoted to global head of sales at *Business Insider* in March. **LYNNE PANTALENA** (LAW'96) of Phippsburg, Maine, was elected to the New England Commission of Higher Education. Friends can email her at lpantalena@gmail.com.

1997
PATRICIA LEAVY (CAS'97) of Kennebunk, Maine, published the second installment in her *Celestial Bodies* Romance series. In *Twinkle of Doubt* (She Writes Press, 2025), world-renowned author Tess Lee is on top of the world when she returns with her husband and former counter-terrorism agent, Jack Miller, from a vacation. She is quickly brought back down to Earth when she discovers an anonymous threat that triggers her deepest fears. As Jack races to discover the culprit, the couple must learn to lean on each other, even in the face of their greatest doubts.

DAVID PENDERY (COM'97) of Taipei, Taiwan, published *Time and Tide: The Implementation and Receipt of Narrative Historical Writing, Fictional and Non-fictional* (Ethics Press, 2024). Email him at dpendery@ntub.edu.tw.

1998
AMIR ZAIDI (Questrom'98) of Washington, D.C., was appointed chief of staff of the US Commodity Futures Trading Commission. He previously held several roles at the agency, including director of the division of market oversight, where he oversaw the certification and deployment of the Bitcoin futures contract. Prior to 2010, Amir served in various financial, legal, and regulatory roles in New York and Washington.

1999
JOE MONESTERE (COM'99) of Agoura Hills, Calif., published his first book, *Daily Anxieties: A Month in the Life of an Ad Executive* (BookBaby, 2026). The memoir draws on his 25 years as an advertising veteran to explore with humor the daily stresses that punctuate life in a creative, fast-paced industry. Classmates can email him at joemonestere@outlook.com.

2001
ELIZABETH GURIAN (Sargent'01) of Montpelier, Vt., was named a Charles A. Dana Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Norwich University in 2025. That year, she also launched The Murder Matrix, a comprehensive tool bringing together extensive serial killer data across jurisdictions, time periods, and offender profiles, creating a centralized resource for researchers, law enforcement professionals, and policymakers. “The aim is to deepen

bu.edu/bostonia/address

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LYNN (TERRAGNA) GRIESEMER (CAS'84) of Tampa, Fla., and her tandem swim partner, Ken Morgan, set a record in a 28.5-mile circumnavigation of Manhattan Island in August 2025. Both 62 at the time, they were the oldest male-female team to do so. Lynn published *Swimming Around Manhattan: Find Your Passion—Make it Happen* (Terra Publishing, 2026), her story of overcoming adversity and training for and completing an elite athletic event. Email her at greeze@juno.com.



ANDREW PLOTKIN (DGE'67, CAS'69, COM'71, GRS'77) of Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., coauthored *The EcoSociology Action Guide: A Hands-On Guide to Transforming the World* (2025), with sociologists William Tarman-Ramcheck and Alecea Standlee. He also coauthored *Creating Life Before Death: Before Disaster Strikes the Ship of State* (Sociological Imagination Publishing, 2nd ed., 2024) with several colleagues, including Bernard Phillips, a BU College of Arts & Sciences professor emeritus of sociology. Classmates can email Andrew at andyplotkin3@gmail.com.

our understanding of serial violence and to provide data-driven insight into prevention and analysis," she writes. "I also used much of the data I generated on The Murder Matrix to write my book, *Serial and Mass Murder: Understanding Multicide through Offending Patterns, Explanations, and Outcomes* (Routledge, 2022)."

2002
XAQUE GRUBER (COM'02) of Vero Beach, Fla., released *Sallywood*, his debut film as a writer/director, in 2024. The film—which has won 50 film festival awards—is an autobiographical comedy about his adventures working as assistant to legendary actress Sally Kirkland, who plays herself. *Sallywood* also stars Jennifer Tilly, Keith Carradine, and Lenny Von Dohlen and features songs by Rufus Wainwright and Toni Basil. Visit www.sallywoodmovie.com, and email him at xaquetv@yahoo.com.

2003
BONNIE DISCEPOLO (CFA'03) of Los Angeles, Calif., wrote in December that her film *Neo-Dome*—"a pulpy, fun, noir Western that is not about war

SARAH M. ALLEN (LAW'04,'14) of North Reading, Mass., was awarded the Boston Estate Planning Council's 2025 Excellence Award.



or racism and definitely will not make you cry"—was long-listed for an Oscar for Best Live Action Short 2026. *Neo-Dome*, which stars Anna Camp (*True Blood*), won a Grand Jury Prize at the 2024 Nashville Film Festival. "We have about a .00000002 percent chance of moving to the next round," she wrote, "but I'm proud that an action flick is in consideration."

EVAN HIRSCH (CAS'03) of Orange, Ohio, was elected copresident of Singerman, Mills, Desberg & Kauntz Co., LPA. His law practice focuses on commercial real estate and general corporate work. Email him at ehirsch@smdklaw.com.

GARIMA SHAH (COM'03) of Windermere, Fla., is president and cofounder of Biller Genie, an accounts receivable automation platform for small and midsize businesses. In January, it announced the close of its Series B financing. "The round marks Biller Genie's first meaningful institutional capital after years of disciplined, capital-efficient growth," she writes. Since launching commercially in 2020, the company has grown revenue at a 126 percent compound annual growth rate through 2026, she says. The Series B will be used to accelerate global expansion, scale product development, and strengthen organizational leadership.

PARAG VAISH (Questrom'03,'03) of Redwood City, Calif., is cofounder

and CEO of NextNow, an artificial intelligence product studio that builds specialized AI capabilities for private equity firms and midsize companies. NextNow partners with investment teams and operators to design and deploy custom tools supporting deal sourcing, diligence, and portfolio operations. Learn more about it at <http://nextnow.ai>, and email Parag at parag.vaish@gmail.com.

2005
NOAH BRITTON (CAS'05) of Boston, Mass., released a solo comedy special, *Noah Britton: The Best Stuff I've Ever Done*, on the Relay streaming app. It includes contributions from filmmakers and brothers **BENNY SAFDIE** (COM'08) and **JOSH SAFDIE** (COM'07).

STEPHEN CURET (Questrom'05) of Wildwood, Mo., published *The Campaign: The Sales Engineer's Guide to Winning the Vote* (Sea Breeze Media, 2025), a strategic manual that teaches technology sales professionals how to navigate complex deals. The book treats the sales cycle like an election campaign, "where every stakeholder's 'vote' must be earned," he writes.

BECCA (KAZOKAS) KIDWELL (Wheelock'05) of Jersey City, N.J., released her debut album, *What You Don't See*, on streaming platforms May 1. A BroadwayWorld Award winner and Manhattan Cabaret nominee, Becca celebrated with a May 4 release concert at Don't Tell Mama in New York, with a Boston encore at the Napoleon Room at Club Café scheduled for fall. Email her at bckidwellsings@gmail.com.

2006
ERNIE CLARK (SHA'06) of Westfield, N.J., joined Wipro Consulting in March as a partner and practice head for change consulting in the Americas. Previously, Ernie spent nearly 11 years at Deloitte. He oversees a highly regarded practice across Canada, the United States, and Mexico. He and his wife have two children.

2007
MICHAEL GREENWALD (Pardee'07, LAW'10) of West Palm Beach, Fla., was promoted to director of global executive relations for AWS Worldwide Public Sector, a division of Amazon Web Services supporting the education, healthcare, public, and nonprofit sectors. He drives global executive business sales and strategy at the



JESSICA (MORRIS) BETZ (CAS'02) (center) of La Mesa, Calif., was joined by **SARAH (DIXON) SHERROD** (ENG'02) (left) and **JOSH PETERS** (COM'02) aboard the USS *Midway* for her promotion to US Navy captain in San Diego, Calif., in December. Congratulate Jessica at jesbetz2008@gmail.com.

intersection of cloud infrastructure, AI, quantum computing, and advanced analytics, with a core focus on deepening business within the defense technology ecosystem and engaging with senior government and defense leaders worldwide.

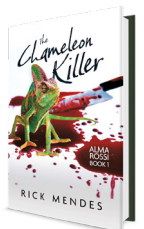
2008
RENANA (GREENBERG) KEHOE (GRS'08) of Westwood, Mass., is leading fundraising efforts to build a regional multi-arts center in Greater Boston. The organization, Bellforge Arts Center, is renovating historic buildings on the former Medfield State Hospital campus. When complete, the facility will feature a 300-seat performance venue, rehearsal spaces, artist studios, classrooms, culinary arts programs with an active farmland on-site, dance and movement programs, visual arts spaces, and other community resources.

REBECCA REDNER (Wheelock'08) of Brookline, Mass., coauthored three chapters in *A Different Spirit: Creating Meaningful B'nai Mitzvah for Children with Disabilities* (Behrman House, 2026). "My chapters include a checklist that clergy and educators can use with families to envision b'nei mitzvah (a Jewish coming of age ceremony) for children with disabilities, a description of supports for teaching students with diverse abilities to decode Hebrew, and a case study about two nonspeaking students preparing for their b'nei mitzvah," she writes.

2010
ANNALISA DIAS (CAS'10) of Baltimore, Md., launched *Start with the Ground: A Journal on Decolonization*, with coeditor Tara Moses, a BU College of Fine Arts lecturer in theater. The periodical, published through Annalisa and Tara's organization Groundwater



NICOLE LOWENBRAUN (CGS'01, COM'03) of Brooklyn, N.Y., published *Adaptive Listening: How to Cultivate Trust and Traction at Work* (Mango Publishing, 2024) with coauthor Maegan Stephens. The pair delivered a TED Talk on the same theme, receiving high praise and viewership on www.TED.com. "Our goal is to help people see listening as one of the most undervalued and overlooked communication skills in the workplace," Nicole writes. Her work focuses on making listening practical and teachable, with tools people can use in real-time situations. Email her at nicole.lowenbraun@gmail.com.



RICK MENDES (ENG'86) of Hacienda Heights, Calif., spent 35 years in the technology sector. Near the end of his career, he wrote his first novel, *Growing Future Operators* (BookBaby, 2023). He writes that he enjoyed writing fiction so much, he retired before age 60 to become a full-time novelist. His second book, *The Chameleon Killer* (Atmosphere Press, 2026), is a love letter to his favorite crime stories. The first in a series, it follows his protagonist, Detective Alma Rossi, as she pursues the titular serial killer through the fictional city of Hillsford, Calif., in a high-stakes game of cat and mouse.

TELL US WHAT YOU'RE UP TO

Submit a class note and/or a photo: bu.edu/alumni/class-notes

Please include your full name, school(s) and year(s) of graduation, and current city and state.

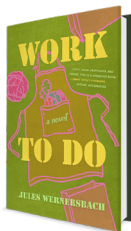
Photos must be high quality and high resolution. Please include the name of the photographer and identify all subjects in the photo.

Our space is limited, so class notes are edited for clarity, style, and length.





BECKY HICKSON (MET'96) of Longmont, Colo., was named chief marketing officer at Ensono, a global provider of hybrid IT services, in 2025. She leads the development of the Ensono Center, which is focused on IT transformation and innovation, and is spearheading initiatives to expand Ensono's brand presence. Becky has more than 25 years of technology experience in diverse positions and enterprises.



JULES WERNERSBACH (CAS'03) of Brooklyn, N.Y., published *Work to Do* (University of Iowa Press, 2026), a time-jumping novel about a beloved Austin co-op grocery store and the torrid relationships beneath its surface. Taking place over one week during the height of Texas hurricane season, the book zooms in on the fraying bonds that hold the store together. Jules is cofounder of Hive Mind Books, a queer independent bookstore and coffee shop in Brooklyn.



JEREMY HOLLANDER (CAS'02, GRS'02) of Sea Bright, N.J., was appointed acting director of the New Jersey consumer affairs division, housed within the state attorney general's office. Previously, he was deputy director for the New Jersey consumer protection office.



BU Asia Alumni Forum Celebrates 20 Years

► For alums, the annual gathering is all about a shared bond and the experiences that changed their lives

BY MOLLY GLASS

NOT TOO LONG AGO, Somerton Sio was at a meeting of World Curling, the global governing body of the Olympic and Paralympic winter sport. Sio (CAS'09), who is president of Curling Association Singapore, remembers looking around the room—filled with representatives from all the countries advocating for ways to promote the sport—when he flashed back nearly 20 years.

As a Boston University undergraduate, Sio was one of a handful of people who founded the BU Curling Club. In those scrappy times, “running around the GSU begging for donations, or cleaning up Agganis Arena after yet another event,” Sio says, he never dreamed that he’d be sitting “among all the major curling countries.”

“There are things you can explore at the University that just really aren’t easily replicated elsewhere,” Sio says.

Now, Sio, who is a flight operations inspector for the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore, describes curling as one of his side jobs. His other side gig? He’s president of the Boston

University Alumni Association of Singapore, one node in a network of BU alumni groups across Asia—with others including mainland China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Taiwan, and Thailand.

This network, to which thousands of alumni belong, reached a milestone in March, when Singapore hosted the 20th annual Asia Alumni Forum. The weekend-long event was a celebration of community, inspiration, and learning. At a venue overlooking Singapore’s scenic Marina Bay, more than 200 alumni discussed big ideas about the future of work, education, and resilient cities—and enjoyed each other’s company.

“You feel a shared bond with everyone there, even though we all went to Boston University in different years and at different times,” Sio says.

“You can talk about walking two miles down Comm Ave in a blizzard, guided by the Citgo sign, and everyone can relate,” he adds, laughing.

In addition to Sio, a number of alumni leaders and local industry



You feel a shared bond with everyone there, even though we all went to Boston University in different years and at different times.”

SOMERTON SIO (CAS'09), president of the BU Alumni Association of Singapore



BU President Melissa Gilliam, who joined the celebration in Singapore, says she’s seen “how far, and how deep, our global engagement truly is.”

leaders attended the forum, including Heng Swee Keat, chair of the National Research Foundation and former deputy prime minister of Singapore; BU Trustee Hugo Shong (COM'87), founding chair of IDG Capital; Tim Zhang (Questrom'16), venture partner at Pitch; and Glenda Chong (COM'97), news anchor and presenter.

BU President Melissa Gilliam joined the celebration. “I knew well before I arrived that Boston University was a major research university with a global footprint,” she said at one of the events. “But as I met with the campus community and alumni, I learned more and more about how far, and how deep, our global engagement truly is. And I knew I had to begin traveling abroad, to meet with people like you, to begin writing the next chapter in our global story.”

For Sio and other alumni, the forum

is much more than a reunion. It’s a testament to the impact BU had—and continues to have—in their lives.

Young-Jae Han (Questrom'79), former president of the Boston University Alumni Association of Korea, says that he decided to get involved with his alumni group “out of a belief in dedicating myself” to his fellow alumni.

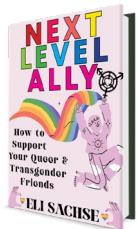
“My time in Boston—from the fall of 1977 to the summer of 1979—played a profound role in my life,” he says. “The University felt like a cradle that prepared me for my entry into society, and this naturally fostered a deep sense of affection and gratitude toward the school. As exchanges among Asia alumni took root, I found great fulfillment in seeing these connections flourish.”

RUSSELL BAI, FANGYUANHONG (HONG KONG) CULTURE MEDIA LIMITED SERVICES

BRANDED BEET (TOP); PETER CIAMBOLI



ROBERT FAGAN (GRS'93) of San Antonio, Tex., works nationally at the intersection of emergency management, business continuity, and resilience education. He teaches graduate-level courses at Tulane University, and writes and consults on crisis preparedness and leadership. Robert spent 30 years in the US Army and federal service, and most recently was deputy director of disaster recovery for the US Small Business Administration. Email him at rjfm1f99@hotmail.com.



ELI SACHSE (CAS'01) of Merced, Calif., published his first book, *Next-Level Ally: How to Support Your Queer and Transgender Friends* (Microcosm Publishing, 2026). “*Next-Level Ally* helps all people explore how they can meaningfully and mindfully perform acts of service that uplift marginalized and maligned people,” he writes. “Transgender people in particular are under attack across the country. Now is the time to explore the solutions offered by queer and trans artists, authors, and activists.” Eli draws on years of experience in activist spaces and as a registered public health nurse. Classmates can email him at questions@lgbtqmerced.org.



GABRIELLE (SCRUGGS) MCCLELLAN (COM'07) (left) of Jersey City, N.J., and **EMILY BERRY** (COM'07) of London, England, visited the dormitory where they were based as Master of Science in journalism students in BU's London program. Joining them was Gabrielle's 8-year-old son—and future Terrier—Marcellus. Gabrielle is a digital asset specialist at JPMorganChase, and Emily is a PhD student at Birkbeck, University of London, researching creative writing and medical humanities.

Arts, is an interdisciplinary publication that brings together Indigenous artists, writers, and community leaders to explore the intersections of decolonization, climate justice, and artistic practice. The project emerged from seven years of Groundwater Arts' commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration and community-building. With support from the Mellon Foundation and the JKW Foundation, it also represents a significant investment in decolonial arts practice and Indigenous artistic expression.

YAIMA (GONZALEZ) SEIGLEY (CAS'10) of Tampa, Fla., is a business attorney with more than a decade of experience working at large law firms. She founded YS Law PLLC, which advises clients across the sports, hospitality,

and real estate industries. Learn more at www.ys-lawfirm.com, and email Yaima at yseigley@ys-lawfirm.com.

2011
ADRIAN CIACCI (CAS'11) of Philadelphia, Pa., was promoted to partner at Faegre Drinker in January 2026.

ALEXANDRA CLARK (CAS'11) of New York, N.Y., was promoted to partner at Blank Rome LLP in January 2026.

2012
NIKKI DILORETO (CFA'12) of Los Angeles, Calif., directed *The Last Podcast on Earth*, which held a staged reading in March at the Elysian Theater. A dark comedy written by and starring **KALEY RONAYNE** (CFA'12), alongside **WILL MADDEN** (CFA'13), the production is an

exploration of late-stage capitalism, influencer culture, and messy female friendship. The reading also served as a fundraiser for CHIRLA, one of California's largest immigrant rights organizations. Nikki is a theatrical director, producer, mentor, and performance coach. Her previous projects include the Tony Award-winning musical *SIX*, for which she was associate director.

EMILY GREENHALGH (COM'12) of Mashpee, Mass., published her third children's science book, *Bug Explorers! A Bug Book for Kids* (Penguin Random House/Z Kids), in October 2025. Her previous two books, also published by Penguin Random House, are *Fun with Oceans and Seas* (2023) and *Fun with Outer Space* (2024). Email her at emwritescience@gmail.com.

SHILPI JOSHI (SDM'12) of Boston, Mass., is an adjunct faculty member at BU's Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine and an associate dentist at East Boston Neighborhood Health Center. In January, she was awarded the 2026 Lucy Hobbs Project Award in the Humanitarian

category, which recognizes dentists making exceptional contributions to advancing oral health and improving access to care for underserved populations.

KEVIN SCHLAGLE (CFA'12) of Boston, Mass., was appointed producing director for the Huntington Theatre in January. Previously the resident producer, Kevin now maintains production and logistical oversight of mainstage plays and the relationships between productions, staff, and artists. He mentors emerging on- and offstage talent.

2013
LAUREL (WEATHERBY) LARIVEE (CFA'13) of Hampton, N.H., had her design selected as the winner of the inaugural Heirloom Marriage Certificate Design contest for the state of New Hampshire. Couples married in New Hampshire now have the option to purchase a keepsake item featuring Laurel's watercolor painting of Mount Washington. Laurel teaches art, with a focus in painting, at Winnacunnet High School. Classmates can email her at lew11190@gmail.com.

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 (CLA—College of Liberal Arts)
- CFA** College of Fine Arts (SFA—School for the Arts) (SFAA—School of Fine and Applied Arts)
- CGS** College of General Studies (CBS—College of Basic Studies)
- COM** College of Communication (SPC—School of Public Communication) (SPRC—School of Public Relations and Communications)
- DGE** Division of General Education (CGE—College of General Education) (GC—General College)
- ENG** College of Engineering (CIT—College of Industrial Technology)
- GRS** Graduate School of Arts & Sciences
- LAW** School of Law
- CAMED** Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine (MED—School of Medicine)
- MET** Metropolitan College
- PAL** College of Practical Arts and Letters
- PARDEE** Frederick S. Pardee School of Global Studies
- QUESTROM** Questrom School of Business (SMG—School of Management) (GSM—Graduate School of Management) (CBA—College of Business Administration)
- SARGENT** Sargent College of Health & Rehabilitation Sciences
- SDM** Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine (SGD—School of Graduate Dentistry)
- SHA** School of Hospitality Administration
- SON** School of Nursing
- SPH** School of Public Health
- SRE** School for Religious Education
- SSW** School of Social Work
- STH** School of Theology
- UNI** University Professors Program
- WHELOCK** Boston University Wheelock College of Education & Human Development (SED—School of Education)

bu.edu/bostonia

CAN'T WAIT FOR THE NEXT ISSUE?

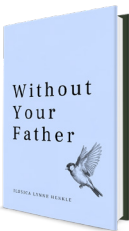
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JESSI MADURO (CAS'16, Pardee'16) (far right) and **JULIA KAPLAN** (Pardee'15) (far left) of Washington Crossing, Pa., were married in Italy on September 24, 2025. The pair shared a major and several classes at BU, but had never met. Six other Terriers attended the wedding: **ALI CHUNOVIC** (CAS'13) (from left), **BOEY LI** (CAS'15), **JONATHAN LERCH** (CAS'17), **ERIN O'NEIL** (CAS'16), **GIANNA SABIDUSSI** (CAS'16), and **CHRISTINA YANNATOS** (Sargent'16). **SARAH MORAN-LERCH** (CGS'14, MET'16), who died earlier in 2025, was there in spirit, Jessi writes, adding, “Together, the group was a central part of the BU Gymnastics Club from 2012 to 2017. #WeBleedScarlet!”



JESSICA HENKLE (CAS'08) of Lake Oswego, Ore., published *Without Your Father* (Unsolicited Press, 2026), a series of more than 100 vignettes chronicling the year following her father's death. Written from an intimate, second-person perspective, the memoir "depicts the oddities and absurdities of navigating sudden loss, along with the utter devastation of it: the daily, sometimes hourly, trudging forward in a life that has become unrecognizable now that one person is no longer in it," she writes.



ELLIOTT SEABORN (COM'93) of Cohasset, Mass., was appointed chief marketing officer of Plymouth Rock Assurance's independent agency (IA) group. He oversees go-to-market strategy, distribution, and agency experience for the IA business. Elliott brings more than 30 years of experience building and scaling distribution systems across a range of industries, including business-to-business, business-to-consumer, and agent-intermediated sales and marketing environments.



SARAH (HUDAK) MCKINNON (Sargent'07;09;17) of Boston, Mass., writes that she is a "proud triple Terrier" and BU field hockey alum. She's celebrating a new milestone with the publication of her debut children's book, *The Cheerful Chip* (Small Tots Books, 2025), which hit shelves in November. An occupational therapist and chair of the occupational therapy department at Massachusetts General Hospital's Institute of Health Professions, Sarah blends her passion for child development, creativity, and community engagement in this new project. Learn more at www.smalltotsbooks.com, and email the author at sarah@southieiot.com.

2015

SARA ROBIN (COM'15) of Somerville, Mass., writes that her documentary, *Your Attention Please*, was selected as a World Premiere Documentary Spotlight at SXSW 2026. "When I set out to start this project back in 2022 with nothing but an idea and a good pitch, I never thought it would get this big," Sara writes. "To see the film land at one of the major festivals is, to say the least, absolutely surreal." Learn more about the project, which exposes the addictive properties of technology in young people, at www.yourattentionplz.com.

2016

COREY LA RUE (CFA'16) of Los Angeles, Calif., a disabled artist and an activist, returned with honorarium to Boston University as a visiting artist in 2025. Born in San Jose and raised in Oakland amid significant challenges, Corey discovered art as a lifeline in a youth rehabilitation program, leading him to BU where he honed his craft. In 2015, he was presented with the John Walker Prize

in Painting. Since graduating, Corey has exhibited widely, participated in relief efforts, and had his work featured in several publications. Overcoming a near-fatal 2023 motorcycle accident that caused permanent paralysis in his dominant arm, Corey relearned to paint with his left hand, channeling themes of endurance and heritage into works using local soils and traditional pigments. Visit coreylarue.art, or connect @corey_la_rue on Instagram.

THE MASSACHUSETTS DENTAL SOCIETY has named 10 dentists to its 2026 10 Under Ten list, with BU Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine alumni comprising more than half of the award recipients. Honorees were featured in the winter 2026 issue of the *Journal of the Massachusetts Dental Society* and were recognized at the 2026 Yankee Dental Congress in Boston. The alums are **CHIHO AHN** (SDM'17), **JESSY AJRAM** (SDM'22), **ARMEN BALABANYAN** (SDM'22), **DIVYA MUDUMBA** (SDM'20), **HIREN PATADIYA** (SDM'21), and **NAMAN RAO** (SDM'22).

2018

ELIZABETH TRAYNOR (COM'18) of Portland, Ore., was named director of global basketball communications for the NIKE Jordan Brand.

2024

AUDREY LELAND (Questrom'24) of Boston, Mass., writes that she launched Illuminated Threads, "a socially conscious clothing brand that combines fashion and education by turning data into wearable art. Each piece features embroidered or printed data visualizations on pressing social issues, such as inclusion, climate change, and gun safety. Illuminated Threads is designed to make complex information visible and accessible through everyday clothing. Every garment tells a story, sparks conversation, and directs a portion of each purchase to nonprofit organizations working directly in these areas."

2025

ALEXIS WARD (Questrom'25) of Stony Brook, N.Y., is the founder of Campus Collective, a social platform she developed while a student at Boston University. Launched in January 2026, Campus Collective is a student-to-student services marketplace that allows users to offer beauty, fitness, academic, and lifestyle services directly to one another on campus. "It formalizes an existing behavior that currently lives across scattered Instagram pages and group chats, and provides a trusted way for students to monetize skills and access affordable campus-based services," Alexis writes. "The concept was informed by firsthand insight into how students seek out services informally, and the platform has been shaped with direct student feedback throughout development." You can learn more about the platform at campuscollective.site. **B**

COURTESY OF SARAH MCKINNON

2026 ALUMNI AWARDS

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



2026 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARDS



ROBERT THOMAS HINES, JR.
(ENG'97)
Colonel, U.S. Air Force & Astronaut Pilot, NASA's SpaceX Crew-4



DUSHANKA V. KLEINMAN
(SDM'76;'76)
President, Santa Fe Group
Professor Emerita, School of Public Health, University of Maryland



KAREN LAFRAZIA
(SSW'89)
President & CEO
St. Francis House



KEVIN E. LOFTON
(QUESTROM'76)
Healthcare Leader
CEO Emeritus, CommonSpirit Health

2026 YOUNG ALUMNI AWARD



IXCHEL LEMUS-BROMLEY
(CGS'17, COM'19)
Disability Advocate
Founder, Free 2 Fly

“We Lost the Last of the Lions”

► LAW ALUM CLARENCE B. JONES, A CIVIL RIGHTS LEADER, DRAFTED PARTS OF “I HAVE A DREAM” SPEECH

CLARENCE B. JONES (LAW’59), a lawyer, civil rights leader, and close friend and advisor to Martin Luther King, Jr. (GRS’55, Hon.’59), died May 22, 2026, at the age of 95. Jones helped plan the March on Washington and drafted portions of King’s iconic “I Have a Dream” speech. He helped preserve and disseminate the handwritten pages of King’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail.”

“We lost the last of the lions,” wrote Angela Onwuachi-Willig, Ryan Roth Gallo Professor of Law and dean of BU’s School of Law in a remembrance. Jones “helped shape the dream that reshaped the United States of America and that changed the course of history,” she wrote, and was “one of the most influential, yet underrecognized architects of the Civil Rights Movement [who] made sure that the moral arc of the universe continued to bend toward justice.”

Jones was an entertainment lawyer in Los Angeles when King visited him at home to ask if he’d join

his legal team. He went on to become a close advisor.

He was the first African American named an allied member of the New York Stock Exchange in 1967, when he joined the investment banking and brokerage firm of Carter, Berlind & Weill. Later, he was appointed scholar-in-residence at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute at Stanford University.

Among his many accolades, he received a Presidential Medal of

Freedom, the nation’s highest civilian honor, in 2024. The American Bar Association’s Section of Civil Rights and Social Justice awarded him the 2021 Thurgood Marshall Award, citing his six decades of dedication to advancing US civil rights “as a passionate activist, accomplished attorney, and speechwriter to Martin Luther King, Jr.” In 2025, the BU Alumni Association recognized his leadership with its highest honor, a Distinguished Alumni Award.

Onwuachi-Willig recalled meeting Jones: “One of the greatest honors of my life was getting to sit down and have an hours-long conversation with him and my colleague Professor Erika George [LAW associate dean for equity, justice, and engagement and the Ernest Haddad Faculty Scholar] a couple of summers ago. Thank you, Dr. Jones, for making my life and career possible! Thank you for all you did for our nation! May your legacy live on through us all!”

Clarence B. Jones (LAW’59) received a Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation’s highest civilian honor, in 2024.

BU Athletic Hall of Famer Dick Farley Dies

► STANDOUT TERRIER ATHLETE WENT ON TO BECOME A TOP COLLEGE FOOTBALL COACH
BY BU ATHLETICS

DICK FARLEY, a member of the Boston University Athletic Hall of Fame and a football coaching legend at Williams College, died on April 1, 2026. He was 79.

A captain in both BU football and track and field, Farley (Wheelock’68;’75) set records in both sports for the Terriers. He became one of only three in BU Athletics history to receive the Mickey Cochrane Award (1967) as the University’s top male athlete and the E. Ray Speare Award (1968) as the top male scholar-athlete.

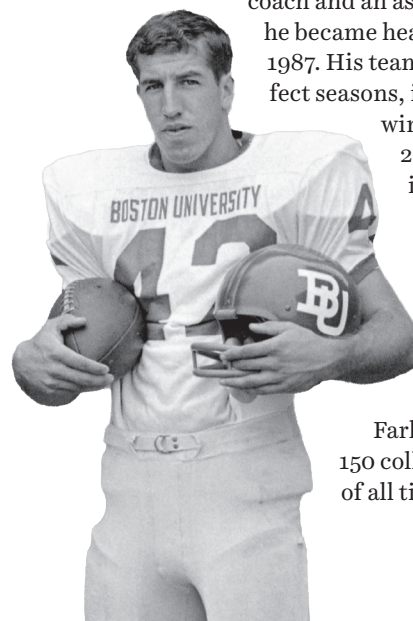
Farley began his Terrier career as a halfback and finished second on the team in scoring, with 26 points. Warren Schmakel, head coach at the time, switched him to safety his junior year, and he went on to set program records for interceptions in a season (9), career (14), and in a game (3). “We needed a fast and agile safety man with good size to protect us deep,” Schmakel said of the move.

Farley signed with the San Diego Chargers and played for two seasons before a back injury forced him to retire. He was inducted in the BU Athletic Hall of Fame in 1982.

He joined Williams as the head track and field coach and an assistant football coach; he became head football coach in 1987. His teams recorded five perfect seasons, including a 23-game winning streak that until

2005 was the longest in NCAA Division III history. In 2006, he was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame with an all-time record of 114-19-3. In 2019, ESPN listed

Farley as one of the top 150 college football coaches of all time.



BU PHOTOGRAPHY (3)

PRWeek once described Gerald Powers (COM’56) as “perhaps one of the most well connected men in PR.”

A Classroom Drill Sergeant “Fiercely Loyal” to His Students

► GERALD POWERS TAUGHT PUBLIC RELATIONS AT COM FOR 35 YEARS

GERALD POWERS (COM’56), a College of Communication professor emeritus of public relations, was known as an exacting writing teacher who helped place students in jobs and internships at major agencies and firms around the globe.

“I like to stand up and play God in the classroom and to scare my students,” Powers told the defunct *B.U. Bridge*. “But I also tell them that one day they’ll be able to help me. And that’s what they do. When I call an old student to set up an internship for somebody, if they give me any grief I can say, ‘Hey, do you remember when I got you an internship in 1972?’”

That was 1999, the year he retired and was honored with the Publicity Club of New England’s Crystal Bell Award for lifetime achievement in public relations. At the time, *PRWeek* described him as “perhaps one of the most well connected men in PR.”

Powers died January 27, 2026. He was 93.

He graduated from Harvard in 1954 and earned a master’s in journalism at COM. He worked in public relations for several years and joined the BU faculty in 1964.

The *Bridge* noted, “While he has a reputation for being a drill sergeant in the classroom and a sometimes cantankerous personality outside it...he is downright sentimental when describing his relationship with former students.” Many of them attended the Crystal Bell ceremony.

The *PRWeek* profile noted that students also attended his birthday parties: “And when his mother passed away, several students drove into the early morning hours to go to the funeral. Several students also rushed to his bedside four years ago, when he was struck by an automobile while walking near his home, receiving a broken arm, scalp lacerations and broken ribs.

“I’m fiercely loyal to my students but they are to me, too,” Powers told the publication, “which is very gratifying.”



Rebecca Alssid, with Jacques Pépin (Hon.'11), worked at BU for 44 years before retiring in 2015. She was instrumental in recruiting Pépin and Julia Child (Hon.'76) to teach at Boston University.

Rebecca Alssid

► METROPOLITAN COLLEGE

REBECCA ALSSID, founding director of BU’s Food & Wine Programs, was pivotal to the establishment of many Metropolitan College programs, including the nation’s first Master of Arts in Gastronomy, the Professional Certificate Program in the Culinary Arts, the Elizabeth Bishop Wine Resource Center, and the Evergreen Program, an educational program for older adults that began in summer of 1980. She also played an instrumental role in recruiting two legendary chefs—Julia Child (Hon.’76) and Jacques Pépin (Hon.’11)—to teach in BU’s food studies programs, according to MET.

Alssid died on February 17, 2026. She was 90 years old.

She worked at BU for more than 44 years, retiring in 2015. She ran food and wine tours to other countries under the title of Culture and Cuisine Tours at Boston University and then on her own.

In 2018, the nonprofit Oldways, which inspires people to embrace the “old ways” of eating, recognized Alssid’s lifetime of achievement with the K. Dun Gifford Local Hero Award. They wrote: “She didn’t just witness the culinary

revolution. She has been part of it.” The organization noted that Alssid’s impact “goes way beyond local...she was ahead of her time. Thousands of students and food enthusiasts from all over the world have benefited from her kind, but tenacious, attention to bettering our knowledge of food and wine.”

Howard Leibowitz

► BU CHOBANIAN & AVEDISIAN SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

HOWARD LEIBOWITZ, a Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine professor and chair emeritus of ophthalmology, died on February 25, 2026.

Leibowitz had a lifelong commitment to advancing the care of the eye, caring for patients in Boston and beyond for more than six decades. He was an internationally recognized expert in the diagnosis and treatment of corneal disorders, according to his obituary.

At BU, he worked to expand the ophthalmology department’s clinical reach and academic reputation. He published many journal articles and two editions of the textbook *Corneal Disorders: Clinical Diagnosis and Management* (W. B. Saunders Co.).

Adrianne Rogers

► BU CHOBANIAN & AVEDISIAN SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

ADRIANNE E. ROGERS, a professor emerita of pathology and laboratory medicine who spent more than three decades at BU’s medical school, died on February 1, 2024. She was 90 years old.

Rogers, who joined the BU faculty in 1979, helped transform the study of nutrition, cancer, and toxicology. Her research contributed important insights into how diet and environmental exposures influence disease.

She advised agencies and organizations such as the National Institutes of Health, the Food and Drug Administration, and the American Cancer Society. At BU, she served as associate chair for academic affairs, director of medical education, and associate dean for academic affairs. She was the first woman to chair BU’s Faculty Council.

N. Paul Rosman

► BU CHOBANIAN & AVEDISIAN SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

NORMAN PAUL ROSMAN, a professor of pediatrics and neurology at BU’s medical school and a clinician, a mentor, and an advocate for children, died on March 18, 2026. He was 91 years old.

Rosman helped shape modern child neurology, publishing more than 200 articles and book chapters, securing more than 30 research grants, and training nearly 100 pediatric neurologists.

“Yet his greatest influence was at the bedside,” according to his obituary. “He often reminded trainees never to eliminate hope, believing that every child could be helped in some way. Families traveled from across the country and beyond to seek his care.”

Students knew Rosman for his high expectations and standards, and in 1981, BU presented him with a Metcalf Award for Excellence in Teaching. **B**

VERNON DOUCETTE

in memoriam.

Due to space constraints, we are able to publish only a small number of names of BU alumni who have passed away. If you would like to see the name of a deceased alum 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.

- 1940s**
ANGELO G. ROCCO (CAS’45) *Stoughton, Mass.*
EVELYN C. SAFEBLADE (SARGENT’48) *Spooner, Wisc.*
STEPHANIE BONICA (CAS’49, GRS’52) *Norwood, Mass.*
MARJORIE KLOPPENBURG DEL GRASSO (CAS’49) *Knoxville, Tenn.*
STEVEN M. SEMINERIO (CAS’49, STH’53) *Concord, Mass.*
RALPH STEIN (CAS’49, LAW’53) *Boca Raton, Fla.*
THEODORE M. TAHAN (DGE’49, LAW’52) *Saint Louis, Mo.*
- 1950s**
ROBERT M. FEARN (DGE’50) *Raleigh, N.C.*
VIRGINIA E. MCDERMOTT (PAL’50,’51) *Fairbanks, Alaska*
SANDRA B. COLLINS (PAL’51) *Randolph, Vt.*
LOUIS S. KAUFMAN (DGE’51, CAS’53) *Clinton, Iowa*
RICHARD S. MILSTEIN (LAW’52) ■ *Boston, Mass.*
ROBERT L. ZIEFF (CFA’52) *Stuart, Fla.*
JOSEPHINE IACOBO (PAL’53) *Andover, Mass.*
AVIS C. TURNER (GRS’53) *Decatur, Ga.*
ELBERT TUTTLE (QUESTROM’53, LAW’57,’76) *Westborough, Mass.*
NANCY SHAPIRO HURWITZ (WHEELOCK’54) *Needham, Mass.*
ANGGENETTE (GROTON) TYLER (WHEELOCK’54) ■ *Auburndale, Mass.*
ANNE D. D. RYDER (SARGENT’55) *Cheshire, Conn.*
BARBARA C. SIDELL (CAS’55, GRS’59, LAW’80) *Palm Beach, Fla.*
EUGENE E. BITROLFF (WHEELOCK’56) *Conroe, Tex.*
SYLVIA A. CARPENTER (CAS’56) *Milpitas, Calif.*
ELLEN BECK (SARGENT’57) *Montpelier, Vt.*
PETER N. CARBONARA (CAMED’57) *Englewood, N.J.*
CARMINE F. PECORARO (ENG’58) *Seattle, Wash.*
RICHARD RE (ENG’58) *Hampton, Va.*
GERTRUDE BAUMGARDNER (SON’59) *New Cumberland, Pa.*
MILDRED J. STEGNER CLIFFORD (WHEELOCK’59) *Wareham, Mass.*
BERNARD G. LEMERISE (CGS’57, COM’59) *Hampton, N.H.*
- 1960s**
HAZEL C. BENNETT (STH’60) ■ *Greenwood, S.C.*
BARBARA SAWYER MORGAN (SON’60) *Westerly, R.I.*
ETHELANNE OYER VULGAMORE (CFA’60) *Albany, N.Y.*
ANDREW F. BLAKE (DGE’61, COM’63) *Winthrop, Mass.*
EDGAR F. FILE (GRS’61, STH’61) *West Napanee, Ontario, Canada*
MALCOLM W. PHILBROOK, JR. (LAW’61) *Biddeford, Maine*
MERWYN BAGAN (CAMED’62, SPH’95) ■ *Concord, N.H.*
JACK KISSEL (STH’62) *Buna, Tex.*
STUART A. MILLNER (CAS’62) *Needham Heights, Mass.*
JAMES H. FOUSS (COM’63) ■ *Middletown, Del.*
SIGRID J. HAMMOND (CAS’63) *Saratoga Springs, N.Y.*
ELIZABETH M. HOLDERRIED (CFA’63) *Raleigh, N.C.*
MAUREEN L. CONNOLLY (SARGENT’64) *North Venice, Fla.*
VINCENT W. DECAIN, JR. (CGS’60, CAS’64) *Chandler, Ariz.*
MARY R. SULLIVAN (GRS’64) *Westwood, Mass.*
ELIZABETH (SMITH) CASASANT (SARGENT’65) *Portland, Maine*
ANNE M. RIDDLE (CAS’65) *Ringling, Okla.*
DAVID P. SKERRY (QUESTROM’65) *Medford, Mass.*
DIANNA M. COLLIER (CGS’64, WHEELOCK’66) *Camarillo, Calif.*
NICOLE HOLLANDER (CFA’66) *Chicago, Ill.*
JOSEPH J. MIGLIORE (CAMED’66) *Jacksonville, Ore.*
ROBERT G. ALEXANDER (CAS’67, CAMED’74) *Winchester, Mass.*
ALEXANDRA KIVOWITZ (SSW’67) *Los Angeles, Calif.*
JACK H. STITT (COM’67) *Macedonia, Ohio*
JEAN (COPPOCK) INNES (SON’68) *Edmonton, Alberta, Canada*
PAUL G. SUTHERLAND (CGS’68) *Proctor, Vt.*
WILLIAM W. WATKINS (LAW’68) *Nacogdoches, Tex.*
SUSAN KILBOURN BURKHARD (WHEELOCK’69) ■ *Swansboro, N.C.*
MAUREEN LOUKAS (GRS’69) *Belmont, Mass.*
STANLEY F. OLIVER (CAS’69) *New Bedford, Mass.*

- 1970s**
LEONARD J. ARMINIO (COM’70) *Peterborough, Ontario, Canada*
ROCHELLE A. LEVINE (WHEELOCK’70) ■ *Charlotte, N.C.*
JOEL N. FREEDMAN (QUESTROM’71) *Framingham, Mass.*
ROSEMARIE RAFFA (DGE’71) *Croton-On-Hudson, N.Y.*
CAROLYN O. BERTELSMEYER (SSW’72) *Eureka, Mo.*
FRANK A. HALL (STH’72) *Westport, Conn.*
LAWRENCE J. OLIVIERA (SDM’72,’72) *Mattapoisett, Mass.*
CAROLINE N. MOSS (WHEELOCK’73) *Sudbury, Mass.*
VERNON R. NESMITH (PARDEE’73) *Celina, Tex.*
LYNETTE BRANNON (COM’74) *Austin, Tex.*
M. MERCER MORRISSETTE, JR. (QUESTROM’74) ■ *Murrells Inlet, S.C.*
LORI M. ANDERSON (SON’75) *Freehold, N.J.*
DAVID E. STEPHENS (GRS’75) *Kennewick, Wash.*
BETTYE B. PATE (CFA’76) *Atlanta, Ga.*
ERIC H. SAWITZ (CAMED’76) *Needham, Mass.*
HILDA M. SWARTZ (SSW’77) *Bedford, Mass.*
RICHARD A. ZIMBONE (QUESTROM’77) *Needham, Mass.*
KENNETH A. STALBERG (CFA’78) ■ *Belmont, Mass.*
BAN T. VU (SDM’78) *McLean, Va.*
LARRY W. GROOME (MET’79) *Summerfield, Fla.*
GERALDINE D. POWERS (WHEELOCK’79) *Portland, Ore.*
- 1980s**
DONALD M. CHERVENAK (CAS’80, CAMED’80) *Livingston, N.J.*
EDWARD S. ROBERTS (COM’80) *Gaithersburg, Md.*
CHI-TSE A. LIN (GRS’81) *Newton, Mass.*
LOIS A. (CRAWFORD) NUNEZ (SPH’82, SARGENT’85) *Jamaica Plain, Mass.*
JAMES T. FORHAN (QUESTROM’83) ■ *Hadley, Mass.*
DEBORAH P. RADOVSKY (CAMED’83) *Sharon, Mass.*
HEIDI J. LAPE BOWIE (SON’84) *Lexington, Ky.*
GEOFFREY E. NORMAN (MET’84) *Newton, Mass.*
THERESA A. BYRNE (SARGENT’85, SDM’95) *Houston, Tex.*
MIREILLE “MICKEY” ARAMATI (SPH’86, MET’87) *Natick, Mass.*
PAKI WIELAND (SSW’86) *Greenfield, Mass.*
- 1990s**
ANNE YOUNG ROBERTS (STH’90) *South Burlington, Vt.*
WILLIAM P. SERVEY (MET’90) *Lancaster, Mass.*
PIERRE A. STROH (CAS’90) *Jupiter, Fla.*
ROBERT H. KENYON (CFA’91) *Fort Worth, Tex.*
PATRICIA C. ABEL (WHEELOCK’92) *Tampa, Fla.*
GINA CANALE (SDM’92) *Queensbury, N.Y.*
JOCELYN D. DUSABLON (SARGENT’92,’93) *Bangor, Maine*
RONALD GULLICK (MET’93,’95) *Everett, Mass.*
SHERRY WALLS (SSW’94) *Salisbury, N.C.*
MELISSA A. WHITENER (SHA’94) *Marstons Mills, Mass.*
JOSEPH LANIA (MET’97) *Arlington, Mass.*
DONALD B. STEWART (QUESTROM’98) *Boston, Mass.*
GEORGE M. BENNETT (COM’99) *Wayland, Mass.*
- 2000s**
CHRISTIAN A. RIVERA (CAS’00) *Pelham, N.H.*
SHARON WINTERS FLATGARD (MET’01) *Newport, R.I.*
MARGARET H. NORTHUP (WHEELOCK’02) *Brunswick, Maine*
LEENA DANG DALAL (QUESTROM’03) *Lexington, Mass.*
JAMES M. O’NEILL (COM’03) *Rocky River, Ohio*
JOHN G. BRENNER (MET’04) *Shelton, Conn.*
CATHERINE L. BURDT (WHEELOCK’04) *Little River, S.C.*
ELIZABETH (LUCKING) MORIN (WHEELOCK’05) *Hopkinton, Mass.*
DOROTHY A. AUSTIN (SSW’08) *Swansea, Mass.*
LOUIS F. LAFOUNTAIN (MET’09) *Eden, Vt.*
- 2010s**
ELIZABETH F. “LISA” DELANEY (CFA’11) *Swampscott, Mass.*
CONNIE MCCLAUGHLIN (SARGENT’12) *Fairborn, Ohio*
LAUREN F. COLLINS (CAMED’14) *Atlanta, Ga.*
FATIMA M. SEDTAL-MOBERG (LAW’17) *Baytown, Tex.*
CONNOR JOHNSON (CAS’19) *Auburn, Mass.*

■ *Members of the Claflin Society, which pays tribute to those who have established a planned gift.*

one more thing.



2,500 MILES APART, BOOMERS AND ZOOMERS CONNECT

► A public phone on BU’s campus allowed conversations between strangers | BY CAMILLE BUGAYONG (COM’27)

WHEN MARIA JAYNES picked up the phone in her senior living facility in Reno, Nev., she was eager to chat. It was 78 degrees in Reno that day, she told me. The 73-year-old had been looking forward to speaking with a Gen Z caller since the biotech start-up Matter Neuroscience set up its “Call a Boomer” phone on BU’s campus in March. The free public phone, which sat outside 736 Commonwealth Ave. for about a month, connected to a similar one at the Reno senior living facility (that one read, “Call a Zoomer”). When the phone rang in the facility’s recreation room, whoever was nearest answered.

Jaynes picked up my call. I told her that the sun was out in Boston, but the wind was rough. It made it difficult to hear her soft voice at times, but her enthusiasm was abundantly clear. Matter Neuroscience, a science-based “happiness company,” has a simple goal: making people the happiest they can be, Matter social strategist Calla Kessler says. “We’re focused on helping people live a happier life by understanding their brain’s chemistry when it comes to their feel-good neurotransmitters in their brains,” she says. The idea behind the public phones was to connect younger adults with

older adults, two of the loneliest demographics, Kessler says. “Humans need more connection in their lives,” she says. “Loneliness is... bad, and combating that with connection is key, because when you have a conversation with someone—even if it’s a stranger, even if it’s short—and it goes well, you’re going to have positive effects from it.” Jaynes talked to me about how she met her husband, Chris, and how they courted. They were married for 40 years before he died, in 2011. She asked me about what dating is like for a college student at Boston University and offered advice on how she and her husband made their marriage last. I thanked her for the past half hour of wisdom and told her I’d do my best to follow her advice. “Life is an adventure, honey, there’s so much to see and do,” Jaynes told me. “I’m not just learning from you, you’re learning from me.” **B**

CYDNEY SCOTT

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