



GW

**THE GEORGE
WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY
MAGAZINE
SUMMER 2023**



Graduates take part in the processional before the university-wide Commencement ceremony on May 21.



GW MAGAZINE SUMMER 2023

A MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

CONTENTS

FEATURES

12 / Agents of Change

A look back at a decade of the Global Women's Institute's groundbreaking efforts to document and prevent violence against women and girls around the world—and ahead at what's next.

/ By Kathleen Garrigan/

20 / Championing Kindness

We talk to Cynthia Germanotta, M.A. '78, about her work leading Born This Way Foundation, which she founded with her daughter Stefani—better known to the world as Lady Gaga.

/ By Rachel Muir/

24 / Sky High

Jonquel Jones, B.A. '19, and Yuta Wantanabe, B.A. '18, are realizing their hoop dreams, playing professional basketball in Brooklyn for the WNBA's Liberty and the NBA's Nets, respectively.

/ By Steve Neumann/

30 / Alumni Spotlight

We profile an educator who braved the Alaskan cold to serve as the official teacher for the Iditarod, a State Department security officer on protection detail for the World Cup, an alumna in a key role for "The Washington Post" and the founder of a nonprofit that addresses worldwide hunger with plant-based food.

DEPARTMENTS

4 / GW News

10 / Bookshelves

40 / Impact of Philanthropy

44 / Class Notes

ON THE COVER **D.C.'s famed cherry blossoms, the city's harbinger of spring, frame the Washington Monument. Photo by Harrison Jones.**

WILLIAM ATKINS

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

WASHINGTON, DC

UNLOCK



DOUBLE THE PURPOSE

**THIRD CENTURY
SCHOLARSHIP
ENDOWMENT
MATCH**



UNLOCKING

CREATIVITY
AMBITION

**ACCESS TO
UNDERGRADUATE
EDUCATION**

DRIVE
PURPOSE



Open doors for amazing GW students through the historic dollar-for-dollar fundraising match to support endowed, need based undergraduate scholarships.

go.gwu.edu/match >>



match@gwu.edu

202-994-6415

GW MAGAZINE

Summer 2023
Volume 30, Issue 1

EDITOR // Rachel Muir

ASSISTANT EDITOR // Lisa Conley-Kendzior

UNIVERSITY PHOTOGRAPHER // William Atkins

DESIGN // GW Communications and Marketing

ART DIRECTOR // Dominic N. Abbate, B.A. '09, M.B.A. '15

ART DIRECTOR // John McGlasson, B.A. '00, M.F.A. '03

CONTRIBUTOR // John DiConsiglio, Columbian College of Arts and Sciences

CONTRIBUTOR // Nick Erickson, GW Today

Mark S. Wrighton
PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY

Donna Arbide
**VICE PRESIDENT FOR DEVELOPMENT
AND ALUMNI RELATIONS**

Ellen Moran
**VICE PRESIDENT
FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING**

Michelle Stone, M.B.A. '10
ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR COMMUNICATIONS

Patty Carocci
**ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT OF
ALUMNI RELATIONS AND ANNUAL GIVING**

Rachel Muir
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
FOR EDITORIAL SERVICES**

"GW Magazine" (ISSN 2162-6464) is published by GW's Office of Communications and Marketing, 2000 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, 300, Washington, D.C. 20006. Phone: 202-994-9029 email: magazine@gwu.edu

© 2023 The George Washington University. The George Washington University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution.

Opinions expressed in these pages are those of the individuals and do not necessarily reflect official positions of the university.

POSTMASTER Please send change-of-address notices to GW Magazine, GW Alumni Records Office, 1922 F Street, NW, Suite 202, Washington, D.C. 20052. Notices can also be sent via alumni.gwu.edu/update, email to alumrecs@gwu.edu or 202-994-9350. Postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices.

Prelude

NEWS AND INSIGHTS FROM CAMPUS AND BEYOND





LEADERSHIP

Mission Accomplished: Wrighton 'Grateful' for GW Tenure

As his tenure draws to a close, President Mark S. Wrighton reflected on accomplishments and only-at-GW moments. By John DiConsiglio


George Washington University President Mark S. Wrighton never liked the term “interim.”

He was clear on his mission when he took office on Jan. 1, 2022. After serving for nearly 24 years as chancellor and chief executive officer at Washington University and five years before that as provost at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Wrighton was charged with steering GW through a transition period, in other words, sustaining a foundation of world-class faculty, staff and students as the university searched for his successor.

“A new president does not normally say, ‘My job is to prepare for the next president,’” he said. “But that was my assignment, and I embraced the responsibility.”

But while he may have been a temporary president, Wrighton never approached the position as a “caretaker,” he said. Stepping onto a campus that had recently celebrated its 200th anniversary while weathering the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic, he committed himself to strengthening the GW community.

During his 18 months in office, he assembled a senior leadership team and spearheaded priorities from enhancing interdisciplinary research to expanding financial aid resources to developing philanthropic partnerships. Along the way, he became a familiar face in Foggy Bottom, whether attending basketball games at the Smith Center and musicals at the Betts Theatre or walking his dog, Spike, by University Yard.

As he prepared to preside over Commencement on the National 



TOP TO BOTTOM President Wrighton talks the value of a GW education with School of Business Dean Anuj Mehrota, presides over the College of Professional Studies' Commencement celebration and poses with Spike, a favorite on campus.

→ Mall—among his favorite GW traditions—before Ellen Granberg becomes GW’s 19th president on July 1, Wrighton was lauded for his transparent and collaborative leadership style as he sure-handedly shepherded the transition.

A Faculty Senate “Resolution of Appreciation” singled out his “extraordinary wisdom, perseverance, transparency, kindness, good humor and leadership.”

And at the Board of Trustees meeting in May, the board cited Wrighton’s “distinguished service and his ongoing dedication and commitment to the university” in another resolution, which named one of the university’s new endowed professorships in the academic medical enterprise the Mark S. Wrighton Professorship in the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences. The board also named Wrighton president emeritus, effective July 1.

Meanwhile, colleagues praised Wrighton’s experience and vision.

“We have all been the beneficiaries of President Wrighton’s remarkable leadership and ability to bring everyone together under a common purpose,” said Provost Christopher A. Bracey. “He is what legendary excellence in university leadership looks like in action, and he has charted the course as we have embarked upon our third century.”

For his part, Wrighton pointed to retaining and recruiting key leadership as a major accomplishment that will impact the university into its third century. He credited a vibrant community of students, staff and scholars—along with stakeholders like GW alumni and donors—with supporting him while he guided the university’s teaching and research mission, and enthusiastically looked

forward to GW’s next steps. “I’m very grateful that I had this opportunity, and I feel that the new president, Ellen Granberg, will be able to do a great job here,” he said. “I see a university with enormous potential... GW has the opportunity to take its place alongside the most outstanding universities in America.”

From the moment he arrived on campus, Wrighton said, he

was continually inspired by GW students. “They’re diverse, academically talented, very engaged and aspiring to make a difference in the world,” he said. Indeed, his favorite GW activities often involved student showcases like the Corcoran School of the Arts and Design’s NEXT Festival, where he viewed graduating students’ artwork at the Flagg Building. “I think any college or university would

be proud of the creative expressions that were exhibited that night,” he said.

On his long list of only-at-GW moments, Wrighton recalled campus lectures by Anthony Fauci on the COVID pandemic and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on U.S.-China relations. He was particularly struck by this year’s Martin Luther King Jr., Day of Service, when Vice President Kamala

Harris joined GW students for volunteer activities on campus—an “extraordinary” event, he said, that highlighted GW’s location in “this unique place, Washington, D.C.” While living in the District, Wrighton said he was privileged to enjoy experiences like being invited by the ambassador from Japan to go to the embassy to celebrate the Cherry Blossom Festival and attending a gala dinner at the Swedish Embassy for a Nobel Prize-winning chemistry colleague. “Those are moments that only occur right here,” he said.

Perhaps most of all, Wrighton said, he’ll miss his campus walks with Spike. In the mornings, he routinely stopped to chat with staff members on their way to work. In the evenings, he was often approached by students. He recalled a student stopping him to pet Spike along his 20th Street route—and asking if the president wouldn’t mind being interviewed for his project. “I did [the interview] right there on the street,” Wrighton said, laughing.

After completing his tenure, Wrighton will return to Washington University and one of his first loves: teaching chemistry classes. With family in the area, he expects to be back in D.C. from time to time. “I’ll be prowling around the GW campus and hoping that I see someone who remembers me.

“I was proud to be their president,” he said. ☐

GW to Welcome New President

Ellen Granberg is an innovative, dynamic leader with decades of experience at research universities and as a sociology scholar.

By Nick Erickson

Moments after Ellen Granberg formally introduced herself to the GW community, a student greeted the university's soon-to-be leader with words never heard in the 200-plus-year history of the institution.

"Welcome, Madam President."

Granberg, who begins her tenure as GW's 19th president on July 1, addressed a capacity Jack Morton Auditorium crowd shortly after the Board of Trustees announced her presidential appointment based on her strong record of bolstering teaching and research excellence across disciplines, supporting a diverse and inclusive community of students, faculty and staff, and collaborating with all stakeholders to drive transformative change and increase institutional prominence.

She boasts plenty of experience running key initiatives and overseeing academic departments during her higher-education career that includes her most recent role of provost and senior vice president for academic affairs at Rochester Institute of Technology as well as former faculty leadership positions at Clemson University. But she's rooted in sociology and human interaction.

And Granberg spent plenty of time interacting with the community while on campus—including with a softball player who had just met Granberg and ran over to tell her teammates that "she makes me want to win for her."

Perhaps that's because her own nonlinear story is relatable. Entering higher education by way of an untraditional path, Granberg spent the first 11 years after earning an undergraduate degree from the University of California, Davis, working for the Fortune 500 telecommunications firm Pacific Bell. While there, she found leading large-scale system conversions an opportunity to understand leadership in the context of complex and high-risk environments. The job provided her valuable experience in

decision-making, team building and communication, she said.

But as the child of a college professor and an attorney, life as an academic stayed in the back of her mind.

She left her home state of California and headed to Nashville, where she worked toward and eventually received an M.A. and a Ph.D. in sociology from Vanderbilt University, launching a career in higher education and specifically research focused on the sociology of self and identity and its influence on physical and mental health.

What attracted her to GW, she said, was its storied history of advancing its impact and prominence every day. She noted how the university, which was founded by an act of Congress more than two centuries ago, has grown from a faculty of three professors and a tutor to a thriving, Carnegie R1 research institution with high-quality academic programs and research across a wide array of disciplines.

But staying true to her background in sociology,

she, along with her wife, Sonya Rankin, are especially excited to work with and meet the GW community.

"As we are quickly learning, this community is one of warm and welcoming people working together to have a positive impact on society and to create a more just and equitable university, nation and world," Granberg said. "Your commitment to this work and your ambition to achieve preeminence as an institution together is inspiring."

The board, informed by the work of the Presidential Search Committee, Faculty Consultative Committee and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, was drawn to Granberg's collaboration skills and eagerness to listen to and partner with the GW community to advance shared aspirations.

"At the dawn of the university's third century, we knew that we needed a leader who would reinforce our commitment to academic excellence, enhance our academic reputation and help us achieve our aspirations for preeminence," said Board of Trustees Chair Grace Speights, J.D. '82. "In Dr. Granberg, we have found that leader."

Granberg succeeds President Mark S. Wrighton, who has served as GW president on an interim basis since Jan. 1, 2022. He said he looks forward to working with Granberg to ensure a smooth transition of the GW presidency.

"There is a phrase I've already heard a lot here—Raise High," Granberg said. "It is a theme that permeates everything we do at GW. It exemplifies the idea that we strive for excellence not just for ourselves but also for one another—in other words, ambition within community. This is the ethos that characterizes who we are and where we are going, and I could not be more proud or more grateful to be joining you on this path." 📧

Ellen Granberg starts her tenure as the 19th president of George Washington University on July 1.





As described when first introduced to the community, the Revolutionaries moniker represents GW community members because they “are not afraid to break boundaries and change the game. The GW Revolutionaries go beyond what’s conventional or expected to focus on shifting mindsets and creating a new future for ourselves and our world.”

GW students, faculty, staff and alumni were then invited to rate the 10 names, which helped the advisory committee narrow the options further down to four finalists: Revolutionaries, Blue Fog, Ambassadors and Sentinels. The GW community was then asked to rate videos representing the four finalists’ names. Once again, Revolutionaries ranked as the top option.

The Moniker Advisory Committee solicited feedback at every phase of the moniker development process, including at the start of the academic year when it hosted engagement activities during the 2022 Alumni & Families Weekend and held several student-athlete town halls.

“To have 47,000 points of feedback from the GW community is a testament to the pride people have in this institution, and we are proud to offer them a new moniker that will propel us as we move ahead in our third century,” said Vice President for Communications and Marketing Ellen Moran.

The full adoption of the Revolutionaries moniker will be implemented during the 2023-24 academic year. Over the coming weeks and months, GW will develop the visual identity for the Revolutionaries moniker and begin the process of bringing it to life on athletic uniforms, campus signage and merchandise. 📍

MONIKER

It’s Revolutionaries!

The new moniker was consistently the top-ranked option in every round of a yearlong process driven by feedback from GW students, faculty, staff and alumni.

GW alumnus Chuck Todd, ATT ’90 to ’94, HON ’22, host of NBC’s “Meet the Press,” introduced the new name in a breaking news-style video that was broadcast on Instagram and Facebook. Monica Ruiz, a faculty member from the Milken Institute School of Public Health; Michael O’Connor, B.B.A. ’02, a former Major League Baseball player; and Jake Sherman, B.A. ’08, founder of Punchbowl News, provided commentary on the selection of Revolutionaries. President Mark S. Wrighton, GW students and George—who will remain the university’s mascot—also participated in the announcement.

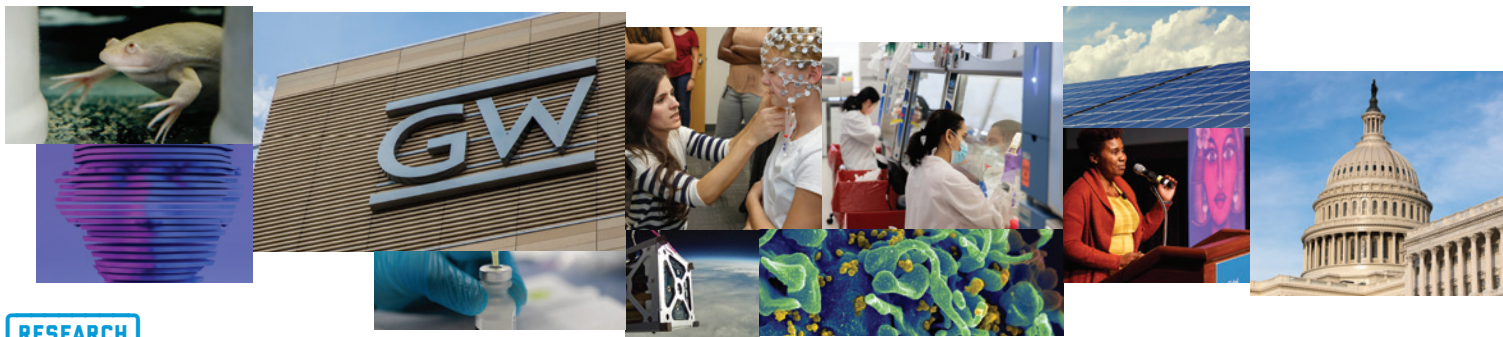
“This is an exciting day for the George Washington University Revolutionaries,” Wrighton said. “I am very grateful for the active engagement of our community throughout the development of the new moniker. This process was truly driven by our students, faculty, staff and alumni, and the result is a moniker that broadly reflects our community—and our distinguished and distinguishable GW spirit.”

The moniker became official when the GW Board of Trustees accepted the recommendation of Wrighton and the Moniker Advisory Committee, which included representation from students, faculty, staff and

alumni.

Throughout the months-long community engagement efforts that included focus groups, random sample surveys and community-wide opportunities to rate moniker options and merchandise distribution, Revolutionaries was the top-ranked option in every round.

In January, the university published a broad call for GW community members to submit proposed names for the new GW moniker. The university received approximately 8,000 moniker suggestions and developed a set of guiding principles that were used to narrow the list to 10 names that best reflected the spirit of GW.



RESEARCH

GW Joins Prestigious Association of American Universities

The university’s membership in the AAU recognizes its leading research, education and innovation.

GW joined the top tier of preeminent universities in North America on June 1 when it became one of just 71 institutions to receive membership in the Association of American Universities (AAU).

Founded in 1900, the AAU comprises America’s premier research universities working to address challenging problems through research while educating and training the next generation of leaders. Membership in the AAU is by invitation only.

“We are honored by this acknowledgment of excellence by America’s leading research universities,” said President Mark S. Wrighton. “The George Washington University has a long and distinguished history of academic leadership at the nexus of research, scholarship, policy and service, and the vital distinction of membership in the AAU reflects GW’s rapidly growing impact locally, nationally and globally. We are proud to join the AAU in the

shared mission of advancing research and scholarship that addresses the world’s most urgent and vexing challenges.”

AAU member universities are invited after a review of “quantitative indicators” assessing breadth and quality of research and education. The universities “earn the majority of competitively awarded federal funding for research that improves public health, seeks to address national challenges and contributes significantly to our economic strength, while educating and training tomorrow’s visionary leaders and innovators,” according to the AAU.

AAU member institutions are also leading voices that shape policy in higher education, science and innovation, set the standard for excellence in undergraduate and graduate education, and have a

positive impact on society.

“GW is a university on the rise, and the invitation to join the AAU is a testament to the accomplishments of an ambitious community that strives for academic excellence and advances the university in its prominence and impact every

“GW is a university on the rise, and the invitation to join the AAU is a testament to the accomplishments of an ambitious community that strives for academic excellence and advances the university in its prominence and impact every day”

**GW President-elect
Ellen Granberg**

day,” said GW President-elect Ellen Granberg, noting that she looks forward to the ways AAU membership will help the university elevate this impact in its third century.

Membership in the AAU signals that GW has significant achievements in research. In addition, being invited to join the AAU recognizes the positive

trajectory of GW. Accelerating the progress of the research enterprise will be important in building the quality and impact of the university. Initiatives like the Global Food Institute,

renewed efforts on sustainability and strengthening biomedical research will contribute to the advancement of GW.

“AAU membership is an incredible achievement, and it is validation of the strength and influence of our university’s research and education,” said Board of Trustees Chair Grace Speights, J.D. ’82. “As chair of the board and as an alumna, I am very proud of our university and community.”

Five other universities also joined the AAU June 1: Arizona State University, the University of California, Riverside, the University of Miami, the University of Notre Dame and the University of South Florida.

“We look forward to working with all of these universities to continue advancing higher education and laying the scientific foundation that helps keep our economy strong and our nation healthy and safe,” said AAU President Barbara R. Snyder.

AAU Board Chair and University of Southern California President Carol L. Folt said AAU institutions are “distinguished by the quality of their education and research” and congratulated the universities’ students, faculty and staff for the hard work required for AAU membership.



‘Up With the Sun’ Reimagines a Toxic Life—and its Violent End

Professor Emeritus Thomas Mallon’s new novel is the always witty and at times poignant tale of Dick Kallman, a real-life actor and mostly closeted gay man who was perhaps the living embodiment of being one’s own worst enemy.

“Up With the Sun” chronicles three decades of ups and downs in the life and career of Dick Kallman—abrasive, showy and off-putting but not untalented in Mallon’s portrayal—from his first role on Broadway in 1951 to his final days in 1980 as a questionable dealer of even more questionable antiques. Mallon alternates Kallman’s relentless trajectory with chapters narrated by a foil, a gentle pianist named Matt Liannetto who is becoming increasingly at ease with his identity as a gay man. (The two cross paths multiple times.)

Kallman’s apex is a starring role on “Hank,” an improbable 1960s sitcom in which an orphan disguises himself as various college students in order to attend university classes. (High jinks generally ensue.) The nadir is his violent murder, along with that of his lover, during a robbery of Kallman’s gaudy Manhattan townhouse. Along the way, we see Kallman bluster, brag, backstab and even slam a costar’s finger in a stage prop mid-performance.

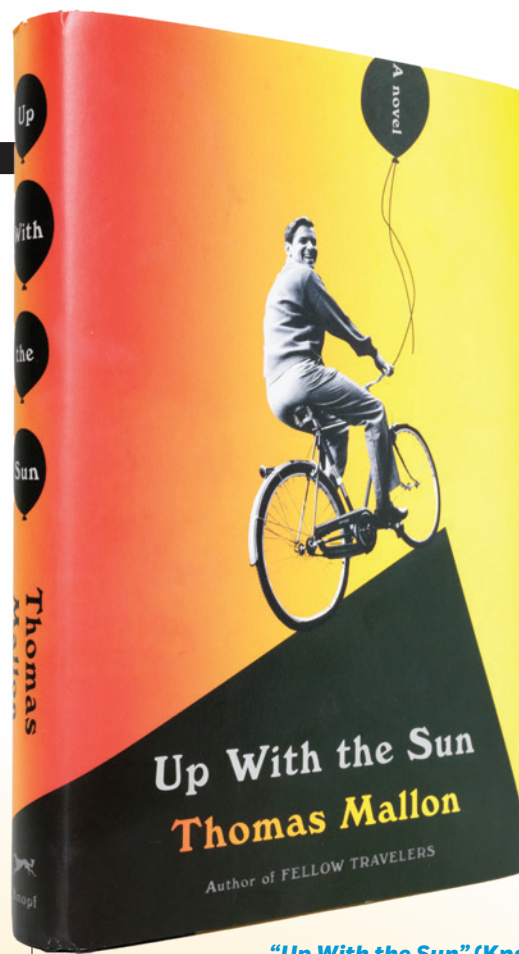
It’s a somewhat different subject for Mallon who has written 11 previous historical novels mainly centered in Washington, D.C., and on its leaders, including “Watergate,” which was a finalist for the PEN/Faulkner Award, and “Fellow Travelers,” which has been adapted for a Showtime series that debuts this year.

“GW Magazine” talked to Mallon, professor emeritus of English, about “Up With the Sun,” what drew him to Dick Kallman and the responsibility of writing about real people.

Q: Dick Kallman—unlike many of the subjects you write about—isn’t a household name (despite his very best efforts). What made you want to write a book about him?

A: I watched his short-lived sitcom, “Hank,” when I was in the ninth grade. I wanted to go to college desperately, as did the character he played. The premise of the show was pretty risible. The character Kallman played had no money and did constant odd jobs on campus; when he knew a student would be absent from a class he was interested in, he’d disguise himself as that student—and try to remain one step ahead of the registrar.

My father, who had had to leave school after the eighth grade, would watch with me—just as we used to watch the quiz show “College Bowl” together on Sunday afternoons. I’m sure that all the



**“Up With the Sun” (Knopf, 2023)
By Thomas Mallon**

time he was watching, he was wondering how he was possibly going to afford to make my own collegiate dreams happen. Bad as it was, “Hank” stuck with me and, weirdly, Kallman was murdered in 1980 on the day of my father’s funeral.

Q: Where does the title come from?

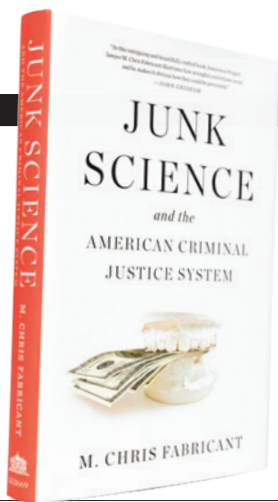
A: It’s in the first line of the theme song from “Hank.” The lyrics, by the great Johnny Mercer, were probably the most distinguished feature of the show.

Q: With the caveat that the book is fiction, what responsibility do you feel to portray real people accurately or empathetically?

A: Empathy is a novelist’s most important requirement. It’s different from sympathy, though it doesn’t exclude that. It’s the ability—whether you’re writing in the first person or the third person—to imagine things from the point of view of a character, whether the figure is based on an actual person or largely made up. I don’t believe a novelist should take gratuitous liberties with real people who are dead, but he has to be able to extrapolate, plausibly and dramatically, from the actual records of those lives. The portrayal of Kallman in this novel is harsh (with a few moments of sympathy), but it was based on the considered recollections of a number of people.

Q: You capture the zeitgeist of the early ’80s with the AIDS epidemic looming. Was it important to you to write about the era and its essential tragedy for almost an entire generation of gay men?

A: Very important. I lived through much of the 1980s in New York and lost many friends to the disease. Last December, I published a selection of my diaries from that time and place in “The New Yorker” (“The Very Heart of It,” Dec. 6, 2022, issue). I intend to do a whole book of those diaries soon. — Rachel Muir



“Junk Science and the American Criminal Justice System” (Akashic Books, 2022)

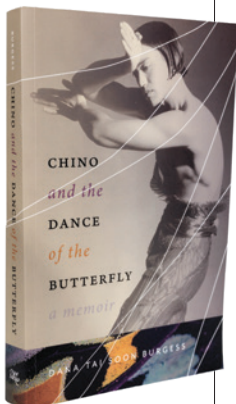
By M. Chris Fabricant, J.D. '97

Fabricant, an attorney with the Innocence Project, turns an unflinching spotlight on the so-called expert forensic witnesses that juries rely on to inform their verdicts. The book tells the story of three prisoners convicted of capital murder based on what Fabricant dubs “junk science” and the Innocence Project’s fight to overturn their wrongful convictions. Fabricant provides an insider’s view of a criminal justice system that is inherently unfair, broken and racist, and characterized by wrongful convictions, corrupt prosecutors and quackery masquerading as science.

“Chino and the Dance of the Butterfly” (University of New Mexico Press, 2022)

By Dana Tai Soon Burgess, professor emeritus of dance

The renowned dancer and choreographer traces his artistic influences back to his early life in New Mexico and shows how his background and identity as a Korean American gay man shaped his creative vision. The deeply personal memoir is also a testament to the power of dance and art. “Dance has allowed me to externalize my internal world, to clarify and form my identity,” Burgess writes. “Dance has swept me along an odyssey to kinesthetically interpret and express my reactions to the stages of life, to find peace and joy within myself as a bullied outsider, a gay Korean American choreographer from Santa Fe, New Mexico.”



“Realigners: Partisan Hacks, Political Visionaries, and the Struggle to Rule American Democracy” (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2022)

By Timothy Shenk, assistant professor of history

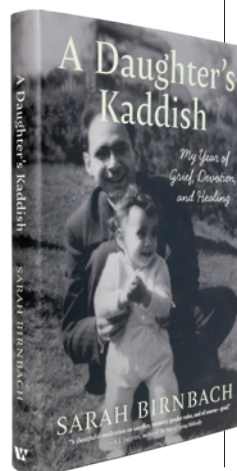
Shenk’s book is a biography of American democracy told through historical figures who succeeded in something that seems impossible today: building coalitions that bind millions of people together in a single cause. He focuses on profiles of the famous (James Madison and Alexander Hamilton, who worked together to forge a Constitutional consensus) and the footnotes (anti-slavery Sen. Charles Sumner and anti-feminist firebrand Phyllis Schlafly, who both reshaped the Republican Party a century apart). Each portrait tells a story about how to maintain popular majorities—and how to lose them.



“A Daughter’s Kaddish: My Year of Grief, Devotion, and Healing” (Wonderwell, 2022)

By Sarah Birnbach, B.A. '71

Birnbach commits to reciting the Mourner’s Kaddish—a Jewish ritual historically reserved for sons—twice a day in synagogue for 11 months for her beloved father. She does this despite the fact that she has not been well schooled in Judaism, that she is a single mother and that her father asked her to hire a man to do it. During the year, she is met with objections and indifference but more often kindness. She gains a new grounding in religion and mindfulness, a sense of purpose and community, and the ability to console other mourners. “When I began sitting Kaddish for my father, I did not anticipate the degree to which the practice would become a lesson in how to live,” Birnbach writes.



“Straight through the Labyrinth: Becoming a Gay Father in China” (Acasual Books, 2022)

By Peter Rupert Lighte, B.A. '65

Lighte, a China scholar and founding chairman of J.P. Morgan Chase Bank China, chronicles his quest for fatherhood and the maze he and his husband had to navigate to adopt a child as Hong Kong reverted to Chinese control in 1997. After seemingly insurmountable bureaucracy and drama, he succeeded, becoming the first gay man to adopt a Chinese child in Hong Kong. Lighte also writes about the no-less-challenging adoption of his second daughter. “There was no way to have prepared myself for the dramas that seemed to conspire, pushing children beyond my grasp; and it took more than an iron will to fuel a spirit enabling me to outrun that receding horizon,” he writes. **GM**

AGENTS OF



OF





CHANGE

FOR THE PAST DECADE, THE GLOBAL WOMEN'S INSTITUTE HAS HELPED BUILD THE EVIDENCE BASE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS AND WHAT WORKS TO PREVENT GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE.

WHERE DOES IT GO FROM HERE?

STORY // KATHLEEN GARRIGAN





When fighting broke out in Juba, South Sudan, in July 2016, a research team trained by GW's Global Women's Institute was in the middle of collecting data on violence against women and girls (VAWG).

The work, led by the institute and its humanitarian partners, was part of the first large-scale, population-based study on VAWG in a conflict setting.

"We had pretty good methods for doing this kind of research in non-conflict circumstances, and we'd done some research in post-conflict settings," says Mary Ellsberg, founding director of the Global Women's Institute (GWI). "But we needed to figure out how to adapt and apply that rigorous scientific method to an area that was in complete upheaval. There was some skepticism about whether it could even be done."

As violence erupted, GWI and its partners were forced to pause the study. After six months, the study resumed but with some modifications: Previously the team had conducted door-to-door interviews at three sites, but one of those sites was deemed too challenging to proceed.

"The team felt it would threaten the data collectors' security going door to door in Juba," says Maureen Murphy, a research scientist with GWI who helped lead the South Sudan study alongside Ellsberg. "By pausing the study during the worst of the crisis, we were able to collect rigorous data without endangering the team on the ground."

A key element in the study was its scope: Rather than focusing on rape and sexual violence perpetrated by soldiers, the team would be examining all forms of gender-based violence.

"We've known for a long time that rape is sometimes used by armed actors as a tactic of war," Ellsberg says. "But there are other forms of violence—for example, intimate partner violence and forced marriages—that also occur or increase during war. Part of what we were trying to break down is this paradigm that conflict-related sexual violence is something that the U.N. should be doing something about, yet nobody's paying any attention to what's happening to women in their homes. Who are we to say which of those is worse?"

The findings from the team's groundbreaking study—that as many as 73% of women had been physically or sexually assaulted by a partner, and one in three women had been sexually abused by a non-partner—completely upended the understanding about VAWG in conflict zones.

Not only were the findings revolutionary, but the methods and tools the team developed and adapted along the way created a global standard for the ethical and rigorous collection of VAWG data against a backdrop of volatility and uncertainty.

A DECADE OF IMPACT

The Global Women's Institute launches

The George Washington University establishes GWI, a pan-university initiative with Mary Ellsberg as founding director.

2012



2013



Partnering with the Malala Fund

GWI works with the Malala Fund to create a resource guide for universities and secondary schools based on the inspiring memoir by Nobel Prize winner Malala Yousafzai.

Today, the South Sudan study is representative of the pioneering work GWI has undertaken in 10 short years to fulfill its mission of advancing gender equality through research, education and action. Further evidence: GWI earlier this year was tapped to co-lead a new £65.7 million (\$82 million) initiative to identify, evaluate and scale interventions that prevent VAWG around the world.



Thirty years ago, there was scant evidence on VAWG's prevalence and no standard practice for collecting data on it.

"There was almost no research on violence against women, particularly epidemiological research, until the 1990s when a few groups of feminist researchers around the world started trying to break that open," Ellsberg says. She was one of those researchers.

During the 1980s and 1990s, Ellsberg was living and working in Nicaragua where she was also a part of the country's burgeoning women's movement. In the early 1990s, members of the movement proposed a law criminalizing domestic violence. When



"There was almost no research on violence against women, particularly epidemiological research, until the 1990s when a few groups of feminist researchers around the world started trying to break that open."

MARY ELLSBERG

GWI FOUNDING DIRECTOR



government officials refused to vote on the law on the grounds that there was no evidence domestic violence was a problem, Ellsberg decided to get the numbers.

While pursuing a doctoral degree in epidemiology at Umeå University in Sweden, Ellsberg carried out the first population-based survey on domestic violence in Nicaragua in 1995.

"We had to make the case that violence was actually a public health issue, and that meant prevalence studies," she says. "But that also meant developing methods for collecting data that were ethical and kept women safe."

Over six months, Ellsberg and a research team that included members of the Nicaraguan women's movement interviewed 488 women in León, Nicaragua's second largest city, about their experiences with domestic abuse. When they published their study, the findings caused an uproar.

One out of every two women had experienced physical or sexual abuse by an intimate partner, and, of those, one in four women had experienced violence within the past year.

Feminist activists immediately launched a campaign to publicize the results of the study across radio, television and newspapers. Within six months, Nicaragua's National

Spotlighting VAWG in "The Lancet"

GWI publishes a groundbreaking, comprehensive review of evidence-based interventions to prevent violence against women and girls in "The Lancet" in a first-ever issue focused on VAWG.



2014

2015



Pioneering research in South Sudan

GWI launches the first population-based study on VAWG in conflict-affected areas of South Sudan, which subsequently influences peace negotiations.

Documenting success in Nicaragua

GWI conducts a 20-year follow-up study to previous research in Nicaragua and finds a 70% reduction in intimate partner violence, demonstrating VAWG can be prevented through a multisector approach and feminist organizing.



2016



Assembly unanimously passed the country's first domestic violence law. Other legislative reforms and improvements in social and law enforcement services followed over the next couple of decades.

"Through this research, we were able to uncover a devastating problem affecting Nicaraguan women that had been hidden for so long," Ellsberg says. "At the same time, by partnering with the feminist movement throughout the research process, we were able to use our results to contribute to real social change."

By this point, researchers around the world had been conducting similar studies. And in 2000, a landmark, multicountry World Health Organization study, to which Ellsberg contributed, revealed the enormity of the issue: Globally, one in three women would experience physical or sexual abuse in her lifetime. Ellsberg and other researchers also began collecting prevalence data that linked domestic violence to a range of medical conditions, including preeclampsia, depression, chronic pain, fibromyalgia, irritable bowel syndrome and heart disease.

"As the evidence accumulates, nobody can say, 'This is not a human rights issue,'" Ellsberg says. "We have shown that violence

against women and girls is both a violation of human rights as well as a health emergency."

Twelve years later, Ellsberg came to The George Washington University. As the founding director of GWI, Ellsberg was able to draw on the work she did in Nicaragua and with the WHO to advance research on VAWG and its prevention around the world.

Early on, Ellsberg and her fledgling team were clear that their goal was to utilize their research to develop practical interventions that would improve the lives of women and girls.

"How can we be a partner who doesn't just care about doing academic research that ends up in peer-reviewed journals?" Ellsberg recalls the team discussing. "How do we become a center that is known for practical, policy-based solutions that can contribute to international dialogue at the [United Nations'] Commission on the Status of Women?"

Over the next 10 years, GWI would answer those questions.



One of the many revelations of the South Sudan study was that VAWG takes many forms and its perpetrators wear many faces. While one in three women in conflict settings reported sexual violence by a non-partner (a high rate when compared to non-conflict settings), the rate of intimate partner violence was even higher. Between 54% and 73% of women experienced sexual or physical violence by a partner.

In addition, the study revealed that humanitarian actors were sometimes reported as perpetrators of sexual abuse, and approximately 20% of women and girls reported being sexually exploited when they tried to access goods and services.

"It's about power imbalances," says Murphy, who now leads GWI's Building Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Evidence in Conflict and Refugee Settings program, among other projects funded by the U.S. State Department. "In a humanitarian emergency, some of those power dynamics



2017

Improving foreign assistance

GWI assesses the Australian government's international program to end VAWG, evaluating the impact of investments to improve women's access to justice, services and prevention.

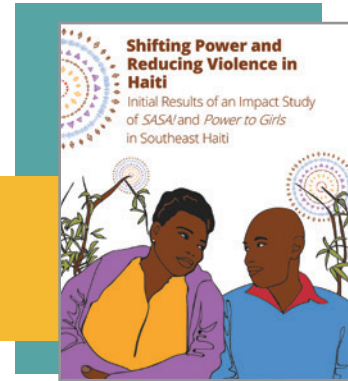
Training development professionals

GWI launches GenderPro, a first-of-its-kind program—delivered virtually and available globally—to professionalize, standardize and strengthen the field of gender within international development.



2018

2019



Evaluating programs to prevent VAWG

Between 2019 and 2022, GWI evaluates the Rethinking Power Program, developed by Beyond Borders and Raising Voices, in southeast Haiti. The program is now a proven solution that has reduced intimate partner violence by nearly 45%.

become more acute, and people become even more vulnerable because of that.”

For Amal Hassan, the fact that humanitarian actors were exploiting women and girls was shocking.

Hassan, a graduate research assistant with GWI who earned a bachelor’s degree from GW’s Milken Institute School of Public Health in 2022, joined the institute in 2019. As an undergraduate research intern, she began working with GWI’s Empowered Aid program, a participatory action research project studying sexual exploitation and abuse of women and girls in refugee settings in Lebanon and Uganda.

“I think one of the main things that surprised me was that most of the perpetrators of violence against women and girls in humanitarian settings were actually trusted people such as humanitarian aid workers,” she says. “They were workers who were supposed to be helping and distributing aid in a very diligent and honest way. There were also male community leaders and community activists and even relatives who were exploiting women and girls.”

Working alongside refugee co-researchers in Uganda and Lebanon, Empowered Aid helped uncover a number of risks women →

Stopping exploitation in refugee settings

GWI develops and leads Empowered Aid, a multi-year, multi-country project that explores sexual exploitation and abuse of women and girls in refugee settings, including Lebanon and Uganda.



2021

2022



Leading a global research consortium into the next decade

GWI is selected to lead the world’s largest ever, multi-year, global research consortium to study and scale effective measures to prevent gender-based violence through “What Works to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls: Impact at Scale,” a program funded by the UK government.



“I think we assumed that entrenched social norms that promote violence and gender inequality would take generations to change, that there’s no way you could meaningfully impact the rate of violence within a two-to-five-year program. But you can.”

CHELSEA ULLMAN

GWI RESEARCH SCIENTIST



GWI celebrates 10 years

GWI celebrates the institute’s first decade in action at GW and honors U.S. Rep. Pramila Jayapal, 33 ex-political prisoners from Nicaragua, and a sexual violence survivor and activist from Bolivia with Champions for Justice awards.



2023

▶ and girls faced through aid distribution processes.

In Lebanon, for example, where the majority of the country's 870,000 refugees come from Syria, the Empowered Aid team found that women and girls were at an increased risk of sexual exploitation and abuse by sanitation and hygiene humanitarian workers who visited homes to make repairs. In Uganda, where people fleeing the conflict in South Sudan make up a large percentage of the country's refugees, the team found that food distribution posed one of the greatest risks.

The team developed a series of recommendations, toolkits and even a free online course to help the humanitarian sector better mitigate sexual exploitation and abuse through aid distribution, monitoring and evaluation.

"That experience really changed my outlook," says Hassan. "That the recommendations we came up with directly impacted women and girls in those contexts and allowed them to get humanitarian aid in a much safer way was extremely touching and empowering. It helped show that the work I was doing as an undergraduate research intern was really helping make a difference for this global public health crisis."

The opportunities that GW students like Hassan have working at an institute like GWI are critical for the future of the field, says Murphy.

"We have a really strong commitment to students," she says. "We've brought on a bunch of students over the years to work on research projects, which is exciting. That opportunity of working with researchers and the communities is important in building up the next generation of researchers and practitioners in the nongovernmental organization space."



Not long after GWI opened its doors, the institute published a review paper in a special issue of "The Lancet" medical journal focused on VAWG. They looked at all the rigorous studies aimed at reducing violence against women and girls and found that almost all of them focused on responses to violence. There was virtually no evidence as to whether the programs actually worked to prevent violence, and there were very few studies carried out in low- and middle-income countries.

Yet, violence could be prevented. Ellsberg showed that when she returned to Nicaragua in 2015 to carry out a follow-up study to her 1995 prevalence study. The study, published



"That the recommendations we came up with directly impacted women and girls in those contexts and allowed them to get humanitarian aid in a much safer way was extremely touching and empowering. It helped show that the work I was doing as an undergraduate research intern was really helping make a difference for this global public health crisis."

AMAL HASSAN

GWI GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANT



in "BMJ Global Health," showed a 70% decline in physical intimate partner violence over a 20-year period. They attributed the decline to the success of the women's movement and its ability to not only change laws and offer services for survivors but also to transform gender norms and educate women about their human rights.

According to Chelsea Ullman, a research scientist who's been with GWI since its inception, the fact that violence is preventable has been one of the breakthroughs over the last 10 to 15 years.

"Not only is it preventable, but we can see reductions in violence within relatively short programmatic time frames," Ullman says. "I think we assumed that entrenched social norms that promote violence and gender inequality would take generations to change, that there's no way you could meaningfully impact the rate of violence within a two-to-five-year program. But you can."

We're learning more every day about what works to prevent violence, Ullman says. She points to programs like Uganda's SASA! Initiative, which engages all members of a community, including religious leaders, parents and children, as examples of effective prevention programming.

Created by the nonprofit organization Raising Voices, SASA!—meaning "Now!" in Kiswahili—focuses on the power imbalances between men and women.

"They don't start by talking about violence," Ullman says. "Some people are immediately turned off when you start talking about violence. But if you start by talking about how we all have power, and we all understand what it feels like to be without power, then we all have a choice about how we use our power."

An evaluation of SASA! showed that the program reduces intimate partner violence by over 50%. Now the model has been adapted to other countries, including Haiti where a GWI evaluation of a program in the southeast of the country found similar success in a different context.

"SASA! looks at violence prevention in a brand-new way, which is really about changing social norms and changing power imbalances," Ellsberg says.



Claudia García-Moreno, who leads the WHO's unit on vulnerable populations in the Department of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Research and is a member of GWI's Leadership Council, has been witness to the institute's meteoric rise and impact over the last decade.



Called “Seven Sisters,” this painting by Shirleen Nampaynpa Campbell, an Indigenous women’s rights activist and artist from Australia, was commissioned by GWI.

“GWI has made invaluable contributions to the field of violence against women, from research on the prevalence of violence against women in humanitarian settings to advocacy for prevention and services, including for migrant women, Indigenous women, political prisoners and other disadvantaged groups of women,” she says.

Earlier this year, GWI was selected to lead the Research and Evaluation Consortium of the “What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls: Impact at Scale.” Funded by the UK government, the seven-year, £65.7 million (\$82 million) initiative is the world’s largest ever, multi-year global program to identify, scale up and evaluate measures to prevent gender-based violence.

When GWI conducted the South Sudan study in 2016, it was part of the first iteration of the “What Works” initiative. Now it leads one of the program’s two consortia.

“This is one tangible metric of our growth,” says Ullman, who is the deputy director of the “What Works” program. “The South Sudan study was innovative and new, and we were able to learn a lot in the field from it. That put us in a position where now, instead of taking one piece of the project, we’re able to help lead it.”

In partnership with research colleagues in Kenya, South Africa, Pakistan, Australia and the U.S., GWI will lead and support over

50 studies in dozens of countries over the next seven years. First, it will assess where information gaps still exist and where more research is needed, particularly in low- and middle-income countries and among populations with diverse identities.

“Many people have overlapping identities, and some of those confer privilege and some of them don’t,” Ellsberg says. “We can’t just talk about ‘all women.’ We have to understand class, ethnicity, gender identity and sexual orientation. The dialogue and our understanding of gender has become so much richer with an intersectional lens.”

Beyond “What Works,” GWI continues to build capacity among humanitarian actors through its Building GBV Evidence and Empowered Aid programs. It is also preparing a new generation of global leaders through GenderPro, a credentialing program that trains mid- and senior-level development professionals to integrate gender into their work. The institute is also applying the lessons it has learned overseas to its own backyard.

“In the U.S., people are much less focused on prevention, and we think the work of groups like SASA! in Uganda and the work around changing social norms has a lot to teach people in the U.S.,” Ellsberg says.

As the U.S. Justice and State Departments develop gender-based violence action plans,

for example, the institute has organized listening sessions between U.S. officials and global gender-based violence experts to share lessons learned from other countries.

For Ullman, the issue of VAWG in the U.S. is not so different from VAWG elsewhere. Different variables may exacerbate or change the way violence looks, she notes, but the intimate partner violence we see in South Sudan is the same type of violence we have here in the U.S.

“Violence happens everywhere,” Ullman says. “It varies by region, but there is no region in the world where it’s zero. However, this is an exciting moment, because we’re not only furthering our global knowledge but also building momentum to take action on VAWG.”

That momentum was on full display March 9 at an event to celebrate GWI’s 10-year anniversary, where U.S. Rep. Pramila Jayapal (D-Wash.) delivered the keynote address, calling GWI “an important catalytic force.”

“You showed the world what it looks like to stop gender-based violence and, crucially, how to achieve that change,” she said. “And research that’s generated here actually does play a direct role in crafting stronger evidence-based policies and preparing the next generation of leaders to create an even stronger movement.”





CHAMPIONING KINDNESS

In 2012, **Cynthia Germanotta, M.A. '78**, and her daughter Stefani—better known to the world as Lady Gaga—launched Born This Way Foundation. Their mission: to support the mental health of young people and to work with them to build a kinder, braver world.

Drawing from her daughter's experiences and conversations with young people around the world, Germanotta and her team at Born This Way Foundation have developed a vast array of mental health tools for youth. They model healthy conversations, connect young people with resources and services, and build communities that understand, prioritize and foster good mental health.

The input of young people informs every aspect of the foundation's work, and the team has collected feedback from tens of thousands of youth both in person and online through advisory boards, academic research and surveys. The resulting message is clear: Kindness and mental health are undeniably linked, and kinder environments are key to nurturing better mental health.

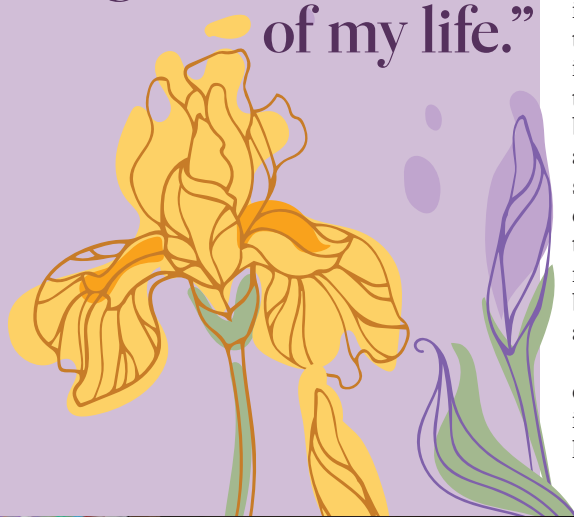
“GW Magazine” spoke with Germanotta about her leadership of Born This Way Foundation and how it has changed lives, including her own. (We also asked a few questions about her time at GW, surprises in life and her superbly talented daughters.)

Q: You and your daughter have been incredibly open about her experience being bullied and mental health issues. Why is it so important to talk publicly about mental health?

A: Mental health is an important part of overall health, and yet it's still often overlooked or stigmatized. When my daughter began sharing her struggles about mental health publicly, I was nervous about how people would react. But she taught me that it is actually brave to share your story, and it's also an act of kindness because it encourages others to do the same and reminds them that they are not alone. We've learned that speaking out and having those open and honest conversations with your loved ones is extremely healthy, a step toward ending the stigma, and helps us understand one another at a deeper level.

My daughter and I hope to encourage others to talk about their own struggles so that they can get the help they need. It is also important to me that we lead by example, showing other families who may be going through similar struggles that there is strength in vulnerability and support available if you reach out.

“Building a kinder, braver world with my daughter, our team and thousands of young people is one of the greatest honors of my life.”



Mental health issues are very common, yet so many of us don't feel comfortable talking about them openly due to fear of being judged or misunderstood. One in five adults lives with a mental illness, and nearly half of all mental health issues arise before the age of 14. My hope is that by creating safe spaces for youth to share and modeling health conversations around mental health, we can help eliminate the stigma.

Q: Born This Way Foundation celebrated its 10-year anniversary recently. How has the foundation helped change the lives of young people, and how has it changed your life?

A: In the last decade, Born This Way Foundation has been able to make a positive impact on millions of young people around the world. We have worked to create safe, inclusive and braver spaces for young people through our programs and campaigns. We've been able to empower young people to build and find kind communities as well as hone skills such as resilience, empathy and self-expression so they can feel confident in who they are. I'm also proud that we have helped reduce stigma around mental health issues by engaging in conversations with youth about topics related to mental wellness.

Founding Born This Way Foundation has changed my life in so many ways. Above all, it's given me an even greater appreciation for how resilient young people are when facing

adversity, and how much they can accomplish when given the right resources and support. Youth want to make a difference in the world, and I learn a new way they're doing so every single day.

This work has given me the opportunity to learn about and share the steps I could have taken to better support my daughter. It has been incredibly rewarding, and I'm so proud of all that we have accomplished in the last 10 years. Most importantly, it has shown me that together we really can make a difference in the world—no matter how small or large our actions might be. That is something we should all strive for every day!

Q: Can you share some of the stories of the young people you've met?

A: I've had the honor of meeting so many incredible young people through my work with Born This Way Foundation, some of whom have become lifelong friends. I recently joined a call, organized by our friends at United for Global Mental Health, where I heard from youth leaders from across the globe on the urgent need for mental health support resources for young people everywhere—especially those navigating the continuing challenges faced by the pandemic and other ongoing, overlapping crises.

To address these issues, they each shared their perspective on the actions we can take to better support youth mental health in their communities. For example, Vinicius from Brazil advocated for the use of media to connect all young people with helplines and urgent care in order to address the suicide crisis. Jennifer emphasized the importance of checking in with young people to see if the care provided meets their needs, because recovery is not linear and looks different for everyone.

Jamie-Lee showed us that stigma for seeking help for mental health still widely exists in South Africa and called for a more open conversation regarding mental health issues worldwide, including the need for increased advocacy and more mental health education in primary, secondary and high schools. Lastly, Fatima-Zahra energized me with her powerful message that organizations need to work in the spirit of true partnerships with young people, which means that we need to go beyond advisory councils and involve them in the development of mental health programs. In other words, when inviting young people to collaborate, we should make sure they are co-owners of the entire process.

Each of these young people continues to be an inspiration for me and reminds me how much we can learn from the youth of the world. They prove that when given the opportunity, young voices can effect real



change in their localities and beyond. I am so proud to work alongside them in creating a future where everyone is supported and empowered to live as their authentic selves.

Born This Way Foundation has been committed to involving the youth voice from our inception, through research, direct interactions and our youth advisers.

Q: Any advice for young people struggling and for their parents?

A: First, it's OK to not be OK or feel OK. My advice for young people who are struggling is to ask for help—there is no shame in reaching out and seeking support. Whether it's talking to a trusted adult or friend, a mental health professional or even using an online resource such as Mindfulness Coach (which offers free self-help resources), know that you don't have to face your struggles alone.

For parents, I encourage them to take the time to really listen and understand their child's feelings without judgment. Showing empathy and providing unconditional love can make all the difference in helping young people feel understood and supported. Additionally, it's important that parents

create an environment where their children can openly talk about their mental health needs so they feel comfortable doing so.

Above all, I want young people and their parents to know that help is available and seeking it out should never be a source of shame or embarrassment. There is strength in vulnerability, so don't be afraid to reach out for support.

Q: Would the 20-year-old you be surprised at how your life has turned out?

A: I know for sure that the 20-year-old me would be surprised at how my life has turned out in many ways. My upbringing was quite simple and humble, growing up in a coal mining town on the banks of a river in West Virginia. My parents worked hard to give all of their children an education, and they raised us to be independent, strong, compassionate and confident.

My life journey, both with career and family, has not been a straightforward one, but it's definitely been interesting. I have worked in both the corporate and government sectors, with much of my time spent living and working in New York City,

and also have come full circle to applying the knowledge I gained at GW in public administration.

It's been the challenge and joy of a lifetime to start a nonprofit organization in a very innovative and still relatively new space. Still, never could I have imagined that this path would have led to the privilege of getting to meet and work with incredible young people all over the world. Building a kinder, braver world with my daughter, our team and thousands of young people is one of the greatest honors of my life. When folks ask me for advice on their career journey, I always lead with encouraging folks to allow themselves to be surprised and take risks. It can be so rewarding.

I'm blessed to have a wonderful family and two incredible daughters who have had the opportunity to develop and share their talents while also doing good in the world. I practice gratitude every day and encourage others to do the same, as well as understand their potential to commit to actions large and small to make the world a better place.

Q: Can you tell me a little about your time at GW? Any favorite memories?

A: After graduating from West Virginia University, I moved to Washington, D.C., to study for my master's degree at GW. It was a huge change, but one I was so excited about and ready for. Coming from that small coal mining town, I remember how cool it was to go to school and live on a beautiful campus, nestled in the midst of a big and unique city. So many experiences and resources were available as long as you took advantage of them, from a great education to diverse culture and opportunities for adventure—all at the epicenter of domestic and international affairs.

One of my other favorite memories was learning in school, which I know may sound strange to some. It was long days, long nights and early mornings—so much studying! But with the support, encouragement and camaraderie of friends, I felt like I could conquer anything that came my way.

You can't get that time back, so the most important thing is to enjoy and make the best of every moment and opportunity!

Q: Do you have a favorite Lady Gaga song and outfit?

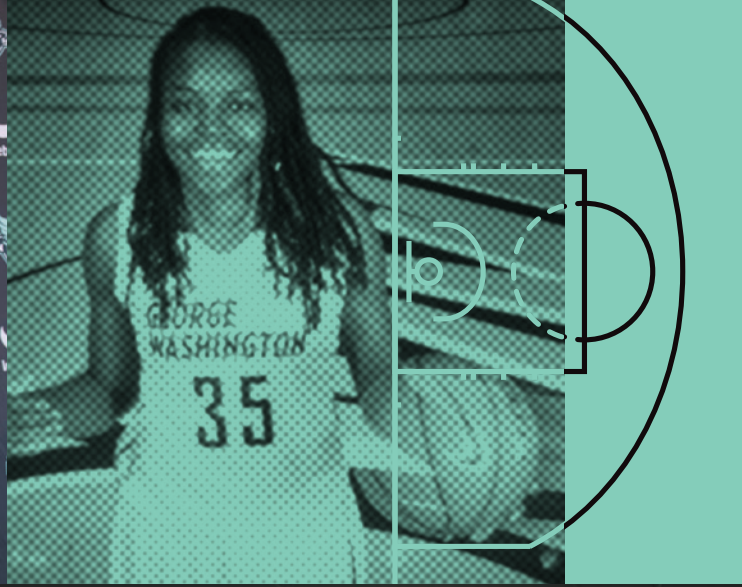
A: I call my daughter Stefi, and I admire and support all that she and her sister, Natali, have accomplished—ALL of the songs, and ALL of the outfits, and above all, ALL of the good they put in the world. I love that they also get to work together often, as Natali has designed many of Stefani's costumes. However, my favorite thing I love about them both is they have good hearts. **GW**



LEFT: Hearing from young people is a critical component of Cynthia Germanotta's work.

BELOW: Germanotta participates in the "Washington Post Live" Global Women's Summit. OPPOSITE: Germanotta and Born This Way Foundation colleagues volunteer with nonprofit Miry's List.

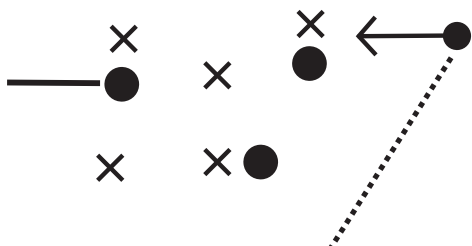




SKY HIGH

WNBA ALL-STAR AND GW ALUMNA
JONQUEL JONES IS LIVING HER
DREAM—AND HER TRUTH.

STORY || STEVE NEUMANN



JONQUEL JONES
FIRST BEGAN TO LOVE
BASKETBALL WHEN
SHE WAS KNEE-HIGH
TO HER CURRENT
6-FOOT-6 FRAME. SHE
BECAME MESMERIZED
BY THE ACTION IN
THE PAINT AT THE
PRACTICES OF THE
BOYS HIGH SCHOOL
TEAM THAT HER
FATHER COACHED.

A All the hooting and hollering as the players repeatedly drove to the hoop inspired Jones, B.A. '19, who would go on to be a Women's National Basketball Association MVP.

When she got a glow-in-the-dark basketball one Christmas, Jones promptly took the bottom out of an old milk crate, nailed it to a piece of board and put it up on a pole on the street outside her home in the Bahamas.

"I remember just getting shots up with that and learning how to shoot," Jones says. "As I got older, I realized I could make a career out of it—if this can be a job, it's a job I want, you know?"

Jones did eventually turn her first love into a career on the court, and a wildly successful one at that. Today, the 29-year-old is in her seventh season in the WNBA and in May began her first season with the New York Liberty as a power forward.

Jones was the sixth pick in the 2016 draft, signing with the Connecticut Sun. In her second season in the WNBA, in 2017, she led the league in rebounds, was named the league's Most Improved Player and was selected to her first All-Star team. In 2021, she was the league MVP.

ESPN analyst Monica McNutt, who was born and raised in Prince George's County, Md., where Jones played high school ball, calls Jones a "force" and has been following her career since high school.

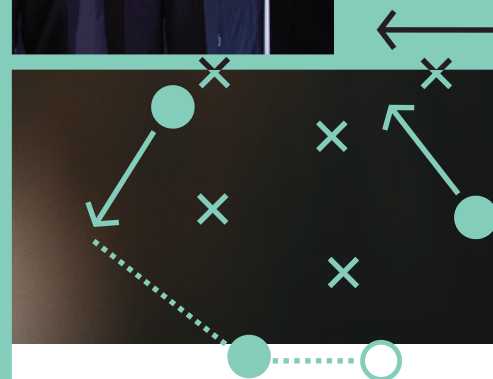
"I remember when she was at Riverdale Baptist in high school as just another kid coming out of Prince George's County area hooping," McNutt says. "She's a presence in the paint, but she can also draw slower-footed defenders away from the rim to knock down a three-ball.

"It's just really been incredible to watch her game grow and evolve," she adds.

Jones seems to be able to do it all on the court: She can dunk, rebound, block shots, drop dimes—that is, assists—and, as McNutt says, make three-point buckets with ease.

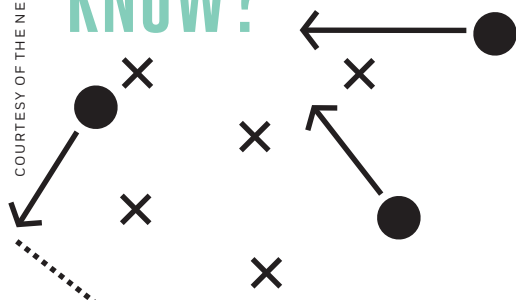


LEFT New York Liberty forward, Jonquel Jones. BELOW Members of the Bahamian Consulate with Jones. BOTTOM Jones during her time on the GW Women's Basketball team.



I REMEMBER JUST GETTING SHOTS UP AND LEARNING HOW TO SHOOT. AS I GOT OLDER, I REALIZED I COULD MAKE A CAREER OUT OF IT—IF THIS CAN BE A JOB, IT'S A JOB I WANT, YOU KNOW?

COURTESY OF THE NEW YORK LIBERTY, GW ATHLETICS



When Jones first landed in the U.S., she went straight from the airport to her first practice with Riverdale Baptist, where the style of game was much

different than what she was used to.

“She was probably one of the better players coming out of the Bahamas, but at my high school, we were pretty skilled and pretty fast, so she was kind of like a deer in headlights at first,” Richardson says.

But, Richardson says, Jones was also like a sponge: The more she gave her, the more she did. She was like the storied postal worker—neither rain nor snow could keep her from putting up buckets.

“I told her, ‘I’ve coached some pretty good players in my time, so you gotta be good,’” Richardson recalls.

As a result, Jones would grab a ball and just shoot and shoot and shoot every chance she got, spending at least eight hours a day working on her game.

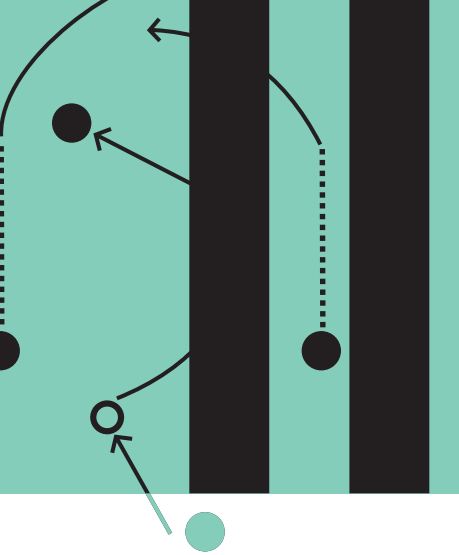
She became a force on the court by putting in long hours starting in high school.

Jones began her basketball career in the U.S. at Riverdale Baptist School in Maryland under head coach Diane Richardson. One of Richardson’s former players—Jurelle Nairn, who is also from the Bahamas—told her there was a player who wanted to come over to the States to play. After some soul searching by both Richardson and Jones’ family, Richardson became Jones’ legal guardian so the future All-Star could enroll and play at the school.

The transition from the Bahamas to the U.S. wasn’t easy for Jones. She was nervous about being “the new kid” playing in an unfamiliar athletic, cultural and social environment, and she hadn’t hit her growth spurt yet.

“I called her spider,” Richardson says. “She was much smaller then and skinny, of course.”

But while Jones was hard at work honing the skills that would later earn her a spot in the WNBA, she was struggling off the court to



Jonquel Jones looks around the New York Liberty locker room at Barclays Center in Brooklyn, N.Y., on Jan. 20, 2023.

reconcile her identity as a lesbian with the faith she grew up with and the traditions of her home country.

Jones was raised as a devout Christian in the Bahamas, a country where same-sex relationships were illegal until 1991 and where discrimination based on sexual orientation is still common.

Not wanting to choose between her sexuality and her relationship with God, she decided to instead focus all her attention on basketball.

That focus caught the attention of Division I scouts, and Jones ended up attending Clemson University in the fall of 2012. Once she got there, however, her experience didn't match her expectations.

"The only thing in [the city of] Clemson is the university, literally," Jones says. "You had to drive 40 minutes to even go to the mall—and that was a new experience for me."

Disenchanted, Jones transferred to GW halfway through her first year. She had played summer pickup games at GW while she was at Riverdale Baptist, so she knew the D.C. area well. Moreover, Richardson had just joined GW as an assistant coach, and one of Jones' former high school teammates, Lauren Chase, was coming in as a point guard.

"Coach Richardson was my high school coach and my guardian, so I knew I would be in good hands," Jones says. "And I knew the level that Lauren could play at, so it would be nice to be able to play with her again, too."

While at GW, Jones continued to focus on her game, again under the tutelage of Richardson.

"Sometimes she would be so unselfish and make that extra pass because we had so many good players on that team," Richardson says. "But there were times when she would be an absolute monster, a beast on the board—she would get that rebound and kick it back out."

"She was a major part of that program, for sure," she adds. "She brought so much energy to the team; they just couldn't wait to

get on the floor to win games."

When Jones finally got the chance to bring that energy to attacking and defending the lane in the WNBA, she also saw a lane open for her in her personal life.

"I saw people that were happily married, people that were in very healthy relationships, people that were single and enjoying life," Jones says, "and it just gave me that reassurance of knowing that it will be OK. I knew I was going to be able to live my truth and still be myself."

But just as she started to feel satisfied personally, Jones began to feel unsatisfied professionally off the court. She had hoped that leading the league in rebounding, averaging 19 points per game, earning the MVP title in the 2021 season, as well as being asked to appear in a State Farm commercial, would lead to more marketing opportunities and monetary benefits—but it didn't.

Jones believed she was being passed over for those opportunities because of who she is: Black, gay and self-described as more masculine—and outspoken about all those things.

"She's not wrong in her assertion," McNutt says. "The league is made up of largely Black women, and a strong percentage happens to be members of the LGBTQ+ community, but these are intersectional identities that, to Jonquel's point, are not often celebrated."

Jones has received some encouragement recently, most notably from Nneka Ogwumike, the president of the WNBA Players Association.

"She told me, 'You don't understand how much being vocal about how you feel can really change your life and your opportunities,'" Jones says. "A perfect example was the State Farm commercial—I probably wouldn't even be able to say that I was in the commercial if I hadn't decided to speak up on social media."

But while there are still frustrations on

the professional front for Jones, things keep getting better in the personal sphere.

"My relationship [with my family] has been way more seamless than I thought it was going to be," Jones says. "I was terrified to [come out to] my dad. I thought he was going to be the toughest person to have a conversation with. I put it off for years."

"But he's been amazing," Jones adds. "He gave me the reassurance I really needed that everything would be OK. He genuinely cares about me and my sexuality, and about my girlfriend and how we're doing."

While the long, hard road from a homemade basket on a street in the Bahamas to the polished hardwoods of the WNBA was well worth the effort, this past year has shown Jones that perseverance in her personal journey also has its own rewards.

"This last Christmas was the first time in my life I brought a girlfriend around extended family," Jones says. "It was very nerve wracking just thinking about it. But when the moment happened, people just understood and accepted it—and that's all I can really ask for."

With that personal milestone behind her, professionally Jones is looking forward to continuing to refine her game with her new teammates on the New York Liberty.

"I feel like ever since my MVP season, there's been so many bodies thrown at me," Jones says. "So coming on the team with shooters like Sabrina [Ionescu] and scorers like Betnijah [Laney] and assists leaders like Sloat [Courtney Vandersloot]—it's just so many different people that can do so many amazing things."

Jones was also back in the D.C. area on May 19 for the Liberty's first game of the season against the Washington Mystics.

"My time at GW was amazing, so every time I'm in the city, I go back," adds Jones, who left GW in 2016 to pursue a professional career but later returned to complete her degree. "I may not announce myself, though, because I like to just go and walk around campus and be nostalgic." 📷

BLAZING A TRAIL FROM KAGAWA TO NEW YORK

THE NETS' YUTA WATANABE IS SHOWING YOUNGER GENERATIONS OF JAPANESE BASKETBALL PLAYERS THAT IT'S POSSIBLE TO EXCEL IN THE NBA.

Yuta Watanabe, B.A. '18, only the second Japanese-born player in the NBA, couldn't miss.

It was last November on the hardwood in Brooklyn's Barclays Center when Watanabe nailed four three-point shots to help cement the Nets' victory over the Memphis Grizzlies.

The crowd gave him a standing ovation.

Watanabe, a 6-foot-8 forward, was among the NBA's most accurate three-point shooters during the regular season, making more than 44%.

His marksmanship has earned him praise from his then superstar teammates Kevin Durant ("his fundamentals look perfect") and Kyrie Irving ("best shooter in the world right now") as well as the nickname "Yuta the Shootah."

He's also known to be a fierce defender who knows how to be in the right place at the right time.

It has taken a lot of practice and patience. The Nets are the third team he's played for in five years.

"I'm glad I'm in the league right now, but there were times when even though I was working hard, it felt like it wasn't paying off," says Watanabe, who played for two years each with the Memphis Grizzlies and the Toronto Raptors before signing with the Nets in 2022. "But in the end, it did."

Playing in the NBA is pretty much all he's ever wanted since his days watching the LA Lakers as a boy. Realizing that dream has taken him from Jinsei Gakuen High



School in Japan to GW's Smith Center to the Barclays Center in Brooklyn.

Watanabe was born and raised in Kagawa, Japan. Both of his parents as well as his older sister played professionally in Japan. His parents were also his first coaches.

As a teenager, Watanabe earned a spot on the country's national team, and a Japanese newspaper dubbed him "the Chosen One." After years of watching recorded NBA games (they were on too late to watch in real time), he had his sights set on the U.S. and playing in the league.

His favorite player? Kobe Bryant, whom he grew up idolizing. But another NBA player made his dream feel possible: Yuta Tabuse, who in 2004 became the first Japanese player in the NBA when he took the court for the Phoenix Suns.

"I was screaming," Watanabe told "The Washington Post" in 2018. "It was so amazing."

Watanabe came to the U.S. in 2013 to finish high school at St. Thomas More Preparatory School in Oakdale, Conn. The following year, he became the first Japanese-born player to earn a Division I scholarship when he came to GW.

He made history again in 2016 when, as a sophomore, he helped the GW men's basketball team win its first postseason championship, claiming the NIT crown with a 76-60 victory over Valparaiso at Madison

Square Garden. Two years later, Watanabe was named the A-10 Defensive Player of the Year.

For Watanabe, the hard work required to play basketball at a Division I school involved more than the daily slog of half-court wind sprints, endless box-out drills and repeated jump shots. As an immigrant, Watanabe also had to navigate a culture and a language that other student-athletes were able to take for granted.

So, on top of his basketball practice and regular coursework, Watanabe attended English tutoring sessions multiple times a week. Between classes, practices, homework, tutoring and extra gym workouts, a typical day at GW for Watanabe usually ended around 10 or 11 p.m.

"No matter what I was doing, I always went back to the gym and got some shots up," Watanabe says. "I just told myself that's something I have to do every day, no matter what."

His dedication didn't go unnoticed. "His work ethic, perseverance and passion wouldn't let him fall short of achieving his basketball dreams," says Brian Sereno, associate athletics director for communications at GW.

"His ability on the basketball court is only topped by the person who Yuta is. He's so focused and serious with everything he does, but he smiles so easily, which is infectious and makes him so easy to root for," he says. "He's a true fan favorite wherever he goes."

Watanabe now has near rock-star status in Japan where he is one of the nation's top athletes and his NBA jersey is a perennial top seller.

It's important to Watanabe to pay it forward by showing aspiring Japanese basketball players a path ahead.

"Before I left Japan, I said I wanted to be a pioneer so that the younger generation can follow me," Watanabe says. "And I think I played that role because now I see a few Japanese players playing in the NCAA."

He also has lots of fans closer to home, including fellow GW alum and New York Liberty forward Jonquel Jones, whose time at GW overlapped with Watanabe's and who shares the same Barclays Center home court.

"When Yuta was at GW, I used to call him Wasabi Watanabe, because I felt like he would catch on fire—he'd just be killing it on the court," Jones says. "I'm happy to see somebody from GW in the same place that I'm in, and just being really successful."

"Every time he makes a bucket, I turn to somebody and say, 'I went to GW with him!'"

GW

Alumni Profiles

FROM ALASKA TO QATAR TO HERE IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL, OUR ALUMNI ARE CHANGING THE WORLD.

HERE ARE SOME OF THEIR STORIES.

WESTRICH

THE LEARNING TRAIL

LIFELONG EDUCATOR [JULI WESTRICH](#) GETS AN OPPORTUNITY SHE'D ONLY EVER DREAMED OF WITH THE FAMED IDITAROD RACE.

by CAITE HAMILTON



The story of how **Juli Westrich, M.A.T. '98**, became the Iditarod's 2023 Teacher on the Trail starts at a Build-A-Bear. Her middle daughter, Claire, at 2 1/2 had picked a stuffed husky to take home during a trip to the store for a cousin's birthday. She named him Ruffy, and he quickly became a member of the family.

Soon Westrich was hosting dog-sledding-themed birthday parties, baking husky-shaped cakes and, by the time Claire had turned 8, the whole family was crowding around the television each March to watch the live-streamed start of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, a highly competitive 938-mile trek across the state of Alaska powered entirely by malamute or husky dogs like Ruffy (only real). They couldn't have known that, more than 15 years after the obsession began, they would be watching the race in person.

LIFELONG LEARNER

Westrich had never heard of the Iditarod before her daughter became so curious about it, but she was accustomed to diving into diverse subjects. While an undergrad at American University studying history and literature, she landed an internship at the National Archives and began spending her days researching in the stacks.

It turned out that what she'd assumed would be her "dream job" wasn't for her. She loved learning, but as a self-proclaimed people person, she couldn't see spending her career in a room by herself, day in, day out.

She went across the street to intern at the United States Navy Memorial Museum and had her lightbulb moment.

"Oh, this is what I'm meant to do," Westrich recalled realizing. "I'm supposed to take the information and help disseminate it, not just find it."

She graduated from American and applied to GW's Graduate School of Education and Human Development for her master's in museum education, a one-year program that eventually led to teaching pre-K kids through the Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center, followed by a position at Discovery Creek Children's Museum in Washington, D.C. She did everything from holding a 6-foot-long boa constrictor in an evening gown ("I was in the evening gown, not the snake" is her go-to joke) to leaping down the National Mall like a Degas dancer—all in the name of education.

By her 40th birthday, Westrich was back in her home state of New York, now with a young family and studying to become a librarian. The new career path combined all the things she'd loved about her previous positions—working with kids, object-based

learning and the bandwidth to dream up new ways to engage and educate students.

"My ability as a librarian is greatly enhanced by my master's in museum education," she said. "I'm a very different librarian than a lot of my peers because I have that kind of inquiry and object-based learning background."

Her new position also gave her an opportunity to continue teaching something she'd been sharing with preschoolers since her time at the Smithsonian: the Iditarod.

SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY

Westrich's love of the "Last Great Race" came to its peak in 2020 when she applied to become a Teacher on the Trail. She'd been aware of the Iditarod's education program for years, but being selected for the job felt like an unrealistic goal. The volunteer position requires weekly lesson planning, evening and weekend availability for Zoom calls with teachers, and finally, a visit to Alaska in March to be at various checkpoints with the mushers. It was a big commitment. But with two of her daughters already off to college, she decided to go for it.

By February 2022, Westrich was boarding a plane to Alaska to meet the other two finalists and present at the organization's annual educators' conference. She got the call last spring: She'd earned the position.

Westrich had some idea of what to expect

when she finally made it out on the trail—the race and all of its intricacies had loomed large in her academic and personal life for more than a decade by that point. (And on a purely practical level, the organization had warned her by sending a bundle of cold-weather gear, including boots with three-inch soles to withstand the snow, before her visit.)

She knew that the race—during which athletes travel across Alaska, from Anchorage to Nome, led entirely by a team of sled dogs—was conceived in 1964, after a chairman of the Wasilla-Knik Centennial, Dorothy Page, became intrigued that the trail could only be traversed by dogs and not automobiles. Page proposed a race over the Iditarod Trail—the same trail used by Alaskan settlers following a gold strike in the 1920s—and, in 1967, the Iditarod commenced.

Westrich's daughter Claire made the journey to Alaska with her in February 2022 and again in 2023 for the culmination of the yearlong Teacher on the Trail commitment—a dream come true for both mother and daughter.

"The incredible abilities of those canine athletes was jaw-dropping," Claire said, recalling the opportunity to be a dog-handler volunteer. "To be able to get up close with the dogs and to help a musher start his arduous journey to Nome was the realization of all my childhood dreams." For Westrich, it's a little harder to pin down the best part. Ask her →

Juli Westrich strikes a pose at the finish line of the 2023 Iditarod race in Nome, Alaska.



➔ to do so, and she simply can't.

She'll name the food she ate (moose, caribou, musk ox, and herring eggs on sea kelp) and the pinch-me moments (sleeping in an elementary school library, playing golf on the frozen Bering Sea, meeting 39-time Iditarod finisher Martin Buser). She'll also recall the ways in which she was able to participate rather than just observe: training to handle the dogs, riding a snow machine 32 miles across a foggy Knik Lake to meet junior mushers at their first checkpoint and presenting the Red Lantern Award to the last finisher.

You get the sense that, for a polymath like Westrich, each of those things finds an equally important spot in her consciousness. It's all a lesson. Anything is cool and interesting if you can share it in the right way, she says.

For Westrich (and a lot of other educators), the Iditarod serves as a kind of learning theme. It creates an entry point across subjects, such as using Alaska's Northern Lights in a science lesson, or studying how the last frontier was formed for a social studies unit on the United States.

As Teacher on the Trail, Westrich acted as the Iditarod's educational ambassador, developing lesson plans and connecting with schools across the country. She began each month with a social emotional learning post (one of the last ones emphasized the importance of multigenerational learning, for instance). Around the 10th, she'd post a more general lesson plan, with materials and reading suggestions, and toward the end of the month, finish with lessons built around diversity, inclusion and identity.

"It's not teaching the Iditarod necessarily as a unit of study," she said. "It's 'How can we use the Iditarod to help teach the rest of the curriculum?'"

It's a frame of mind that's rubbed off on Claire, who's currently in her second year at Mount Holyoke College.

"The Teacher on the Trail journals have continuously proven that the Iditarod can be viewed, experienced and understood through a number of different lenses," Claire said. "Dog mushing really is a sport for everyone, and the race is so culturally rich that it'd be difficult to not have it influence my own education."



PROTECTING FROM THE SIDELINES

SPECIAL AGENT
RACHEL WOLF-HUBBARD, M.A. '17,
PROTECTED THE
FAMILY, FRIENDS
OF THE U.S. MEN'S
SOCCER TEAM
DURING THE 2022
WORLD CUP IN
QATAR

by LISA CONLEY-KENDZIOR

As **Rachel (Ridley) Wolf-Hubbard, M.A. '17**, emerged from a traditional Bedouin tent and gazed up at the stars twinkling over the Qatari desert, she thought about how far she'd come from her small hometown in Maryland, half a world—and a lifetime—away.

Wolf-Hubbard was born and raised in Laurel, Md., a town of less than 30,000 situated between Washington, D.C., and Baltimore. She always dreamed of traveling the world and had a particular fascination with Egypt and the Middle East where she hoped to one day work as an archaeologist, a vocation that, perhaps surprisingly, was not inspired by Indiana Jones.

"I always get asked that question," she said with a laugh, "but I had never seen those movies until after I was already on that path. I think I got the idea from a book I read in history class."

She enrolled in the University of Maryland where she studied

anthropology and Arabic. It was during that time that she also took her first trip to the Middle East, which solidified her interest in the region but also shifted her career aspirations away from archaeology and toward international security.

“Traveling to Morocco was such a positive experience for me that I started to think about how I could help others travel to the region safely,” she said. “So many people think they can’t go to the Middle East, and that’s not necessarily true.”

Her desire to work in international security led her to pursue a Master of Arts in Middle East Studies at George Washington University’s Elliott School of International Affairs.

“I was looking for a D.C. school in particular because I wanted to work for the government in some way, shape or form,” she said. “I didn’t really know exactly what I’d end up doing yet, but I felt like being in D.C. would be a good place to get started.

“And one of the big factors in choosing GW was the Arabic language part of the Middle East Studies program,” she added. “I wanted something that would force me to keep up with it.”

While at GW, Wolf-Hubbard studied the history and political landscape of the Middle East, and she recalls a particularly transformative class focused on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

“It just opened my eyes to be able to see things differently,” she said. “You see how many different arguments and perspectives there are, and how many people can be right at the same time. It really shaped the way I look at the world overall.”

After graduation, Wolf-Hubbard, in her own words, “lucked into” a job at the U.S. Department of State, where she worked as a Middle East and North Africa analyst within the Diplomatic Security Service (DSS), the department’s federal law enforcement and security bureau.

DSS is sort of like the Secret Service, Wolf-Hubbard explained, but instead of only protecting members of the executive branch and their families, DSS special agents protect the U.S. secretary of state, visiting foreign dignitaries, former heads of state and U.S. citizens during major international events like the Olympics.

Wolf-Hubbard decided to apply to become a special agent, a process that was arduous from the very beginning.

“They accept applications on a rolling basis now, but it used to be just once every one or two years, so you just had to wait for your chance,” she said. “Then you’d submit your application and just kind of keep your fingers crossed that you’d make it past the initial avalanche of all these applications



DSS Special Agent Rachel Wolf-Hubbard (FAR RIGHT) and her U.S. Soccer Federation counterparts hold up an American flag before the start of the FIFA World Cup match between the U.S. Men’s National Team and Iran at Al Thumama Stadium, Doha, Qatar, Nov. 29, 2022.

going in.”

She did, and it was the start of a nearly two-year journey involving oral and written exams, hypothetical security situations and problem-solving assessments. After she was accepted, she underwent an additional nine months of training before she was given her first assignment as a special agent in 2020.

“It was worth it,” Wolf-Hubbard said of the grueling application process. “The job is amazing, and it has a ‘choose-your-own-adventure’ aspect to it. There are so many different things you can do and places you can go, so everybody’s career looks different.”

However, many special agents have the same goal: to work a major international event. Wolf-Hubbard got that chance in April 2022 when she received an email assigning her to the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

“Not everybody gets the opportunity to do something like that, so I was very, very excited,” she said.

Wolf-Hubbard and a team of three other agents traveled to Qatar where they served as field liaison officers for more than 300 family members and friends of the U.S. Men’s National Soccer Team.

“We were there for them as a resource in case somebody lost a passport or got held up or detained at a game...things like that. Basically, we were there as a security presence if anything should come up,” she explained. “Thankfully, nothing did.”

The security team also accompanied the

family and friends on excursions, including a trip to the desert where the group rode dune buggies and camels, went sandboarding and dined in a Bedouin tent.

“We got to go because it was a security risk if something were to happen in this remote location where there wasn’t great cell phone service,” she said. “It was a lot of fun and definitely one of the highlights of the trip.”

Wolf-Hubbard, who admits that she’s not a huge soccer fan, said that she and the other special agents were heavily invested in the success of Team USA, since its duration in the tournament determined the security team’s duration in the country.

“We were cheering along with everybody else,” she said. “We really wanted them to go all the way.”

The team advanced past the group stage but ended up losing to the Netherlands in the round of 16, bringing Wolf-Hubbard’s time in the Middle East to an end...for now.

Wolf-Hubbard, who at the time of the interview was stationed with the DSS New York Field Office but has since been assigned to the secretary of state’s security detail, said she’s looking forward to having future opportunities to travel with DSS.

“I would love to have a chance to be at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo, but beyond that, I’m just kind of excited to see more areas of the world,” she said. “I’ve just barely scratched the surface of all of the things that a special agent can do.”

KATHY BAIRD

'DO IT ANYWAY'

KATHY BAIRD, B.A. '96, CHIEF COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER FOR "THE WASHINGTON POST" AND MEMBER OF THE ROSEBUD SIOUX LAKOTA NATION, HAS NEVER LET ADVERSITY HOLD HER BACK.

by LISA CONLEY-KENDZIOR

Kathy Baird, B.A. '96, always dreamed of becoming an actress but never imagined that her biggest, most life-changing role would be that of a young single mother.

Baird is originally from Rosebud, S.D., and is an enrolled citizen of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. Her family moved to Washington, D.C., when she was a child, and it was there that she developed a passion for theater, dance and music. She would later pursue that passion at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York before her life took a dramatic turn.

"I wasn't expecting to be a mom so young, so when my daughter arrived, I spent a year with her thinking, 'Well, OK, what happens to acting now? And what do I need to do to set us up for success?'" she recalled.

Baird had always had an innate sense that she needed to give back to her community and decided to do so as a tribal attorney.

"I thought, 'That's a decent way to raise a child as a single mom,' and that's really why I came to George Washington because I figured it would be a good step before law school," she explained, adding

that at the time, both her family and her daughter's father's family were living in the D.C. area.

"I didn't view myself as someone who could necessarily go away to school with a child, that felt really scary, so I was a commuter student at GW."

Balancing schoolwork with motherhood meant



COURTESY OF KATHY BAIRD

that Baird didn't have the time or energy to pledge a sorority, join a club or audition for theater productions. Instead, she focused on studying hard and building a better life for herself and her daughter, Peaches.

"I was an amazing student, and I can't tell you I was that way before college," she said, admitting that in high school she cared more about theater and partying than her grades.

"But having a child just really set my intention and perspective on being educated and accomplishing something that I could feel proud of that would guide a future for my daughter and me," added Baird, who graduated magna cum laude in what she called one of the "highlights of [her] life."

After graduation, Baird decided to pursue an executive M.B.A. rather than a J.D., and it was while she was in business school at Georgetown University that she fell in love with business consulting.

"Being able to problem solve and bring in different teams of people to tackle big business challenges, that felt exciting and a little bit scary, but I found myself really thriving in that environment and also realizing that I was capable of doing more than I thought," she said.

Baird spent the next 15 years working as a consultant for different agencies while also raising her daughter, teaching at Georgetown, and founding and managing the Unified Scene Theater—which offered improv classes and hosted performances—with her husband, Shawn, whom she met through an improv class.

She had no intention of

deviating from the life she had created, though there was one exception: If she received a job offer from her dream company, then, she told herself, she'd have to "just do it."

"I always said, 'If Nike calls, I'll answer.' And then they did, and it kind of blew my mind a little bit," she said.

So, for the second time,

Baird's world completely changed. She joined Nike as its senior director of global communications and moved across the country to start her next adventure.

"Moving to Oregon felt like the 'going-away-to-college' moment that I never had," she said. "I ended up going away to this amazing, amazing place where I learned so much about everything from communications to athletes to business strategy. And I learned so much about myself, and I did things that I hadn't ever done before.

"You don't go to Nike to sit in a box and think abstractly about how things might work better; you actually do it," she added. "For me, that level of doing was far greater than I had ever been allowed as a consultant."

During her time at Nike, Baird led communications on a "get-out-the-vote" initiative, formed a partnership with the Institute for American Indian Arts and collaborated on the N7 Collection, which celebrates Indigenous athletes and cultural game-changers.

It was the type of civic engagement work she had once envisioned doing as an attorney, and to this day she still praises the "power of the swoosh" and Nike's positive impact on the world.

But history, as it so often does, repeated itself, and Baird soon found herself facing another

situation that would ultimately spur another cross-country move.

"The only reason I left [Nike] was because I had the opportunity to work at 'The Washington Post,' whom I had previously worked with as a consultant, so I knew people there," she explained. "All of a sudden it became really clear to me that it was something I should go after."

In late 2022, Baird joined "The Washington Post" as its chief communications officer, a job that offered the same sort of mission-driven work that Baird had enjoyed at Nike.

In her new role, Baird oversees public relations and brand marketing as well as "Washington Post Live," the newsroom's live journalism platform where top-level government officials, business leaders, cultural influencers and emerging voices discuss the most pressing issues of the day.

She's also involved with "The Post"'s Press Freedom Foundation, a public service initiative that supports journalists around the world who are threatened, imprisoned or even killed because of their work.

"A friend of mine used to say, 'We're not saving lives here at work.' But we are saving lives. We really are," she said. "It feels really important and incredibly urgent."

When reflecting on both the magnitude of her job as well as its position on the corporate ladder, Baird said she's grateful to have had strong women of color—including Edelman CEO Lisa Ross, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland and Cheryl Crazy Bull, president and CEO of the American Indian College Fund—as role models, and she can only hope that she now serves as a role model for others.

"I feel really privileged and really blessed to be in the chair that I am. I don't know of any other Indigenous people in the C-suite in traditional corporate America," she said. "To be invited to a table like the one that I'm at is because I'm an integrator. I've been a bridge builder since I was born."

Baird said she doesn't know what the future holds for her—maybe she'll coach other Indigenous women who want to rise to the executive level or perhaps she'll foray into public service—but she does know that she's not willing to let fear stand in her way.

"Fear can hold people back from making decisions. And I certainly can't say that I've been brave my whole life, but I've walked through a lot of spaces that have been scary, and I've realized that I have what it takes to get through things or to accomplish things," she said. "So it's possible to be afraid but to do something anyway."

"Besides," she added with a small smile, "I like to be a little bit afraid—it keeps me alive."

"I certainly can't say I've been brave my whole life, but I've walked through a lot of spaces that have been scary, and I've realized that I have what it takes to get through things."

DAWN MONCRIEF

A SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION TO HUNGER

ALUMNA DAWN MONCRIEF IS HELPING FEED THE PLANET WITH PLANT-BASED FOODS THROUGH A WELL-FED WORLD.

by ERIC BUTTERMAN



Dawn Moncrief, a double GW alumna, can pinpoint the moment when she decided to devote her life to promoting plant-based hunger solutions.

It was in 1999 when she read the International Food Policy Research Institute’s “Livestock to 2020” report. It highlighted how population growth, urbanization and growing income in developing countries were causing demand for animal-based food to skyrocket. The report urged governments and other entities to plan to accommodate the surge in demand caused by the so-called “livestock revolution.”

A longtime vegetarian and recent vegan, Moncrief, M.A. ’98, M.A. ’01, wondered why no one was advocating for the reduction of animal-based foods at least as part of the solution to world hunger, especially given the outsized environmental impact of animal-based food.

At the time, Moncrief had just earned her first master’s from GW in international relations and was working on her second in women’s studies. “I knew I wanted to work on hunger relief development issues,” she says.

So she created Plants-4-Hunger as an educational tool, then expanded it into a campaign while working as program director and later executive director at a national animal advocacy organization.

In 2009, A Well-Fed World officially launched as a full, stand-alone nonprofit dedicated to international hunger relief and food security through plant-based food and farming. Since then, the D.C.-based nonprofit has gone on to raise more than \$12 million to fund projects in 94 countries.

A key part of Moncrief’s mission is to raise awareness of the benefits of plant-based food—both nutritionally and in terms of the impact on the climate. “Too many crops are being diverted unnecessarily for livestock use that could help feed people,” Moncrief says. “Many people don’t realize the effect animal agriculture has on pollution and greenhouse gases.”

For example, she says, to produce a 100-calorie beef patty, a cow needs to be fed 2,500 food crop calories (enough to feed an adult for an entire day).

One of A Well-Fed World’s flagship programs is Plants-4-Hunger, which supports plant-based hunger relief programs in some of the world’s most impoverished areas. A hundred percent of donations go to the program’s projects, Moncrief says, which are developed in partnership

COURTESY OF DAWN MONCRIEF

with the communities they aid.

“We don’t grow the food or distribute it,” Moncrief says. “Many development organizations are criticized for going in and imposing their model.” Instead, she says, A Well-Fed World funds projects that are self-sustaining. “It’s about being community empowering.”

In Ethiopia, for example, A Well-Fed World has partnered with the International Fund for Africa to provide plant-based school meals for children in need. “We’ve been a supporter for more than 10 years now,” she says. The program has built on-site bakeries and mushroom farms to support long-term stability.

A Well-Fed World also partners with Malnutrition Matters, which provides sustainable low-cost food technology solutions, such as equipment to turn soybeans


into soy milk and a variety of high-protein foods for direct consumption and to sell. The goal is to provide platforms for micro-enterprises that enable local women to earn some income and provide affordable, nutrient-dense food to the community.

Other Plant-4-Hunger partnerships expand global bean and seed distribution, food trees that support reforestation of the Amazon and other rainforests, and disaster relief efforts. Recent projects include providing food aid through Lviv Vegan Kitchen in Ukraine; community food gardens and food shares in hurricane-torn New Orleans, Haiti, Puerto Rico and Florida; and protein-packed care packages to nourish economic victims of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Moncrief credits GW with helping forge her career path. “I wanted to help figure out how to address the causes of food insecurity,” she says. “I did my second master’s thesis centered on food issues, and that thesis is still the core of my work.”

The thesis examined rethinking meat and its role in world hunger, and Moncrief earned GW’s Graduate Prize for Feminist Scholarship for her research.

“I learned so much over my time at GW,” she says. She cites classes with Professor James Rosenau, an expert on globalization, as particularly eye-opening. “It was one more example of GW teaching you to think through things for yourself as you look at issues. Being in the graduate school community with sophisticated thinkers and discussing ideas, you grow at GW.”

And how will A Well-Fed World continue to grow? “We want to continue to get the word out,” she says. “We want to build up plant-based campaigns in school-lunch systems and encourage more people to get involved in making a difference. You see so many who care about people and our world—that encourages me.” 

**“WE DON'T
GROW THE
FOOD OR
DISTRIBUTE
IT...IT'S
ABOUT BEING
COMMUNITY
EMPOWERING.”**

THE GEORGE
WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, DC

GW Career Connect

The key to unlocking your next career opportunity.

Connect with thousands of GW alumni and students to create real connections with real career outcomes.



JOIN TODAY
careerconnect.gwu.edu



Alumni Association



Center for
Career Services



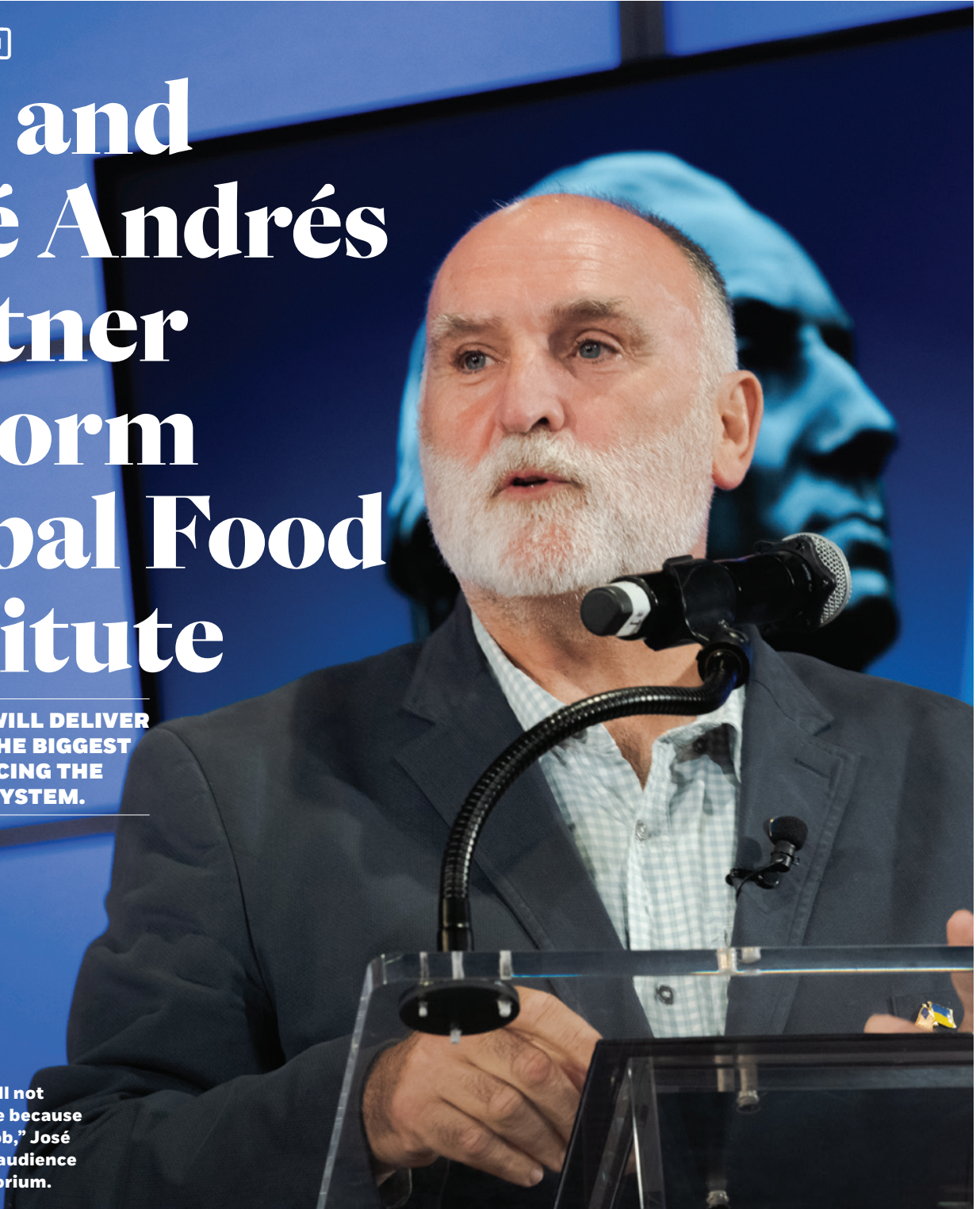
IMPACT OF PHILANTHROPY

CHANGING THE WORLD

GW and José Andrés Partner to Form Global Food Institute

THE INSTITUTE WILL DELIVER SOLUTIONS TO THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES FACING THE WORLD'S FOOD SYSTEM.

"One day the world will not know hunger anymore because this institute did its job," José Andrés told a packed audience at Jack Morton Auditorium.





The George Washington University and world-renowned chef, author and humanitarian José Andrés, HON '14, announced in May a historic partnership to launch a premier Global Food Institute at the university, a transformative and unprecedented collaboration that will be the world leader in food system solution delivery.

GW is uniquely positioned to drive global progress in the food space, thanks to its location in the heart of the nation's capital, depth of academic expertise across countless disciplines, track record of leading critical conversations in the public and private sectors and partnerships with global influencers from the White House to the World Bank.

"In The George Washington University's third century, we are focused on accelerating the positive impact of our interdisciplinary scholarship on society, including through innovative partnerships with visionary leaders," said GW President Mark S. Wrighton. "We are thrilled to establish in partnership with José Andrés the Global Food Institute—a center that will create new knowledge and shape national and international progress on food system issues."

Driven by Andrés' vision of changing the world through

the power of food, the Global Food Institute at GW will work to transform people's lives and the health of the planet, taking an interdisciplinary systems approach across three main pillars: policy, innovation and humanity.

The institute will enable faculty and students, industry leaders, policymakers and renowned experts to work and teach across these pillars, producing cutting-edge research to create and improve domestic and global food policies, incubate and engineer inventive new technologies and entrepreneurial spirit, and lead critical conversations about the impact of food on the human race.

"Our global food system is experiencing a crisis, brought on by systemic inequities, rampant hunger and poverty, the climate crisis, and deteriorating public health and nutrition," said Andrés. "But food has the power to solve problems: It can rebuild lives and communities, heal both people and the planet and create hope for the future, but only if we think bigger. The Global Food Institute will reshape how we think about food, break down barriers across industries, politics and nations, and inspire and empower the next generation to develop systemic solutions that reshape the food system."

Over a decade ago, GW and Andrés introduced the interdisciplinary course, "The World on a Plate: How Food

Shapes Civilization," forging an academic partnership that fueled ambitions for much greater impact.

"GW has a 200-year track record of exceptional academic collaboration and interdisciplinary research and teaching. Our location in the heart of our nation's capital makes it the ideal place for the brightest minds across disciplines to convene, develop innovative research and solutions and educate the next generation of advocates to drive the food systems change we need," said Christopher Alan Bracey, GW's provost and executive vice president for academic affairs.

Critically, the Global Food Institute will prioritize educating and training future generations of diverse leaders spanning many careers who will be equipped with the knowledge and skills to approach their professional and academic pursuits through the lens of food and help create food solutions of tomorrow.

A founding gift from Andrés made the Global Food Institute possible, and the institute's work will be powered by philanthropy and supported by partnerships with organizations, companies, foundations and individuals. A significant contribution from the Nelson A. and Michele M. Carbonell Family Foundation will endow the executive director position. The Rockefeller Foundation has also committed financial support for the Global Food Institute.

"We are incredibly honored

by—and grateful for—the generous support from these visionary donors that share our aspirations to solve these seemingly intractable challenges," said Donna A. Arbide, GW's vice president for development and alumni relations. "It is testament to GW's unique strengths and commitment to changing the world for the better that they chose to invest in our university to spearhead this initiative."

Nelson Carbonell, a 1985 GW alumnus, chair emeritus of the GW Board of Trustees and 2021 honorary degree recipient, and his wife, Michele, strongly believe in the urgency around the Global Food Institute's work and look forward to sharing more in the coming weeks.

"The time is right to embark on the changes to food issues that the world needs," said Carbonell. "The multidisciplinary nature of the Global Food Institute is unparalleled, and Michele and I hope our gift provides the financial underpinning for GW to hire a proven leader to run it."

In the coming months, the institute will launch a search for the executive director; identify additional leadership, staff and affiliated faculty; identify physical space; and begin to develop engagement opportunities for the community and potential partners.


Information about the Global Food Institute can be found at
globalfoodinstitute.gwu.edu

"The Global Food Institute will reshape how we think about food, break down barriers across industries, politics and nations, and inspire and empower the next generation to develop systemic solutions that reshape the food system."

José Andrés

OPENING DOORS

‘Do Something Meaningful’

SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDERS ‘ADOPT’ AN ATTITUDE OF GIVING BACK AND SUPPORTING AMERICA’S FUTURE DOCTORS.

// By Lisa Conley-Kendzior

For Russell Libby, B.S. ’74, M.D. ’79, George Washington University has been a huge part of his life from the very beginning—literally.

Born at GW Hospital, Libby later earned a bachelor’s and a medical degree from GW, where he also currently serves as assistant clinical professor of pediatrics.

“The opportunity to become a physician in the special tradition unique to GW changed my life,” Libby said. “To be a physician is an incredible privilege, and being in a position to help improve the lives of our patients, communities and society is more fulfilling for me than any other endeavor could have afforded.”

But while becoming a physician might be fulfilling, it isn’t cheap. According to the Association of American Medical Colleges, medical students incur a median debt level of \$200,000.

“The cost of a medical education is staggering,” Libby said. “The debt incurred by many can discourage them from following their hearts, compromise their idealism and change their career choices.”

That’s why Libby and his wife, Dr. Mary Schmidt, established the Adopt-a-Doc Scholarship in 2010. The program—which was created to honor Libby’s late mother, Leona Libby Feldman—provides alumni and friends the opportunity to financially support an incoming GW medical student throughout their four years of medical school.

“He’s invested in future medical students and in finding the best way to support them,” Allison Hoff, M.D. ’15, the first Adopt-a-Doc recipient, now a board-certified psychiatrist in Colorado, said of Libby. “Dr. Libby has been an amazing advocate and inspiring mentor. I can’t thank him enough.”

Most recently, Libby and Schmidt “adopted” Stephano Bonitto, M.D. ’23.

Bonitto said the scholarship alleviated the financial burden of attending medical school, which, in turn, allowed him to concentrate on learning.

“Going to medical school is not only rigorous but also costs a lot of money, and they ameliorated that for me,” he said. “I got to just focus on my studies and being the best I can be.”

Almost more important than the money, however, has been the relationship the three have built; Bonitto said that over the almost four years he’s known Libby and Schmidt, the two medical doctors have become amazing mentors who have shared a wealth of wisdom with him.

“Every time we talk, I learn something new from them,” Bonitto said. “I’m just extremely grateful for all the help that they give me.”

Likewise, the two donors said the most

rewarding part of the program is the connections they’re able to form with the students they support.

“We want to help in every way that we can,” Libby said. “If it’s financial, if it’s emotional, if it’s academic or if it’s just professional—we just want to be there if there’s anything that we can do.”

“We’ve been so proud to see what our students have accomplished and what they will accomplish,” Schmidt added. “Every student that we’ve had has been really honored to receive the scholarship and has taken a moment to share with us their plans for the future.”

As for Bonitto, he has big plans for his future. Although he had once dreamed of being a pediatrician, his experience at GW has inspired him to think bigger, and he now plans on also pursuing an M.B.A.

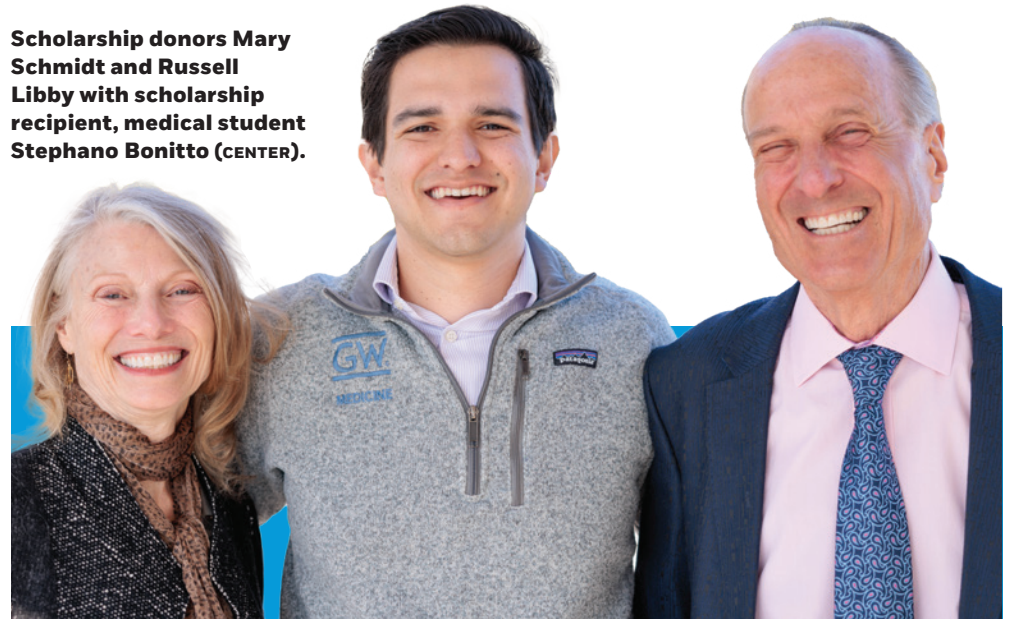
“Being in the nation’s capital for medical school allowed me to see that it’s not just about being in the hospital—it’s a much bigger system,” he said. “Now I have these much bigger dreams of affecting whole health systems by getting an M.B.A. and being a physician.”

And for Libby, that’s what the Adopt-a-Doc program is all about.

“It’s truly an honor to be a physician,” he said, “so do something meaningful.”

Learn more about how GW is opening doors of opportunity for the next generation of leaders at giving.gwu.edu/priorities/open-doors.

Scholarship donors Mary Schmidt and Russell Libby with scholarship recipient, medical student Stephano Bonitto (CENTER).



A \$1 million gift from Ulvi Kasimov (CENTER) will support graduate fellowships in the Art Therapy Program.



FELLOWSHIPS

Opening Doors for Artists Who Heal

GW PARENTS ULVI AND REYKHAN KASIMOV ENDOW FUND SUPPORTING GRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS IN UNIVERSITY'S ART THERAPY PROGRAM. // By Ann McMaster

During the worst of the pandemic, George Washington University parent Ulvi Kasimov knew he was not alone in feeling the anxiety rooted in isolation and fear for his family's health.

"The pandemic negatively impacted everyone," Kasimov said. "And there are not enough psychiatrists and psychologists in the world to address a problem of this magnitude."

The prolific venture capitalist, passionate art collector and 2020 "Observer" Top 50 Most Influential Leader in the Art World decided to take a creative approach—literally—to improve wellness by supporting the growing need for credentialed art therapists. These mental health care professionals use concepts from psychology and counseling to engage patients

through active artmaking as a means of communication and healing.

Support and promotion of art therapy globally is now the top corporate philanthropic initiative for .ART, the digital creative community hub and domain registry Kasimov founded with his wife, Reykhan. Launching their initiative with a \$1 million endowment for graduate fellowships for students in GW's Art Therapy Program, they recognized the critical need for financial support to attract and retain top students with a passion to serve.

"We are so grateful to the Kasimovs for this endowed fund that will support art therapy fellowships for generations," said Heidi Bardot, director of the program. "The intense time commitment of classes and internships, plus their own personal creative

development, doesn't leave time for students to have outside employment to financially support their studies."

Kasimov has big plans to multiply fellowship support for more students, explore opportunities for other partnerships leveraging his .ART community and interdisciplinary applications, and expand use of these therapeutic techniques into new settings such as refugee camps.

Last year, the Kasimovs made a \$1 million donation to support bench-to-bedside medical research to help stem the spread of COVID-19.

"We appreciate the continuing support of the Kasimovs," said President Mark S. Wrighton. "Scholarships and fellowships not only open doors to the transformative power of education to the individual recipient but also have ripple effects to their families and communities. This effect is particularly applicable to art therapists, who have great impact on their patients' lives."



Join GW in opening doors for talented students at go.gwu.edu/Kasimov.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Center Launches to Promote Health in the Caribbean, Latin America

MILKEN INSTITUTE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH MARKED THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE GILL-LEBOVIC CENTER FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH IN THE CARIBBEAN AND LATIN AMERICA IN APRIL.

The center was established by a gift from veterinarian Holly Gill and James Lebovic, a professor of political science and international affairs at the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, to improve health outcomes, train students and health professionals and create sustainable models for healthier communities in the region. Their gift is the largest such contribution by GW faculty.

“I’ve been in academia a long time, and it’s very rare—in fact, in my experience, unprecedented—that a leader of our faculty would make such a commitment,” said GW President Mark S. Wrighton. Their gift, Wrighton said, “added to this school both distinction and distinguishability.”

Michael and Lori Milken Dean of the Milken Institute School of Public Health Lynn Goldman noted that the new center will boost the work of public health faculty who are already working with communities in the region. “This center is focused on healthier communities across a region instead of a specific health issue in any one specific country. It is a unique approach and will have a true impact on addressing health disparities and improving public health,” she said. 



FROM LEFT: >
Provost Christopher A. Bracey, Professor Dawn C. Nunziato, President Mark S. Wrighton, Professor Daniel J. Solove, Dean Dayna Bowen Matthew and Professor F. Scott Kieff

FACULTY

GW Law Installs Three Endowed Professors

ENDOWED PROFESSORS OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND TECHNOLOGY LAW MARK A MAJOR INVESTMENT IN AN INCREASINGLY FUNDAMENTAL LEGAL ARENA.

// By Ruth Steinhardt



An April ceremony honored faculty members F. Scott Kieff, installed as the Stevenson Bernard Professor of Law; Dawn C. Nunziato, installed as the Theodore and James Pedas Family Professor of Intellectual Property and Technology Law; and Daniel J. Solove, installed as the Eugene L. and Barbara A. Bernard Professor of Intellectual Property and Technology Law.

“I’m thrilled to see each of these individuals recognized for their pioneering research, their policy work, their education and their service to the university,” GW Provost Christopher A. Bracey said. “When you receive an endowed professorship, it not only celebrates your past and present work and contributions but also anticipates transformative contributions to legal education, knowledge production and the world of ideas, and perhaps most importantly, a significant and impactful contribution to society.”

IP law is concerned with the “full spectrum of human creativity” that may range from books, films and music to medical or other technology, according to a definition from “Understanding Intellectual Property Law.” The field is rapidly evolving as technology becomes increasingly complex and innovation expands into virtual spaces.

“All three of our distinguished honorees are gifted scholars, teachers and internationally renowned leaders at the forefront of their disciplines, and all three have selflessly given up their time and talent to help propel our law school to great new heights,” GW Law Dean and Harold H. Greene Professor of Law Dayna Bowen Matthew said.

Kieff served from 2013 to 2017 as commissioner of the U.S. International Trade Commission, having been nominated by President Barack Obama, recommended

Holly Gill and James Lebovic



unanimously by the U.S. Senate's Committee on Finance and confirmed by unanimous consent of the Senate. The Stevenson Bernard professorship is funded by the late Eugene "Gene" L. Bernard, J.D. '51, and his wife, Barbara, and by the late Frederic C. Stevenson, B.A. '34, J.D. '38. Bernard served as an officer in the U.S. Navy and practiced intellectual property law for many decades in Washington, D.C. Stevenson served as an attorney for the Federal Trade Commission and the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

"When you receive an endowed professorship, it not only celebrates your past and present work and contributions but also anticipates transformative contributions to legal education, knowledge production and the world of ideas, and perhaps most importantly a significant and impactful contribution to society."

Provost Christopher A. Bracey

The Bernards and Stevenson "were tremendous friends and generous supporters of GW Law," President Mark S. Wrighton said at the event. "Upon their passing, their estates made a transformational gift, which has had an immediate impact on the school and intellectual property program. We want to extend our appreciation for them and their support for the university."

Nunziato is an internationally recognized expert on free speech and the internet and the author of "Virtual Freedom: Net Neutrality and Free Speech in the Internet Age." Donors and brothers Theodore and James Pedas, in whose honor Nunziato's professorship is named, became involved in the motion picture business while attending GW Law. They founded the Circle Theatre company, which emphasized independent and foreign films, and Circle Films, whose production roster included early films by the Coen brothers.

Solove is one of the world's most cited experts in privacy law, the founder of TeachPrivacy, a privacy and cybersecurity training company, and the author of numerous books, several textbooks and even a children's fiction book. Like the Stevenson Bernard professorship, the Eugene L. and Barbara A. Bernard professorship is funded by the estate of Gene and Barbara Bernard.

GW

FUNDRAISING

Giving Day Broke GW Record for Number of Donations in 24 Hours

FUNDS RAISED FROM NEARLY 3,200 DONORS WILL GO TOWARD STUDENT AID, ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND OTHER AREAS OF NEED.

The GW community worked together to raise funds to support scholarships and programs on campus during Giving Day 2023 in April, which resulted in the highest number of donations GW has ever received in a 24-hour period.

The focus of the 2023 campaign was to encourage more members of the GW community to engage in Giving Day. The university exceeded its goal of 2,750 donors, receiving gifts from nearly 3,200 alumni, students, faculty, staff, families and friends, a more than 22% increase from Giving Day 2022.

Daniel J. Burgner, the executive director of annual giving at GW, said it was amazing seeing the GW community join forces to reach a common goal.

"It was so inspiring to see the entire GW community come together to support our students on Giving Day," Burgner said. "We set a goal this year to increase donor participation, and the GW community came out strong. GW Giving Day 2023 marks the most donors in a single 24-hour period in our university's history. One of the best parts of the day was watching community members posting and sharing on social media; the energy was incredible."

The university received gifts from donors in all 50 states and in 30 countries, totaling over \$1.2 million.

Burgner said the funds raised on Giving

Day will profoundly impact students and the university community.

"People gave to athletic teams, student orgs, academic departments and research," he said. "The community came out in force to donate to areas they are passionate about. We had over a quarter of a million come through for scholarships. Those scholarship gifts will go to work supporting our exceptional students."

There were over 65 matches and challenges that amplified donor impact.

More than 400 students celebrated at the in-person Giving Day event in Kogan Plaza featuring GW-branded prizes, flowers and snacks.

"The Kogan Plaza event this year was so much fun. We had over 400 students come through and make gifts," Burgner said. "So many students were asking about how their gift will make an impact and why it's important to give back. This was a great opportunity for students to learn how philanthropy creates the 'only-at-GW moments' that make this a world-class university."

Ten GW schools and units exceeded their goals, with GW Hillel topping the leaderboard with 186% of its goal met.

"We've already started brainstorming for GW Giving Day 2024 and are thrilled to continue this tradition. Exciting things are happening at GW, and our donors came out in record numbers to show

their support," Burgner said. ☑

GIVING DAY
2023
BY THE NUMBERS

3,200
DONORS

ALUMNI, STUDENTS,
FACULTY, STAFF,
FAMILIES AND
FRIENDS

\$1.2M
TOTAL DONATIONS

50 STATES

30 COUNTRIES

22%
INCREASE IN DONORS
FROM '22

CLASS NOTES

Alumnus Mark Shenkman and his wife, Rosalind, outside of his namesake residence hall on the Foggy Bottom campus.



// '60s

Alumnus Earns Museum of American Finance's Lifetime Achievement Award

Mark Shenkman, M.B.A. '67, was honored with the Museum of American Finance's Lifetime Achievement Award in March. The museum, a Smithsonian Institution affiliate, is the nation's only independent museum dedicated to finance and financial history.

His lifetime achievement award honored his exceptional career in the investment industry. Shenkman is considered one of the pioneers in leveraged finance, high-yield bond and loan markets. He serves as chair, president and co-chief investment officer at Shenkman Capital Management, which he founded in 1985 as one of the first independent high-yield investment management firms.

"As a successful businessman and pioneer in finance, Mark is a very deserving recipient of this lifetime achievement award," President Mark S. Wrighton said. "We are proud to consider him a distinguished member of our university community, and we are grateful for the many ways he helps to advance our university—as a trustee emeritus, Leadership Advisory Council member and generous philanthropist and supporter."

Shenkman's namesake residence hall on GW's Foggy Bottom campus, memorializes his numerous contributions and steadfast support of the university. His leadership roles include service on the GW Leadership Advisory Council, the Board of Trustees and the GWSB Board of Advisors.

He was named one of GW's Monumental Alumni as part of the university's bicentennial celebration in 2021. Shenkman also received the GW Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award and the GW Alumni Outstanding Service Award. In addition, Shenkman funded the move and expansion of Veterans Memorial Park to Kogan Plaza.

// '70s

Louella Bryant, B.A. '71, M.Ed. '21, published "Sheltering Angel: A Novel Based on a True Story of the Titanic" (Black Rose Writing, 2023), which tells the story of her husband's great-grandparents who were first-class passengers aboard the Titanic.

Lt. Gen. Richard E. Carey, B.S. '71, is the subject of a new biography, "The Flying Grunt" (Casemate, 2023), by Alan E. Mesches. "The Flying Grunt" chronicles Carey's 38-year military career with the Marine Corps.

Denise Vogt, B.A. '78, co-chair of the Foggy Bottom Association's History Project, created an online project showcasing the neighborhood's 250 historic homes and those who've lived there.

// '80s

Paul D'Ambrosio, B.A. '81, was named senior editor for "The Marshall Project," the Pulitzer Prize-winning criminal justice news site, in April.

CeCelia C. Ibson, J.D. '88, was awarded a graduate certificate in public management and the Dr. Yong S. Lee Scholarship for excellence in public management scholarship upon being voted best in class by department faculty at Iowa State University.

Chris Myers, B.A. '84, published "Conundrum," which follows the adventures of Dr. Joshua Petersen, a former CIA operative and current GW president, who must thwart an evil plot to poison the world's food supply.

Sarah Schneiderman, B.F.A. '80, hosted a series of art exhibitions across Connecticut featuring works from her "Breaking Political Barriers" collection.

// '90s

Joel C. Bryant, B.A. '99, was promoted to partner at the international law firm of Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone.

Marci Vanim Cleary, B.A. '93, was awarded the 2022 Founders Distinguished Service Award from the Cancer Patient Education Network for her longtime work in

the field of patient education in cancer care.

George B. Donnini, B.A. '95, was elected to serve on Butzel law firm's board of directors.

Laura Taddeucci Downs, B.A. '92, M.A. '95, was re-elected as chair of the school board for Falls Church City Public Schools in Falls Church, Va.

Ron Fricker, M.S. '92, was inducted into the Virginia Academy of Science, Engineering, and Medicine.

Andrew Greenfield, J.D. '92, was re-elected to a fourth term on the executive committee of Fragomen, a global immigration law firm. He also serves as the managing partner of the firm's Washington, D.C., office.

Aaron Hall, M.S. '99, was appointed adjunct professor in the Virginia Tech Pamplin School of Business M.B.A. program.

Jacqueline J. Herring, B.A. '92, joined Hinshaw & Culbertson law firm as a partner in the Chicago office.

Nori Jabba, M.U.R.P. '91, published "KEEPING YOUR SEAT AT THE TABLE, A Memoir and Guide on Regaining Confidence in Middle Age" (1st World Publishing, 2023).

Corry Westbrook, M.A. '98, published the science fiction novel "The Judgement" (4 Horsemen Publications, 2023), the final installation in "The Impact Series."

// '00s

David Brody, B.A. '03, of Sherin and Lodgen LLP, was named a 2022 Go-To Thought Leader by "National Law Review" and was recognized by Massachusetts Super Lawyers, a rating service of outstanding lawyers.

Simon Cleveland, M.S. '00, and his wife, Marisa Cleveland, published "There is No Box" (BenBella Books, 2022), a practical guide for leaders who want to rethink leadership development.

Walter Davis, J.D. '02, joined Blank Rome LLP's Intellectual Property Litigation practice group as a partner in the Washington, D.C., office.



Hitesh Dev, M.S. '02, joined VetsEZ as director of solutions architecture.

Emily V. Driscoll, B.A. '02, produced "Quest To Save The Parasites," a short film that examines the big role parasites play in the global ecosystem.

Bobby Flanders, M.B.A. '09, successfully completed the Harvard Kennedy School's Senior Executive Fellows program.

Eugene J. Gibilaro, B.A. '07, was promoted to partner at Blank Rome LLP.

Cassandra A. Good, B.A. '04, M.A. '05, published "FIRST FAMILY: George Washington's Heirs and the Making of America" (Hanover Square Press, 2023).

Justin Guido, B.A. '07, was promoted to partner at RumbergerKirk.

Hallie Harenski, M.B.A. '00, was promoted to senior vice president

of marketing & corporate communications at Crum & Forster.

Lisa Hodson, M.P.A '07, was named the chief executive officer of Allied National.

Matt Honan, B.S. '08, joined Emmes, a leading clinical research organization, as vice president and head of corporate development.

Mike Hurst, J.D. '00, of Phelps Dunbar LLP joined the International Association of Defense Counsel.

Ari Mittleman, B.A. '04, published "Paths of the Righteous" (Gefen Publishing House, 2022), which features diverse non-Jews who are standing up against anti-Semitism.

James Phelan Robinson, B.A. '09, was promoted to partner at Goodell DeVries.

Ivie Serieux, B.A. '09, was promoted to shareholder at Littler, the world's largest employment and labor law practice representing management.

James Zarsadiaz, B.A. '08, published "Resisting Change in Suburbia: Asian Immigrants and Frontier Nostalgia in L.A." (University of California Press, 2022).

// '10s

Devery S. Anderson, M.P.S. '18, published "A Slow, Calculated Lynching: The Story of Clyde Kennard" (University Press of Mississippi, 2023).

Garrett Bishop, B.A. '06, J.D. '13, was promoted to partner at Foley & Lardner LLP.

Alexandra Bono, B.B.A. '10, was recognized as one of the 2022 Inspiring Fintech Females by NYC Fintech Women.

Chad Copeland, B.A. '15, was appointed to the board of directors of FitMoney, a nonprofit organization that provides free financial literacy programs for K-12 students.



Ben Hamd, B.A. '13, founder of Brookwood Capital Advisors, established the Wichita Sky Kings minor league basketball team in Wichita, Kan..

Jared Hartzman, J.D. '15, and April Park, J.D. '15, were promoted to principals at Fish & Richardson, a premier global intellectual property law firm.

Kelly Ann Jacobson, B.A. '11, published "Robin and Her Misfits" (Three Rooms Press, 2023), a queer, feminist retelling of Robin Hood.

Daniel Kim, B.A. '11, was selected for the 2023 Leadership Council on Legal Diversity Fellows and Pathfinders programs and the National Employment Law Council Academy.

GROW YOUR GIVING POWER WITH THE GW DONOR ADVISED FUND



GIVE

Make a contribution at any time and receive tax benefits.



INVEST

The fund is invested and grows tax-free.



GRANT

Advise grants to support your favorite charities and causes, including GW.

Benefits include an immediate income tax deduction, potential capital gains tax savings, simplicity in giving, and multiple prudent investment management options.

THE GEORGE
WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, DC

LET US HELP YOU PLAN

pgiving1@gwu.edu | go.gwu.edu/daf | (877) 498-7590



IN MEMORIAM

Theodore N. Lerner, A.A. '48, LL.B. '50

Theodore “Ted” N. Lerner is remembered not only as the founder and owner of the Washington Nationals baseball team, a philanthropist and a real estate developer but also for his and his family’s significant impact on GW and D.C. Lerner died on Feb. 12 at 97 years old.

The son of immigrants, Lerner learned the power of an education from a young age. A member of the “Greatest Generation” and a native Washingtonian, Lerner served in the Army during World War II and later enrolled at GW on the G.I. Bill. He earned two degrees from GW: an A.A. degree from the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences and an LL.B. from GW Law.

But more than any degree, Lerner and his family have embodied the GW spirit and are always committed to building community. Lerner served for 15 years on the GW Board of Trustees, from 1986 to 2001. Three buildings on campus are named for the Lerner family: Theodore N. Lerner Hall at GW Law; the Annette and Theodore Lerner Family Health and Wellness Center; and the Lerner Family Hall at GW Hillel.

“As an alumnus, trustee, philanthropic leader and friend of the George Washington University, Mr. Lerner provided unparalleled support, generosity and wisdom to our university—enhancing our campuses and improving the lives of countless individuals in our university and District communities,” said GW President Mark S. Wrighton. “The legacy he leaves will shape our university’s trajectory for years to come.”

Lerner and wife, the former Annette Morris, were married in 1951. Together, they had one son, two daughters, nine grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

Lerner was the patriarch of a true GW family, with many of his relatives joining him as alumni, including his son, Mark David

Lerner, B.B.A. '75; daughter Marla Lerner Tanenbaum, J.D. '83; son-in-law Robert “Bob” K. Tanenbaum, J.D. '82, also a former GW trustee; and several grandchildren. Lerner’s daughter Debra Lerner Cohen, son-in-law Edward “Ed” Cohen, and daughter-in-law, Judy Lenkin Lerner, are also friends of the university.

During GW’s bicentennial year in 2021, Lerner alongside Mark, Marla, and Bob were named GW Monumental Alumni, the highest recognition given by the university to a graduate.

An endowment from Lerner’s family foundation created the Lerner Family Associate Dean for Public Interest and Public Service Law, held by Alan B. Morrison at GW Law. “It is impossible to overstate the impact that Ted Lerner and his family have had on GW Law,” Morrison said. “The building with the main classrooms, where I teach every week, is named for Ted Lerner in honor of his financial and moral support for his alma mater.”

Adena Kirstein, executive director of GW Hillel, has also been personally affected by Lerner’s generosity.

“In my heart and for all of us here at GW Hillel, his memory will be a blessing because of the model he set in other arenas,” Kirstein said. “He had a deep and lasting commitment to family, a long-term investment in building vibrant Jewish communal life and a giving spirit that impacted many corners of our city.”

Apart from his family, the other great love of Lerner’s life was baseball. Among his proudest achievements was bringing the sport he loved back to

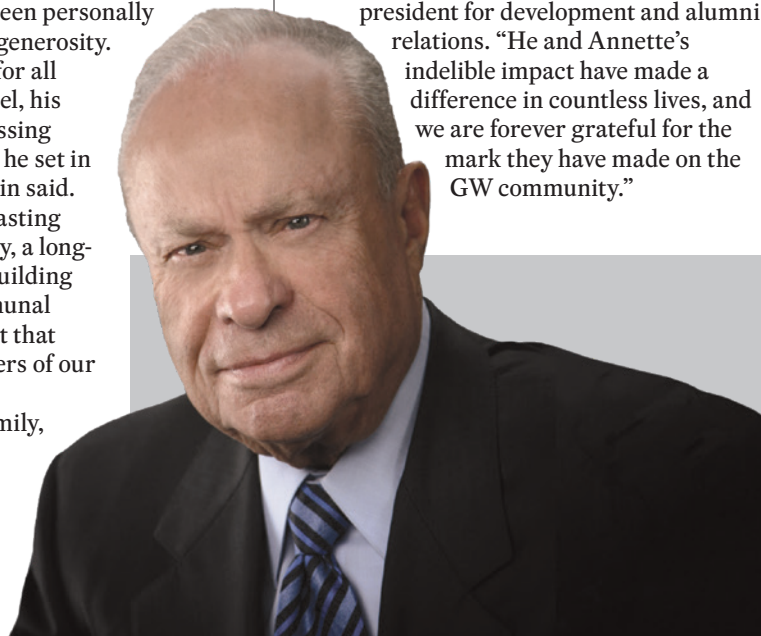
the city he loved and leading the Washington Nationals to a World Series championship in 2019.

As the founder and principal of Lerner Enterprises, he helped transform the city into the metropolis it is today, providing private homes and apartments for thousands of Washington residents and developing more than 20 million square feet of commercial and retail buildings.

Lerner was also active in the planning and creation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, serving as a member on its development committee and also, by presidential appointment, as a member of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council.

Lerner, his wife and their children have supported numerous charities through the Annette M. and Theodore N. Lerner Family Foundation. Their philanthropy has been recognized with many honors and awards.

“Ted Lerner is synonymous with not just business success but with the utmost integrity and exceedingly generous philanthropy,” said Donna Arbide, GW’s vice president for development and alumni relations. “He and Annette’s indelible impact have made a difference in countless lives, and we are forever grateful for the mark they have made on the GW community.”





Norma Lee and Morton Funger



Calvin Cafritz

Morton Funger, A.A. '52, B.A. '53

Morton “Morty” Funger, a steadfast supporter and dedicated champion of the George Washington University, died on Jan. 6. He was 92.

Funger is remembered for his leadership and support of the university that spanned over five decades and included endowed professorships in the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, the Elliott School of International Affairs and the School of Medicine and Health Sciences.

“I was fortunate to have the opportunity to speak regularly with Mr. Funger,” said Aristide Collins Jr., university vice president, secretary and chief of staff. “In addition to his and Mrs. Funger’s philanthropy, he constantly recommended outstanding applicants to the university. In my conversations with him, we talked about his pride and love for his family, appreciation for GW and the broader community.”

Funger earned an associate’s degree from CCAS and a bachelor’s degree in business administration from the School of Business.

After graduating from GW, Funger had a successful career in real estate development. He was president and owner of Ralmor Corporation and a partner in Condor Corporation, a family-owned real estate company. He was also a co-founder and chair of Community Realty Company.

In 1986, Funger, along with his wife, Norma Lee Funger, established the Funger Hall Endowment Fund, which helps with maintenance, renovation and operations costs for the GW School of Business building that bears their name. They later established the W. Scott Funger Memorial Scholarship Fund in memory of their son, W. Scott Funger, J.D. ’83, who died in 2012.

In 2013, the Fungers were presented with GW’s President’s Medal, an award that recognizes individuals who have exhibited courage, character and leadership in their chosen fields and who exemplify the ability of all human beings to improve the lives of others.

“Funger was a special guy,” said GW President Emeritus Stephen Joel Trachtenberg, “a proud GW alumnus and a longtime servant of the institution as trustee and generous benefactor. A university is blessed if they have sons and daughters like Funger.”

Funger was a native Washingtonian who often gave back to many local charitable and philanthropic organizations. He held numerous leadership positions, including emeritus member of the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Board, trustee of the National Gallery of Art Board of Trustees, and president of the Greater Washington Jewish Community Foundation.

His greatest treasures in life were his wife, four children and 10 grandchildren. Three of the Funger’s grandchildren are also GW alumni.

“A university is blessed if they have sons and daughters like Funger.”

Stephen Joel Trachtenberg
GW President Emeritus

Calvin Cafritz, a businessman, philanthropist and longtime supporter of GW and the broader Washington, D.C., community, died on Jan. 12, at age 91.

Since 1989, Cafritz led the Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, a charitable organization named for his parents. The foundation distributed hundreds of millions of dollars in grants to a range of nonprofit organizations.

In 2001, the Cafritz Foundation named the Cafritz Conference Center in the University Student Center. The foundation also gave generously to support the recent GW Hillel building renovation as well as to provide ongoing support to other civic-minded programs at GW.

Cafritz was a leading force in the establishment of GW’s Center for Excellence in Public Leadership in 1997, which supports leadership and management training for public sector employees.

Dean Liesl Riddle of the GW College of Professional Studies, where the center has been housed since 2005, said, “Thanks to the support of the Cafritz Foundation for more than 25 years, the center has supported organizational transformation across the public sector in the city. Mr. Cafritz recognized and championed this work, and its success is a part of his inspiring legacy.”

With support from the Cafritz Foundation, the Center for Excellence in Public Leadership hosts a yearly Cafritz Awards gala to honor D.C. government employees who demonstrate outstanding public service.

The Cafritz Foundation is also a longtime supporter of GW’s Honey W.

▶ Nashman Center for Civic Engagement and Public Service.

"Calvin Cafritz and the Cafritz Foundation have been part of the GW Honey Nashman Center from its earliest roots," said Amy Cohen, executive director of the center. "Mr. Cafritz has been an exemplary advocate for excellence in government and nonprofits in D.C., and the foundation has been a force for community self-efficacy. The D.C. community is better for his engagement, and we will miss him terribly."

Another longtime beneficiary of Cafritz

"The D.C. community is better for his engagement, and we will miss him terribly."

Amy Cohen

Executive Director, Nashman Center

Foundation support has been The Textile Museum.

"For over 30 years the Cafritz Foundation has supported The Textile Museum, especially as a prominent proponent of the museum's move to the George Washington University," said John Wetenhall, director of the George Washington University Museum and The Textile Museum.

Cafritz is survived by his wife, Jane Lipton Cafritz, three children, three, and numerous grandchildren and step-grandchildren, as well as brother, Conrad Cafritz. ☞



REMEMBERING

Joseph L. Brand

Lawyer and philanthropist Joseph "Joe" Lyon Brand, J.D. '63, a former GW trustee and instructor who co-endowed GW Law's Brand-Manatt Lecture Series, died Dec. 17, 2021. He was 86.

After graduating from GW Law with honors, Brand joined the firm that would become Squire Patton Boggs LLP, where he would spend a five-decade career as a foreign affairs lawyer and international human rights activist.

Brand's association with GW was long and multidimensional. He was a member of GW Law's adjunct faculty, served on the Board of Trustees and was a member of the GW Law Dean's Advisory Council. In 1993, he received GW Law's Jacob Burns Award for Extraordinary Service.

In 2016 Brand co-endowed a lecture series with Charles T. Manatt, J.D. '62, hosted by GW's International and Comparative Law Program. Brand-Manatt lecturers have included leaders from the United Nations, international human rights judges and White House alumni.

Bart Kogan, B.B.A. '69, M.A.E. '70

Barton H. "Bart" Kogan, an alumnus who established Kogan Plaza died on Oct. 3, 2022. He was 75 years old.

Kogan earned a B.B.A. from the

School of Business in 1969 and an M.A.E. in counseling in 1970. His commitment to GW students, GW's Jewish community on campus, GW's School of Business, and to higher education in general shapes his legacy. Kogan's philanthropic support of GW was complemented by his time investment: He and served on the School of Business Board of Advisors from 1990 to 2012.

"Bart will be deeply missed by our GWSB family," said Anuj Mehrotra, dean of GWSB. "His service on our GWSB Board of Advisors spanned more than a decade, and we are thankful for the many ways in which his thoughtful engagement and generosity continues to benefit our entire university."

After a career in telecommunications, Kogan founded BHK Management Company Inc., moving into property acquisition and management. He served as co-chair of the board of governors for Sinai Temple of Los Angeles and past president of the Western Region of the Federation of Temple Men's Clubs.

Kogan Plaza was named in 1999 following a gift from the Brand Foundation of New York, a family foundation of which Bart Kogan was a founding board member. Kogan Plaza quickly became an iconic campus space that buzzes with activity as students gather, study, attend outdoor performances and host activities. The plaza's pettiotto and gates are among

the recognizable features of GW's campus. His generosity encourages and inspires generations of leaders as they walk through and enjoy the plaza together in community.

Kogan is survived by his brother, Michael S. Kogan.

F. David Fowler

David Fowler, a former dean of the George Washington University School of Business whose leadership and management skills were widely lauded, died on Jan. 18. He was 89.

Fowler, whom the F. David Fowler Career Center in Duquès Hall is named after, was dean from 1992 to 1997 and worked tirelessly to help the school rise to international prominence.

During Fowler's tenure, the quality of new graduate students steadily rose, with GMAT scores for entering M.B.A. candidates increasing by 40 points between 1996 to 1999. He also traveled extensively internationally to recruit students and raise awareness of GW Business.

Under Fowler's watch, the school established the joint M.B.A. in International Business/M.A. in International Affairs program and a certificate in tourism destination management. It also launched four new research centers—the Center for Public Financial Management, the Financial Markets Research Institute, the Institute for Global Management and Research and the Center for Law Practice Strategy and Management Faculty.

Fowler came to GW from KPMG Peat Marwick, where he was managing partner of the Washington office and member of the board of directors. He had also served as chairman of the International Personnel Development Committee and of the KPMG Peat Marwick Foundation.

Alfred "Alf" Hildebeitel, (March 12, 2023, 80)

professor emeritus of religion, history and human sciences, was an expert on Indian religious tradition and folklore. During his 49 years at GW, Hildebeitel served as the director of the human sciences program, chair of the religion department and chair of the South India Term Abroad Program. He is survived by his wife, two sons, four stepchildren and three grandchildren.

Lt. Col. William "Bill" Collins Reagan, B.S. '61, (Feb. 18, 2023, 83)

served his country for over two decades as an Air Force fighter pilot and flight commander. He was awarded several commendations during his military career, including the Air Force Bronze Star and Vietnam Service Medal. He is survived by three children, 10 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. ☞

OUR DONORS ARE

GW

LOYAL

THE GEORGE
WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY

WASHINGTON, DC

Nearly 10,000 GW loyal donors support GW every year and make only-at-GW experiences possible for countless students.

**Give now
to join us**



LUTHER RICE SOCIETY *DONORS LEAD THE WAY*

➤ Over 200 years ago, Luther Rice raised the necessary funding to make GW a reality. Today, The Luther Rice Society celebrates donors who make annual leadership gifts that transform students' lives.

giving.gwu.edu | 1-800-789-2611

THE GEORGE
WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY

WASHINGTON, DC

The George Washington University
Washington, D.C. 20052
Change Service Requested



Alumni Association

GW Alumni & Families Weekend

SAVE THE DATE
SEPT 29-OCT 1, 2023

alumnifamiliesweekend.gwu.edu

#GWAFFW23



THE GEORGE
WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY

WASHINGTON, DC

ALUM 2023.01