

MINNESOTA

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

WINTER 2011

**Out of the Lab
and into the
Marketplace**

**The Man
Who Battled
Wheat Rust**

**A Debut Novel
with Bite**

The Accidental Memoirist

Alumna Michele Norris
of NPR on race, secrets, and
fearlessness



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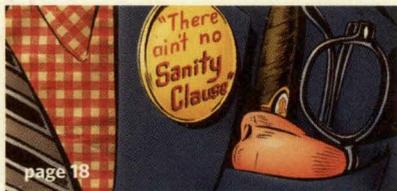
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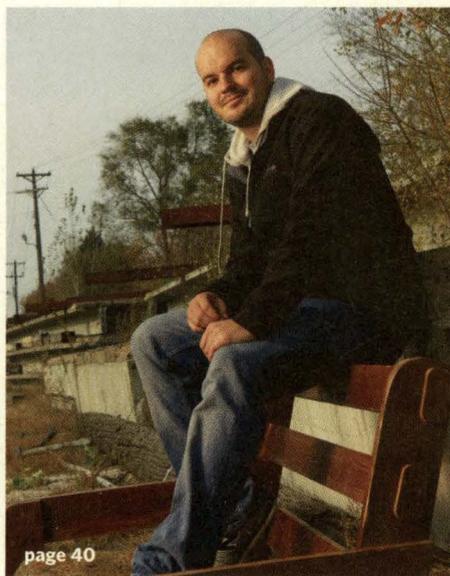
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COVER PHOTOGRAPH by Mark Luinenburg. This page, clockwise from top: photograph by Dan Marshall, photograph by Tony Nelson, illustration by Jonathan Carlson

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President and CEO

How Did I Get Here?

In these times, it's easy to get mired in the negativity of a less-than-ideal economy and the busy details of everyday life. There is a lot of noise to distract us from remembering the most important people and responsibilities in our lives.

If we look beyond the distractions, however, we can see reasons for gratitude: our family's health, our deep friendships, our job, a house to keep us warm. We all know people who seem to have this attitude of gratitude all the time. What inspires me is

that these are usually people who demonstrate their appreciation for what they have by trying to make things better for others.

Case in point: Take a look at the article on page 54 about this year's recipients of the Alumni Awards. Add up all the years of combined service they've given to the University, and the total is well over a century. It is simply impossible to tally the number of students whose lives they have positively affected by working behind the scenes to



Phil Esten is president and chief executive officer of the University of Minnesota Alumni Association.

help programs, departments, and colleges be the best they can be.

In my admittedly biased opinion, I believe the University of Minnesota, in some way, has had a positive impact on every single Minnesotan. Whether you or someone you know has benefited from the innovation inspired by the battery-operated pacemaker, have lifelong friendships that were forged on campus, or had your world broadened by a wise and challenging professor, consider the impact the University has had on your life.

These experiences do not just happen without deliberate and intentional planning. For every person you can think of who has made an impact on your life, there are a dozen who worked behind the scenes as volunteers. All of us, in some way, have benefited from volunteerism. Volunteers provide mentor relationships for students; advocacy for necessary University programs and initiatives; social and professional networking infrastructure for students, alumni, and friends; and needed resources that make events for students and alumni go as smoothly as they do.

In this column's headline I ask the question, How did I get here? The answer is, the same way we all got wherever we are: hard work, good fortune, and a lot of help from people who were generous enough to offer their time and talents as volunteers. I want to say a special thank you to those of you who already volunteer for the U and the Alumni Association. I encourage all of you to think about the people who were there for you and continue to be there. Reach out to those who've made a difference in your life even if it is just to tell them so. And, if the University of Minnesota has a place in your own history, I encourage you to visit campus and get involved. Together, we can ensure the University continues to serve future generations as it has you.

—Phil Esten (Ph.D. '03)



To discover how to get involved as a volunteer, visit www.MinnesotaAlumni.org/volunteer.



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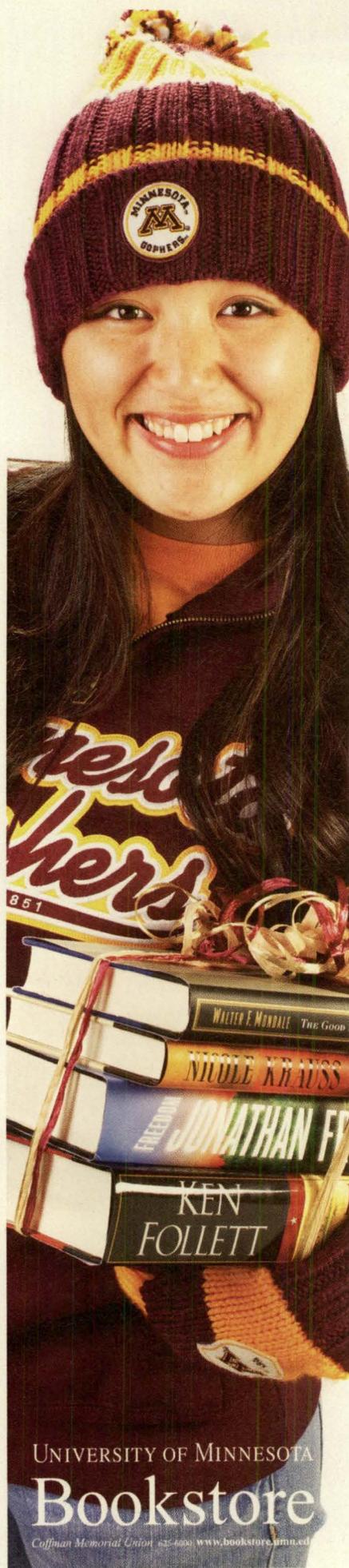
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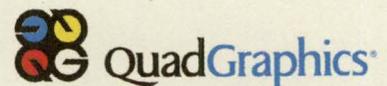
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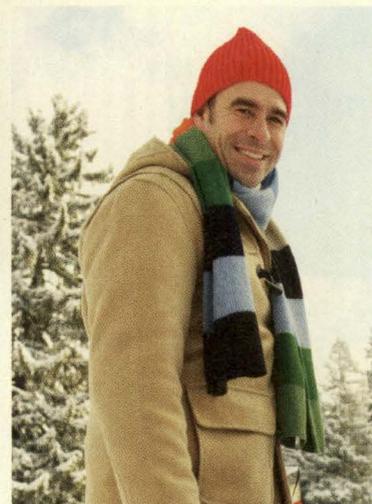
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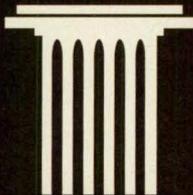


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MEMBER BENEFIT

Editor's Note

Commenters Anonymous

Have you ever made this mistake? You're reading an interesting newspaper article online and then scroll down past the end of the story and into the underworld of reader comments. I'm referring to online publications that allow readers to hide behind pseudonyms like "imgr8," "2cool4u," and "look@me!" and then supervise the proceedings about as closely as the *Lord of the Flies* schoolboys.

It's like taking an evening stroll along a city's streets, enjoying the lights and the sights, but then making a wrong turn and finding yourself halfway down a dark, dank alley. Suddenly you're surrounded by unsavory characters, foul-mouthed thugs and crapulous losers hurling threats and insults.



Shelly Fling

I'm all for healthy skepticism about what we read in newspapers or online—and am a defender of a free press and the right to free expression. But anonymous commenters invariably devolve from questioning the accuracy or bias of a story to shredding the names of the people in it to venomous attacks on other commenters or anyone who might hold a differing political view. I've heard journalists say sources have declined to be interviewed for articles because of such abuse. This realm is not for the fainthearted.

Joining the fray, much less reasoning with the wrong-headed, is pointless. Instead, I'll look for a way out, fast.

In a panic, I quickly scroll up the page or repeatedly hit the back button or close out of the browser and breathe a big sigh of relief. Whew! I've escaped unscathed.

Or nearly so. Sadly, the harm has been done. My heart is racing and, instead of feeling uplifted by the new insights gained from the article, I'm now seething at the meanness and willful ignorance demonstrated by this gang of louts—and disgusted by the newspaper for encouraging it. I have half a mind to log on under a fake name and give that publisher a few choice words of advice!

Fortunately, the other half of my mind stops me from diving into the cesspool.

I know that these nameless mudslingers aren't representative of all readers. But I'm hardly appeased by statistics that I've heard—for example, that 1 percent of readers leave 99 percent of the comments—I suppose because that 1 percent is pretty loud and nasty. Plus, what numbers like that tell me is that 99 percent of people aren't joining the discussion. And who can blame them?

Because communication is becoming increasingly faceless, perhaps we forget that actual human beings are doing the communicating. (Indeed, 2cool4u might be your grandmother or the co-worker on the other side of the cubicle wall.) As someone who holds in high regard the power of words and attempts to use them with care, I cringe to think what these kinds of online forums are doing to discourse. Not only am I disinclined to contribute my own thoughts or ideas in such a place, I find myself ignoring all other comments as well. There is just too much garbage to wade through to find the rare, credible, edifying remark.

But that's not the case everywhere. I frequent news sites that require users to give their real names when leaving comments. I've already spent a couple hours on alumna Michele Norris's site (michele-norris.com), where readers of her new memoir, *The Grace of Silence*, using their full names, tell about their own families' stories. And, of course, the Alumni Association website (www.MinnesotaAlumni.org) is a place where alumni and friends may log on. It takes just a few minutes to register—by name—but we hope you all join the discussion. ■

Shelly Fling may be reached at fling003@umn.edu.



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A Honey of an Honor

If honeybees could clap, their ovation for Marla Spivak would still be reverberating. In September the internationally renowned University of Minnesota bee researcher was named one of 23 recipients of a John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation “genius grant.” Recipients are selected annually for their creativity, originality, and potential to make important contributions to the future.

“It just blew me away. I thought they might have the wrong person,” Spivak said after receiving news of the prestigious award.

The grant comes with a \$500,000 no-strings-attached award, a windfall that will allow Spivak to pursue projects that have been waiting in the wings. “I have lots of ideas and big visions that I would like to accomplish, and over the last couple of years I’ve been trying to dream up ways that I could get these things funded,” she says.

Essential to healthy ecosystems and to the agricultural industry as pollinators of a third of the United States’ food supply, honeybees have been disappearing at alarming rates in recent years due to the accumulated effects of parasitic mites, viral and bacterial disease, and exposure to pesticides. Spivak has developed the Minnesota Hygienic line of bees that is able to fight a range of pests and pathogens without chemical pesticides.

In a 2005 interview with *Minnesota*, Spivak talked about her efforts to bolster bees’ ability to defend themselves without chemicals. “In my mind, that’s the most important thing, so we can get bees off the chemical treadmill and back on their own six feet,” she said. (To read the 2005 article, go to www.MinnesotaAlumni.org/beequeen.)

A faculty member in the department of entomology in the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences since 1993, Spivak leads the U’s Bee Lab, which provides research and education to professional and amateur beekeepers.

—Cynthia Scott



Marla Spivak in the bee yard on the St. Paul campus



Eric Kaler Named President

The Board of Regents named Eric Kaler (Ph.D. '82) the 16th president of the University of Minnesota on November 18. He will assume the presidency on July 1, 2011. For more on Kaler, visit www.MinnesotaAlumni.org.

Medical School Names Dean

Aaron Friedman, chair of the department of pediatrics at the University of Minnesota Medical School and pediatrician-in-chief at the Amplatz Children’s Hospital, has been named the University of Minnesota’s new vice president for health sciences and dean of the Medical School. He succeeds Frank Cerra, who announced he was stepping down earlier this year. Friedman will assume his new duties full-time on January 3.



Perfectly Green

The U is one of three schools in the nation to earn top grades in all nine categories of the College Sustainability Report Card, issued in October by the Sustainable Endowments Institute of Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Last year the U earned A's in all categories except green building (C), student involvement (B), and endowment transparency (B). In bumping the grade for green building to A, the report card cited the U's commitment to LEED-certified (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) buildings, water-saving technologies, and construction projects' diversion of waste for reuse and recycling. In the student involvement category, the report card noted 16 sustainability-themed student groups and a student-run organic farm that grows more than 100 varieties of produce. Endowment transparency earned an improved grade based on the availability of a list of external managers and votes cast on proxy resolutions on a company-specific level.

To see the University's full profile, visit www.GreenReportCard.org.

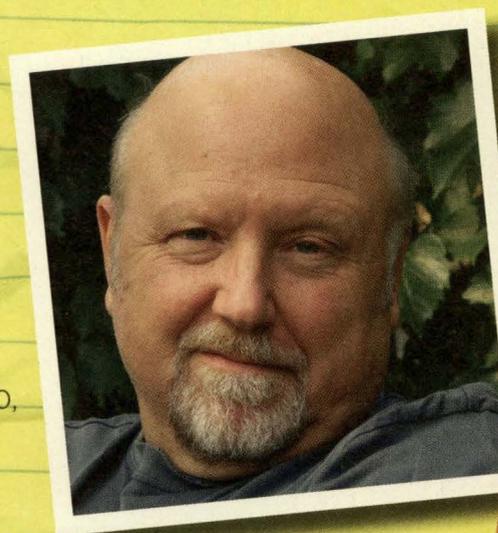
Overheard on Campus

"The thing about retiring my jersey is, hey, I'm alive, I'm still here. Most of the time when people retire jerseys, they've passed away 20 years, 15 years ago."

—Gopher great Bobby Bell, reflecting on the retirement of his No. 78 during the October 2 Homecoming game against Northwestern. Bell anchored the 1960 national championship team and is a member of the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

FICTION CONTEST

Minnesota magazine is now accepting submissions for its 12th annual fiction contest, and all University of Minnesota alumni and students are eligible to enter.

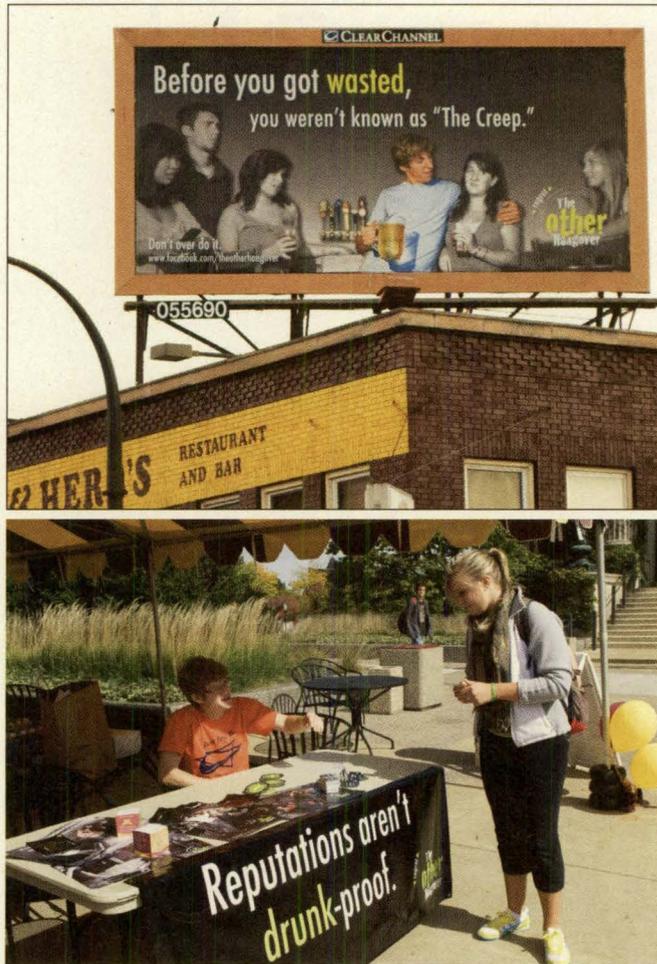


Ian Graham Leask (B.A. '80, M.A. '86)—author of *The Wounded and Other Stories about Sons and Fathers*; publisher of Scarletta Press, Inc.; literary consultant; and producer/host of KFAI's "Write On! Radio"—will judge the finalists.

The winner will receive a cash prize of \$2,000, and the winning story will be published in the Summer 2011 issue of *Minnesota* magazine and on the magazine's website.

Submissions must be postmarked by February 7, 2011.

Visit www.MinnesotaAlumni.org/fiction for contest rules and to read past winners.



Beware the Other Hangover

There's nothing like a little overindulgence to ruin a reputation. That's the message of "The Other Hangover" (www.TheOtherHangover.com), a responsible-drinking campaign created by University of Minnesota School of Journalism and Mass Communication (SJMC) students and launched on campus in September. Drawing on edgy slogans and arresting images, the campaign zeroes in on damaged relationships, ruined reputations, and the harm to

Top: "The Other Hangover" campaign billboard at the corner of Oak Street and Washington Avenue.

Bottom: Students from "The Other Hangover" campaign handed out coasters and other material at Gopherfest during Homecoming Week.

self-image that can accompany excessive drinking. One ad depicts a disheveled young woman sprawled on a floor with an empty wine bottle beside her. "A few drinks before, they thought you were fabulous," the slogan reads. Another warns simply, "Reputations aren't drunk-proof."

The multi-media campaign uses Facebook, billboards, coasters, sidewalk and mirror clings, and magnets to get its message across. "We're really talking to our peers about the dangers of high-risk drinking and asking them to think about their

behavior from a different perspective," says Dan Lans, SJMC undergraduate student and one of several project leaders.

The National Student Advertising Competition named "The Other Hangover" one of the best and most innovative student advertising campaigns of the year. The campaign was implemented with a \$75,000 grant from the Century Council, a national non-profit organization that promotes responsible decision-making around alcohol consumption.

—C.S.



A Long Time Between Presidents

President Barack Obama addressed thousands of students and others in the University of Minnesota Fieldhouse on October 23 during a pre-election campaign stop. Obama was the first sitting president to hold a public rally on campus since William Howard Taft, in 1911.

Overheard on Campus

"My adviser called me and said, 'Oh, by the way, did you hear you are a national finalist?' I feel bad for him, I let out a scream. I was shocked."

—Agricultural education major Erin Daninger, about being named a national finalist in the Dairy Production Placement Supervised Agricultural Experience, a hands-on learning program sponsored by the FFA Organization.

Overheard on Campus

"If you ride around saying, 'Here, kitty, kitty,' people know what you're doing. But if you go, 'Hello, how are you?' Pretty bird... I got stares."

—University of Minnesota physics professor Priscilla Cushman quoted in a *St. Paul Pioneer Press* story about her quest to find Zuzu, her Quaker parrot, who escaped from her porch. Zuzu was returned to Cushman after being found 30 miles away.

Gopher Sports Shorts

★ Head football coach Tim Brewster was fired October 17 after starting the season 1-6. The search for a new coach began immediately.

★ A 2-0 win over Texas A&M in November propelled the Gopher soccer team into the NCAA Round of 16 for the second time in three years.

★ Former Gopher standout Kelly Roysland (B.S. '07, M.S. '09) joined the U women's basketball coaching staff in October.

★ For details on these and other campus news stories, visit www.MinnesotaAlumni.org.

ANNUAL STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION

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Free distribution: 10,430
Total distribution: 47,949
Percent paid/requested circulation: 78.25%

Circulation for Fall 2010 issue:

Number of copies printed: 51,625
Paid/requested circulation: 40,735
Free distribution: 10,175
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Percent paid/requested circulation: 80.01%

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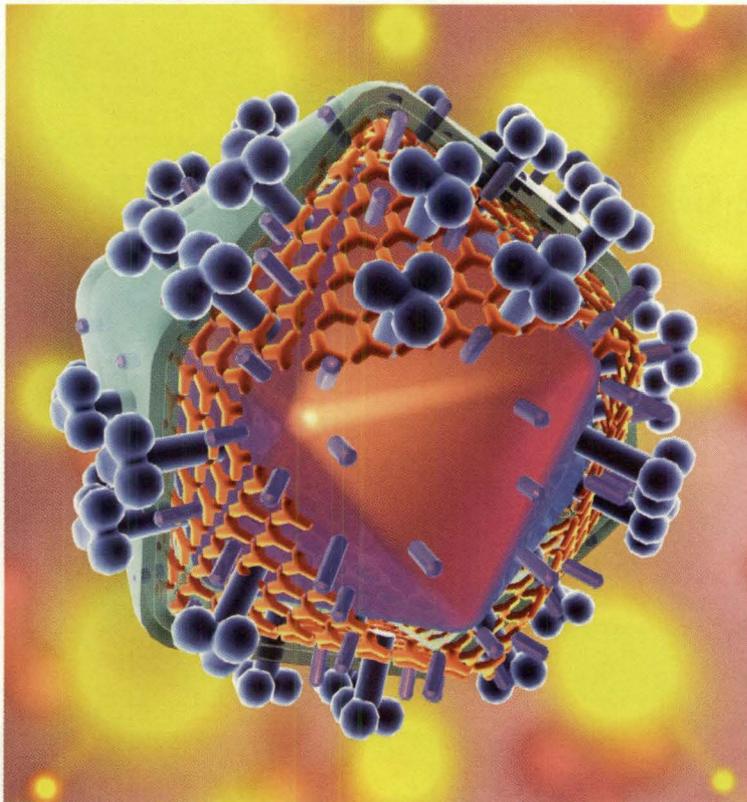
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COLLEGE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



A One-Two Punch against HIV

Researchers from the University of Minnesota's Institute for Molecular Virology, School of Dentistry, and Center for Drug Design have discovered that two cancer drugs, when combined, show promise for treating HIV infection. Decitabine and gemcitabine, both FDA approved and currently in use against cancer, were found to eliminate HIV infection in mice by causing the virus to mutate itself to death. This is a landmark finding in HIV research because it is the first time this approach has been used to attack the virus without causing deadly side effects.

One of the reasons HIV is so difficult to treat is its ability to mutate rapidly and essentially outrun drugs. The U researchers determined that that ability could be used against the virus by forcing it to evolve to the point of extinction.

The study was published online in the September issue of the *Journal of Virology*.

F for Alcohol Prevention Efforts

Colleges and universities nationwide have failed to implement recommendations issued eight years ago aimed at curbing alcohol abuse among students, according to a study by researchers from the University of Minnesota's School of Public Health.

In 2002, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) detailed the problems associated with student drinking, particularly binge drinking, and outlined a comprehensive approach to combating it. The approach included targeting at-risk individuals and the student body as a whole, as well as involving the surrounding community in efforts such as monitoring illegal alcohol sales or restricting access to low-cost alcohol.

The U researchers found that just half the 351 colleges surveyed offered only brief intervention programs with documented evidence of effectiveness. Only 33 percent reported collaborating with their community. Nearly all colleges offered educational programs, even though the NIAAA report found that such programs are ineffective unless carried out in concert with other measures.

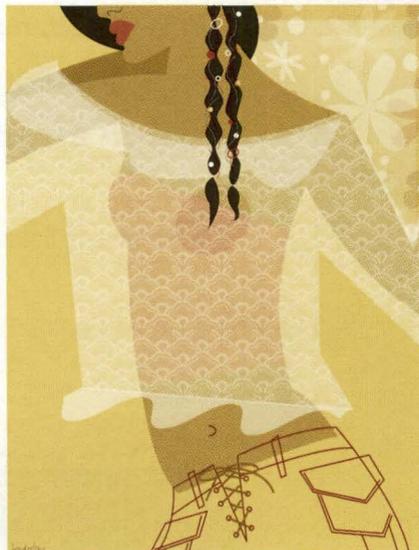
Researchers identified a number of reasons for the lack of implementation, including strained relationships between communities and college campuses over student drinking and a lack of resources, including inadequate staff training.

The study was published in the October issue of *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*.

Hormones Drive Buying Choices

Ovulating women unconsciously buy products and services that enhance their physical appearance, according to consumer research at the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management. The study found that ovulating women unconsciously make decisions about their dress not to impress men, but to outdo women they perceive as rivals during the handful of days each month when they are ovulating. The research showed that only women who lived in the same area as the test subjects were perceived as rivals.

Researchers asked ovulating women to view a series of photographs of attractive women and then asked them to choose



clothing and accessory items to purchase. The majority of participants chose more revealing products—for example, a blouse or dress with a low neckline—than those who had been shown photographs of unattractive women or women who lived more than 1,000 miles away. The women's decisions were not conscious, and non-ovulating women were not subject to the effect.

The study appeared online in the August 27 issue of the *Journal of Consumer Research*.

Taming a Killer Skin Disease

A skin disease that is almost always fatal can be successfully treated with stem cell therapy, according to research at the University of Minnesota's Medical School in collaboration with researchers in Portland, Oregon; Japan; and the United Kingdom.

Epidermolysis bullosa (EB) is a rare genetic disease that causes skin, including the lining of the mouth and esophagus, to blister and scrape off with the slightest friction or trauma. Prior to the latest discovery, there was no treatment and no chance for cure.

In 2007, U researchers found a rare subpopulation of bone marrow stem cells that could repair the skin in laboratory models—a remarkable finding

because previously bone marrow had only been used to replace diseased or damaged marrow. But the researchers found that stem cells contained in bone marrow can travel to sites of injured skin, leading to increased production of collagen, which is deficient in patients with EB.

Since 2007, 10 children with the most aggressive forms of EB have received transplants. Two have died from complications related to the treatment; the response of others has varied. All continue to be monitored.

The research findings were published in the August 12 issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

Weight a Factor in Colon Cancer

New research from the University of Minnesota's School of Public Health and Masonic Cancer Center provides further evidence that maintaining normal body weight may reduce the risk of dying from colon cancer.

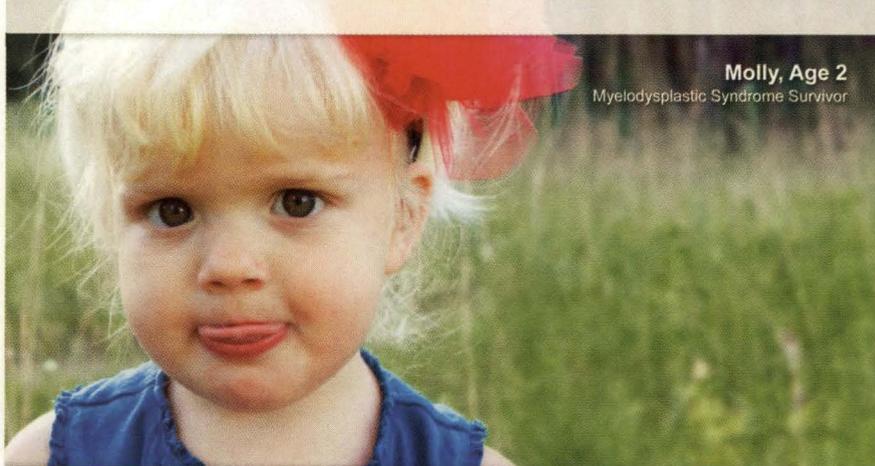
The research finds that postmenopausal women who carry an increased amount of weight around the abdomen are more likely to die after being diagnosed with colon cancer than are women of normal weight. This study is the first to demonstrate a correlation between abdominal obesity and increased mortality.

Previous studies have shown that underweight women are also at increased risk of dying from colon cancer.

The study was published online in September in *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention*.



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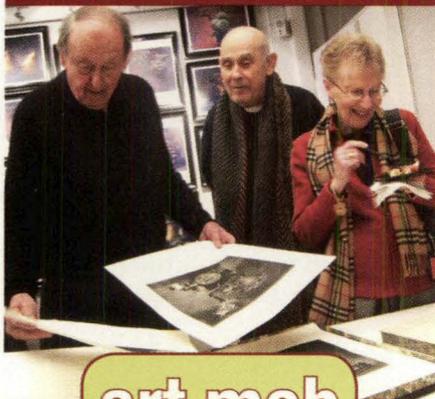
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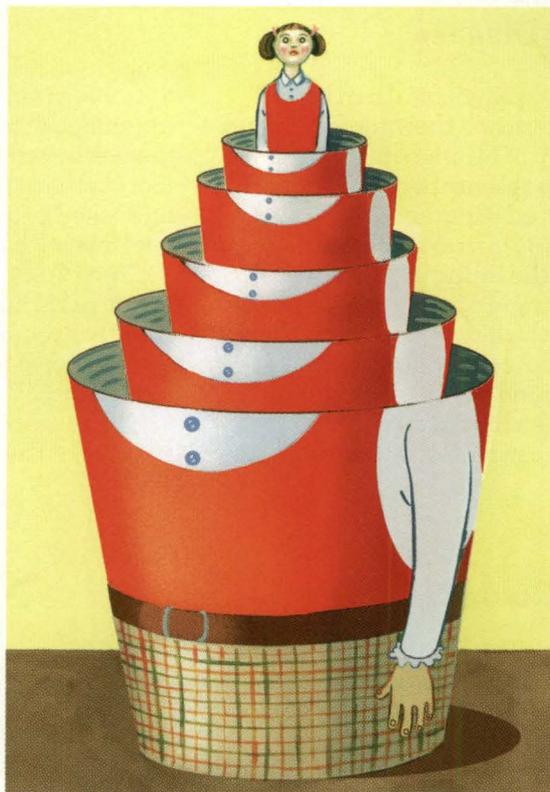
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Discoveries



Mum's the Best Word on Weight

Comments from mothers about their children's weight, mothers' own dieting behaviors, and teasing by family members may contribute to disordered eating in adolescent girls, according to researchers at the University of Minnesota's School of Public Health.

Analyzing data from 365 adolescent girls, many of whom were overweight, researchers found 45 percent of participants reported their mothers encouraged them to diet. Girls whose mothers encouraged them to diet were twice as likely to binge eat and five times more likely to engage in extreme weight control behaviors than girls whose mothers

did not encourage them to diet. Extreme weight control behaviors include taking diet pills or laxatives and vomiting for weight control purposes.

Of the study participants, 58 percent reported being teased by a family member about her weight. Girls with higher Body Mass Indexes (BMI) were teased more. Weight teasing was strongly associated with higher BMI, body dissatisfaction, unhealthy and extreme weight control behaviors, and binge eating. Likewise, about 66 percent reported their mother dieted or talked about her own weight, both of which were associated with greater use of unhealthy and extreme weight control behaviors among the girls.

Researchers suggested that parents avoid talking about weight and dieting and instead make changes in the home to support healthier eating and physical activity.

The study was published in the September edition of the *Journal of Adolescent Health*.

Laws Don't Change Sexual Behavior

Laws that criminalize HIV transmission do not prevent men who have sex with men from engaging in high-risk sexual behavior, according to research from the University of Minnesota's School of Public Health.

Thirty-two states have laws that make it a crime to infect another person with HIV. Previous studies have examined legal issues surrounding these statutes, but this is one of the first studies to consider whether those laws have an impact on sexual behaviors.

The study's 1,725 HIV-positive and negative participants were recruited from 16 states, some of which criminalize HIV transmission and some of which don't. Sixty-five percent of respondents believed it should be illegal for persons living with HIV to have unprotected sex without disclosure. However, between the entire sample and the sub-sample of HIV-positive respondents, attitudes about unprotected sex with recent partners did not vary according to state law, leading researchers to conclude that HIV laws do not deter high-risk sexual behavior.

The study appeared in the October issue of the journal *AIDS Care*.

Hear, Hear: Tests Could Be Flawed

Ten percent or more of children who are diagnosed with noise-induced hearing loss may be misdiagnosed, according to analysis by researchers at the University of Minnesota's Department of Speech-Language-Hearing Sciences.

The U's research showed that conventional hearing tests are subject to measurement error. The U researchers measured the hearing of members of the University of Minnesota Marching Band for one year and found that about 15 percent had hearing loss. When the results of multiple hearing tests were averaged, more than half of the apparent noise-induced hearing losses disappeared, a finding consistent with measurement error. Researchers concluded that people with normal hearing could produce false responses that resemble mild hearing loss.

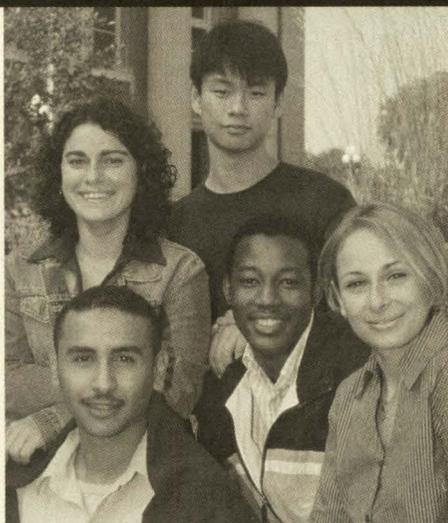
Researchers warned that their findings do not mean exposure to loud sounds is not harmful to hearing. But the damage is likely to build up over time and not appear until a person is older, they said.

The research was published online in September in the *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*.



 **Discoveries is edited by Cynthia Scott.** University of Minnesota Alumni Association members may access many of the journals that published these studies through the Libraries Online member benefit. Go to www.MinnesotaAlumni.org/Libraries.

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Remembering the Marx Brotherhood

I mostly remember the frozen streets. I lived in south Minneapolis, and the meetings were held in Murphy Hall on the University of Minnesota campus, so getting home meant a late-night bus transfer and, invariably, a long wait in an unheated bus shelter downtown. I'd pull my fingers in from their separate glove slots to warm them, do an occasional jig, pray that those headlights in the distance were the headlights of my bus, the 18G, then pray again that the man walking down Nicollet Avenue shouting to himself would keep walking—that he wouldn't see me standing there alone, an Edward Hopper figure dressed by Dick Guindon, and mess with me. It was 1979. I was 16, and the fear of being messed with was all over my face: a beacon to crazies everywhere.

The irony was that I was coming from a gathering celebrating the craziest men ever put on film.

The Marx Brotherhood was formed in 1976 by Jay Hopkins, a junior at the University of Minnesota, to honor Groucho, Harpo, Chico, sometimes Zeppo, and once-upon-a-time Gummo—Minnie's boys, vaudevillians who had conquered Broadway in the 1920s and Hollywood in the '30s.

Initially Hopkins wanted to start a local chapter of the national Marx Brothers fan club; then he discovered there *was* no national fan club. So he started his own. In Marxian: He had a good mind to form a club and beat himself over the head with it.

That there was no fan club in the mid-1970s made some sense: The Marx Brothers' film career ended with a whimper nearly 30 years earlier with *Love Happy*, their 13th movie. But it also made no sense. The Marx Brothers had never been more popular than they were in the '70s, a decade in which their irreverent humor—authority mocked, girls chased—fit the mood of a country where the revolution was sexual and the president was Nixon. For a time, everyone from Hawkeye Pierce to the Jackson 5 to kids on McDonald's commercials duckwalked and wagged an air cigar.

The first Marx Brothers movie I saw was one of the last they made, *A Night in Casablanca*, from 1946, which my older brother and I watched one Friday night on WCCO-TV's "Comedy and Classics," hosted by John Gallos. I was 10, and their appeal was immediate. The world was full of dull phonies and lousy schemers, then the Marx Brothers burst on the scene and upended everything. They popped the pretensions in the room. While

most of the other characters looked normal but felt fake, the Marxes were obviously fake—a bewigged mute with a trench coat full of tricks (Harpo), a piano player with a two-bit Italian accent (Chico), and a wiseass with a greasepaint moustache (Groucho)—but they had an air of authenticity about them. They were always themselves.

So I was already a fan when my father, the movie critic for the *Minneapolis Tribune*, wrote about the Marx Brotherhood in March 1978 for the Sunday entertainment section. At the next meeting, honoring Chico's 91st

birthday, Dad was the club's guest of honor, and I went with him to Murphy Hall. The brotherhood met in a small room filled with a dozen rows of metal folding chairs, a movie projector at one end and a collapsible movie screen at the other. When Jay Hopkins, in his prefatory remarks, complimented the article and introduced my father, who half-raised himself in his seat, acknowledging the applause with a held-up hand, I twisted myself into knots of embarrassment beside him.

Somehow I got my ninth-grade friend Nathan to join the group with me, and we became its only high school members. Nathan was tall and skinny with thin, brown hair parted in the middle, deep circles under his frog eyes, a gap-toothed overbite, and a wicked sense of humor. Instead of signing my yearbook with the usual comments ("You're funny! See you next year"), he filled the middle two pages with a long disquisition on stewed prunes. I can still see him: eyes gleaming, tongue emerging from his half-smile as he broke down another absurdity of life. I was held back by politeness—and by a desire, certainly in high school, to fit in with all the dull phonies and lousy schemers. He didn't give a shit. He knew the world was wider.

To be honest, I'm not sure why Nathan and I were friends. We had similar tastes but different sensibilities. After one meeting, instead of that bus ride through downtown Minneapolis, I got a ride home from his mother. While we waited for her on a side street near the University, Nathan lit matches and watched them burn. When his mother showed up he kept doing it. I made nervous noises and indicated his mom with a head-bob. He looked at me like I was crazy. His expression said: Can I buy back my introduction to you?

The brotherhood met monthly and showed one or two of the Marxes' 13 films along with an extra something: an episode of *You Bet Your Life*, Groucho's quiz show from the 1950s, or Harpo recreating the mirror scene with Lucille Ball on a 1955 episode of *I Love Lucy*. Once, a contest was held to see who could do the best "gookie," Harpo's trademark facial expression, in which tongue is curled, cheeks ballooned, and eyes crossed. A *St. Paul Pioneer Press* reporter showed up on "Salute to the Moustache Night," which is how the brotherhood, with Nathan and I front and center, holding cigars and wearing greasepaint moustaches, got splashed across the front page of the Twin Cities' other newspaper.

ESSAY BY ERIK LUNDEGAARD » ILLUSTRATION BY JONATHAN CARLSON

But 13 movies doesn't allow for much variation, particularly when five of the films were subpar and the extra somethings were often tinged with sadness: Chico and Harpo, faces sagging with age, seeming trapped by their absurd wigs and clothes. At least Groucho, on *You Bet Your Life*, eschewed the greasepaint moustache for the real salt-and-pepper variety and came across as a dapper old man with a twinkle in his eye.

shorts. Nathan turned up in a metallic jumpsuit, 3-D glasses, and slicked-back hair.

"What's this?" I asked when we bumped into each other in the hallway.

"Devo," he said.

I laughed, but Nathan wasn't joking.

"You like them?" I asked, incredulous.

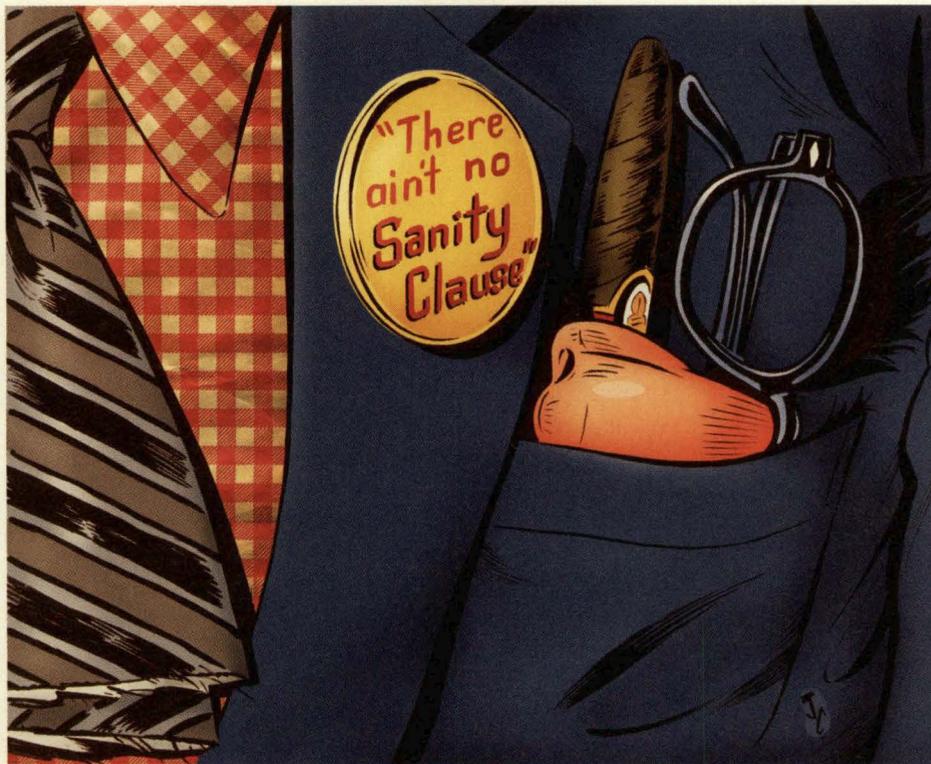
"You don't?" he answered back.

For the midyear talent show, Nathan fronted a band, War Movie, which performed a song that was loud, long, and dissonant. I had no idea what he was doing anymore. But he did: After graduation he went to Northwestern, changed his name to Nash Kato, and started another band, Urge Overkill, which had some success in the mid-1990s. He and his bandmates wore all white clothes with big belt buckles. They looked fake but had an air of authenticity about them.

The Marx Brothers thrived in the 1970s, in that brief period between the ascendancy of the humorless left (and its flirtation with anarchy) and the ascendancy of the humorless right (and its flirtation with libertarianism), when the country didn't know what to believe in. There the Marx Brothers were, believing in nothing ("those are my principles, and if you don't like them, well, I have others").

I had assumed the Marx Brothers would stay near the center of our culture, but they're marginal figures now (or again), relatively unknown to people in their 20s. A young colleague pleaded ignorance about them, then did a Google search that revealed it: She searched for the "March brothers."

I ran into Nathan once more, in the late '80s, at a show at 7th Street Entry in downtown Minneapolis. I had recently returned from a year abroad, in Taipei, and he and his band, struggling in Chicago, were giving Minneapolis a try. We spent the night party hopping. Nathan, eyes amused, tongue protruding from his half-smile, did what he always did. He picked apart the proceedings. He popped the pretensions in the room. He made me laugh so hard I could hardly breathe. ■



But the humor on his show was forced. Everyone waited for Groucho to be Groucho, but there was no stuffed shirt, no Sig Ruman character, to be affronted. The contestants, often drab middle-class Americans, wanted to be insulted. They *waited* to be insulted. "Oh, Groucho," they'd say afterwards, pleased. This always cracked Nathan up. Not the fact that the contestants were glad to be insulted, but that they called this dapper old man Groucho. To be born Julius but to be known, at 65, as Groucho—Nathan loved that.

Eventually Nathan and I drifted away from the brotherhood. I'd get a flyer in the mail and think, "All that way? To watch *The Big Store* again?" VCRs didn't help. By 1982, the brotherhood was no more.

Eventually Nathan and I drifted away from each other too. I did my best to blend in, and Nathan did his best to stand out. For "Senior Slave Day" at Washburn High School, in which freshmen were assigned their own seniors, like us, who had to wear crazy clothes and carry their books and do whatever they said, I wore the traditional suit jacket over

The Marxes were obviously fake—a bewigged mute with a trench coat full of tricks, a piano player with a two-bit Italian accent, and a wiseass with a greasepaint moustache—but they had an air of authenticity about them. They were always themselves.

Erik Lundegaard (B.A. '87) is a magazine editor living in Seattle.

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For writers' guidelines, visit www.MinnesotaAlumni.org/firstperson.

The Accidental Memoirist

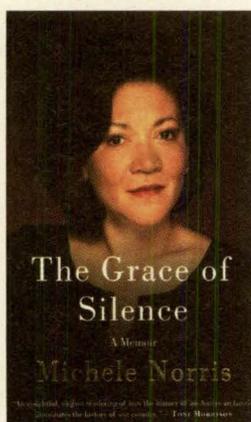
Alumna **Michele Norris** set out to record other families' racial experiences but found her most poignant stories disconcertingly close to home.

As memoirs go,

The Grace of Silence, by Michele Norris (B.A. '05), co-host of National Public Radio's *All Things Considered*, is notably thin on self-consideration. There is little in the way of conventional autobiography, and not much of her firsthand experience growing up African American on the mostly white south side of Minneapolis during the 1960s and '70s. She reveals few details about her days at Washburn High School and the University of Minnesota and scarcely touches on her journalistic postings at the *Los Angeles Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Washington Post*, ABC News, and NPR. Her husband and their two preteen daughters are mentioned only in passing. And though Norris writes vividly about the cruelty and indignities visited upon

her parents and grandparents, there is only a trace of the anger that her family's experience—hers by extension—would justify. Anyone who's read Richard Wright or James Baldwin (never mind Eldridge Cleaver and Malcolm X) will find Norris disarmingly measured and reasonable. Her tone is very NPR, come to think of it—though her composure derives, readers quickly discover, from a more intimate source.

Norris calls her book an "accidental memoir." Inspired by the award-winning series of conversations she and NPR's Steve Inskeep conducted in 2008 with a diverse group of citizens in York, Pennsylvania, it was supposed to be a collection of essays on race—informed, insightful, but not overtly personal. At that time, Americans—either energized or alarmed by Barack Obama's run for the presidency—seemed to be talking a lot about race, yet Norris "had the feeling that something was left unsaid," she says. Something indeed, and not just by the general public.



Unbeknownst to Norris and to most of her extended family, her father, when he was a 20-year-old World War II vet, had been shot and wounded in a scuffle with white police in Birmingham, Alabama, his hometown. What's more, her maternal grandmother had worked, as a middle-aged woman, as a costumed Aunt Jemima demonstrating Quaker Oats pancake mix for midwestern housewives; the well-known product icon was, of course, based on a slavery-era stereotype that

BY WILLIAM SWANSON | PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK LUINENBURG



many African Americans found offensive. Norris's father had died with his secret, and her mother talked about *her* mother's experience reluctantly, only after persistent questioning. Norris, who had by this time in her career uncovered her share of inconvenient truths, was floored by the revelations.

"Well, the truth can set you free," Norris writes in her book's introduction, "but it can also be profoundly disconcerting."

"She was discombobulated," says her close friend and Washington, D.C., neighbor Gwen Ifill, herself a celebrated broadcast newswoman (PBS's *NewsHour* and *Washington Week*) and first-time author (2009's *The Breakthrough: Politics and Race in the Age of Obama*). "It was suddenly a very different book from what she'd set out to write. But she quickly decided that this was the book she *had* to write—and a better, more important book as well." Instead of sharing other people's family stories, Norris decided she had to focus on her own. "That would be painful and unsettling," Ifill adds, "going to her own family and asking difficult questions."

The slight (185-page), bittersweet, wholly engrossing book that emerged could serve as a pocket companion to *The Warmth of Other Suns*, Isabel Wilkerson's sweeping account of the African American south-to-north migration of the 20th century, also published this fall. *The Grace of Silence*, however, may be more accurately described as a portrait of Norris's parents, their sprawling families, and their tumultuous times than as a memoir, accidental or not. Betty Norris (who, at 79, still lives in the Twin Cities) is a tough, feisty, fourth-generation Minnesotan descended from the only black family in early 20th century Douglas County. Belvin Norris Jr., who succumbed to a brain tumor in 1988, was a fastidious, positive-thinking, self-effacing but controlling man who, after migrating north from Birmingham, ended up in Minneapolis with the help of a coin toss. According to his daughter, he desired above all to be "the Average Joe of the American dream." Betty and Belvin were postal workers who, mainly because they wanted to live near water and with access to good schools, became the first black homeowners on their block of Oakland Avenue just off

Minnehaha Creek; they remained close and supportive even after divorcing when Michele was in junior high. (Betty had two older daughters by a previous marriage.)

Beginning as a small child—a "little girl in lace socks and patent leather shoes"—Norris spent part of every summer with her father's kin, many of whom lived in a poor but tightly knit Birmingham neighborhood called Ensley. Though formal segregation was on its last legs in the South, her grandparents drilled Michele in the basics: *Don't look white folks in the eye. Don't call attention to yourself. Don't make a fuss when you aren't allowed to use the dressing rooms downtown.* The rules were backed by law and tradition, and "everybody knew their place." Visiting other relatives in Chicago provided continuing education in the stark realities of the time. "I realized that my uncles lived in all-black neighborhoods," Norris explains during a Twin Cities stop midway through a 30-city promotional tour in October. "My cousins did not socialize freely or frequently with white



Michele Norris says this is her favorite picture of her father, Belvin Norris Jr.

1988: CANCER, AND A CONUNDRUM

When my dad tried to lean toward me to ask a question, his words sputtered forth like bricks tumbling from a shelf. The satin dolls found it hard to mind their own business. They stared and pointed every time Dad attempted to speak. They didn't try to hide their disparagement, one of them harrumphing loud enough for anyone to hear, "Goodness sakes, it's not even noon yet!"

After spending a lifetime trying to be a model minority—one of the few black men in his neighborhood, at his workplace, or on his daughters' school committees—my father now sat facing the condemnation of the two blond scolds. They had apparently concluded that he was an early morning lush instead of a gray-haired man fighting a losing battle with a devastating disease.

Here is the conundrum of racism. You know it's there, but you can't prove, beyond a reasonable doubt, how it colors a particular situation. Those pink satin ladies were strangers to me, so I have no idea if they would have been as quick to judge a gray-haired white man with impaired speech. However, I do know this: the fact that they were white women added mightily to my father's humiliation. I knew my father felt the sting of their judgment. I knew it because he kept pushing up his cardigan sleeve and futzing with his wrist, as if he'd left home without his Timex. But it was not the wrist on which he wore his windup watch. It was the wrist where the plastic bracelet had been affixed at the hospital. His awkward gestures were a silent plea to the satin dolls to notice the hospital bracelet. My heart breaks every time I think of the look on his face that day.

The jut of his chin showed indignation, but the sag of his shoulders and the crease in his brow conveyed something different. Something hovering between anger and shame. There was also, however, a hint of grace. I see that now that I have come to understand my father better, as a man who was always in tight control of his emotions. I believe now that he was trying not just to salvage his dignity but also to absolve the two women from dishonor. A less controlled, more impulsive man might have responded by giving those women the finger to shut them up. My father drew strength from reaching past anger.

Excerpted from *The Grace of Silence*, copyright © 2010 by Michele Norris.
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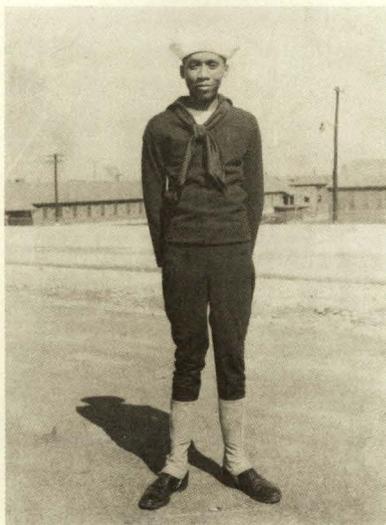
people because of where they lived. When I went to visit, there weren't white kids in the neighborhood and there weren't mixed families."

In Minneapolis, by the 1970s, Norris says, her neighborhood was an integrated and mostly accommodating place—a "happy little rainbow community," she calls it—where the protocols were fewer and more subtle. Just as her parents socialized with black and white friends, Michele had playmates of various colors, including the children of several mixed marriages, and her parents' guidelines, at least on the surface, had more to do with personal appearance, resourcefulness, and probity than with matters of race.

"Nobody sat me down and said people [weren't] going to like me because of the color of my skin," she says. Only as she grew wise in the ways of the world did she begin to appreciate the reason her parents kept telling her, "You're going to have to work four times as hard to get half as far," Norris recalls. "I look at an old photo of us kids standing out there on our corner lot—5, 6, 7 years old, all smiles and missing teeth—and realize I took things for granted at the time and didn't realize what my parents did to make it happen, to crack the ice."

At 49, Norris is a stylish woman with dark eyes and light skin. Radio may be her natural medium—no one on the air today speaks with silkier precision—but it's not difficult to imagine her on television. (She is in fact a frequent guest on *Meet the Press* and other programs.) She laughs easily, tears up when reminiscing about her father, and, when having to answer questions rather than ask them, chooses her words with care. "I'm not going to say I didn't experience any problems" growing up black in Minnesota, she says, "because that wouldn't be true. Integration came easy to our neighborhood, but in the 1970s there were differences, and they became more acute when we started dating. Things got more complicated in junior high and high school. Even though we'd all played together as kids, now we felt we had to choose. White kids would sit together and black kids would sit together. I was a cheerleader—I think there were two black cheerleaders at Washburn at the time—and so I straddled both worlds. Sometimes that was difficult."

She says she also listened to the stories her father and his brothers would tell about their days at A.H. Parker, the legendary, high-achieving black high school in segregated Birmingham, and contrasted those accounts with her experience in Minneapolis. "My dad and my uncles would talk about all the black students who excelled at Parker and were members of the honor society and the valedictorians and ran things," she says. At Washburn—



A teenaged Belvin Norris at Camp Robert Smalls, the naval station at Great Lakes, Illinois. During WWII, the camp was the site of a separate program for "Negro" recruits.

where African Americans were a small minority at the time—that wasn't always the case. "Black students did well there, especially in sports, but in the social hierarchy there were divisions, and you didn't necessarily see black students in the top positions."

Longtime acquaintances, such as Twin Cities communications executive Kathleen Crandall (B.A. '89), remember the teenaged Norris as smart, happy, involved, and popular. None of which would be enough, Norris says, to dull the sting of a passerby calling her "nigger" in front of a mixed group of her friends (Norris calls it "the N-word") or ward off the hurt when the nervous parents of a white boy she was dating forced him to end the relationship. In such cases, Michele inevitably received from her parents the terse response that she'd learned to expect. "Ignore it—that kid's a fool," her father would say of the epithet and its source. Of the bigoted parents and the boy on

the other side of the social color line: "They have no idea what they're missing. One day he'll regret it."

After high school, Norris enrolled at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, where she could pay Minnesota tuition rates while enjoying out-of-state independence. Her parents encouraged her to study electrical engineering because, she says, "engineers build things." But, for a number of reasons, including her desire to study journalism in the Twin Cities, with its two large media markets, she transferred to Minnesota.



Michele Norris's 8th-grade school photo

1961: A HOUSE NEAR MINNEHAHA CREEK

The Twin Cities, especially Minneapolis, were known for tolerance. Even so, blacks, Latinos, American Indians, and, later, Hmong and Vietnamese refugees would cluster in a few ethnic fiefdoms. My parents wanted to be on the far South Side, where the best schools were located, and they wanted to be close to water. Finding a house wasn't going to be easy for a brown-skinned couple. Realtors would "forget" appointments or make hasty exits when my parents walked into their offices. So my parents decided to sidestep real estate agents and focus on other ways to buy a house, like reading newspaper obituaries. After all, a family in mourning might feel pressured to entertain a strong offer, regardless of the race of the bidder, as long as the money on the table was green. Ghoulish, but Belvin and Betty did what they had to do, and eventually things worked out for them.

In January 1961, they found a three-bedroom, two-story, Tudor Revival on a corner lot with a large yard, an open kitchen, a large limestone fireplace, and a finished basement with knotty pine paneling. . . . [It was] the largest house on the 4800 block of Oakland Avenue. My mother's sister advised her against buying so big a house. "It will just make it harder," Aunt Doris said. "Why give them another reason to judge you? They're going to say you think too highly of yourself. You know how they are." Mom wasn't having it. "I do think highly of myself, and I don't care if they know that. In fact, I prefer if they know that."

"I've always loved to read and always loved to tell stories," she says, explaining her interest in communications. Norris remembers the U of M as a "welcoming place" where she "didn't obsess" about race. "I was more about the business of being cool at that point in my life," she laughs. "I worked at the [Minnesota] Daily

and lived off campus—I had a couple of different apartments in Uptown." She hung out with her *Daily* colleagues and roomed for a while with Lizz Winstead, who'd go on to a successful career as standup comic and writer. At one point, in addition to working on the campus paper, she waited tables at Faegre's, the erstwhile

Only Negro Alexandria High Graduate Portrays Version of 'Aunt Jemima'

Hundreds of Pancakes Served Here Friday By Former Ione Hopson

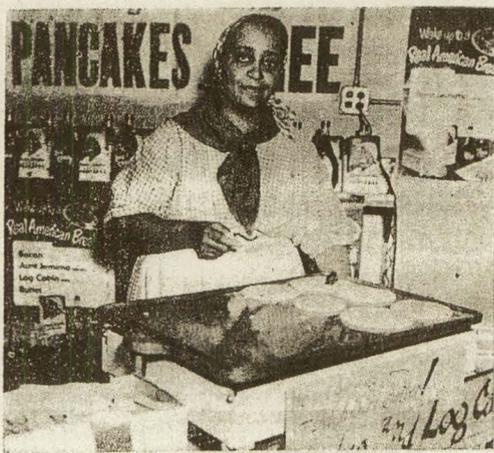
The only Negro girl to graduate from Alexandria high school returned to her old home town last Friday as the celebrated Minnesota version of "Aunt Jemima."

Ione Brown, formerly Ione Hopson, whipped up hundreds of her famous pancakes for shoppers at the Mel Johnson grocery Friday and in the course of doing so met a number of old classmates and other acquaintances here.

A charming, genial woman of ample proportions, Ione says she got the job as Aunt Jemima because of her size and not her voice, she is both proud and happy with her new role in life.

Ione has been the Upper Midwest Aunt Jemima for the past three years. She was "discovered" by the Quaker Oats company while singing at the Bethesda Baptist church in south Minneapolis.

"The original Aunt Jemima is in Chicago," Ione explained. "I just sort of pinch hit for her in Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Michigan, Iowa and Wisconsin."



MRS. IONE BROWN

Michele Norris's maternal grandmother, Ione Brown, shown in the costume she wore in her job as a traveling "Aunt Jemima" for the Quaker Oats Company. The photo appeared in a northern Minnesota newspaper, the Park Region Echo, in 1950.

BIRMINGHAM: WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?

During my summer stays in Birmingham, my grandfather usually carried me into town with him on trips to Bruno's, the big grocery store. I would have to get dressed up for the day in a starched little pinafore and patent leather shoes. And since this was before the days of car seats, I would sit next to him in the massive front seat, the two of us in what most people would call Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes. Some days, when we parked the car and walked into the business district, my grandfather would be approached by men in work uniforms. They lived in a section across a creek that I later learned was home to Irish and Italian families. They always looked ruffled. They had dirt on their faces, and their hair always seemed wet. They called my grandfather "boy" and "nigrah," which was supposed to be slightly less offensive and confrontational than *nigger*. Slightly.

Sometimes they'd ask him who he "thought" he was, driving a big car and dressing like a preacher. They would follow us, barking and sneering and spitting on the sidewalk. They would step in front of us now and then to block our way. My grandfather said little. He knew the men by name. I remember that he would sometimes tell them to give his regards to their parents or ask after someone he used to work with at the mills. This would often get the men to back off, allowing us to continue on our way—a man with hands the size of mitts holding on to an overdressed child.

I now wonder whether the little girl in the lace socks and patent leather shoes was invited along for the ride to provide Grandpa with a measure of protection from Birmingham hostility. I can't imagine putting my own kids into a similar situation, dressing them up as armor for their grandparents. I ran this by Mom, wanting her to say, "You're crazy" or "Your imagination is running away with you." But instead she allowed, "We lived in different times. People did what they had to do."

Warehouse District bistro, and pulled overnight duty on weekends monitoring the police scanner at WCCO-TV. (In the spring of 1985, she left school a few credits shy of a degree to take a job with the *Los Angeles Times*, then returned for a B.A. exactly 20 years later—when she also delivered the College of Liberal Arts commencement address.)

"My parents helped—they were always willing to help if you helped yourself—but I needed the money," she says. Meantime, "the fact that most of those places were peopled mainly by whites just wasn't a big deal. All along, I had African American friends, and being in places and positions where I was the distinct minority didn't make me feel unusual or uncomfortable."

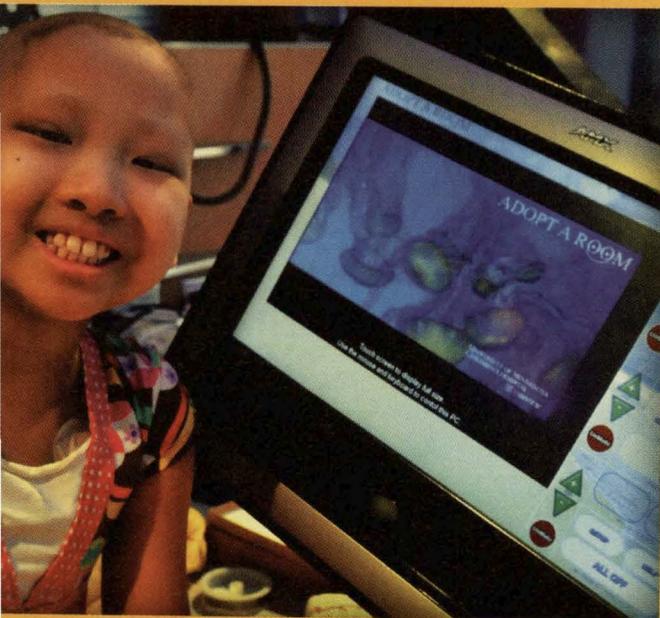
At the time, Norris had no clue about the events that lay behind her parents' steadfast equanimity. "Our parents armed us with what they thought we needed: strength, courage, and a touch of indignation. But just a touch," she says in her book. "I was shaped by the advice and admonitions that rained down on me. I've always known that. What I did not know until I began this project is that I was also shaped by the weight of my parents' silence." Elsewhere she writes: "I was raised by a model minority to be a model minority, and to achieve that status, certain impulses had to be suppressed. Years later, I understand both the reason and its consequence."

Norris's investigation of those hidden events and her gradual understanding and appreciation of her parents' determination not to talk about them provide the narrative drive of her memoir. She digs through old newspapers, police reports, and court dockets and tracks down the few living witnesses she can find from the day. She sheds a bright light on an outrage often overlooked by historians of the great struggle for civil rights: the shameful and frequently brutal treatment of African American servicemen upon their return home after World War II.

On one of several trips to modern Birmingham, she acknowledges both the dramatic gains made by the city's black citizens following the demise of Jim Crow and the deterioration of the old Ensley community. The cossetting neighborhood Norris remembers from her girlhood visits is now a grim, dangerous spot. "You just can't roll up in this neighborhood for sightseeing," a teenager on a bicycle remarks when she nods toward the empty lot where her grandparents' bungalow once stood. "You likely to get robbed or even killed. Best you get yourself back to where you came from."

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"It breaks my heart," says Norris back in Minneapolis, when reminded of the incident.

But Norris, like her father, is an optimist. She believes in social progress and the power of shared truths. She is too smart and too well-traveled to be a Pollyanna, and she's too honest a storyteller to underplay the commonalities linking her father's working-class origins and the poorly paid, generally disrespected city police who tried to keep restive young blacks "in their place." She recounts a candid conversation with a long-retired Birmingham cop named, in one of those ironies only life can script, Aubrey Justice—a conversation that would have been unthinkable in 1965, taking place in a neighborhood that 40 years ago would have been off-limits to a black person, even a big-shot national news anchor driving a fancy rented car.

"Only later, upon reflection on his life and our conversation, did it occur to me that I'd been sitting knee to knee with an older white man who was in odd ways a mirror image of the black man who'd raised me," she writes. "At first I pushed the thought away. For myriad reasons, I didn't want to go there. Segregation was informed by, and sought to keep alive, the illusion that white and black people are fundamentally different, one superior to the other. But the illusion could sometimes work both ways, for many blacks have refused to see anything of themselves in their oppressors, the race responsible for their denigration." In any event, and for a number of reasons, the similarities between Officer Justice and Belvin Norris "kept creeping up on me."

The universal dynamic of *The Grace of Silence* is at least as generational as it is racial, and the paradox of the daughter of a determinedly private man becoming a broadcast journalist who takes his life story public is rich in its own right. Then



Michele Norris's mother, Betty, before a high-school dance, wearing a handmade gown

again, there's nothing quite that simple about Norris's tale. Betty and Belvin, for instance, were lifelong news junkies—voracious readers and avid public-radio listeners; religiously, every Sunday, her father would drive downtown to Shinders to pick up his copy of the *New York Times*. Norris had made it to the *Chicago Tribune* before Belvin died, and "he was very proud," she says. "If he had lived long enough to hear me on NPR, he would have *really* strutted." She believes he would eventually have been willing to share his secret.

"He was 62 when he passed—I was in my mid-twenties," Norris explains during her recent visit. "Your twenties [are] a period of self-absorption, and maybe I just didn't make a place for him to tell me a lot of things. If he had lived long enough to experience what we've experienced in the past few years, including the

election of an African American president, I have to believe we would have had different conversations and that he would have told me more about his life in Birmingham." Her words suggest the regret of both a daughter who sorely misses her father and an enterprising journalist who missed a crucial source.

When asked if the audience for her book might look a lot like her audience on *All Things Considered*—which is, among other salient characteristics, predominantly white—she winces and replies, "I *hope* my audience is big and broad." She says that people of all colors know so little about their family histories that the tale of a quest for long-buried information would seem to be of widespread interest. At the same time, she believes the book will hold particular appeal for African Americans, especially older African Americans, whose determination to keep their eyes on the prize as they've struggled for their share of the American dream has kept them quiet, at least so far as their most painful memories are concerned.

"I believe we want our stories told," she says. "That at some point before we die we want to unburden ourselves. Like, 'Before I leave this earth, I want you to know who I am.'"

Norris is committed to expand and extend the process begun with the York Project and *The Grace of Silence*. Her website, *michele-norris.com*, is already collecting heartfelt, often difficult-to-talk-about stories from people of diverse backgrounds and experience across the country.

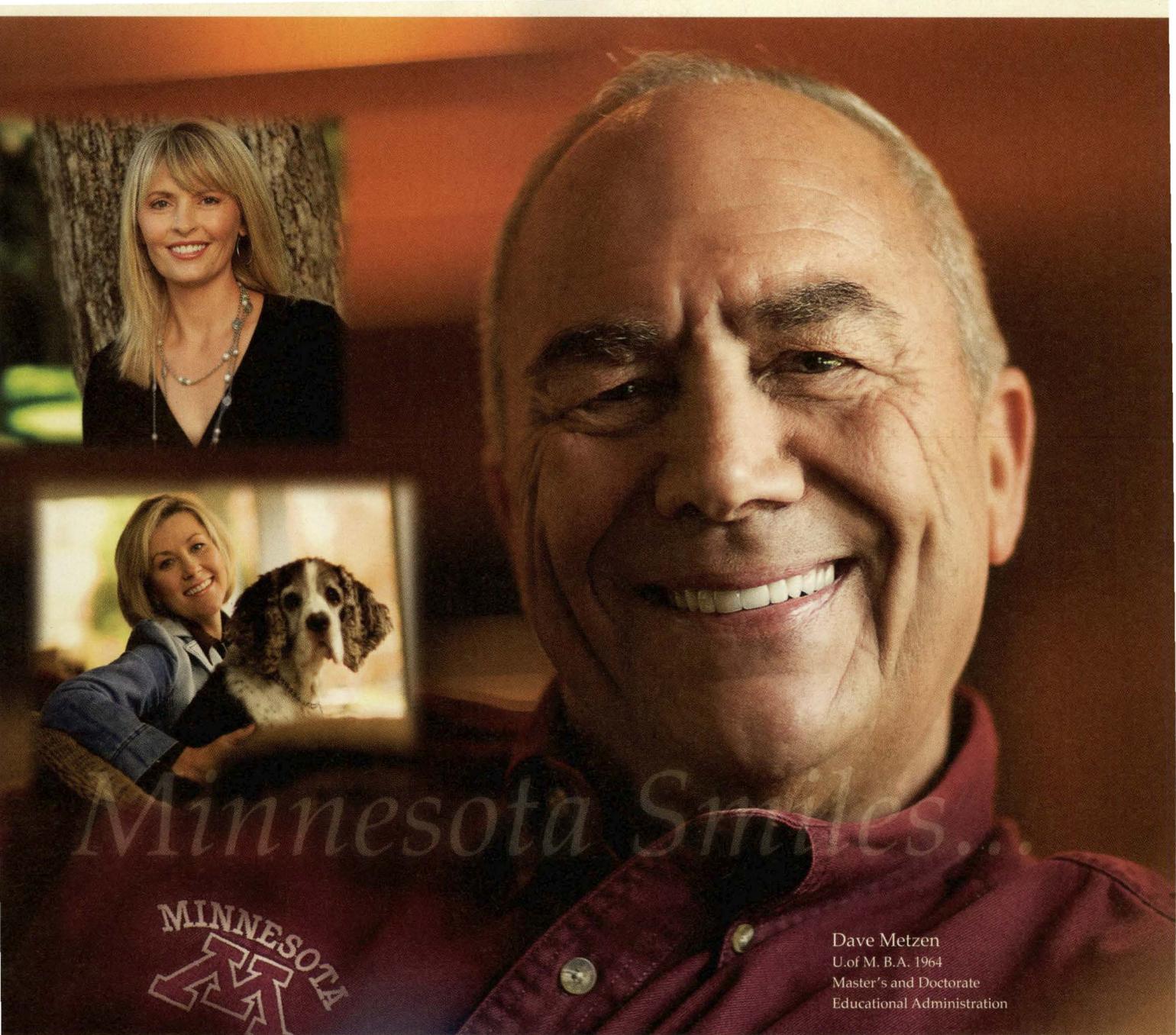
"Our continuing national conversation on race will no doubt proceed by fits and starts and occasional spats and squabbles," she writes near the end of her book. "But all of us should be willing to remain at the table even when things get uncomfortable. We need to be fearless while unburdening ourselves, even as we respect the same effort in others. There is often grace in silence. But there is always power in understanding." ■

William Swanson (B.A. '68) is a Minneapolis journalist and author. His account of the 1970 assassination of St. Paul police officer James Sackett and its aftermath will be published by Borealis Books in 2012.

BEYOND SILENCE: A WAY FORWARD

All the talk of a postracial America betrays an all too glib eagerness to put in remission a four-hundred-year-old cancerous social disease. We can't let it rest until we attend to its symptoms in ourselves and others. Jimmy Carter talking about white voter discomfiture with Barack Obama's race; Eric Holder suggesting that Americans are more often than not cowards in their refusal to address the subject candidly; Harry Reid surmising that Obama's advantages are his skin tone and lack of a "Negro" dialect: all have been subject to immediate and loud public censure by people more interested in excoriating them for daring to bring up the subject of race than willing to examine whether their statements bore hard truths.

So often the mere mention of the word *race* can make some people apoplectic or pious or frozen by anxiety, only to beat a hasty retreat to their comfort zone: grim taciturnity. Our collective discomfort with the issue is why discussions about race can so easily become so explosive. But our sensitivity renders us vulnerable to those who would exploit race for their own agenda, if not their ratings. Public discussions of race are very often a blood sport. Private conversations—with no audience, fewer sanctions, and, often, fewer filters—can be altogether another matter. They are no less painful—the hurt can be profound—but the results are almost always far more productive.



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RESEARCH TO REVENUE

The point of making scientific discoveries is getting new ideas to those who will benefit most: the public. The U's Office for Technology Commercialization—through licensing and launching start-up companies—helps U innovations get to market.

BY JAY WEINER » PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK LUINENBURG



Erik Cressman (left), an assistant professor of radiology in the U's Medical School, had been trying to get his thermochemical ablation invention into the hands of physicians for several years. Then he met medical device entrepreneur Mike Selzer (right) through the U's Office for Technology Commercialization.

T

he meeting had all the makings of a classic confrontation between two traditionally polarized spheres: pure science vs. aggressive business, lab coat vs. suit coat. The venue was the cluttered office of Erik Cressman in the University of Minnesota's Mayo Building. A stack of teetering medical journals here, scribbled ideas on a whiteboard there, and, for Cressman—an assistant professor of radiology in the U's Medical School—frustration everywhere.

It was late 2009, and Cressman was peeved at the progress—or lack thereof—he had made in convincing someone, anyone, to embrace his thermochemical ablation process to fight liver cancer. He had been wanting to get his invention into physicians' hands for three years. But, he says, "I wasn't thinking in terms of business. I was thinking in terms of science." But business, he has come to understand, is what gets science to market.

This is where Mike Selzer entered the picture—and Cressman's bursting office. The two got together, the scientist and the entrepreneur, through the U's Office for Technology Commercialization (OTC), which helped bring in more than \$95 million in revenue in 2009 from University intellectual property. The OTC sits at the intersection of groundbreaking scientific discovery and creative business development, at the crossroads of the strengths and challenges of the modern public research university.

Selzer is a Twin Cities-based entrepreneur who has vast experience with biomedical devices and start-up companies. He was a founder of ConcepTx Medical, which helps develop medical device businesses, and is a former Medtronic vice president and former CEO of Urologix, Inc. He was a perfect fit for a special role in the OTC's unit known as the Venture Center. Selzer was serving as a CEO-in-Residence, one of a half-dozen seasoned business leaders brought in to aid the OTC's staff in evaluating discoveries and inventions made by U faculty and researchers.

These CEOs-in-Residence meet every Wednesday morning at the OTC offices in a low-slung office park just west of Highway 280 in Minneapolis, midway between the U's Minneapolis and St. Paul campuses. Under a cloak of confidentiality agree-

ments, the CEOs-in-Residence evaluate the market potential of University intellectual property, and there's lots of it: about 900 disclosures of new processes, findings, or devices by researchers between 2006 and 2009 and more than 250 patent filings by the U for those ideas over the same period.

Cressman had developed a technology in which a heated device inserted into a cancer patient's liver would destroy tumors. Selzer had examined Cressman's invention but had a new idea based on work he'd done previously with ConcepTx. While liver cancer affects about 22,000 Americans per year, chronic venous insufficiency, or CVI, a condition caused by damaged valves in leg veins, is treatable in 9 million Americans.

Selzer wondered if Cressman's invention could be modified to benefit people with CVI. Simply put, could a heated device stimu-



Tim Mulcahy (front), vice president for research at the University, and Jay Schrankler, executive director of the Office for Technology Commercialization, have created an entrepreneurial culture at the U and have brought experts from the business community to campus to help evaluate the market potential of U discoveries.

late the vein wall and increase blood flow in patients' legs? Such a remedy could have a market potential of \$700 million.

The grim reality was that the market potential of using Cressman's device for people with liver cancer was too small and the time and cost in obtaining FDA approval too great. A viable business with that initial application would not get off the ground. Cressman agreed to try it for CVI, and the two shook hands right there in Cressman's tiny office. Seven months later, XO Thermix Medical was born, with Selzer as CEO and Cressman a partner. It became one of 11 start-ups launched by the OTC over the past two years (read about all 11 start-ups beginning on page 32).

THE RACE FOR REVENUE

The OTC is the “tech transfer” hub at the University. It competes with similar operations nationally, including the highly successful tech transfer office at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. A unit of the Office of the Vice President for Research, the OTC is led by former University of Wisconsin biological sciences professor and research administrator Tim Mulcahy.

Spinning off companies like XO Thermix Medical isn't the only measure of success for the OTC. Creating an entrepreneurial culture among U researchers is what Mulcahy and Jay Schrankler (B.S. '88), executive director of the OTC, are most interested in promoting. They figure that infusing the passion for discovery with entrepreneurial innovation can't help but drive research and revenue.

OTC-generated companies reflect a growing desire of the University to be an equity partner in enterprises that can eventually move to public offerings and, in most cases, be sold to larger firms, especially in the biomedical and pharmaceutical sectors. Software isn't a bad prospect either; just ask Stanford University about its initial stake in something called Google, which generated more than \$300 million when the university sold its shares a few years back.

The pressure to find new revenue sources is the harsh new reality for public research universities today.

In Minnesota's case, the state has drastically cut funding to its land-grant institution. At the same time, scientists are generating lifesaving ideas that the University owns and, by federal law, must commercialize. But which discoveries will pay off is unpredictable, and the business of tech transfer requires a different kind of state support.

Since 2000, the University has garnered more than \$400 million in royalties from the AIDS drug Ziagen, which was developed by Robert Vince, a professor of medicinal chemistry at the U. But by 2014, when Ziagen's patents expire, the revenue from the drug's manufacturer, GlaxoSmithKline, will trickle to zero. In 2009, when the OTC brought in \$95.2 million in gross revenues from 306 revenue-generating agreements from licensees, all but \$8.7 million came from Ziagen.

The OTC and the University are in search of another scientific and revenue home run, and soon. The race is on to replace the Ziagen income. “We have a little fun ahead,” Schrankler says wryly.

FROM INVENTION TO IPO

The path from discovery to marketplace can be long and winding, expensive and risky. The University, through the OTC, can garner millions in revenue on critical discoveries, but the institution is also on the hook for bad decisions. Many were made in the years before Mulcahy and Schrankler arrived on campus, in 2005 and 2007, respectively.

Every time an idea is patented, it can cost the OTC between \$15,000 and \$20,000 in legal fees. And sometimes patents don't

produce any revenue. In the years before Mulcahy and Schrankler, the OTC started up 120 companies, Mulcahy says, but only one grew enough to have an initial public offering.

The journey from the lab bench to the patient or customer can take from a couple of years to—in the case of some pharmaceuticals—a decade or longer. Schrankler describes six stages between the time an inventor has an idea and a deal is closed on a license or is launched as a start-up company. Each stage is navigated by the OTC's staff of strategy managers and marketing managers, who first must learn of the invention from a researcher and then determine the commercial potential for it. That is followed by an initial patent application to protect the intellectual property; the development of a market strategy and securing an “innovation grant” of, perhaps, \$250,000 to keep the research and development going; acquiring worldwide patents and courting prospective licensees; and then deciding whether to grant a license to an established company or to create an OTC start-up.

It's during these stages that mid-course corrections might be made to the technology and the target market. XO Matrix Medical moving from a liver cancer application to leg veins is a good example. Another is start-up Neurendo Pharma, which is based on a molecule created by U professor of medicinal chemistry Philip Portoghesi, whose research focus is anesthesia. But entrepreneur

and inventor Lance Ehrke and diabetes expert Tom Clemens, both based in Wisconsin, realized the same molecule, in small doses, could benefit patients with obesity and type 2 diabetes.

“We discovered there was a more efficient use for Phil's molecule,” Ehrke says. “It was a ‘eureka’ within a ‘eureka.’” With that discovery, Ehrke worked with the OTC and Portoghesi to start Neurendo Pharma in early 2010. With diabetes and obesity rates on the rise throughout the world, the market potential for the new drug is eye-popping.

Business leaders who have had contact with the OTC in recent years say the operation has become more focused and business friendly since Schrankler, a former Honeywell executive, took over. Rob Cohen is a former executive at St. Jude Medical and now CEO of U start-up Miromatrix, Inc., which is exploring groundbreaking regenerative tissue research by Doris Taylor, director of the U's Center for Cardiovascular Repair. Cohen has dealt with numerous tech transfer offices around the nation.

“I frankly think it's spectacular,” Cohen says of the U's OTC. “It is among the very few times I've ever dealt with a tech transfer office that understands how business is done. Most places don't, and that's what normally screws up a transaction.”

A NATURAL MARRIAGE

Transforming research into commercial opportunities that benefit the University and the public is what Tim Mulcahy lives for. As the U's vice president for research, Mulcahy eagerly anticipates the future but is also somewhat annoyed with the lack of understanding on the part of legislators and other critics.

“We had to take the tech transfer operation from an anemic state and put it on steroids,” says Tim Mulcahy, vice president for research at the U. “If we wanted to play in the big leagues, we needed to step up and be much more deliberate in our planning, our resourcing, and our strategies around technology commercialization.”

When he arrived in the Twin Cities almost six years ago, Mulcahy was confronted by a business community that believed the U was an "impenetrable" institution, a black hole of unreturned voicemails and unreachable officials, that needed to be more fully engaged in the economic development of the region. North Carolina's Research Triangle, Wisconsin's Biotechnology Center, and Boston's 128 Corridor were pointed to as models Minnesota should emulate.

"We had to take the tech transfer operation from an anemic state and put it on steroids," Mulcahy says. "If we wanted to play in the big leagues, we needed to step up and be much more deliberate in our planning, our resourcing, and our strategies around technology commercialization."

Still, lawmakers in St. Paul have been impatient for U innovations to translate into new companies and jobs and until recently haven't invested in helping the OTC develop businesses or offered tax credits for investors who will. "The thing that frustrates me, quite frankly, is how naïve some of the critics are about what's involved in launching a start-up company that will ultimately culminate in sustainable jobs," Mulcahy says. "There seems to be an assumption that starting up a company in a university is a cost-free enterprise." Not so.

Creating jobs is just one way to measure tech transfer. And Mulcahy says state leaders must pay attention to Minnesota's business "ecosystem" and more effectively invest in University discoveries.

Besides the external challenges, there remain lingering, albeit fading, internal tensions. Some faculty members are wary of the

influences of the corporate world on their research. Others have questioned putting energy into commercialization when they have a full plate of other professional demands. As a way to offer incentive, soon after Mulcahy arrived, "technology transfer" activities were added as one of the planks for a faculty member achieving tenure.

"There should be a natural marriage between science and business," Mulcahy explains. "Some think there should be no influence of the outside world, but the states and federal government are investing with the idea that this research is going to help the country. This is not a social welfare program. There is an inherent expectation that what we do here is going to get commercialized."

Says Schrankler: "The whole idea for research is that it benefits the public good. That's what we're here for, to help get it out to the public."

Meanwhile, XO Thermix Medical continues to wend its way to the marketplace. It continues to seek investors. The exothermic process needs to be further tested. Then there are the tricky matters of the FDA approval process and whether medical insurance will reimburse for the procedure. Selzer figures XO Thermix's leg vein innovation won't make it to market for three to four years.

By then, however, hundreds more University discoveries will have reached the OTC, and dozens of suit coats and lab coats will have come to the table to talk innovation and business. ■

Jay Weiner is a Twin Cities-based writer and author of This Is Not Florida: How Al Franken Won the Minnesota Senate Recount.

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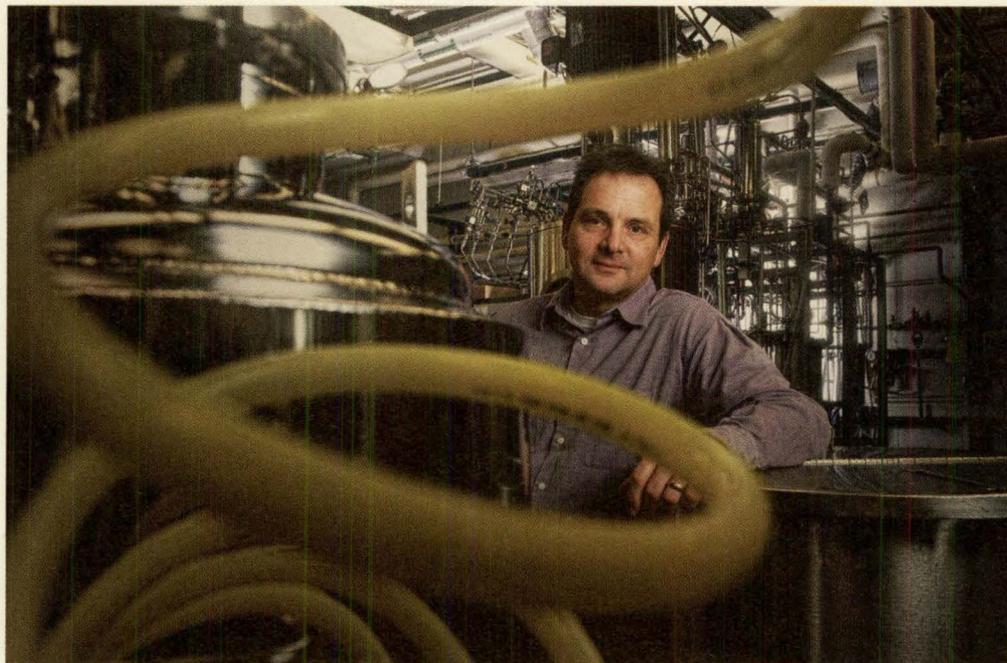
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GETTING STARTED

Over the past two years, 11 nascent companies have emerged from the Venture Center at the University of Minnesota's Office for Technology Commercialization. Most are in an R&D mode, two to four years away from the regulatory approvals that would launch them into the marketplace.



Marc von Keitz, an engineer with the U's BioTechnology Institute and director of its Biotechnology Resource Center, is helping to navigate start-up company BioCee's path to the marketplace.

ASCIR

Stillwater, Minnesota
Founded in February 2009
www.ascir.com

Using infrared detection technology developed by Joseph Talghader, a U of M professor of electrical engineering, Ascir is at work on a handheld instrument that can identify harmful gases from a safe distance. The device, known as a microbolometer, is expected to have great potential for military, civil defense, and public safety applications, as well as for the mining, chemical, waste management, and automotive industries.

BIOCEE

St. Paul
Founded in May 2009
www.biocee.com

A proprietary approach to bio-coating—using engineered microorganisms to neutralize unwanted chemicals or toxins—is BioCee's stock in trade. This technology, invented by former U of M biochemistry professor Michael Flickinger, is first

being applied to liquid fuels. Indeed, BioCee is on the verge of reaching pollution reduction guidelines for diesel in most of the developed nations. A lab on the St. Paul campus is working to bring the process to a scale that could impact refineries and, ultimately, air quality around the world.

CELLADON

La Jolla, California
Founded in May 2009
www.celladon.net

Under an exclusive license, Celladon is testing a University-developed approach to treating advanced heart failure via genetically targeted enzyme replacement therapy. U of M biology professor Dave Thomas and researcher Razvan Cornea are the scientists behind the treatment, in which patients who once might have needed heart transplants may be given one-time outpatient therapy in a cardiac catheterization lab.

R8SCAN

St. Paul
Founded in August 2009
www.r8scan.com

R8Scan's technology, based on the work of University biochemical engineer Friedrich Srienc, will permit medical and biotech researchers to track the growth rates of individual cells and study the dynamics of cellular development in unprecedented detail. Benefits are expected to include streamlined processes for pharmaceutical labs and improved treatment strategies for cancer and other diseases.

HENNEPIN LIFE SCIENCES

Minneapolis
Founded in October 2009
www.hennepinlifesciences.com

Microbiology professors Ashley Haase and Pat Schlievert announced in March 2009 that they had identified a naturally occurring compound that could prevent the sexual transmission of the primate form of HIV, known as SIV. Hennepin Life Sciences, under a licensing

agreement with the U, is using that research as it works to develop a topical microbicide for human use, which could have an enormous impact on global public health.

MIROMATRIX MEDICAL

Minneapolis
Founded in February 2010
www.miromatrix.com

This is no doubt the start-up with the highest public profile, as it's based on the work of Doris Taylor, who made international headlines in 2008 by, in lay terms, creating a new rat heart in her U of M lab. Taylor's "decellularization/recellularization" technology has myriad potential applications, including the replacement of all or a portion of a human heart, liver, kidneys, lungs, and pancreas. Miromatrix's first product: an acellular cardiac-derived biomesch for hernia repair and breast reconstruction.

NEURENDO PHARMA

Madison, Wisconsin
Founded in March 2010
www.neurendopharma.com

Using the science of Philip Portoghese, a professor of medicinal chemistry in the U's College of Pharmacy, Neuroendo Pharma is developing drugs targeted at a constellation of increasingly common metabolic disorders known to be risk factors for coronary heart disease: obesity, type 2 diabetes, prediabetes, and atherogenic dyslipidemia.

NEW WATER

Minneapolis
Founded in June 2010
www.getnewwater.com

This start-up garnered widespread media attention last summer largely because of the youth of its starter-uppers. In 2009, in a Carlson School of Management course called Applied Technology Entrepreneurship, then-undergrads Joe Mullenbach and Alex Johansson were introduced to a biocatalytic water purification technology developed by U of M biologists Lawrence Wackett and Michael Sadowski. Soon, a company was born. NewWater, in which the University holds an equity stake, aims to market the technology—which uses patented enzymes to trigger bacterial metabolism of the corn herbicide atrazine, breaking it down into harmless byproducts—to municipal water plants and private well owners.

XO THERMIX MEDICAL

Wayzata, Minnesota
Founded in June 2010

Radiology professor Erik Cressman developed a technique called exothermic ablation to attack cancerous tumors of the liver, a relatively rare condition. When it was determined that the procedure and device might also be used to treat a leg problem known as chronic venous insufficiency—which affects about 9 million Americans—a large-scale entrepreneurial venture began to take shape.

IN-HOUSE SOFTWARE START-UPS

The OTC has kept two software start-ups in-house and expects eventually to spin them off to outside operators.

CASTT: COMMERCE AND SEARCH FOR TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

Founded in February 2010
www.license.umn.edu (search for CaSTT)

Originally designed for internal use by the OTC, this is a web-based e-licensing, administration, and management application for technology transfer offices, of which there are hundreds across the nation.

EARLY LEARNING LABS

Founded in May 2010
earlylearninglabs.umn.edu

This web-based tool, created at the College of Education and Human Development, allows educators to track the language progress and literacy readiness of preschoolers using a quick, efficient, repeatable process known as IGDIs (for individual growth and development indicators).

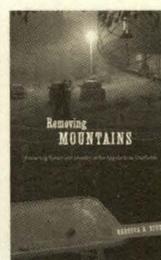
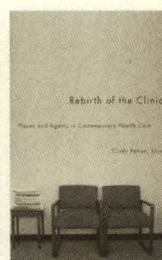
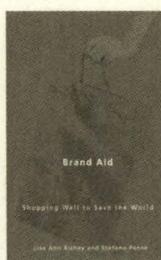
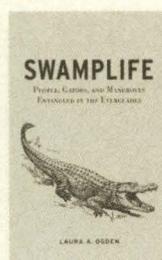
—J.W.

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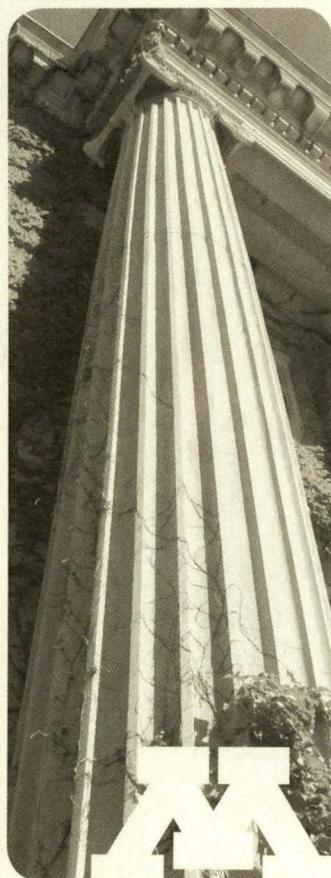


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Combating the “Shifty Little Enemies”

If it weren't for the work of University of Minnesota plant pathologist **E.C. Stakman**, who strove to eradicate wheat rust from the nation's breadbasket, millions of people around the world might not have lived to benefit from the genius of **alumnus Norman Borlaug**.



For years afterward, Nobel laureate Norman Borlaug (B.S. '37, M.S. '39, Ph.D. '42) credited the day he wandered into a lecture being given Professor E.C. Stakman (B.S. '06, M.S. '10, Ph.D. '13), head of the Department of Plant Pathology at the University of Minnesota, as the moment his storied career began. Then a senior studying forestry at the U, Borlaug had just spent the summer working in the mountains out west and was vaguely wondering if he was cut out for a life among the trees. The title of Stakman's talk, “Those Shifty Little Enemies Who Destroy Our Cereal Crops,” was more sug-

gestive of a health class film than the intellectual bolt of lightning that it was for Borlaug. But something in its subject—the variety and devastating impact of rust diseases on grain plants—and in the man delivering the lecture, called “Stake” or “The Big Chief” by his students, struck a deep and resonant chord in Borlaug. ¶ Neither of the principals involved in this first meeting would have recognized it as a historical moment, even years later when they became the kind of men after whom universities name buildings. But their coming together was more than just the joining of two exceptional scientists. They formed the link between the agricultural beginnings of the state of Minnesota and the Green Revolution that helped feed hundreds of millions of people around the globe.

Top: E.C. Stakman, photographed in a greenhouse in 1915, was the University's first doctoral candidate in plant pathology, earning his Ph.D. in 1913.

Right: Stakman, photographed in 1918, led a USDA effort to eradicate barberry plants, known to be a host for the devastating wheat rust fungi, across the wheat belt.



BY TIM BRADY

The outline of Borlaug's career is familiar to most students of U of M history. From that mid-1930s day when he first heard about those "shifty little enemies," Borlaug was hooked on plant pathology. He soon began a course of study under Stak-

Company alone produced 10,000 barrels of flour daily. In all, 24 Minneapolis mills produced 7,000,000 barrels annually and Minnesota farmers harvested 50,000,000 bushels of wheat. Flour production would continue to grow until the start of World



man, earned his Ph.D., took a post with the Rockefeller Foundation at a farm laboratory in Mexico, and began in earnest a career that would take him to the heights of agricultural, scientific, and humanitarian fame. He was not only the force behind the creation of a hardy, disease-resistant form of wheat, he was its chief salesman and ambassador. From the 1960s until his death in 2009, Borlaug spoke out about feeding the world's hungry through scientific and agricultural advances.

Not so well-known is what precedes Borlaug's story—the link in the chain that reaches back to the days when thrumming flour mills lined the Mississippi River at St. Anthony Falls and wheat waved in seemingly endless fields across the land. It begins with the man presenting that lecture on cereal grains and their diseases.

Elvin Charles Stakman was born in Algoma, Wisconsin, in 1885, when Minnesota was rising to the peak of its wheat-growing prowess. From the rolling hills of southeastern Minnesota to the giant bonanza farms along the Red River Valley, Minnesota was a veritable sea of wheat and Minneapolis was the acclaimed milling capital of the nation. By the time Stakman was a 4-year-old boy and had moved with his family to Brownton, Minnesota, as much as 70 percent of the farm acreage in the state was planted in wheat. The Pillsbury

War I, when more than 20 million barrels of wheat were shipped from the state. As an industry, grain-milling easily matched Minnesota's lucrative mining and lumbering interests.

As the Upper Midwest became the nation's breadbasket in the last quarter of the 19th century, farmers became vulnerable to the boom and bust cycles that came with single-crop agriculture. Wheat was particularly susceptible to stem rust, a fungus that causes the plant's grain to shrivel and die. Epidemics of wheat rust struck Minnesota in 1875, 1892, 1894, and, with particular severity, in 1904, when Stakman was just two years into his college career at the University of Minnesota.

Stakman earned his degree in science in 1906 and subsequently took teaching jobs in Red Wing, Mankato, and Argyle, Minnesota, where he became superintendent of schools at the age of 23. He would be lured back to the University a few years later by Professor Edward Freeman (B.S. 1898, M.S. 1899, Ph.D. 1905), who had been impressed with Stakman's work as an undergraduate. Freeman had served in the botany department at the U, but his specialty was plant pathology.

At the time, plant pathology was viewed as something of a stepchild within the department; it was an applied science as opposed to a pure one, and a relatively new form of study at that. Plant pathology was linked closely with the science of genetics, which was itself only a few decades old. The latest round of stem rust in 1904, however, had raised public awareness of the importance of studying plant disease. The epidemic had wiped out almost the entire spring wheat crop in the state, erasing livelihoods and commerce along with it. Plant pathology suddenly became a subject of deep interest to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), which began programs designed to fight grain diseases and bolster tougher strains of wheat crops.

In 1907, the U of M decided to create a new department in plant pathology with Freeman as its head. Stakman became the department's first doctoral candidate and, in 1913, the U's first Ph.D. in plant pathology. His study on "bridging hosts"—plants that served as homes for the wheat rust fungi—would launch 40 years of research on the subject. That same year, the University hired Stakman as an associate professor in plant pathology. And a year



Top: Flour-milling, an integral part of Minnesota's economy beginning in the late 19th and early 20th century, was devastated by repeated wheat rust outbreaks. In an undated photograph, Russell-Miller Milling Company workers sacked and weighed flour.

Bottom: Photographed in a field in Mexico in the 1960s, Norman Borlaug, a former student of Stakman's, developed a hardy form of disease-resistant wheat that helped sustain millions of people in developing countries.

served as homes for the wheat rust fungi—would launch 40 years of research on the subject. That same year, the University hired Stakman as an associate professor in plant pathology. And a year

after that, Stakman began a long association with the USDA as a consultant in plant pathology for federal programs.

Along with efforts to develop rust resistant strains of cereal crops, the U's plant pathology department and the USDA began encouraging the eradication of barberry, a shrub known to be a host plant for wheat rust. Barberry was a decorative plant brought to the United States by colonists in the 17th century and planted primarily as an ornamental hedge. The plant moved into the grain-producing states of the Upper Midwest simultaneous to the region's expanding settlement and wheat production.

While the association between barberry and wheat rust was well-known, eradication efforts had been halfhearted until another disastrous epidemic of wheat rust, in 1916, killed more than 60 percent of Minnesota's wheat crop, just as the United States stood at the brink of entry into World War I. The devasta-



School-age children formed Rust Busters Clubs that rooted out barberry plants in cities and the countryside. This group of children in 1930 received medals for their efforts.

tion prompted a far more vigorous attempt, at both the state and federal levels, at rooting out barberry bushes. And the man the USDA picked to lead these efforts was E.C. Stakman.

The U gave Stakman a temporary leave of absence to lead the USDA campaign to completely rid grain-producing states of barberry. Because the plant produced astronomical numbers of spores that could easily be carried on the wind to wheat plants, barberry needed to be eradicated not simply in the countryside, but in towns and cities as well. That meant that local, regional, state, and federal authorities had to form a concerted effort. Problem was, no similar sort of collaborative program had been tried before.

A small man with an elfin grin, Stakman had the countenance of a warmhearted teacher. Future colleagues in plant pathology like Professor Helen Hart (B.A. '22, Ph.D. '29) were quick to praise his intellectual skills, his "keenness of observation" and "intense interest in ordinary and extraordinary phenomena of everyday living." But his skills were also political and his leadership forceful and dynamic.

Stakman began his work at the USDA by finding allies in commerce and industry. General Mills, the John Deere Company, and

the Northern Pacific Railroad all signed on and helped form a Rust Prevention Association. Minnesota and other states in the Upper Midwest enacted legislation ordering the removal of the barberry plant. Publicity was crucial to the campaign, and Stakman and the USDA enlisted school-age children throughout the Upper Midwest to help spread the message to eliminate barberry. They used scouting programs for the same purpose and later formed a kids' Rust Busters Club. They encouraged garden clubs to conduct Barberry Bees to educate about the plant, and got groups of farmers and local citizens to tromp through fields to locate and destroy barberry plants and dump salt on remnant root systems to prevent barberry from reemerging.

The effort to eliminate barberry was successful from the start. In Minnesota alone, an estimated 600,000 plants were destroyed in 1918, the first spring of its operation. But as Norman Borlaug would one day learn, the enemies of cereal crops were indeed shifty little creatures, and the elimination of barberry bushes was a long-term job. In fact, the endeavor would continue as a state and federal program until the early 1970s. By that time, more than 450 million barberry bushes had been eradicated in 18 states and, in the words of Stakman's biographer, C.M. Christensen, "long before that the often regular and destructive local epidemics of black stem rust were a thing of the past."

Stakman's association with the USDA would continue throughout his long career, but he was back teaching and conducting research at the University of Minnesota in the early 1920s. He continued to study rust diseases as well as the development of more rust-resistant plants. He became the world's

leading authority on grain rust fungi and the epidemiology of rust diseases. His studies of barberry plants helped yield sources of inocula for the disease and suggested ways in which new strains of the fungi might arise. He was a pioneer in aerobiology—one of the first scientists to use airplanes to trap and track microorganisms in the air, leading to studies on the distribution and dissemination of plant pathogens across wide swaths of the continent.

He also established a 40-acre plot on the University's St. Paul campus where, in the words of a 1944 *Time* magazine profile, "he cultivates almost every plant disease known to the Midwest. There are thousands upon thousands. Stake's object is to develop tough new varieties of wheat and other cereals that will resist these diseases. His \$300,000 laboratory at the University of Minnesota is one of the liveliest in the U.S., pulsing with Arrow-smithian fervor. His graduates, scattered over the earth, today are fighting fungi in Europe, Australia, China, India."

Stakman—along with Freeman; colleagues like Hart, Herbert Hayes, and Clyde Bailey (M.S. '16); and a string of talented students, including George Harrar (Ph.D. '35), attracted to plant pathology by Stakman's expertise and brilliance—helped to build a department at the U of M that was second to none in the field. Furthermore, his work helped raise the importance of plant pathology in the public eye, as well as in public policy.

Stakman's skills were called upon again, just prior to the Unit-

ed States' entry into World War II, when he was asked to tour South America to look for sites where the growth of rubber trees might be reinvigorated. At the time, more than 90 percent of American rubber came from Malaysian and Indonesian rubber plantations, which were soon to be taken over by Japan. Those plantations in the East had been established a half-century earlier from rubber trees stolen from the plant's native Brazil, which had previously had a monopoly on the tree's harvest. U.S. industry desperately needed to find a stable and secure source of rubber. Stakman's task was to help find locations in South America for replicating the success of the rubber tree farms in the East.

Photographed in Oromina, Peru, in April 1941, Stakman traveled to South America at the behest of the U.S. government to look for sites to grow rubber trees in anticipation of entering World War II.



China—the vaunted Green Revolution that was honored most famously by Borlaug's Nobel Peace Prize in 1970.

When Stakman retired from full-time teaching at the U of M in 1953, he had acquired a host of honors. He held honorary doctorates from six institutions; was a past president of the American Phytopathological Society and editor-in-chief of *Phytopathology*; was voted president of the prestigious American Association of the Advancement of Science in 1949; was named as an adviser in biology and medicine to the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission; and served for a number of years on the board of the National Science Foundation. In 1952, he was named by the

publishing house Little, Brown one of the 100 most important people in the world.

Stakman lived a long and productive life, dying in St. Paul in 1979 at the age of 93. Wheat rust, which had been such a devastating influence on the world of agriculture into which he was born, is still out there. It remains a shifty little enemy today, mutating and threatening new varieties of wheat and challenging the next generation of plant pathologists, inspired no doubt by the work and achievements of the pioneering E.C. Stakman. ■

Tim Brady is a St. Paul-based freelance writer and regular contributor to Minnesota.

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Taking Compassion in Stride

Don't even suggest to Mike Torchia (B.S. '10) that his values—particularly his impulse to use his talents for the good of others—are at all unusual. Not even when it comes to his volunteer work in Costa Rica and Peru.

"It's just a commonsense thing," Torchia says with a wave of the hand. "It comes down to respecting people and doing the right thing. Just respect people, and a lot flows from that," he says.

Certainly a lot has flowed from Torchia's career as a Gopher student athlete. Last spring the Rochester, Minnesota, native received his biochemistry degree with a 3.94 grade point average and has been nominated for a Rhodes Scholarship. He is applying to medical schools—Minnesota is on his list—while he runs cross country and prepares for the indoor track season. He also works at the Dignity Center, a nonprofit resource and advocacy organization for homeless people in Minneapolis.

Torchia earned an extra year of athletic eligibility because three concurrent stress fractures, in his hip, spine, and femur, sidelined him for the 2009 season. In fact, adversity has been Torchia's constant companion throughout his Gopher career: a hip stress fracture the summer before his freshman year; surgery on his thigh the following summer; a fibular stress fracture the fall season of his sophomore year; and a bout with mononucleosis at the end of his junior year.

Yet he persisted. In 2008, his junior year, Torchia placed

seventh in the Big Ten championships in the 5,000 meter and sixth in the 10,000 meter. That year he also set what was then a school-record time in the 5,000 (it now ranks third) and earned All-Midwest Region honors in cross country.

Torchia has come to consider his injuries a blessing in disguise. "They've forced me to develop an identity apart from being a runner. I came in with aspirations to run professionally and in the Olympics. But when you're injured you have to step back and look at the other opportunities there are."

Opportunities such as volunteering in Costa Rica to help build an addition to a community center and renovate a school during winter break of his sophomore year, and working at an orphanage in Lima, Peru, a year later. The orphanage experience, he says, was life-altering.

"Prior to the trip, I attributed any success I had to my own hard work. After Peru, it became apparent that hard work was only a small part of success. No matter how talented or hardworking some of the orphans were, their chances of earning an athletic scholarship were greatly limited. These 'opportunity chasms,' as I like to call them, that came about from the sheer bad luck of being born in the wrong part of the world, were very unsettling to me." Torchia channeled his unsettled feelings into organizing a personal fund-raising campaign that netted \$5,000 for the orphanage.

Torchia sums up what he's learned at Minnesota very simply. "If you see something that needs to be done, just do it."

—Cynthia Scott



Mike Torchia



Terra Rasmussen

Maroon and Gold Genes

Terra Rasmussen is known for her take-no-prisoners style on the ice. When the Gopher hockey captain was a freshman, she blasted out onto the ice during her first game and immediately landed in the penalty box.

“Terra’s an Adrian Peterson-type player, real thunder and lightning,” says Kelley Scott, the athletics director at Rasmussen’s high school, Coon Rapids High, referring to the Minnesota Vikings running back. “When she runs into people, she doesn’t go down. And if you don’t take her speed seriously, she’ll just blow right past you.”

It’s easy to see where T-Raz—as Terra is known on the ice—gets her steel-trap playing style. Her father, Randy Rasmussen (B.A. ’85), captained the Golden Gophers football team in the mid-1980s and then played six seasons in the NFL. Her grandfather, Bob Rasmussen, was an offensive guard and a lineman for the Gophers from 1955 to 1957, and then lost a few teeth on the professional wrestling circuit in Canada. Her mom, Dana Rasmussen, was a lightning-quick lacrosse player. And her sister, Teena, is a U.S. Marine.

“We’re a pretty tough bunch,” says Randy, who earned the Gophers’ MVP award in 1983. The Rasmussen family stands out not only for its succession of Gopher athletes, but also for its genuinely American story.

Terra’s great grandfather, Sven Rasmussen, immigrated to Minnesota from Denmark in 1923 with just a few kroner in his pocket and settled in northeast Minneapolis. His son Bob became

a standout three-sport athlete at DeLaSalle High School, and was offered the U’s full-ride Williams scholarship to play football.

“If you think about it, that one scholarship helped to lift me up, and then the two generations after me,” says Bob, who now splits his time between Luck, Wisconsin, and a winter home in Florida.

Bob started playing for the Gophers in 1955, when the club had just graduated from leather to plastic helmets and face guards were a novelty. He still proudly remembers crushing UCLA at Memorial Stadium in a full-blown snowstorm.

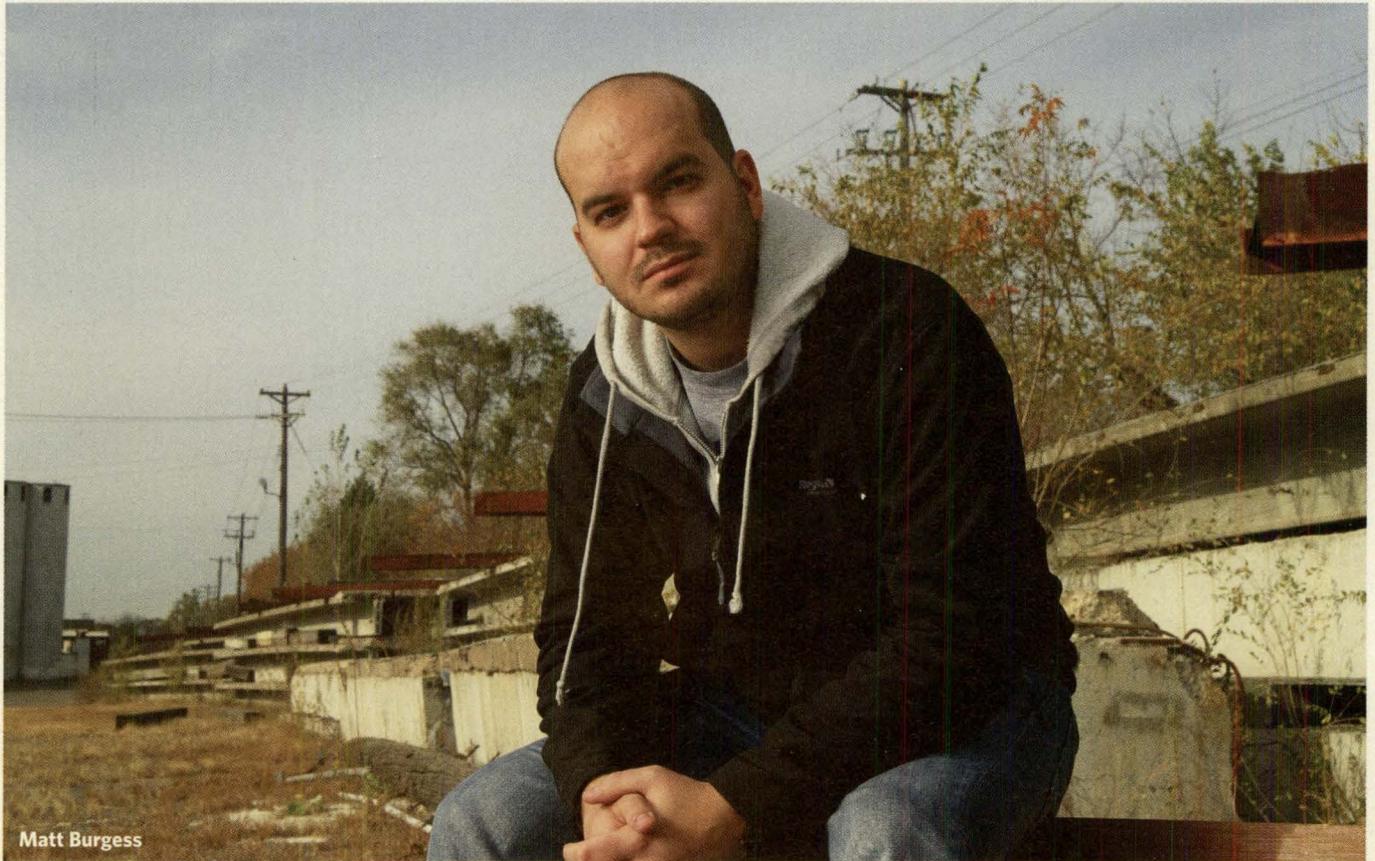
His 6-foot 2-inch son, Randy, kept up the gridiron tradition in high school and was recruited by Division I teams from across the country. But he decided to follow in his father’s footsteps, and eventually captained the Gopher team.

Now the Rasmussen dynasty has Terra. “I always thought of myself in a Gopher jersey before I went to sleep,” says Terra, a business management major. She chose ice hockey as her sport, arguably the most physical, hard-edged game available to women. “I love how fast it is,” she says. “It’s a world apart from high school hockey.”

Dana and Randy never miss a game, driving through snow and whatever else the weather serves up to Grand Forks, Madison, Bemidji, and Potsdam, New York, to see their youngest daughter rake the ice. “The first time she scored, Dana and I just looked at each other,” says Randy. “We were so proud we could hardly even cheer.”

The feeling is mutual. “Family is a huge thing for us, and I think having them here for me is the biggest thing in the world,” Terra says.

—Alyssa Ford



Matt Burgess

Street's Disciple

A powerful debut novel from Matt Burgess

1. Hispanic American youth—Fiction. 2. Drug dealers—Fiction. 3. Brothers—Fiction. 4. Street life—Fiction. 5. Queens (New York, N.Y.)—Fiction.

—Library of Congress cataloging-in-publication data for *Dogfight, A Love Story*, published this fall by Doubleday

The Library of Congress might also have said something like this: “1. First novels—uncommonly good. 2. Post-9/11 novels—not hamstrung by solemnity. 3. Violent novels—in spades. 4. Love stories—exhilarating yet grounded. 5. Hopeful endings—against long odds, and not simplistically, yes.”

And this: “6. Jackson Heights, Queens, as melting pot, battleground, holy land, penitentiary, Elysian Fields—oh, yeah. Big-time.”

It will come as no surprise to anyone who reads this novel that its author, 28-year-old Matt Burgess (M.F.A. '09), grew up in Jackson Heights, which he calls “one of the most ethnically diverse areas in the world.” Asked about the book's genesis, Burgess says, “I absolutely set out to write a Queens novel. I wanted to jam as much of the borough as I could into this book, [which means] the Mets are going to have to get referenced, and the Lemon Ice King of Corona and the No. 7 train and Sammy's Halal. I can't separate the story I'm telling from the place in which it unfolds, just as I can't separate myself from the place

in which I grew up. It's fundamental to my identity.”

The story Burgess tells is not easily summarized, partly because it teems with character and incident, and partly because it is the sort of story whose greatest strengths are the author's narrative voice, his humor, and his agility with point of view. In outline, *Dogfight* is the story of 19-year-old Alfredo Batista, a small-time drug dealer whose girlfriend, Isabel, is seven months pregnant. We meet Alfredo on June 14, 2002, the day before his violence-inclined older brother, Tariq (né Jose), who was Isabel's boyfriend before he got sent to prison for burglary, is to be released on parole. This places a variety of pressures on Alfredo, not the least of which is that he has less than 24 hours to steal or otherwise procure a pit bull for Tariq's welcome-home party/dogfight. Chaos (in the form of thefts, beat-downs, shootings, dogs launching themselves at each other in a bodega basement) naturally ensues; but so does love (romantic, parental, fraternal), so does friendship, so do wage-earning and meal-making and prenatal checkups and the little soliloquies of Isabel's unborn child, which only she hears.

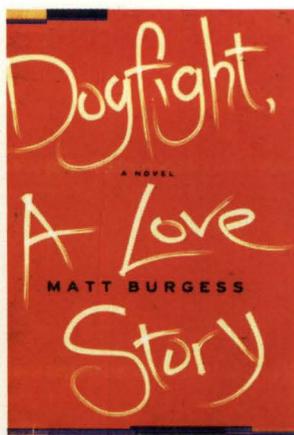
Burgess never plays anything that is painful, physically or emotionally, for laughs—and yet you put the book down thinking of its humor as much as any of its other qualities. It isn't easy sitcom humor, though wisecracks abound. Alfredo's partner

in crime, a Haitian kid named Winston, says of the elaborate and terrifying preparations for the dogfight, “Whatever happened to simple parties? Whatever happened to getting somebody an ice cream cake?” Burgess’s narration is peppered with sardonic observations. “A group of kids float around . . .” he writes. “A promising sign—split the nucleus of a teenaged atom and you’ll often find drugs.”

And this: “The NYPD’s anti-crime unit [is] the department’s version of chemotherapy, poisons injected onto diseased streets in order to kill deadlier, more dangerous poisons.”

“I wanted to write an urban novel that celebrated life, and in particular *these* lives,” Burgess says. “A book that wasn’t relentlessly grim and gritty, that didn’t have that unfortunate medicinal aftertaste. A big influence in this regard was my father, who asked me early on if *Dogfight* was funny. I said, ‘No, not really’—thinking in my head, ‘Of course it’s not funny, it’s *literature!*’ And he said, ‘Yeah, that’s what the world needs—another unfunny book.’ No kidding, right? So I started over.”

Burgess wrote most of the book in Minneapolis, where he spent three years in the University of Minnesota English department’s M.F.A. program in creative writing. (His undergraduate degree is from Dartmouth.) He chose Minnesota for several reasons, including the fact that his then-girlfriend, now-fiancée, was planning to study social work here. Her plans changed, but by then Burgess was committed to the U, partly, he says, “because Charles Baxter teaches there, and he wrote one of my favorite books on books, *Burning Down the House*,” and partly “because they were the only M.F.A. program who accepted me outright. And thank God. My experience at the U was amazing. The teachers, like Baxter and Julie Schumacher, were tremendously generous with their time,



Dogfight, A Love Story
By Matt Burgess
Doubleday, 2010

not only line-editing my work, but also showing me how I should carry myself as a writer—which is to say that I should take fiction as seriously as it deserves to be taken. No shortcuts. No tricks.”

With all that happens in *Dogfight*—the petty crimes, the serious crimes, the heinous crimes; the several deep and convincing love stories; the backstories of characters with names like Baka and Vladimir

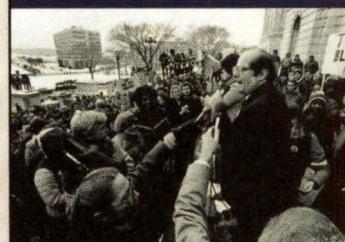
Shifrin and Max Marshmallow and the Alphabet Brothers; and the dogfight itself, which is more than 50 pages of upward-ratcheting tension, cinematic storytelling, and remarkable moral vision—you could almost miss the references to 9/11, which Burgess slips in with a deft touch here and there, that unspeakable day throwing off aftershocks in the minds and hearts of his characters, sometimes at the oddest moments. But you do notice them, and as they accumulate you begin to wonder, almost as a technical question, when and how they’re going to pay off.

It isn’t until the book’s last chapter, its coda, that they do. In that chapter, set a year after the dogfight, on the day of the Northeast Blackout of 2003, Burgess gives Isabel—the new mother, whom he allows is his favorite among all the characters he so affectionately portrays—the task of showing us how the images of that day have come to live inside us, how they color what we see even in our most intimate moments. You realize that this is what the book has been building to—*this*, Isabel’s vision, not Alfredo’s or anyone else’s. You come to the last paragraph, and you take in the words, and each one lands perfectly, and when it’s over you know something different about yourself and your history. It is the sort of thing that perhaps only the best fiction can do, and Matt Burgess, of Minneapolis and Queens, pulls it off.

—Jeff Johnson

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF ALLAN SPEAR

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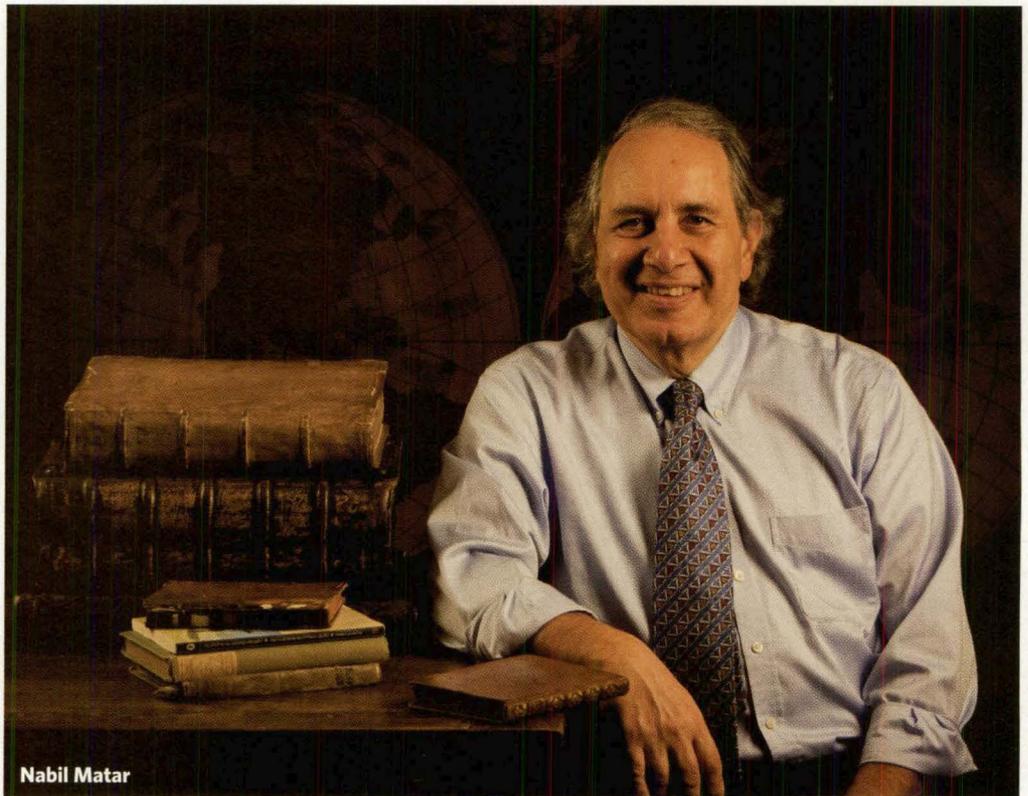
Bridging Islam and the West

Has the relationship between Islam and the West always been as contentious, complicated, and controversial as it is today? Where might common ground be found? In an effort to answer those questions, the University of Minnesota's Religious Studies Program and Institute for Global Studies, in collaboration with community and student groups, will sponsor Shared Cultural Spaces: Islam and the West in the Arts and Sciences, an international conference that will be held on campus February 24 through 26.

Funded by a \$170,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the conference will explore ways that Muslim contributions to literature, science, art, and architecture have influenced and helped build the foundation for those disciplines in the West. "People talk only about what's going on today," says Nabil Matar, a professor of English at the University of Minnesota and a co-organizer of the conference. "The discourse is very contemporary, which is fine; it's just that there is a long, long history of interaction and engagement between cultures and religious civilizations—between that elusive term the 'Islamic World' and the more elusive term, the 'Western World.'"

The centerpiece of the conference will be the staging of one of the literary masterpieces of the medieval Islamic world, *Hayy bin Yaqzan* by Ibn Tufayl, an Arab physician and philosopher in the intellectually adventurous court of caliph Abu Ya'cub at Cordoba, in 12th-century Spain. New York director Mohammad Bagher Ghaffari has dramatized the text into a play that will premiere at the conference.

Hayy bin Yaqzan, which means "Alive, son of Awake" in Arabic, is a story of spiritual discovery, and was the inspiration for Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. Hayy, an orphan raised on a desert island by a gazelle, evolves in his understanding of the natural world and God. Although the theological motif of *Robinson Crusoe* is often ignored, Defoe's protagonist reenacts a similar spiritual journey when a shipwreck leaves him with nothing but a Bible. The performance of *Hayy* will demonstrate the profound influence of Muslim literature on the West. Hayy is, as Matar notes, "the universal human being. At the time, it was unique to say that the human is able to educate himself without recourse to religion, to history, to society; that we make



Nabil Matar

ourselves, rather than being made."

Hayy is well-known but little-read in the Muslim world today. Yet in its day it was controversial. "All monotheism likes to believe that it's God who reveals himself, not you who can figure him out," Matar says. "We may know his text, we may know his revelation, we may know his incarnation in Christ, but we never understand God. So the idea that a human being like Hayy can know God without revelation was, and continues to be, very problematic."

William Beeman, chair of the University of Minnesota's Department of Anthropology, co-organizer of the conference, and producer of the play, describes the 90-minute production, which will be staged in the round with just a few actors and musicians, as relatively spare but powerful. "The simplicity of [Ghaffari's] work with movement and symbolism is extremely evocative," he says. "One can expect a very beautiful and lyrical performance."

"The play is really an exposition of early Islamic science at a time when nothing like this was known in Europe," Beeman says. "Viewers should be curious about how this level of understanding arose in the Muslim world so far in advance of the West."

Performances will take place February 24, 25, and 26 on the Arena Stage at the Rarig Center, 330 21st Avenue South on the West Bank of the Minneapolis campus. They, and all other conference events, are free and open to the public. For more information visit www.religiousstudies.umn.edu.

—Laura Silver



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On behalf of President Robert Bruininks, you are invited to attend the University of Minnesota's annual **Legislative Briefing** on January 19.



Attend this year's Legislative Briefing and participate in powerful new activities created to help you connect directly with your legislators. President Bruininks will share the U's 2011 legislative request and Peggy Flanagan, '02, community organizer and advocacy professional, will share her remarkable story about how attending the U changed her life and why personal stories are still what really matter to elected officials.

Minnesota's state budget faces a deficit of up to \$6 billion in the next biennium, putting the U's already diminished state support at deep risk. If we allow state leaders to neglect our shared commitment to higher education, the cost of rebuilding our academic and research quality and capacity will be extraordinarily high for the University and the state.

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From Potlucks to Press Passes

When the president of the National Press Club (NPC) visited the University of Minnesota's School of Journalism and Mass Communication in September, he revealed something most journalists zealously guard: one of his sources.

"My dad is my source for Minnesota politics. He called the gubernatorial election for Jesse Ventura [in 1998] and he's been right every election since then," Alan Bjerga (M.A. '98) divulged to a group of students.

The fact that Bjerga, an accomplished agricultural policy reporter for Bloomberg News in Washington, D.C., still looks to his family in northern Minnesota for political insight says a lot about how deep his Minnesota roots are. In fact, Bjerga attributes his impressive career at least in part to church potlucks in Motley, Minnesota, near the family farm where he grew up.

"When I got to D.C., I was surprised to learn how much I knew about farming. All those years sitting at potluck at Faith Lutheran Church, standing in line at auctions and hearing people talk about their finances and their problems—you internalize a lot that you just don't get if you don't grow up there," he says.

Bjerga began his career at the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* in 1999. Following reporting stints in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and Wichita, Kansas, he landed a job at the Washington, D.C., bureau of Knight-Ridder and eventually moved to Bloomberg. He is nearing the end of a one-year term as president of the National Press Club, the prestigious, 108-year-old journalists' organization best known for the national broadcasts of its luncheon speaker series, which features heads of state, business leaders, scholars, artists, and other renowned guests. With his inauguration last January, the 37-year-old Bjerga became the third-youngest president of the NPC.

He is also likely the first president in the club's history to have been sworn in while holding his hand on a Minnesota Vikings Brett Favre jersey. Minnesota Senator Amy Klobuchar administered the oath—by NPC tradition, an irreverent one—in which Bjerga solemnly swore to "thoroughly investigate the NFL referees whose decisions kept my team out of the Super Bowl."

During his visit to campus, where he spoke to students about covering Washington in the Obama era, Bjerga exhibited the hallmark of his trade: being able to tell all sides of a story. On the one hand, he says, President Obama has taken concrete steps to make government more open and accessible. For instance, the backlog on Freedom of Information Act requests has diminished significantly since Obama took office. On the other hand,



the president has not moved on his campaign promise to press for a federal shield law, which would protect reporters from having to reveal sources. And Bjerga says that message management within the Obama administration is "aggressive and incredibly sophisticated.

"It's not a bad thing that government tries to get its own message out. But it's essential for the press to play its role of holding it accountable. The system collapses if you don't push back. My nine years in D.C. have strengthened my faith in the power of the press."

Bjerga counseled students to persevere in their aspirations in the face of the seismic shifts occurring in the profession. Develop expertise in a particular area, such as health care, or languages, and never stop learning. "Journalism can be fun," he says. "It's exciting. It's important. And you just maybe can do your part to help your country."

—Cynthia Scott

ACTIVE ALUMNI

What's Your Rec Sports Story?

Dr. David Nelson is a political junkie who likes crossword puzzles, wood carving, playing golf, and traveling whenever he gets the chance.

In 1954, his Touch Football team won the University of Minnesota's Intramural Championship. In those days, the University of Minnesota Champion went on to play the University of Wisconsin's Championship Team. He said that although the game he played in Madison was a fun experience, it was not nearly as memorable as the bond he formed with his Minnesota teammates.

What's your Rec Sports story? No matter how small, if Rec Sports has made an impact on your life, we want to hear about it!



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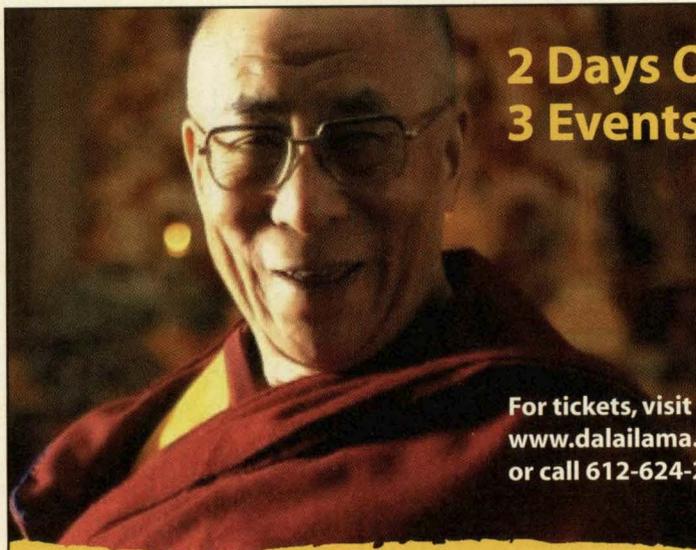
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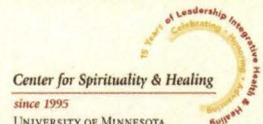
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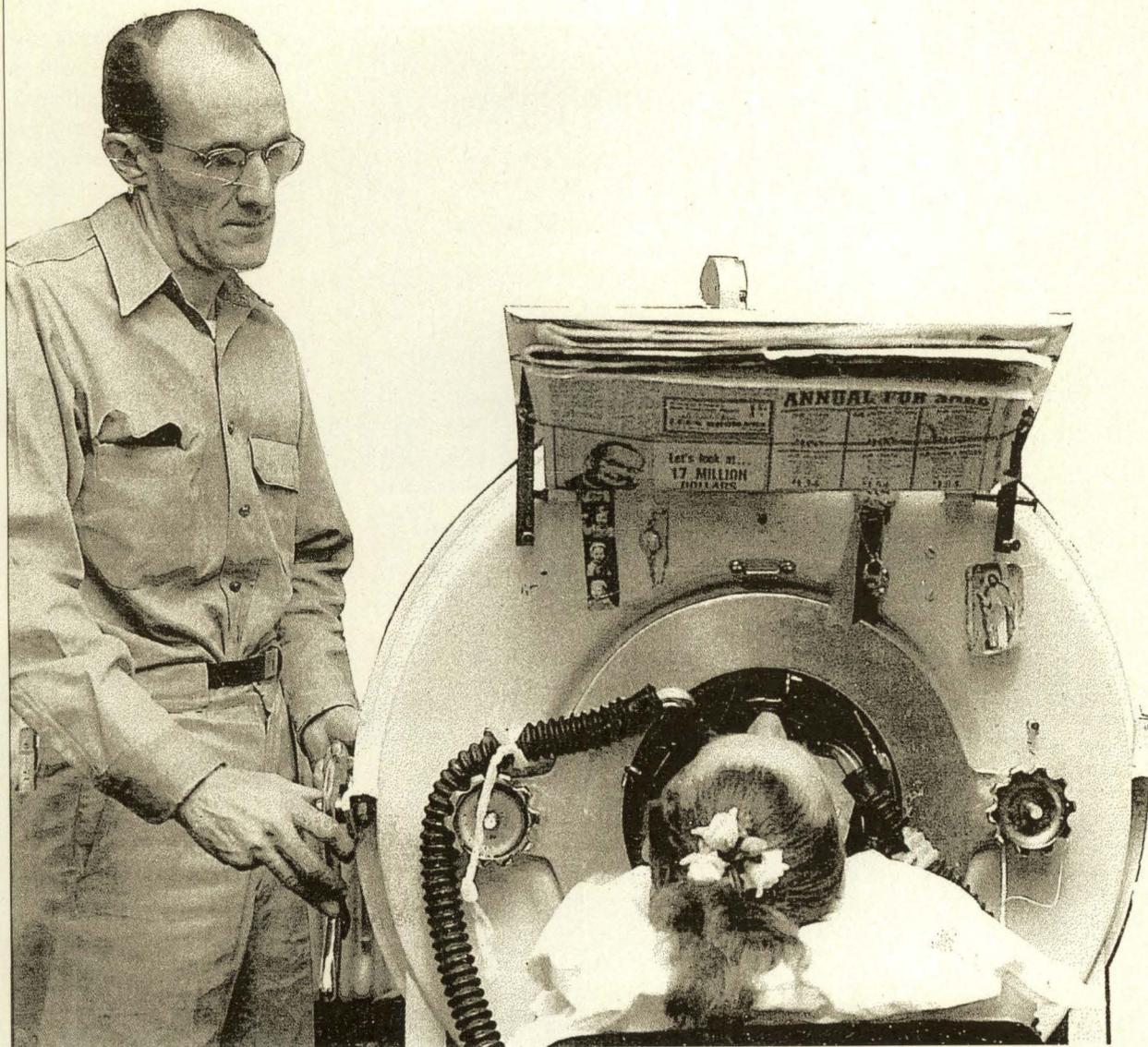
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Alumni Association Angle



Maintaining Hope When the polio epidemic swept the nation in the early 1950s, the iron lung was the only way patients whose respiratory muscles were paralyzed could be kept alive. Machines from all over the United States were shipped to the University of Minnesota Hospital, which in turn distributed them to other parts of the Midwest. The handling, servicing, and shipping of the respirators were in the hands of the U's mechanics and maintenance men, who worked around the clock. In this 1953 photo, Clarence McKelvey fixes a port in the iron lung of a U hospital patient. This photograph is part of the Academic Health Center History Project, which documents and preserves the history of health sciences at the U.

INSIDE

The 2010 Annual Report

Just the Ticket for Gopher Fans

Remembering Homecoming

Honoring Alumni Involvement



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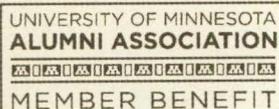
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PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANZ HALL

McNamara Addition Opens



University Hall, which looks out on the Scholars Walk and freshly landscaped Regents Plaza, is one of the McNamara Alumni Center's new meeting and event spaces. It accommodates up to 150 dinner guests.

The McNamara Alumni Center celebrated the grand opening of its new four-story addition on November 11. The 5,600-square-foot expansion on the southwest corner of the building adds office, meeting, and dining space to the award-winning facility.

The Gateway Corporation, a partnership between the University of Minnesota Alumni Association, the University of Minnesota Foundation, and the Minnesota Medical Foundation, owns the McNamara Alumni Center and funded the expansion.

Drawn to the Bell Museum



BELL PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAYME HALBRITTER

The University of Minnesota's Bell Museum has a new lineup of Thursday evening programs that includes Sketch Night, an opportunity for everyone from the accomplished artist to the casual hobbyist to draw museum objects. Subject matter ranges from rare animal mounts to exotic nests, skeletons, fossils, and other natural history objects. Twin Cities artist and illustrator Roz Stendahl informally leads the evening.

Sketch Night is held from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. the first Thursday of every month. The event is free for members of the museum. Alumni Association members receive a 25 percent discount on museum membership. For more information visit www.MinnesotaAlumni.org/benefits.

National Board Chair

Ambassadors, the Time Is Now

In addition to housing the offices of those organizations as well as conference and event space, the center is home to the Heritage Gallery, a multimedia exhibit space that honors the accomplishments of U alumni, students, and faculty. Alumni are always welcome to visit.

Life members of the Alumni Association are entitled to discounts on room rentals for conferences, weddings, receptions, and other events. For more information visit www.MinnesotaAlumni.org/McNamaraAlumniCenter.

In my last column I wrote about our challenging economic environment. As the 2011 legislative session draws closer, I want to reiterate how essential alumni advocacy is for the University of Minnesota. As President Bob Bruininks has said repeatedly, the University absolutely depends on alumni to speak on its behalf to legislators. Our state will not prosper without the University of Minnesota being a vigorous, well-supported institution of higher education. Those of us who understand the truth of this must be engaged legislatively.

Minnesota's \$6 billion budget shortfall will require difficult decisions to be made. Keeping in mind our state's tough financial challenges, President Bruininks intends to request \$642 million from the 2011 legislature. This is actually a modest request: It is the same amount the legislature approved last session as the U's base appropriation. As the president points out, the cost of not investing in the U now will be extraordinary. We cannot cut our way to prosperity.

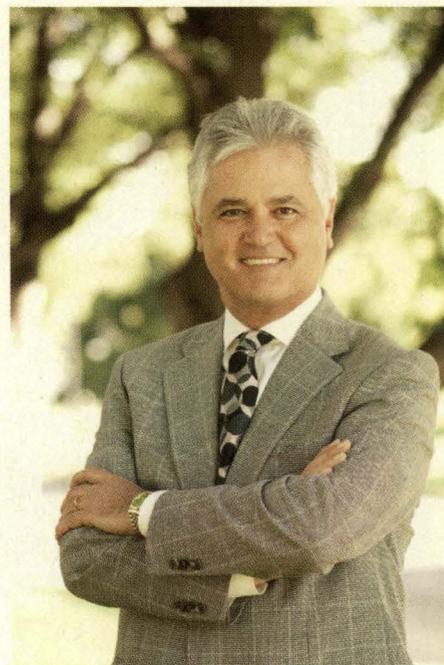
The Alumni Association's annual Legislative Briefing will be held on January 19 at the McNamara Alumni Center beginning at 5:30 p.m. Please plan to attend, and listen to President Bruininks' final legislative briefing before stepping down as president of the University. And prepare to be inspired by our speaker, Peggy Flanagan (B.A. '02), a member of the White Earth Band of Ojibwe and a community organizer who has years of experience training ordinary people—people like you and me—to become effective, confident advocates in the political arena. She also speaks passionately about the impact the University has had on her life. Peggy knows from personal experience how citizens who become willing and able to speak up for what they believe in can transform politics. She is a dynamic and powerful speaker who is sure to inspire you. Register at www.SupportTheU.umn.edu.

Both the University and the Alumni Association have a proud past and a bright future. But a bright future depends on all of us who believe in it to do our part so that the U continues to educate, innovate, and be the economic engine that drives our state and its citizens to prosperity.

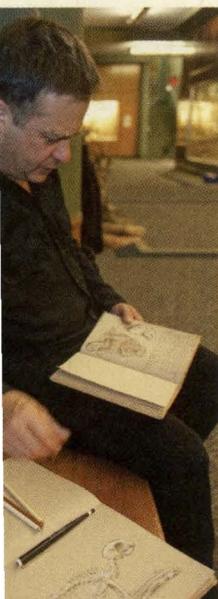
Galvanizing alumni to be effective advocates is an important part of the Alumni Association's role. It's a role we take very seriously, and to do it right we have launched our fourth five-year strategic planning process. In a national search, we selected the Napa Group, an organizational consulting firm, to facilitate the project. Our goal is to create a transformational plan that will expand and strengthen relationships among students, alumni, friends, and the University. New developments in technology and communications present opportunities to do this in exciting new ways.

We are committed to including key stakeholders in our strategic planning process. That includes University leadership, students, and you, our members. We believe strongly that inclusion of *all* stakeholders results in a stronger plan. I encourage you to share your visions, concerns, questions, and comments about how the Alumni Association can forge a future that advocates effectively for this great university. We've set up a feedback forum at www.MinnesotaAlumni.org. Please tell us what you expect from your alumni association. We're eager to hear from you.

—Ertugrul Tuzcu (M.S. '78)



Ertugrul Tuzcu



Pictured clockwise from far left are Dian Wall-Wagner (B.A. '87, B.S. '92), Ken Avidor, and Roberta Avidor.



FY10 ANNUAL REPORT



Thank you for being a member of the University of Minnesota Alumni Association! Membership dues help strengthen the Alumni Association by supporting communications, advocacy initiatives, services,

and events that benefit our alumni, students, and friends. Our business is your business and while these pages provide only a snapshot of our important work, I invite you to see how your membership helps our efforts to strengthen the University of Minnesota. As we plan for the future, we will work to be vital and relevant to stakeholders by enhancing our programs and services, encouraging meaningful engagement, and advancing our mission and goals. Go Gophers!

Phil Esten

Phil Esten

President and Chief Executive Officer,
University of Minnesota Alumni Association

As a loyal ambassador for the University and the Alumni Association, you helped to strengthen the University of Minnesota community and made it possible to:

Inform more than **221,000** alumni, students, and friends about the latest University news and research discoveries through the quarterly award-winning *Minnesota* magazine

Connect nearly **2,000** students with alumni, providing valuable professional and personal mentoring

Unite 7,139 alumni and friends at **164** chapter events across the globe, from lecture series to promoting the U of M to prospective students to game-watching parties

Support 18 collegiate societies, engaging more than **10,500** alumni and friends at programs and events

Provide members online access to **14,820** full-text publications and academic journals

Update 2,327 people in **48** Minnesota communities on the U of M's impact on the state during Statewide Speakers Tour visits from University faculty and staff

Gather nearly **2,000** alumni and friends together for the 2010 Annual Celebration featuring keynote speaker Katie Couric

Win a gold CASE award for *Minnesota* magazine, for Best College and University General Interest Magazine

Recognize 39 faculty, alumni, and students for exceptional teaching, volunteerism, and leadership

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STATE CHAPTERS



NATIONAL CHAPTERS





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FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

for fiscal year ended June 30, 2010

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Cash and Investments	\$ 21,148,000
Accounts Receivable and Prepaid Expenses	322,000
Fixed Assets	214,000
Total Assets	\$ 21,684,000

Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	\$ 74,000
Deferred Revenue	3,803,000
Total Liabilities	3,877,000
Net Assets	17,807,000
	\$ 21,684,000

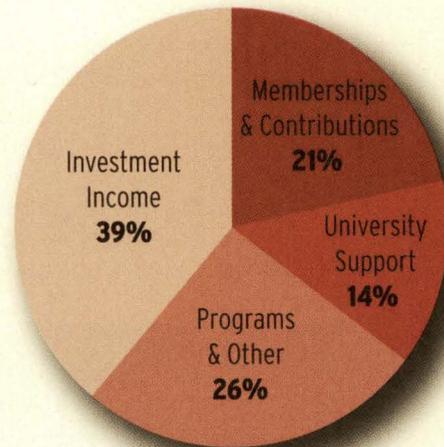
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

Memberships and Contributions	\$ 1,036,000
University Support	662,000
Programs and Other	1,239,000
Investment Income	1,866,000
Total Revenues	4,803,000

Programs and Activities	1,159,000
Membership	1,082,000
Publications and Communications	1,075,000
Advocacy and Service	415,000
Supporting Services	666,000
Total Expenses	4,397,000

Change in Net Assets **\$ 406,000**

REVENUES



EXPENSES



INTERNATIONAL CHAPTERS

COLLEGIATE SOCIETIES

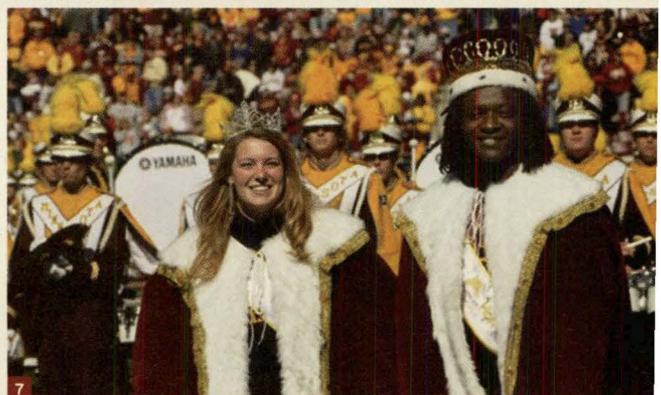


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- College of Biological Sciences
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- College of Design
- College of Education and Human Development
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- School of Journalism and Mass Communication
- Law School
- College of Liberal Arts
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- School of Nursing
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Homecoming Painted the Town Gold

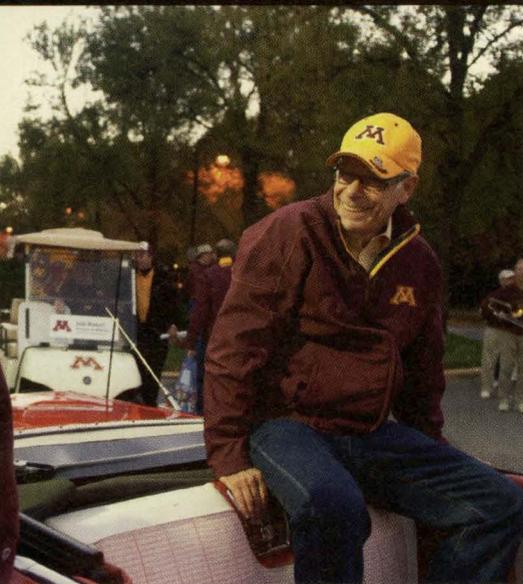
Campus took on a festive atmosphere the week of September 27 for Homecoming Week, topped off by the parade on Friday evening, October 1. Thousands of alumni, students, faculty, and staff lined University Avenue to view 80 entries, including the University of Minnesota Marching Band and twirlers, floats, the men's gymnastics team, and recipients of the Alumni Service Awards, all led by Grand Marshal Bob Bruininks. The Gophers played the Northwestern Wildcats on Saturday, losing a heartbreaker 29-28 in the final minutes.





A special welcome to our newest life members.

(reflects July 10 - October 15, 2010)



1. A young Gopher fan took in the parade.

2. Alumni Association national board chair Ertugrul Tuzcu and his wife, Karen Tuzcu.

3. University of Minnesota President and Grand Marshal Bob Bruininks along with student Paul Straine holding a photo of a younger Bruininks

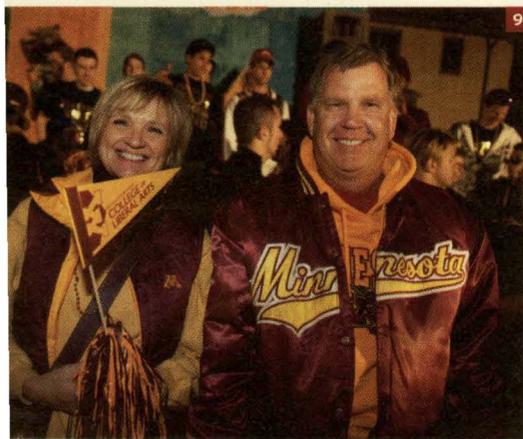
4. University of Minnesota Marching Band twirler Britney Dances

5. The Alumni Association hosted a reception for past presidents at TCF Bank Stadium prior to the parade. Bottom row, left to right, are Linda Mona, Tom Swain, Bob Stein, Ertugrul Tuzcu, Jerry Noyce, Dave Mona, and Archie Givens. Top row, left to right, are Tom LaSalle, Fred Friswold, Andrea Hjelm, Chip Glaser, Bruce Mooty, and Denny Schulstad.

6. Nolan Peterson of Peterson's Pedicabs gave a lift to School of Public Health student Lauren Mammini.

7. Homecoming queen Ashley Keinhofer and king Jermaine Elliott at halftime of the football game

8, 9. Parade-goers enjoyed the brisk fall evening.



ROYALTY PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHELSEA SOWERS. OTHER PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAYME HALBRITTER

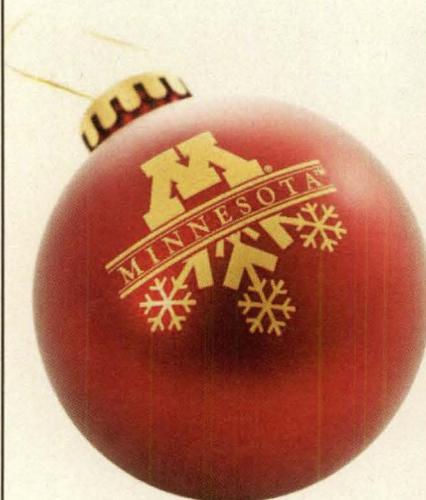
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Awards Recognize Exceptional Alumni Service



PHOTOGRAPH BY PATRICK O'LEARY

The Washington, D.C., Chapter received the Outstanding Chapter award for excellence in programming and participation at the Alumni Awards on September 29. Pictured are, from left, Alumni Association CEO and President Phil Esten, D.C. Chapter president Susan Heltemes and immediate past president Lara Lamprecht, and national board chair Ertugrul Tuzcu.

The University of Minnesota Board of Regents and the Alumni Association honored the exceptional contributions of volunteers at the Alumni Awards Celebration September 29 at the McNamara Alumni Center. The celebration was part of Homecoming Week festivities. The University presented the prestigious Alumni Service Award to 12 individuals.

Henry Blissenbach (B.S. '70, Ph.D. '74) is past president of the Pharmacy Alumni Society and currently serves as a member of the College of Pharmacy board of advisers and the Alumni Association national board. He made mentoring pharmacy students a part of his own practice early on and developed one of the first postgraduate pharmacy residency programs in Minnesota.

Deborah Broberg (M.A. '97) began mentoring students from the Carlson School of Management shortly after she graduated. She served on the school's Human Relations and Labor Studies Alumni Relations Board and Undergraduate Advisory Board.

Thomas Harding (A.A. '83) helped carry forward the history and mission of the University's General College (GC) through his work on the original Alumni Advisory Committee and through his service on the College of Education and

Human Development Alumni Society Board after GC was incorporated into the new college in 2006. Harding's efforts to reassure his fellow GC alumni of their place within a new alumni organization have been integral to the board's success in maintaining ties with alumni.

Kent Horsager (B.S. '84), the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences (CFANS) representative to the Alumni Association national board, has played a leading role in creating and sustaining the CFANS Science Achievement Award. The award recognizes high school juniors who excel in science and also helps CFANS alumni connect with prospective students.

Joyce Rude Johnson (B.S. '83) has been a steadfast ambassador for the School of Dentistry's dental hygiene program for more than 40 years. Active in many professional organizations, she also serves on the School of Dentistry's endowment

campaign steering committee, the Dean's Advisory Council, and the Continuing Education Advisory Council.

Bernadine Joselyn (B.A. '78, M.P.A. '01) has devoted years of service to the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs Alumni Board, mentor program, and Dean's Advisory Council. She has been a tireless promoter of the Institute's mid-career public affairs degree program, and works to inspire alumni to share scholarship assistance and mentor others.

Bruce Mooty (B.A. '77, J.D. '80) is the fourth member of his family to have served as national president of the Alumni Association board. He has also chaired the association's advocacy committee, visited 35 communities around Minnesota on the Statewide Speakers Tour, and helped mobilize 8,000 members of the Legislative Network to support the U's legislative request. His quiet, steady, behind-the-scenes support of the Alumni Association and the University continues today.

Sandy Morris (B.A. '64, M.A. '72) has been an active supporter of the College of Design's Goldstein Museum for 28 years, helping build the museum's collection, establish a permanent directorship, and support teaching, research, and outreach through cultural exchanges.

Brian Osberg (B.S. '73, M.P.H. '86) fulfills a deep commitment to assuring universal access to quality health care in part by working to ensure that the student and alumni experiences are the best they can be. As a volunteer for the School of Public Health Alumni Society he worked with faculty and alumni to design a more practice-based curriculum, established and increased participation in the Alumni Scholarship Fund, and established its mentor program.

Jim Pichler (M.S. '03) provided innovative leadership to the College of Science and Engineering (CSE) Alumni Society's K-12 Outreach Committee and to the legislature through his video work

for the University's Legislative Network. Under his presidency, the CSE Alumni Society was named Outstanding Alumni Society of the Year.

Paul Taylor (B.A. '61) has served the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) and the Alumni Association in various capacities for almost two decades, including on the CLA Alumni Society Board and the Alumni Association Advocacy Committee. The hallmarks of his service have been creative relationship-building and strategic planning to help advance the mission of CLA.

Melissa Thorson (B.S. '98, M.S. '08) made a seamless transition from student leader to alumni ambassador on the Nursing Foundation Board and later as an officer of the Nursing Alumni Society. She has been instrumental in the society's mentoring program and the school's centennial celebration of 100 distinguished alumni.

The Alumni Association recognized four individuals and seven groups for outstanding service and programming during the past year.

Outstanding Alumni Society: School of Nursing Alumni Society

Outstanding Chapter: Washington, D.C., Chapter

Programs Extraordinaire: College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences Alumni Society for Golf Scramble for Scholarships; College of Science and Engineering Alumni Society for Tech Fest at the Works; School of Dentistry Alumni Society for Clinical Grand Rounds; Dakota County Chapter for its fall lecture series; and West Central Lakes Chapter for Bringing the U to You.

Student Volunteers of the Year: Amie Jo Digatono, College of Pharmacy; Anna Michael, College of Veterinary Medicine; and Jeff Remakel, School of Dentistry

Faculty/Staff Volunteer of the Year: Stephen Schondelmeyer, College of Pharmacy

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