

# Minnesota ALUMNI

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

SUMMER 2017

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# Summer 2017



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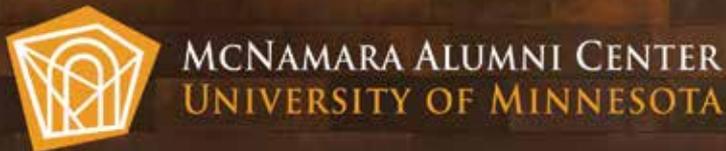
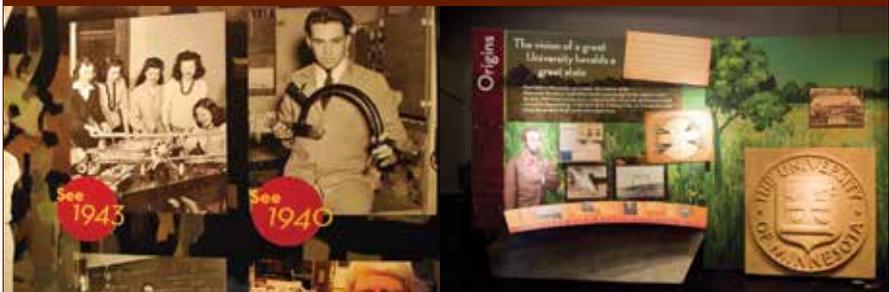
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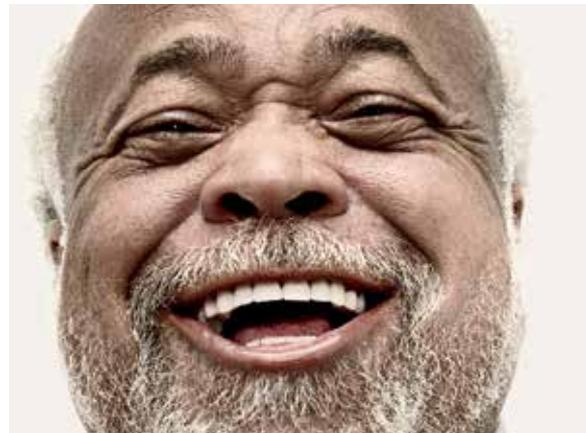
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## On Caring



ONE OF THE PERKS of editing this magazine is the opportunity it affords to be exposed to a vast range of ideas. The U is something of a candy store in that regard: ideas are here for the taking, for a quick injection of energy or for a long, slow savoring that beckons you back for more.

One of the more memorable ideas I have encountered in my 11 years with the magazine comes from University of Minnesota political scientist Joan Tronto.

In 2015 she received the prestigious Brown Democracy Medal, presented annually by the McCourtney Institute for Democracy at Penn State to someone who has made exceptional innovations to advance democracy in the United States or around the world. Tronto has spent her 30-plus-year career exploring a simple and revolutionary idea: a robust democracy has caring, not market economics, at its center. She calls for rethinking our own fundamental values and commitments as well as our political structures from a caring perspective. “Usually we think of the worlds of care and of politics as far apart. This is partly because we wrongly think that care is all about compassion and kindness, and that politics is all about one-upmanship,” she writes.

“What ails our democracy is not (or not only) that there is too much money in politics, or that elections aren’t meaningful or deliberative enough, or that there are myriad other concerns about how we conduct our democratic politics . . . what we currently call ‘politics’ is wrong. Our obsession with economics distorts what should be the most fundamental concern: care.” Her work offers rigorous economic and structural analyses as a road map for revitalization.

To put care at the center of our politics is a stunning idea that seems almost quaint in our current toxic and, may I say, distressing political environment. Yet it resonates. For example, as readers of this magazine well know, many states, including Minnesota, have become downright miserly when it comes to funding education. At root, education is a caring activity. That sustaining it has taken a back seat to a narrow and transactional notion of economics is Tronto’s theory writ large.

Tronto’s work is one of many influences that have prompted me to rethink my own fundamental values and commitments. One of the reasons I went into journalism is because I consider it a noble enterprise. As much as I have cherished the opportunity to do journalism at this publication, I have decided after a great deal of reflection that it is time for me to devote myself to different “care-full” endeavors outside of the University.

And so this is my last issue as editor of *Minnesota Alumni*. It has been the privilege of my professional life to serve this venerable magazine, the UMAA, and the U. I leave with a lump in my throat at the thought of no longer working with my colleagues here and across campus. They have taught me so much about professionalism and dedication, cared for me so well in a million ways, and simply been great friends. I thank them from the bottom of my heart, and I thank you, our readers. Take care. 

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## Fertile Ground: Our Bond with Farmers



ONE OF MY TOP PRIORITIES as president has been to build and strengthen relationships with Minnesota’s agricultural leaders and to ensure the University’s historic partnership with Greater Minnesota and its farming and natural resources communities.

It all began dramatically at my first visit to the State Fair in 2011 when I tested my cow-milking abilities, as you see in the accompanying photo. But when I showed the snapshot to my Tennessee mother-in-law, who grew up on a farm, she replied, “That’s a nice picture, dear, but next time put a bucket under the cow.”

Well, no one told me *that!*

Seriously, agriculture and the University of Minnesota are as inextricably linked today as when we became the state’s only land-grant institution 155 years ago. It’s our responsibility and an essential component of our mission.

After all, Minnesota ranks fifth in the nation in agricultural production and that generates nearly one-fifth of our state’s total economic activity. Just as we’re a global university, so, too, is Minnesota’s food a worldwide factor as the fourth largest exporting state in the nation.

As this issue’s article about farmer Pat Duncanson (B.A. ’83) demonstrates, agriculture has evolved over the past half century. So, too, has the University’s responsiveness to the ag community. Indeed,

as agribusiness and rural Minnesota have undergone dramatic changes, our approach to preparing the state’s ag workforce and our focus on ag-related research has adapted to the needs of producers and the food industry.

- Take our Minnesota Discovery, Research and Innovation Economy—or MnDRIVE—initiative. MnDRIVE is a highly successful research partnership with the state of Minnesota, and two key components of MnDRIVE are tied to agriculture and natural resources. One, Global Food Ventures, helps to fund research around crop productivity, farm animal illnesses, and food safety, among others. Another research focus, simply called Environment, focuses on water resources, which are critical to sustainable agricultural production.

- Take our College of Veterinary Medicine’s remarkably successful rapid response in 2015 that helped curtail the devastating effects of the avian flu for Minnesota’s nation-leading turkey producers.

- Take the ongoing strategic decisions by our College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences, or CFANS, to better prepare Minnesota’s talent force, emphasizing how food and agriculture careers are data-driven and truly high-tech fields that require strong STEM competencies.

- Or look at how Extension, with impact in all 87 counties, has constantly adjusted to better serve rural Minnesota’s increasingly diverse populations.

No one put it better than turkey producer Doug Huebsch (B.S. ’85), a member of the UMAA Board of Directors, when he testified before legislative committees earlier this year while advocating for our biennial budget request. Here’s what Doug said: “The University’s impact extends to just about every farmer, in every county, in every corner of the state, driving Minnesota’s global economy and our statewide workforce.”

We aim to build on that while strengthening our enduring agricultural partnerships. **■**



President Kaler milking a cow at the 2011 State Fair. His mother-in-law suggested he use a bucket next time.

“As a longtime recovering addict/alcoholic, my first question is never ‘why the addiction?’ My question is ‘why the pain?’ ”

### Insensitive and Bizarre

I taught in the College of Design’s School of Architecture from 2005 to 2016. I left to take a teaching position in Canada and the decision to leave the U was very difficult, as my family and I had made Minneapolis home for 11 years. I will be forever grateful to a community of passionate, committed, and student-focused colleagues who worked every day to make the study and teaching of architecture as engaging and rigorous as possible.

I remember too the students who were part of our academic journeys. I am delighted to have had the great pleasure to teach Lane Rapson in a graduate studio and the remarkable opportunity to meet and show my drawings (nervously) to [his grandfather] Ralph Rapson. As teachers, we love to keep up with our students. So I was curious to know what our architecture alumni were doing with the New York City skyline [“A Dance in the Sky,” Spring 2017].

I was struck by the insensitivity of a single comment in an otherwise interesting article. As a teacher, designer, a member of the Islamic faith, and as someone who has had the wonderful fortune to visit Mecca for the annual Hajj Pilgrimage—as well as experiencing the wonderful, hectic urbanity of Manhattan and the Hudson Yards project—I was puzzled and, I must add, offended, at the statement that “like the great mosque that surround the Kaaba in Mecca, 55 Hudson yards encloses an six-building owned by the MTA.”

I’m disappointed that this unfortunate comparison—which, as accidental or innocuous as it might have been—reduces the spiritual, historical, cultural, and personal meaning of Islam’s most sacred landscape to a bizarre metaphorical comparison with a massive urban development project in Manhattan. I am fairly certain the author’s intent was not to offend, but what an unfortunate outcome, for a moment, for this Gopher-at-a-distance.

**Ozayr Saloojee**

*Carleton University Azrieli School of Architecture and Urbanism  
Ottawa, Canada*

*Editor’s response: While Professor Saloojee is correct that the writer (or the editor, with whom responsibility ultimately rests) did not intend offense, we see and understand why offense was taken. We apologize for our insensitivity.*

### On Addiction

I read with interest the Spring issue, especially the stories concerning addiction.

As a longtime recovering addict/alcoholic, my first question is never “why the addiction?” My question is “why the pain?” Pamela Gonzalez [“It Has to Stop”] clearly gets it.

Gonzalez says, “We need to start looking at this differently because it’s negatively impacting future adults by us not recognizing its roots, and understanding its origins is involved in prevention.” Yes!

I’m wondering whether Carol Falkowski [“Sobering New Realities”] gets it. She says, “[...] recreational marijuana use has unique and sometimes lasting ramifications for adolescents. For starters, they’re more likely to develop an addiction.” I respect Carol for her years of working in the addiction field, but I think she has this wrong.

“The Power of Three Good Things” states “Alcoholics Anonymous recommends expressing “genuine gratitude for blessings received” in step 10. Step 10 says no such thing. The tenth step simply says, “Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.” [Editor’s clarification: The recommendation for expressing “genuine gratitude for blessings received” appears in the chapter on step 10 in the A.A. Big Book.]

**Jim Carter**

*Hastings, Minnesota*

*Carol Falkowski responds: My remarks were in reference to well-documented and longstanding fact, not opinion: The earlier the age of onset of use, the greater the risk of addiction.*

Al-Anon is the organization that helped me when my son was drinking and using. I was single, working full time, with a limited income. I believed the alcoholism was somehow my fault. When I was led to Al-Anon, the sun began to shine again. I found others in similar circumstances. Hope returned. Al-Anon costs nothing but helps many people.

(I started college when I was 40 years old, one class at a time, and I finally graduated when I was 60.)

**Virg Ledo (B.A. '95)**

*Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota*

### CORRECTION

The article about Stacia Kalinoski (B.A. '07) titled “Narrating a Brainstorm” [Spring 2017] contained several inaccuracies.

Kalinoski had one seizure on air, not several. She did not begin experiencing auras in college, as was stated. She was not on air in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in 2015—she left her job there in 2014. She experienced two episodes at work in Grand Rapids, not several, including one toward a coworker, not a supervisor. Finally, Kalinoski is a substitute teacher in St. Louis Park, Minnesota. We regret the errors.

Kalinoski noted that health care providers and advocates prefer the term “people with epilepsy” rather than “epileptics,” which was used in the article.



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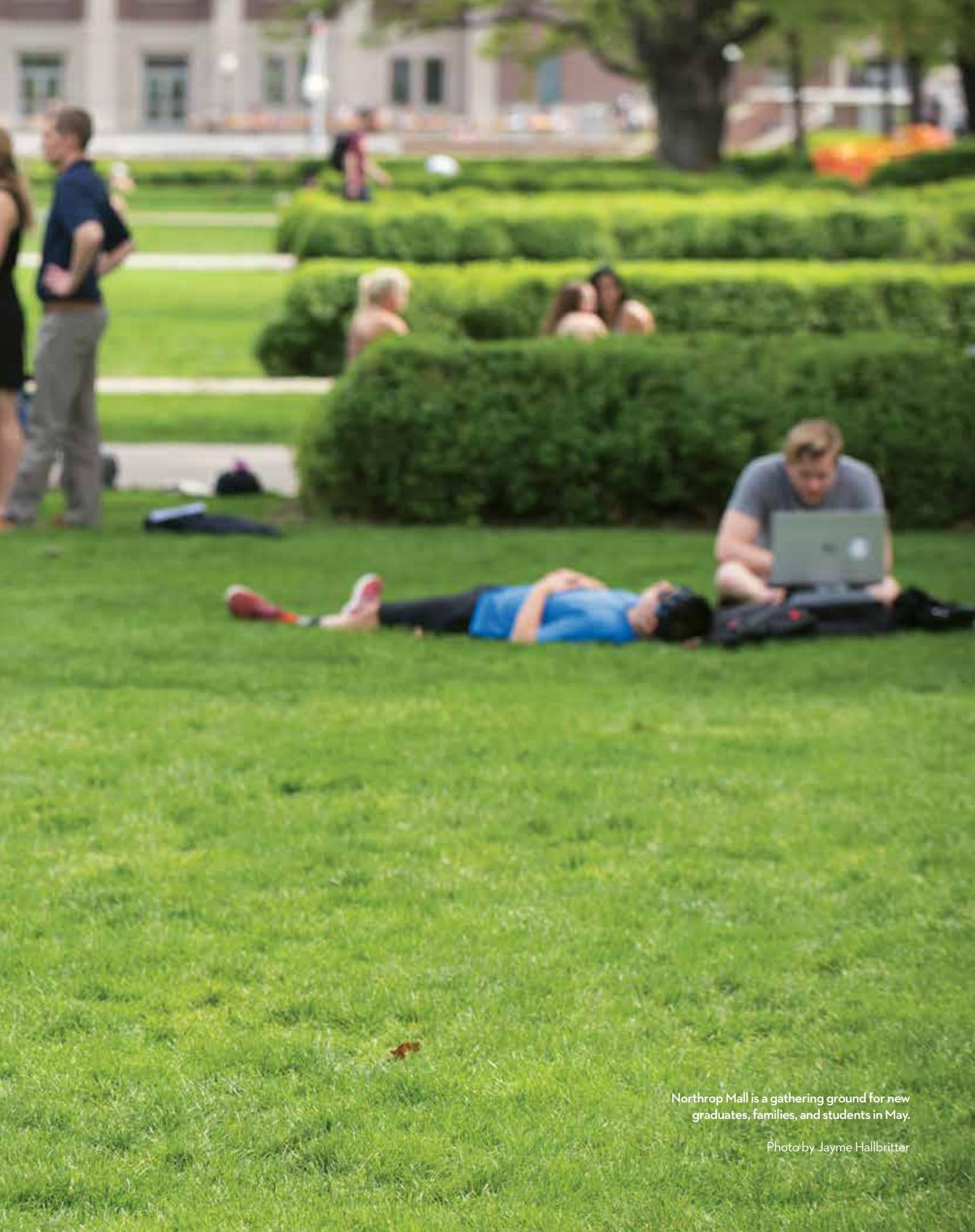


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ABOUT  
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Northrop Mall is a gathering ground for new graduates, families, and students in May.

Photo by Jayme Hallbritter

## J SCHOOL WILL HONOR THE HUBBARD FAMILY

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication will become the Hubbard School of Journalism and Mass Communication on July 1 in recognition of its longstanding support.

Alumna Deborah Hopp (B.A. '75), vice president of publishing and publisher of *Mpls. St. Paul Magazine*, said the Hubbard family is "synonymous with media innovation." The family, now in its third generation of leadership in the industry and community, pioneered with radio, TV, and satellite in the Twin Cities market.



# Whoa. That's Crazy!

Eddie Hoey and Zachary Doffing

**I**N JANUARY, Sanford Hall resident Eddie Hoey, a freshman, learned he was getting a new roommate. His name was Zachary Doffing, and he had transferred to the U from a Florida school. Eddie, of course, Googled his name.

"I didn't realize he went by Zack," says Eddie. "It's a little morbid, but the only place a Zachary Doffing showed up was in an obituary." That obituary was for Zack's maternal grandfather, 86-year-old Clarence Tervola (B.S. '51, D.V.M. '55), who died in 2012.

"The thing is, I knew the name Clarence Tervola," says Eddie. "My grandpa talked about a Clarence Tervola." In fact, as Eddie learned after checking with relatives, his maternal grandfather, Al Mayers (B.S. '57), had been Clarence's closest friend.

Once Zack moved in, the roommates bonded over the coincidence. But a dinner with Eddie's

grandparents revealed a bigger coincidence. Clarence and Al had been roommates. On the St. Paul campus. In 1948. The two agricultural education/veterinary medicine majors shared digs in the now-demolished Old Home building. After Al's service in the Korean War, the men and their new wives became inseparable.

Zack and Eddie plan to stay in each others' lives too, even after Eddie moves into the Kappa Eta Kappa fraternity next year. Al, 86, gives them his blessing. "It looks like they're going to have the same kind of happiness that Clarence and I had," he says.

Zack says the discovery has taught him awareness. "What you do now," he says, "just might have an effect 70 years down the road."

—Jon Spayde

# Legislature Elects Four Regents

AS IT HAS EVERY OTHER year since 1851, the Minnesota Legislature elected four regents to the University's governing board on February 22. Incumbents David McMillan (B.A. '83-UMD, J.D. '87) and Darrin Roshka (B.S. '90, B.A. '91, M.P.A. '93, J.D. '96) were reelected to six-year terms for the state's Eighth and Third Congressional Districts, respectively. Former regent Steve Sviggum won the Second District seat and General Mills CEO Ken Powell was elected to the board's at-large position. As stipulated by state law, their terms began immediately following the vote.

Roshka is an attorney with Roshka Legal Group in Orono and corporate counsel for Crutchfield Dermatology in Eagan. A lieutenant colonel in the Minnesota Army National Guard, he currently serves as a military judge. Roshka previously served as an at-large student regent from 1989 to 1995, winning election as a junior in the then College of Agriculture. He lives in western Hennepin County with his wife Valorie and their three children.

Powell is chairman and chief executive officer of General Mills, where he has served in a variety of positions since 1979. He serves on the board of directors for General Mills, Medtronic, the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, Greater MSP, the Grocery Manufacturers Association, and the Minnesota Business Partnership. Powell received a bachelor's degree in biology from Harvard and an M.B.A. from Stanford University. He lives in Golden Valley, is married, and has two adult children.

Sviggum is a farmer and former Speaker of the Minnesota House of Representatives. He also served as Commissioner of the Minnesota

Department of Labor and Industry and Commissioner of the Department of Management and Budget. He served in the Minnesota House of Representatives from 1979 to 2007 and was communications director for the Minnesota State Senate Majority. Sviggum was an adjunct professor and Legislative Fellow at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey School. He was first elected to the Board of Regents in 2011 but resigned when he accepted a position with the Minnesota Republican caucus. Sviggum is currently on the board of directors for Security State Bank of Kenyon. A graduate of St. Olaf College with a degree in mathematics, Sviggum and his wife Debbie have three adult children and 11 grandchildren.

McMillan is executive vice president of Minnesota Power, where he has served in a variety of roles since 1989. McMillan has extensive board experience, previously serving as the board chair of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, the Natural Resources Research Institute, the Area Partnership for Economic Expansion, and Goodwill Industrial Vocational Enterprises. Active in his community, he is a past member of the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center's Board of Directors and the Board of Directors of St. Luke's Hospital.

## The selection process

While the State Legislature is the final authority for electing regents, in 1988 it established a 24-person citizen advisory body called the Regent Candidate Advisory Council (RCAC). The RCAC's mandate is to recruit, screen, and recommend to the Joint Legislative



From top: Darrin Roshka, Ken Powell, Steve Sviggum, David McMillan

“This is one of the cases I knew was going to be really, really hard. I psychologically girded myself.



I had to carbo load for this one.”

University of Minnesota associate professor of neurosurgery UZMA SAMADANI, quoted in the *StarTribune*, commenting on the challenge of removing five spinal tumors in one surgery from a 15-year-old patient. The successful surgery took 28 hours.

Committee of the Senate and House Higher Education Committees at least two and not more than four candidates. The Joint Legislative Committee in turn forwards four finalists to the Legislature but is not bound to accept the recommendations of the RCAC. Rather, it may nominate and consider candidates who have not been through the RCAC's screening process. Likewise, the Legislature may nominate other candidates from the floor of the joint legislative convention during the final vote.

This year, the RCAC received 36 applications for the four open positions, selected 17 for interviews, and subsequently recommended 12 to the Joint Legislative Committee. Those 12 participated in a regent candidate forum attended by about 100 people at the State Capitol on January 28 hosted by the Alumni Association at the RCAC's request.

The Joint Legislative Committee's finalist recommendations were McMillan, Rosha, and then-regent Tom Devine (B.E.S. '79), all of whom had also been recommended by the RCAC, and Steve Sviggum, whom the Joint Committee nominated. Powell, who participated in the RCAC's process, was nominated from the floor of the joint convention during the final vote.

To learn more about the Regent Candidate Advisory Council, go to [rcac.leg.mn](http://rcac.leg.mn).

### The Alumni Association's role

In a statement on October 22, 2016, the Alumni Association Board of Directors affirmed its vested interest in ensuring that the Board of Regents is composed of highly qualified, mission-driven leaders who are committed to the long-term success of the University as a world-class research institution. The UMAA does not lobby for or endorse individual candidates, though alumni leaders and volunteers may individually recruit other alumni to apply.

The statement said the Association is uniquely positioned to help identify a diverse and qualified candidate pool. "The UMAA believes that an open, transparent process where qualifications are developed and vetted is critical to finding the best leaders from across the state. The UMAA promotes the availability of position openings regardless of whether there is an incumbent regent eligible for reappointment in that role," the statement read. To this end, the Alumni Association collaborated with the RCAC to assist with communications regarding open regent positions, regent qualifications, and the application process. The Alumni Association's participation in the selection process culminated at the January 28 regent candidate forum.

### THE BOARD'S DUTIES

The Board of Regents has one of the most challenging and complex public responsibilities in Minnesota: the governance of one of the state's oldest and most important institutions, with a budget of

more than \$1 billion; 63,000 students on five campuses; and nearly 27,000 employees. To carry out such critical responsibilities, regents serve six-year terms without pay, typically meeting every other month to deliberate and decide on matters as wide

ranging as approving the budget to the inauguration or termination of degree programs. The board is ultimately responsible for clarifying the mission of the University and ensuring that it has the funding, programming, and personnel necessary to carry it out.

The Board approves a schedule of its meetings for the coming year every June. Meetings are open to the public unless declared nonpublic as provided in state statute. Unless otherwise noted, all meetings are held in the boardroom on the 6th floor of the

McNamara Alumni Center. Board meetings are live-streamed on the regents website at [regents.umn.edu](http://regents.umn.edu). Agendas, minutes, policies, contact information for individual regents, and other information can be found there as well.

—Cynthia Scott





## Take that, Big Apple!

The University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, fondly called the Arb, was named the best botanical garden in the nation in the *USA Today* Readers' Choice Award in April. The New York Botanical Garden in the Bronx finished right behind. A panel of botanical garden experts and *USA Today* editors chose 20 nominees and the top 10 winners were determined by popular vote.

“It’s an intense amount of pain, and you’re not sure if it’s going to go away. It’s quite a rush, actually.”



University of Minnesota professor of molecular food safety microbiology DAVID BAUMLER describing biting into the Trinidad Moruga Scorpion, one of the world's hottest peppers. Baumler, an expert in chili peppers and foodborne pathogens, ate the pepper to raise funds for pepper farming in Africa.



## ON TO THE NEXT 125

Members of the University of Minnesota Band Alumni Society reunited with O'Neill Sanford, director of the U of M Marching Band from 1976 to 1985, at the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary gala concert on May 5. The concert was the culmination of a year of celebrating a century and a quarter of the University Band Program and featured the U of M Marching Band, Alumni Band, and jazz ensembles. Sanford traveled to the Twin Cities from his home in New Orleans for the concert.

Pictured left to right are Ellen Sorenson, Ron Rasmussen, Mary Sorenson, Tom Baldrice, Caroline Rosdahl, Jeanne Elert, Brent Elert, Sanford, Jim Jordan, Lizanne Pick, Jim Rost, Bill Pick, Paul Pagel, Steve Kreitz, and Janet Linkert.

Alumni, students, and other band musicians join together over the summer for U of M Summer Band, a community concert-style ensemble that performs several outdoor concerts in the Twin Cities area. To see the schedule, visit [skiumah.org](http://skiumah.org).

## Regents Will Review Handling of Assault Allegations

A COMMITTEE APPOINTED by the University of Minnesota Board of Regents is reviewing how the U handled allegations of sexual assault against Gopher football players late last year. The allegations triggered a federally mandated Title IX investigation that resulted in the suspension of 10 players in the weeks prior to the Holiday Bowl game on December 27. In February, after completing the appeals process, four of the accused students were cleared. Four were expelled from the University, a fifth was suspended for a year, and one expulsion was reduced to a one-year suspension. No criminal charges were filed against the players relating to the alleged sexual assault.

Board of Regents Chair Dean Johnson appointed Regents Thomas Anderson (B.S. '80), Peggy Lucas (B.A. '64, M.S.W. '78), and Steve Sviggum to the review committee. In addition, former federal prosecutor John Marti and labor law specialist Jillian Kornblatt (J.D. '10) of Dorsey and Whitney law firm in Minneapolis will serve on the committee. "We believe it is good governance to review recent circumstances and to determine how we can improve processes for the betterment of our students," Johnson says.

The University's Office of the General Counsel will conduct the review, with the University's Chief Auditor providing guidance as needed.

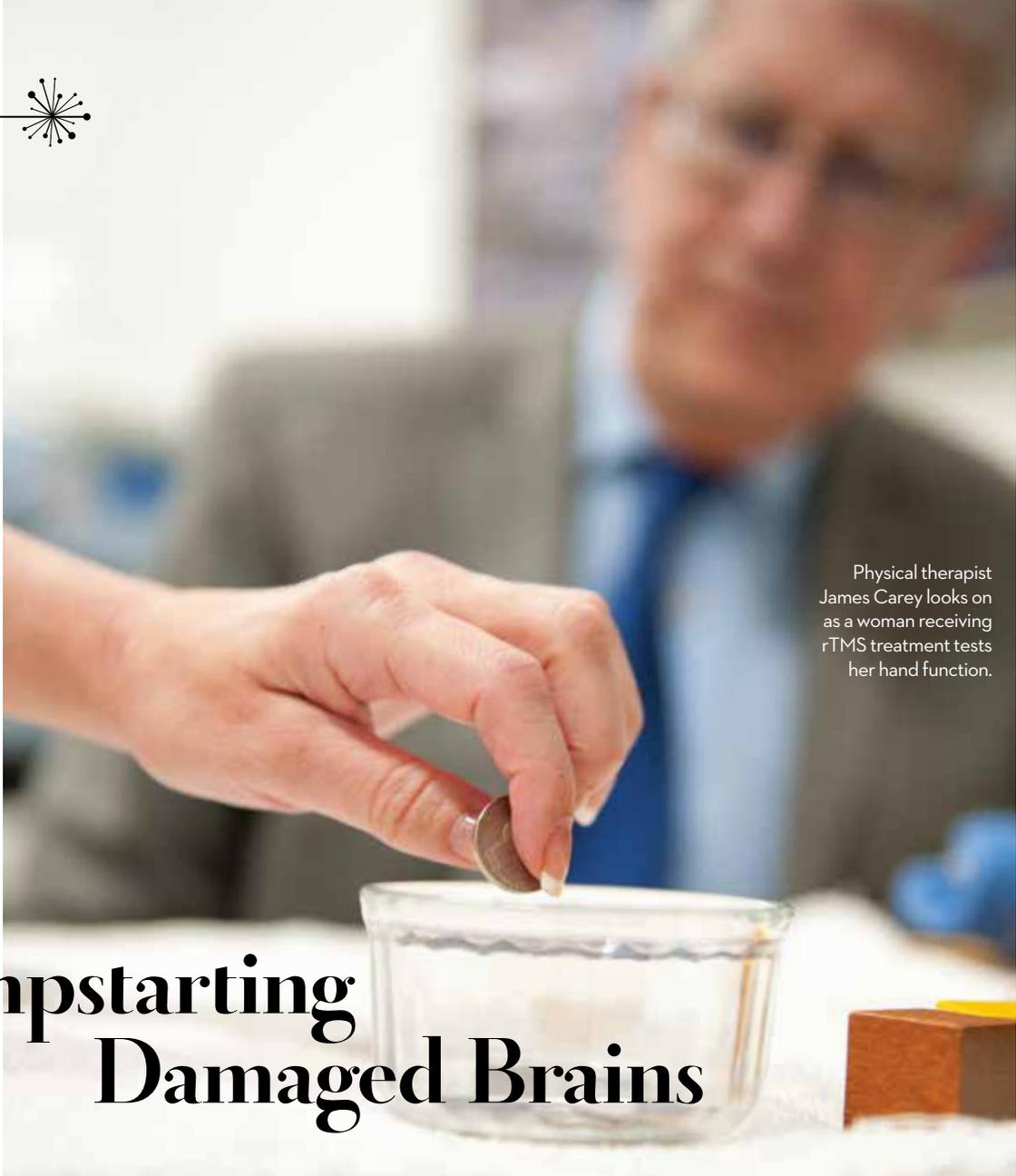
No timeline has been established for releasing the report to the public.

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Young gardeners dig in to learning at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum.



Physical therapist James Carey looks on as a woman receiving rTMS treatment tests her hand function.

# Jumpstarting Damaged Brains

A noninvasive treatment offers hope for patients with stroke. *By Carmen Peota*

**T**HE 46-YEAR-OLD WOMAN, whose life was upended by a stroke a few months earlier, can't unclench her left fist and struggles to pick up a wooden block. After several herky-jerky attempts, she finally scoops one into fingers still curled tightly around her thumb. A couple of weeks later, after treatment with repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation (rTMS) at the University of Minnesota, she extends her fingers and grasps a grape with relative ease.

The woman had read about the noninvasive procedure, which uses a coil about the size of a man's hand to deliver magnetic currents to the brain, and asked her neurologist about it. He referred her to professor of physical therapy James Carey (B.S. '72, M.S. '78, Ph.D. '88), who had just started offering it to patients with stroke at the M Health Clinics and Surgery

Center in January. He has investigated the treatment—which has been around since the 1980s and is more commonly used to treat depression—for much longer.

Carey began pursuing the idea of using rTMS with people who'd had a stroke a dozen years ago. At the time, he was researching neuroplasticity: the ability of the brain to form and reorganize synaptic connections. Research suggested rTMS might help that process along in patients with stroke. In 2005, Carey went to Boston to study with Harvard's Dr. Alvaro Pascual-Leone, who was using rTMS with stroke patients. When Carey returned to Minnesota, he got a National Institutes of Health grant enabling him to purchase rTMS equipment. He decided to focus on hand function, in part because it's a primary concern for people who have had

strokes and also because the area of the brain controlling the hand is relatively large.

The targets of rTMS are neurons in the damaged area of the brain that survived the stroke. “We are trying to resurrect those neurons out of their dormancy into a higher level of excitability so that they can be voluntarily recruited by the person to produce function,” Carey explains.

In his research, Carey has sought to show that it works. And to some extent, he’s done that. A study published in 2013 in *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology* found rTMS was effective and safe in children who’d had a stroke. But in a study of adults with stroke published in 2014, he couldn’t show a group benefit of rTMS in adults. And he notes the literature on rTMS is mixed as well. “I have to say that some of the trials are disappointing,” he admits.

Yet in Carey’s studies there were always individuals who responded to rTMS. “Along the way, patients declared, ‘I really benefit from this, and I’d like to continue it,’” Carey says, noting they were even willing to pay out of pocket for it. He would explain that there was no clinical venue for the treatment. But recently, he began to wonder if he should make rTMS available to those who asked for it. Many were desperate for help.

He approached University of Minnesota Physicians about offering it in the clinic, suggesting it could be done

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within a framework that would be safe and fair for patients, all of whom would need to meet certain criteria: They couldn’t have had a seizure within two years or take medications putting them at risk for seizure, and they couldn’t have metal in their heads. They’d need their doctor’s approval. Carey himself would receive no remuneration for the treatments (a 10-session series costs about \$2,400), and he would stop the treatments after five sessions if there were no signs of progress. The 46-year-old woman who picked up the block was his first patient.

In April, she was back for a “booster.” Carey measured the distance from her eyebrows to the top of her skull and marked a spot before placing the electromagnetic coil on the crown of her head. He turned on the machine, looked at a screen, and moved the coil. When he found the spot he wanted, he held it there while the machine pulsed, sounding like a ruler rapping on a table, rapidly for 10 minutes and then slowly for another 10.

Neither therapist nor patient was sure whether the rTMS that seemed to help her before will do so this day. “It’s all experimental,” she says. She hopes what Carey is learning by treating her will benefit others. He hopes it will one day be a tool that all physical therapists can use. In the meantime, both are willing to continue the experiment. For her the stakes are high: “I’ve got a whole life to live and people are depending on me,” she says. “I don’t have time to fool around.” ■

## A Honey of an App

Bee populations are declining across the nation, including on farmland where they are needed to pollinate crops. To help, some farmers are planting wildflowers, a source of nourishment that can help bees survive. But up until now it’s been difficult to know how much those and other

efforts may be helping. A new app aims to change that. Eric Lonsdorf (Ph.D. ’04), a lead scientist with the Natural Capital project, a partnership of the University of Minnesota’s Institute on the Environment, Stanford University, the Nature Conservancy, the World Wildlife Fund, and Taylor Ricketts, a bee expert from the University of Vermont, are coleading the development of the app, which is scheduled

for release later this year. “The app will do a pollination, productivity, and eventually, a cost-benefit analysis,” Lonsdorf explains. “Farmers can compare scenarios, and then determine which choices bring the best return on investment.” Using aerial images of North America, the app allows farmers to enter their location and differ-

ent best practices for increasing pollination, including planting flowers, adding windbreaks, and augmenting native bees with honeybees in the field. Researchers hope the app’s combination of science and bee-friendly practices will eventually help reverse some bee losses.





Researchers at the University of Minnesota have gained insight into the complex interactions that occur between the ear and brain. They could advance the design of better hearing aids or cochlear implants.

Psychology professor Andrew Oxenham and psychology researchers Magdalena Wojtczak and Anahita Mehta tested volunteers with normal hearing. Each subject was presented with pairs of tones, one low and one high; sometimes the two tones were simultaneous and on the beat, and sometimes one was 50 milliseconds early or late. Using EEG and behavioral activity, researchers monitored whether the brain, or the volunteers' conscious perception, could pick up timing differences within a pair of tones. They found that if a high flute note comes a little earlier than a bass note, the participant probably wouldn't notice. But if the bass note came earlier, they would. They also noted that beat didn't matter. What was important was the order in which the notes were played.

The fact that a low note could come in after a high note without the delay being noticed surprised researchers. Low notes have longer wavelengths, and the cochlea of the inner ear takes longer to respond to them. A low note coming in late, compounding the delay that already exists in the inner ear, should have been noticeable. But the opposite happened. "What we discovered is that the brain seems to compensate for the inner ear's built-in delay in giving us an accurate report on low notes," Oxenham explains.

The study is published in the January issue of *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

A study coauthored by Mindy Morales-Williams, a University of Minnesota postdoctoral student in the College of Biological Sciences, found that thousands of lakes in Canada and the United States, including Minnesota, are at risk due to rising chloride levels caused by road salt. The study was the first to examine the impact of road salt on freshwater across a broad geographic region.

Researchers used data from a variety of sources to compile long-term chloride concentrations from 371 lakes across North America. Lakes used in the study had at least a decade worth of chloride data, a low chloride concentration (no brackish lakes), and a surface area greater than about 2.5 acres.

Because rising chloride levels are expected to persist, and even increase, in the coming decades, 14 lakes in the study are expected to surpass levels the Environmental Protection Agency deems necessary to support aquatic life in lakes by the year 2050. Thirteen of those lakes are in Minnesota. Regional models predict that around 7,770 lakes are at risk for increased chloride levels. "This is a striking example of the challenges we face in balancing population growth and urban sprawl with maintaining our freshwater resources for future generations," says Morales-Williams.

The study was published in the April issue of *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.



A team of scientists, led by University of Minnesota associate professor of chemical engineering and materials science Paul Dauenhauer (Ph.D. '08), has invented a new technology to produce renewable car tires from trees and grasses. The process could shift production away from a reliance on fossil fuels toward more renewable resources.

The team created a new chemical process to make isoprene, the key molecule in car tires, using natural products like trees, grasses, or corn, Dauenhauer says. The U's Office for Technology Commercialization has applied for a patent on the renewable rubber technology, which could be applied to other uses besides tires.

In addition to other U researchers, including professors Michael Tsapatsis and Kechun Zhang, the team consisted of scientists from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and the Center for Sustainable Polymers, a National Science Foundation-funded center at the University of Minnesota.

The study was published in the January issue of *ACS Catalysis*.

A research team led by University of Minnesota scientists has developed a process to successfully rewarm large-scale animal heart valves and blood vessels preserved at very low temperatures, a process that could potentially increase the availability of organs and tissues for transplantation.

John Bischof, the study's senior author and a mechanical engineering and biomedical engineering professor, says this is the first time that anyone has been able to scale up to a larger biological system and demonstrate successful, fast, and uniform warming of preserved tissue without damaging it.

More than 60 percent of hearts and lungs donated for transplantation must be discarded each year because the tissues cannot be kept on ice for longer than four hours. Long-term preservation methods, like vitrification, that cools biological samples to an ice-free glassy state using very low temperatures (between -160 and -196 degrees Celsius) have been around for decades. But rewarming has remained an ongoing problem because tissues (particularly larger tissues) are often damaged during the rewarming process, making them unusable.

The study was published in the March issue of *Science Translational Medicine*.

# MEASUR CT



The sun sets on Todd Golly in his fields near Winnebago, Minnesota. New auto-steer technology on this tractor allows work to continue after dusk.

# Precision agriculture is giving farmers new tools for productivity

By Meleah Maynard ✨ Photos by Mark Luinenburg

# ED ROWTH

CENTURIES AGO farmers commonly tended small plots of land, paying attention to the needs of individual plants and growing whatever clearly did best in particular areas. But this changed as farm operations grew larger and more complex. No longer able to tend to the unique needs of plants and soil on every square foot of their land, farmers began to rely more on machines and standardization for soil preparation, watering, fertilizing, and pesticide application.

While this approach has vastly boosted yields overall, it also revealed that productivity within fields is variable: Some sections produce higher yields because of variations in soil, drainage, sunlight, slope, and other factors, necessitating differing amounts of water, fertilizer, and other needs. To remedy that, an increasing number of farmers and other agricultural producers are turning to precision agriculture. Perhaps more accurately named site-specific agriculture,



Todd Golly considers precision agriculture the future of farming. Here he holds a drone, one of the key technological advances for the industry.

precision agriculture is the strategy of using the right management practice in the right location at the right rate at the right time.

Determining all of those variables takes tools, so farmers use information technologies, such as global positioning systems (GPS), geographical information systems (GIS), and remote sensors such as satellites and aerial robots—commonly called drones—to customize how they address variable field conditions. Examples include using drones and ground robots to gather data to create detailed maps and identify problem areas, diagnose pest problems and nutrient deficiencies; equip tractors, combines, and harvesters with GPS to aid in planting in a straight line without overlap, applying fertilizers and reducing fuel waste; and using sensors to tell equipment when to spread manure, fertilize, and water at variable rates depending on the data that is gathered.

The University of Minnesota's Precision Agriculture Center has been a leader in precision agriculture research for more than two decades. Founded in 1995 by Professor David Mulla and the late Pierre Robert, professors in the Department of Soil, Water, and Climate, the center was the first of its kind in the world. Researchers continue to conduct studies on farms nationally and internationally while also developing innovative techniques for precision crop monitoring and management.

Robert was the Center's director until his death in 2003, when Mulla became director. Robert and others from the department recruited Mulla to come to the U from Washington State University, where he had been studying precision agriculture since 1984. "I'm one of the early pioneers of precision agriculture," Mulla says, recalling how in the 1980s he began noticing a connection between variability across landscapes and crop yield. "I could see that crops didn't perform as well in areas with light-colored soil, particularly on steep slopes, and I wondered why there was so much variability and how we could manage fields more effectively."

Used properly, precision agriculture helps farmers get the most value and productivity from every inch of land. It also may help minimize agriculture's environmental impact by reducing waste, conserving water and energy, and reducing potentially harmful runoff containing pesticide and herbicide. Currently used primarily in the production of crops such as corn, sugar beets, potatoes, wheat, barley, oats, and soybeans, precision agriculture researchers are studying ways to expand the practice to include the management of vineyards, orchards, livestock, and more.

The University's multidisciplinary research team remains one of the most robust, crossing three colleges

and numerous departments. Mulla's research focuses on several areas, including groundwater and soil quality management, as well as the use of drones to estimate yields and detect plant diseases and nutrient deficiencies in farms and orchards.

### In the field

Todd Golly (B.A. '95) had two passions while studying agricultural engineering at the University of Minnesota: agriculture and technology. Seeing firsthand how precision agriculture could change farming, he worked as a consultant for the University's Precision Agriculture Center after graduation. In 1999 he returned home to Winnebago, Minnesota, and helped turn his family's 6,000-acre corn and soybean farm into an early adopter of precision agriculture. "We were among the first to use precision ag to control variable-rate spreading of fertilizers, turn sprayers of herbicides and fungicides on and off, sample soils, monitor yields, and auto-steer equipment," he explains.

"Everyone wants to be more efficient," says Golly, who believes the technology he's using is giving him an edge over other farms. GPS sensors on combines, for example, automatically shut off sprayers if the machine heads into an area that's already been treated. "That's hard to do just by looking, so it's easy to use too much herbicide or fungicide because you don't want to miss an area," he says.

Auto-steer on tractors and combines makes the farm about 25 percent more productive, Golly figures, because the technology prevents overlapping passes for things like tillage and harvesting and allows work to continue after dusk. Also, drivers who are on board to make sure the equipment functions correctly are freed up to do other tasks such as going over budgets or other data.

Convinced that precision agriculture is the future of farming, Golly also runs Aker (formerly known as Leading Edge Technologies), which he cofounded in 2013. In addition to drone-based services, the company offers a wide range of technology for agricultural and other industries. "Precision ag is one of the few growth areas in this industry," he says. "We've been adding new technologies for years and we'll continue to add more all the time."

Shakopee, Minnesota-based Farmers Edge also offers a wide range of customized services to farmers nationally and around the globe. Jose Hernandez (Ph.D. '07), a former student of Mulla's, was hired there in 2015. In his position as a regional agronomist he uses a lot of the science he helped develop at the University to help the company with research and product development. He also works directly with clients.

"Growing up in Costa Rica, I always loved working with

Golly believes the technology he's using is giving him an edge over other farms. GPS sensors on combines, for example, automatically shut off sprayers if the machine heads into an area that's already been treated.

numbers and statistics, and I started studying precision agriculture because I liked the quantitative approach to farming," he explains. "Farmers want to maximize yields, and all of the data we collect helps identify variability in the fields so we can obtain the highest yields and avoid over-application of inputs like fertilizer and water."

Hernandez likens the concept to sustainable agriculture—only with more data collection and number crunching. "We help farmers make better decisions throughout the year. For example, we can use weather stations, crop modeling, and tools to measure nitrogen in the soil to tell farmers that they should add nitrogen to a certain part of their corn field in the next 10 days."

Mulla believes that demand for precision agriculture is only going to grow, eventually allowing farmers to manage not only entire fields, but individual plants. "There are millions of plants in a field and precision agriculture will ultimately give us the capacity to provide each plant with a customized application," he says. That's already happening in some grape vineyards, but apple orchards in Minnesota may one day do this with individual trees. "Drones and robots can't do everything, but we will be able to replace a lot of our big field equipment, which would help prevent compaction and protect our soil. It's just a matter of time."



# DEEP ROOTS

Minnesota farming has been synonymous with the U since its beginnings.

By Tim Brady ✨ Photos from University Archives



A researcher examines flax at the Agricultural Experiment Station, 1901



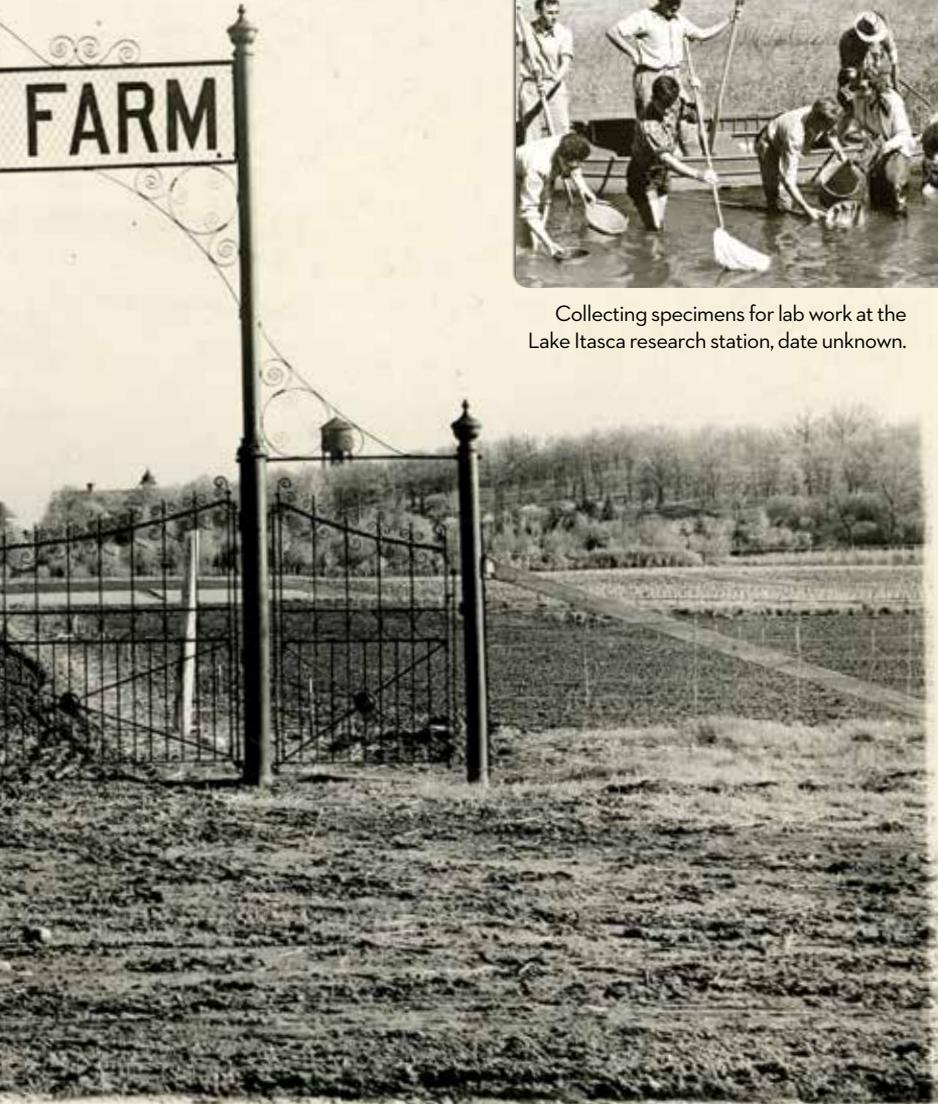
The University Farm gate c. 1900



Workers at the Excelsior Fruit Breeding Station in 1914.



Collecting specimens for lab work at the Lake Itasca research station, date unknown.



THE NEED FOR A COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE at the University of Minnesota was discussed by state educational and political leaders from the school's earliest days. Even as the U of M was taking shape back in the 1850s, through the Civil War, the beginnings of a nascent campus on the east

bank of the Mississippi River, and on to the hiring of the University's first president in 1869, the founders of the U envisioned the establishment of an institution of agricultural studies. No one anticipated it would take 20 years more to determine where that school would be located and how it would attract students.

In 1868, 90 acres of land for an experiment farm was purchased southeast of Minneapolis, straddling University Avenue from Oak Street to Prospect Park, about a mile east of the current campus.

But the new site proved to be infertile. Further, few students, many of whom hailed from the country, envisioned learning about agriculture after coming to the city. For a dozen years, hardly anyone signed up for classes.

Then, in 1881, Edward Porter assumed the chairmanship of the agriculture department and the seeds of a successful college were planted. Porter was able to recruit students where they lived, in the country, by establishing the first of the University's outstate agricultural experiment stations. He also sold the experiment farm near the Minneapolis campus and with the proceeds bought a more expansive and suitable property off of Como Avenue in St. Paul. There, in 1888 at what became known as the University Farm—and today is the St. Paul campus—the agricultural school was soon thrumming with studies in animal husbandry, crop improvement, and horticulture.

By 1895, when William Liggett, the first dean of the College of Agriculture, was hired, the school was offering courses in agronomy, soil sciences, and dairy husbandry. In addition, the college offered a very popular series of short courses geared to working farmers and their



This page, clockwise from top left: visitors from Houston County at the U for Farm Home Week, 1931; a U plant pathologist examines a farmer's wheat sample at the State Fair, date unknown; examining tractors at Farm Home Week, 1938; a student churns butter in a Home Economics class.

families. Specifically designed to fit a farm schedule, these classes typically ran in the winter months, between November and March. Farm men and women could take courses in animal feeding techniques, beekeeping, swine health, growing berries, and many others.

In 1897, the college became coeducational and shortly thereafter home economics courses were added to the curriculum. So many women signed up for classes that in 1914 home economics formed its own administrative unit. Similarly, the study of forestry, which came to the college in 1906, soon formed its own department.

Growth continued with the establishment of departments of plant pathology, agricultural engineering, and agricultural

economics in the early 20th century. Enrollment on the St. Paul campus boomed and construction of a new sheep barn, hog house, and expanded dairy hall commenced. Classrooms were added and a gymnasium was built. More dormitories soon followed, including two for the newly admitted women in the college.

In addition to the new departments, experiment farms offering educational programs were set up in Waseca, Morris, Crookston, and Grand Rapids. Separate research stations were built in Duluth, Lake Itasca, and Cloquet. A fruit breeding farm in Excelsior, first headed by Charles Haralson, was soon producing delectable apples, including one named for the director. The U also partnered with the federal government to create a research lab

to study the eradication of wheat rust.

By the 1920s, 14 departments comprised what was now called the College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Home Economics—a far cry from those early years when just filling a class with students was a chore.

Students of the college were a mix of young men and women: future farmers, home economists, and scientists. Typical was a young man from the small town of Cresco, Iowa, named Norman Borlaug (B.S. '37, M.S. '41, Ph.D. '42), who arrived during the height of the Great Depression. His greatest interest early on was wrestling, but as an undergraduate he settled into the study of forestry. Then, a lecture on wheat rust by E.C. Stakman, one of the leading lights in the plant pathology department, changed



From top: Borlaug's mentor E.C. Stakman, at far right, with students in the lab; Professor of Horticulture William Alderman and an unidentified man at the University Fruit Farm in Excelsior; the School of Forestry's Frank Henry Kaufert at the Cloquet Forestry Center, 1974

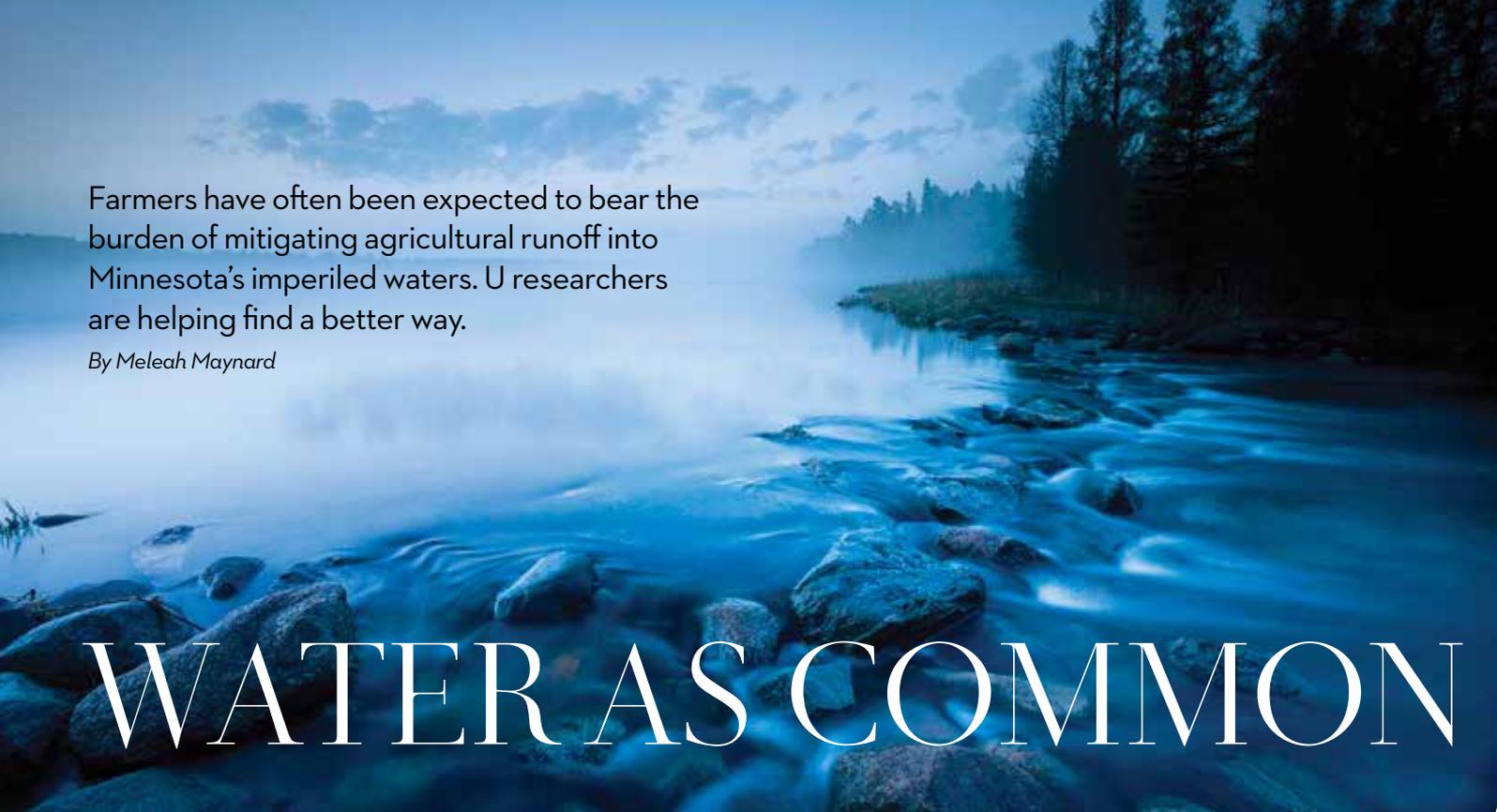
University researchers meet with locals in Morocco in 1967. Top: Nobel Peace Laureate Norman Borlaug at work in the field.

Borlaug's life—and eventually the lives of millions around the world who benefitted from his newfound interest in plant pathology. His groundbreaking work to develop wheat resistant to the devastating effects of the wheat rust virus ushered in the Green Revolution and is credited with saving millions of people from starving, work for which Borlaug was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1970.

As the 20th century progressed, the college embraced its role in the international community. In 1963, the Institute of Agriculture, Forestry and Home Economics, as the college was then called, established the Office of International Agricultural Programs to assist a growing number of international students and to foster research and exchange programs in other nations.

The names of the college and departments have evolved over the years. The College of Forestry became the College of Natural Resources; the College of Home Economics became the College of Human Ecology; the Institute of Agriculture, Forestry and Home Economics became the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Studies. In 2006, the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences, or CFANS, as it is designated today, was formed. It continues to thrive as Minnesota's premier center for higher education in food, agricultural, and natural resource sciences. And, as it was more than a century ago, it remains an invaluable resource for the agricultural industry in Minnesota. **AA**





Farmers have often been expected to bear the burden of mitigating agricultural runoff into Minnesota's imperiled waters. U researchers are helping find a better way.

By Meleah Maynard

# WATER AS COMMON

AT A TIME WHEN much of the world is facing drought, water shortages, and other serious water-related problems, it's easy to see Minnesota—the Land of 10,000 Lakes—as being safe from such worries. But that is not the case. In fact, the state's water supplies are facing many challenges, issues so serious that last August Governor Mark Dayton announced a “Year of Water Action” in Minnesota, urging everyone in the state to take action to conserve and improve water quality.

Dayton's action followed several reports by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), including one in February noting, among other things, that nearly two-thirds of test wells in central Minnesota have levels of nitrate that exceeds the state's drinking water standards. That's significant because nitrates can cause a potentially fatal blood disorder in infants called blue baby syndrome. A subsequent report concluded that more than 40 percent of Minnesota's waters were considered to be impaired or polluted—additional lakes, rivers, and streams are added each time there is new study is completed.

While several factors contribute to the state's water problems, the MPCA has continually pointed to one threat in particular: agricultural runoff. Soil, nitrate and phosphorous fertilizers, and other contaminants often flow off of farm fields and into nearby waterways. And because this type of cropland runoff is exempt from state and federal pollution regulations, it's up to farmers to voluntarily change their practices to help improve water quality. Some Minnesota farmers are already adopting clean water practices, such as planting cover crops, using less fertilizer, and using grass buffers to absorb fertilizer runoff. But

others are skeptical of the MPCA's findings. Many argue that ideas aimed at mitigating runoff often place an unfair financial burden on farmers and more ought to be done to offset associated costs and potential yield losses.

The complexity of the issue is longstanding and undeniable, says Jeff Peterson, director of the University of Minnesota's Water Resources Center. Peterson, who has been working on issues related to water and agriculture for nearly 20 years, says the state's water quality problems are getting worse, in some ways, due to climate change that is producing earlier and heavier spring rains. “We are getting more rain than we used to in the spring when crops haven't been planted yet, which means more water is coming off the land and bringing sediment, nitrate, and phosphorus with it into streams and rivers,” he explains. Also contributing to increased runoff, he says, are changes in land use. In recent years, the trend has been to plant fewer perennial crops like alfalfa, which help hold the soil in the spring, and more corn and soybeans, which means soil is bare more of the year.

With these things in mind, University researchers are exploring many ideas, innovations, and technologies aimed at reducing agricultural runoff's affect on water quality. Some are already making a difference for farmers and the environment in large and small ways. Work by David Mulla, cofounder of the U's Precision Agriculture Center (read more about his work on page 20), for example, is enabling farmers to use technology to conserve water and reduce the use of fertilizers and herbicides.

Scott Wells, an assistant professor in the department of agronomy and plant genetics, is one of several researchers

Brian Peterson/StarTribune



# GROUND

working with the Forever Green Initiative. A program of the University of Minnesota and the USDA Agriculture Research Service, Forever Green aims to develop crops that improve soil and water quality while also offering new economic opportunities to farmers.

Wells is part of a team working to develop cover crops that will boost soil health while also reducing erosion and soil runoff to keep the water cleaner. Widely used elsewhere in the country, cover crops are traditionally planted after the last harvest of crops like corn and soybeans and then killed before spring planting begins. Here in the upper Midwest, though, the short growing season makes cover crops more challenging. “We’ve surveyed farmers in the upper Midwest and they tell us it’s too cold, too wet, and they don’t have enough time to plant before the frost,” says Wells.

The answer may lie in the development of winter hardy annual oilseed crops, such as winter camelina (false flax) and pennycress (a part of the mustard family), which can be planted in autumn following crops, including small grains, silage corn, and sugar beets. Because they can survive into spring, these crops generate revenue while also helping to reduce soil erosion and runoff. Later in the summer, farmers are still able to plant soybeans and other late-season crops as they normally would. Details of this type of dual-cropping system are still being worked out, but Wells and others have demonstrated the concept’s viability and promise.

In addition to new winter annual crops, the researchers are also investigating the possibility of planting corn and

From its headwaters at Itasca State Park in northern Minnesota (above left) to the Delta in Louisiana, the Mississippi River accumulates agricultural runoff and other toxins, creating a hypoxic (low-oxygen) zone, commonly called dead zone, near where it flows into the Gulf of Mexico. Size estimates of the dead zone vary from 5,000 to 8,000 square miles.

“We’re looking at ways to intercept that nitrogen in the field or at the edge of the field before it gets very far downstream. That’s what keeps us working fervently in this area.” —GARY SANDS





# TURNING OVER THE FIELDS

Pat Duncanson still lives in the house he grew up in and farms the same land his parents did. Now he's preparing the next generation to take over the family farm.

By Chris Smith ✨ Photo by Mark Luinenburg

soybeans along with perennial cover crops, such as fine fescues and kura clover. "Previous research has shown corn and soybean yield reduction when they are integrated with a continuous living cover crop, but we are closing that yield gap," Wells explains. "This strategy has the potential to reduce offsite movement of nutrients, so it could be an important part of the tool kit to protect wells."

Gary Sands, an Extension engineer and a professor in the Department of Bioproducts and Biosystems Engineering, is tackling water quality by focusing on agricultural drainage. Like irrigation, agriculture depends on good drainage, which is especially important in the upper Midwest where the clay soil may be fertile, but its tendency to hold water can be detrimental to crops.

In Minnesota, thousands of farmers rely on artificial drainage to channel excess water off of their land. Some make use of above-ground ditches while many use drain tiles, so named because the underground drainage systems, which are now made of plastic tubing, used to be made of clay tile. This may be good for farms and agricultural production, but drainage water may carry soil, fertilizers, and other chemicals downstream to the Gulf of Mexico, creating a massive dead zone: an oxygen-starved area the size of Connecticut where very little can survive.

Because coastal oxygen starvation is primarily driven by nitrogen, finding ways to reduce the soil nutrient's presence in runoff is a key part of Sands' research. "We're looking at ways to intercept that nitrogen in the field or at the edge of the field before it gets very far downstream," he explains. "That's what keeps us working fervently in this area." Along with other researchers, Sands is exploring the use of saturated buffers along the edge of farmland. Usually about 10 to 50 feet wide, the grass buffers would act like a filter by absorbing nitrogen from water flowing from outlet pipes engineered to veer off from drain tiles in certain spots. "We didn't come up with this idea, but we think it has tremendous potential for ecological benefits," he says.

Additional strategies are described in *Ten Ways to Reduce Nitrogen Loads from Drained Cropland in the Midwest*, a 2016 publication by the University of Illinois Extension to which Sands and other researchers contributed. "We recognize the complexity of why our agricultural systems look the way they do today, and we are working to reduce the environmental footprint of that system," he says. "One of the biggest challenges we have to address is that improving water quality is for the common good, but there is an imbalance if society reaps the benefits of addressing this problem while the costs fall primarily on the backs of farmers."

DRIVING THROUGH SOUTHERN Minnesota toward the farm of Pat Duncanson (B.S. '83), it's easy to get lost in the urban stereotypes of farm life: simple and solitary, attuned to the seasons, often hard and dirty, but ultimately beautiful. As I learned more than two decades ago, though, when I visited the farm several times for a lengthy article in this magazine tracing a year in the lives of three Duncanson families, the reality of farming is more nuanced and complicated. Farming is a life ruled by complex economics and changing technologies, by small decisions amplified over thousands of acres. As Duncanson enumerates at his kitchen table, the elements necessary to build a thriving farm sound like those for any business: continuing education, networking and information exchanges, marketing and financial savvy, and boldly grasping new technologies. "Those are all the things I learned to do at the U," he says.

Then, as now, farmers like Duncanson hedge against variables like weather and fluctuating markets by pursuing complex strategies in land ownership and leasing, crop and livestock mixes, precision farming, and market timing. "My role has been evolving," Duncanson says. "I spend time every day looking at the markets, reading, listening, in web meetings. . . . Lots of places have good weather and good land. It's oftentimes the management and the people and connections that makes the difference" in having a successful farm.

In early April, the principals of the farm—Duncanson, his wife, Kris, and his nephews Karson and Kameron (B.S. '06)—sat down with a facilitator for strategic planning, charting



Duncanson Growers partners and owners Pat Duncanson and Kristin Weeks Duncanson

a course for the farm for this year and several years into the future. Duncanson's older brother and business partner, Karl (B.S. '80), died in a car crash in May 2015. Legally dividing the farm so that Karl's sons can take ownership of his portion adds to the need for careful planning.

Although he is immersed in the management and marketing of the farm more than the day-to-day work in the fields, Duncanson's iPhone rang several times as we caught up: his nephews seeking his thoughts on specifics for the impending planting. "I guess they think the old uncle has a little bit of wisdom accumulated," he jokes.

The Duncansons have farmed for four generations, and the next generation will need to learn to sift through and incorporate increasing amounts of data from the computers now built into most farm machinery and new drone technology. "There's so much data available right now that we're still figuring out what to do with it all," Duncanson says. He's also watching for changes in pest and disease patterns due to climate change, while balancing the growing demand for corn and soybeans with ever-narrower margins and the needs of sustaining a healthy environment in southern Minnesota. "We have the recipe for a lifelong challenge there," he says. "I'm not ready to step aside anytime soon."

He feels there's "a pretty strong likelihood" at least one of his four children, the youngest of whom is a junior in the U's College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences, will return to take up the profession. "Our family believes that it's a

good thing to do something else for a few years before deciding if this life is right for you." His three older children work in farm economics, social work, and geology at present. Duncanson himself did something else, interning with then-Senator Rudy Boschwitz in Washington, D.C., before returning to the farm. He met Kris, who worked for Boschwitz on farm policy, in Washington. And while she dedicated herself to farm life and raising children in the 1990s, she used her political background to remain active in farming organizations and help educate others about agriculture. She is now a consultant working with agribusiness companies on policy and sustainability concerns and serves on numerous advisory boards, frequently returning to Washington. Pat, while busy running the farm, also volunteers with the University and other schools, believing the U is uniquely positioned to tackle coming challenges of food production, technology, and human and environmental health. He has served as chair of the U's Regent Candidate Advisory Council and was recently elected to a term on the Alumni Association's Board of Directors that will begin July 1.

"We want to keep our world big," Duncanson says, recounting numerous foreign travels where he and Kris create and book their own itineraries, including recent trips to Cambodia and remote northern Peru. "I'm living in the house I grew up in, in a small town in the middle of the continent. It's important to push the boundaries a little bit.

"I've lived a pretty good life in being able to do and see things that my parents' generation could not have dreamed of." ❧



Gymnast Ciara Gardner,  
forward Sarah Potomak, and  
pitcher Amber Fiser

## WHAT ACCOUNTS FOR THE GROWING SUCCESS OF GOPHER WOMEN'S SPORTS?

By Pat Borzi | Photos courtesy University Athletics

**CONSIDER THE 2016-17 SEASON** for Gopher women's sports: Hockey reached an unprecedented sixth consecutive NCAA Frozen Four, sustaining the excellence that brought four national championships the previous five seasons and boasting an NCAA points leader, Kelly Pannek. Volleyball produced the national player of the year in Sarah Wilhite while making its second consecutive Final Four appearance, a program first, and attracting rocking sellout crowds to the Sports Pavilion. No sports venue on campus matches the energy of the Pav when the Gophers are rolling.

Soccer, led by Coach of the Year Stefanie Golan, won its first Big Ten tournament championship since 1995 and an automatic bid to its third NCAA tournament in four years, while defender Rashida Beal (B.S. '16) was picked No. 35 overall by FC Kansas City in the National Women's Soccer

League draft. Softball won its third Big Ten tournament in four years and reached its fifth consecutive NCAA tournament; the Gophers were ranked No. 1 in the nation by coaches at the end of the regular season with a record of 54-3. Gymnastics qualified as a team for its 22nd consecutive NCAA regionals.

That's not to mention 71 academic All-Big Ten selections with cumulative grade point averages of 3.0 or above. The previous year, in 2015-16, women's athletics accounted for 50 of the U's 72 Big Ten Distinguished Scholars, honoring those with 3.7 or higher GPAs.

What do these programs have in common? Dynamic coaches who root for each other to succeed, recruit high achievers, and demand excellence in competition and the classroom. And student athletes, in turn, who do not take the privilege of competing at the Division I level for granted and who support each other in large and small ways.

"One of the things that's really neat around this place now is, there is a buzz," says Golan. "There is a tangible excitement of people who really believe in what you can accomplish here."

But the groundwork for today's successes stretches back a decade or more.

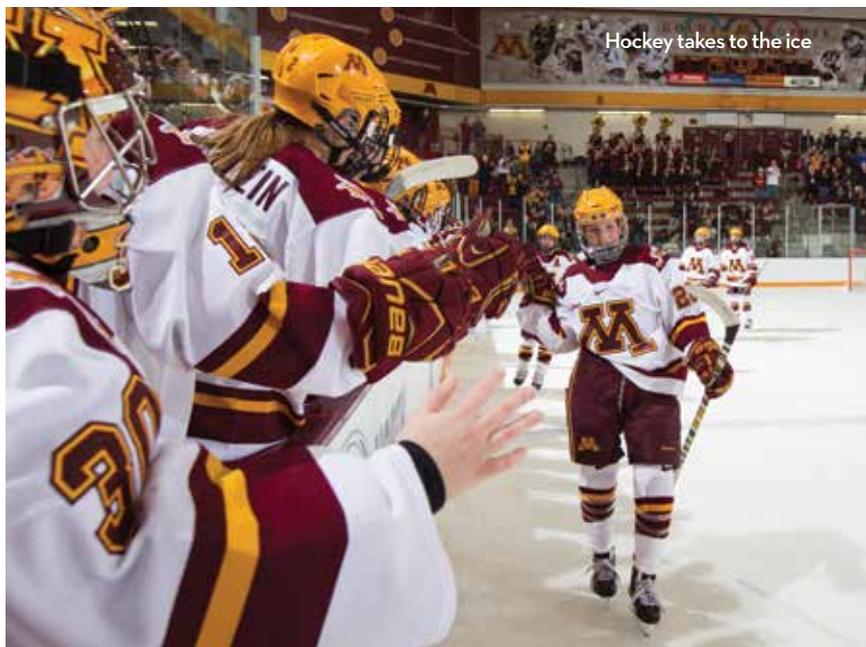
## HOCKEY

Since 2000, no other program at the U, men's or women's, matches hockey's national stature. Founding coach Laura Hallderson won three national titles before turning the program over to assistant Brad Frost, who added four more. Ridder Arena, where the Gophers play, was the first collegiate facility built specifically for a women's team, and stands to the vision of Kathleen (B.A. '47, UM-Duluth, B.S. '60) and Robert Ridder, who led the fundraising. Murals high on Ridder's walls honor 12 Olympians, 18 All-Americans, and photos of championship teams adorn the hallway outside the Gopher dressing room. (Kathleen Ridder, 94, died in early April. "Her impact on our program is immeasurable, and she will be greatly missed," said Frost.)

This year's team lacked the depth and star power of other Gopher teams—no Amanda Kessel (B.S. '16) or Natalie Darwitz (B.S. '07) flying down the ice, no Hannah Brandt (B.S. '16) setting them up, no Noora Raty (B.A. '13) making impossible saves in goal. But the Gophers persevered anyway, led by first team All-Americans Lee Stecklein on defense and Pannek up front.

Stecklein, a 2014 U.S. Olympian, joined Krissy Wendell, Darwitz, Raty, and Brandt as the Gophers' only three-time All-Americans. Pannek and forward Sarah Potomak compensated for the lengthy absence of Dani Cameranesi, the U's most dynamic forward, to an injury.

And junior goaltender Sidney Peters, in her first season



Hockey takes to the ice



Sprinter Emerald Egwim



The volleyball team celebrates



Guard Kenisha Bell

as a starter, excelled in the final weeks. Peters shut out Minnesota-Duluth 1-0 in the NCAA quarterfinals to send the Gophers to the Frozen Four, the only unseeded team to advance.

“Success looks differently to many people,” Frost says. “Success for us is getting great people in here that get a great education. Our team’s GPA was a 3.5 last semester. To us, that’s success, when our kids are embodying and fulfilling our values each and every day. That looks different on the big scoreboard at the end of every game. The day to day, it’s a huge thing for us.”

## **VOLLEYBALL**

Now-retired Director of Athletics Joel Maturi always sought women to coach women’s sports, but he made two key exceptions. One was Frost. Another was Hugh McCutcheon, the two-time U.S. Olympics coach who assumed the job after the 2012 Games in London, succeeding Mike Hebert when Hebert retired.

Under Hebert, the Gophers were already a nationally respected program, reaching the Final Four three times from 2003 to 2009. McCutcheon took them even higher. Though eventual NCAA champion Stanford ousted the Gophers in last fall’s national semifinals, individual honors poured in.

The American Volleyball Coaches Association and espnW named Wilhite national Player of the Year and she



Midfielder Molly Fiedler



also won the Big Ten Player of the Year Award, giving the Gophers back-to-back conference players of the year after Daly Santana won it last year. Hannah Tapp (B.S.B. '16) and Big Ten Setter of the Year Samantha Seliger-Swenson joined Wilhite on the all-conference team. Paige Tapp (B.S.B. '16), Hannah's twin sister, became the first Gopher to win a Senior CLASS award, which honors one NCAA athlete nationally in each sport for all-around student athlete achievement.

Nothing beats the game night atmosphere at the Pav, particularly when the crowd yells back the public address announcer's call of "Point U!" The Gophers own a 36-match winning streak at home since 2014. Average attendance of 4,835 in the 5,500-capacity arena ranked fourth nationally and even outdrew U women's basketball. Volleyball became such a thing that Elvera "Peps" Neuman, basketball's famed "Blanket Lady" who stirs up the crowd by galloping along the sidelines waving a maroon and gold blanket, took in the Gophers' home NCAA Tournament match against Hawaii.

"The atmosphere grew tremendously during my four years," Wilhite says. "In the playoffs, it helped to have the big crowd behind you."

## SOCCER

Stefanie Golan's father, Geno Kraay, was an All-American goaltender at the Air Force Academy before becoming a fighter pilot and career officer. Before coming to the U, Golan coached at West Point. No surprise, then, that the energetic Golan recruits similar types: self-driven and committed.

"We look for competitors, people who enjoy that aspect of it, who when you watch them play they have an absolute passion for what they're doing," Golan says.

"I like watching a team that has its back against the wall. How does that player you're interested in respond and impact that team in those moments? That's the piece of the natural leadership. We want kids that have that within them. Because the more they have that, the less hand-holding and the more development we get to do."

Last year, for the first time, the Gophers won both the Big Ten regular-season and conference tournament championship. Students noticed. This year, the Gophers sold out three games at Elizabeth Lyle Robbie Stadium, with a record 1,758 watching the Big Ten opener against Penn State, a 1-1 draw.

Simone Kolander (B.A. '16) earned her second consecutive Big Ten Forward of the Year award, and goaltender Tarah Hobbs (B.A. '16) set a school record with 33 career shutouts. Midfielder Josee Stiever (B.A. '16) made All-Big Ten first-team, Beal was named conference Defender of the

Year and, for the second time, an Academic All-American.

"It speaks to a person's character that they approach every aspect of their experience with the notion of being successful," Beal says. "Our coaches definitely emphasized doing well in school, and it's kind of a holistic thing. If you struggle in one area, it's going to pull you down in others."

## SOFTBALL

Maturi's legacy rests with his support for a well-rounded program, especially for women. Even today, Maturi and his wife Lois often turn up in the stands at women's hockey and volleyball.

But here's an untold story: Maturi hesitated hiring Jessica Allister as softball coach in 2010, even though he liked everything about her. Allister was just six years out of Stanford, where she had been an All-American catcher. Were six years as an assistant with Georgia, Stanford, and Oregon enough?

"Jessica knows this—she wasn't the first person I offered the job to," Maturi says. "I was nervous and hesitant to hire Jessica because she was only 27 years old. She was confident. Had a vision, a silent quiet energy. After more than one person said no, I offered her the job."

Good call. Allister took a 234-102 record, six consecutive 30-win seasons, and four straight NCAA berths into 2017, where Sara Groenewegen, two-time All-American pitcher, leads another talented group. Groenewegen recorded her 1,000th career strikeout in March, a milestone reached by only two other Gophers.

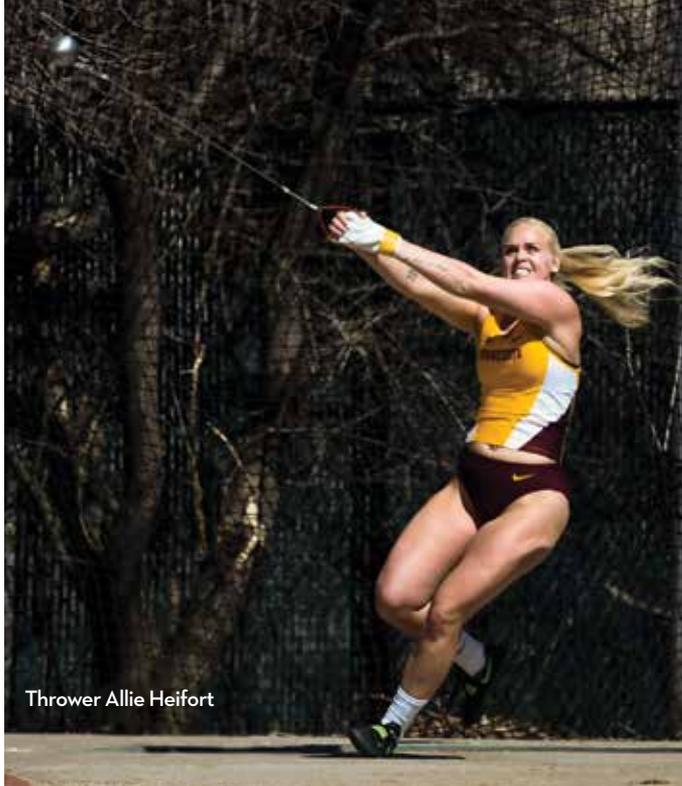
"The leadership we have from our senior group, the depth we have in the pitching staff, the skill set we have at different infield positions, our ability to score up and down the lineup, I think this is our best team," Allister says.

Like her Gopher coaching peers, Allister recruits high achievers.

"You want to bring in people who want to take advantage of everything the University of Minnesota has to offer, then go into the world afterward and make an impact," she says. "That's one of the really cool things about being a collegiate coach. You see 17- or 18-year-old girls come in, and they leave as women ready to make a difference in the world. The transformation is one of the coolest things."

## COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

Fellow coaches gravitate to Hugh McCutcheon, a 6-foot-5-inch New Zealander known for his calm straightforwardness. He challenges standard assumptions of team dynamics. He's big on "the process," or day-by-day improvement during a long season, instead of victory-based goals. He looks for great teammates



Thrower Allie Heifort

***“You see 17- or 18-year-old girls come in, and they leave as women ready to make a difference in the world.”***

—SOFTBALL COACH JESSICA ALLISTER



Game time for the softball team and ball girl

who support each other while demanding excellence. And McCutcheon dismisses the notion of team as family, because it’s phony.

“With families, there’s a level of dysfunction you have to tolerate, because they’re your family,” McCutcheon says. “But I don’t think dysfunction is a huge part of high-functioning teams.

“I think there’s a kind of misconception that teams have to be pseudo-sororities or fraternities, they’ve all got to be best friends. I think that’s not only naive, but also unrealistic,” McCutcheon says. “You don’t have 18 best friends, and they don’t change year to year as teams do. By taking the whole friend expectation off the table and making it about being a great teammate, and understanding that’s the best thing you can do for the team, the connections that get formed from that starting point are based in truth. Because they’re based in something real and authentic, the connections become real and authentic themselves.”

Frost says he and McCutcheon frequently pick each

other’s brains about recruiting and culture-building strategies. “Frosty,” as McCutcheon calls him, applies McCutcheon’s notion of process to his own team.

“I can’t go to our players and say, ‘Let’s go win this game,’” Frost says. “Yes, that’s the outcome we want. But the process for us is, have a great attitude, give the best effort you can, play for the person next to you, keep it simple on the power play, no undisciplined penalties. If we do those things, then we’ll have a real good chance of winning.”

Women’s athletics booster Deborah Olson, the retired Nelson Laboratories CEO, finds this refreshing. The daughter of the late Miami Dolphins owner Joe Robbie, Olson donated \$900,000 to help fund soccer’s Elizabeth Lyle Robbie Stadium, named for her mother, who owned the old Fort Lauderdale/Minnesota Strikers of the North American Soccer League. Olson was also part of the search committee that hired current Director of Athletics Mark Coyle.

“Watching the coaches nowadays, they don’t necessarily talk about winning all the time. They talk about the team and the learning,” Olson says. “They almost

sound more like teachers do than coaches. I found it with Brad Frost. I found it with Stefanie Golan. I find it with Hugh McCutcheon. It's a different philosophy than the hard-nosed way coaches were always portrayed, being tough and yelling."

### ATHLETES SUPPORTING ATHLETES

The support among athletes and coaches reminds basketball coach Marlene Stollings of Winthrop University, her first stop as a head coach.

"The smaller the school, there's usually more camaraderie because you see each other more," Stollings says. "When you get onto larger campuses like ours, it becomes much more difficult, because the coaches are in different buildings and things like that. At a larger school, you have to make a concerted effort to make those connections."

And women athletes do at the U. Beal noticed more of her peers at soccer matches last season, and loved it. "It's empowering to see other female athletes doing really well in their sports," Beal says. "It reinforces the idea that it is something important, and that we're successful at it."

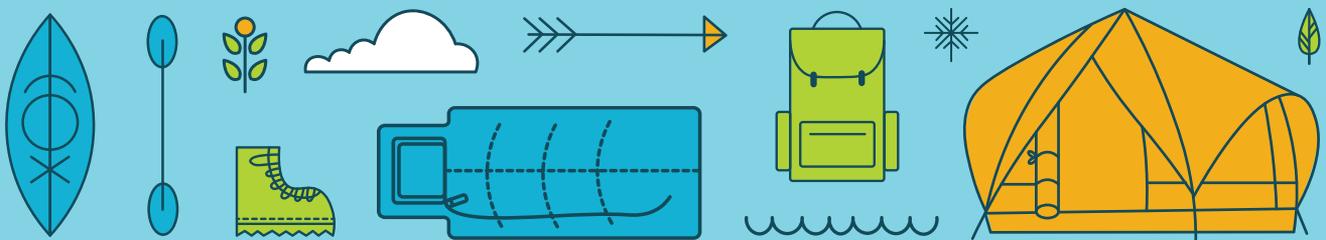
Basketball player Joanna Hedstrom (B.S.B. '16), the daughter of 1980s Gopher hoops standout Mary Dressen (B.S. '85), attends volleyball and hockey games when her studies permit and her own team isn't playing. Hedstrom embodies the student athlete ideal. A three-time Academic All-Big Ten honoree, she graduated summa cum laude from the Carlson School in three years with a business degree. Now she's working toward a masters degree in human resources and industrial relations.

"It's a pretty tight-knit community with women's sports here," Hedstrom says. "As female athletes, we go to each other's games. It's encouraging to see their success and try to, in a healthy way, compete and try to do just as well as them.

"We've heard it from a lot of our alumni, that it was much different before Title IX—different rules, fewer opportunities for women. I feel like there's a sense of female athletes playing to thank the people that paved the way for us. We're supporting each other and we're supporting female athletes and women's sports in general just because it has that historical aspect. It hasn't always been this way." 

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# HOMELAND INSECURITY

In the middle of World War II, Homer Smith was based in Moscow while working as the only black war correspondent on the Eastern Front. One day, after he paused in a rail station to write down a friend's phone number, Soviet police seized him and accused him of spying by making drawings of the station and a nearby bridge. They found no drawings on Smith and soon released him, but this wasn't the first time the police had detained him without cause. A longtime resident of the U.S.S.R., he began to feel that his life was at risk. Russia had grown dangerous for foreigners. The Soviet Union was no longer the sanctuary for seekers of racial freedom and opportunity that Smith had sought years earlier.

Smith was about to start a new chapter in his singularly unpredictable life. As he had done before, he decided he must leap across the globe to find a new home.

Today, 45 years after his death in 1972, Smith remains a mysterious figure, a man who seemingly fit in nowhere. He wrote under an invented name, discarded political beliefs like old clothing, fictionalized his life in his memoirs, and spent a lifetime searching for a home that would accept him. What was he looking for, and did he ever find it?

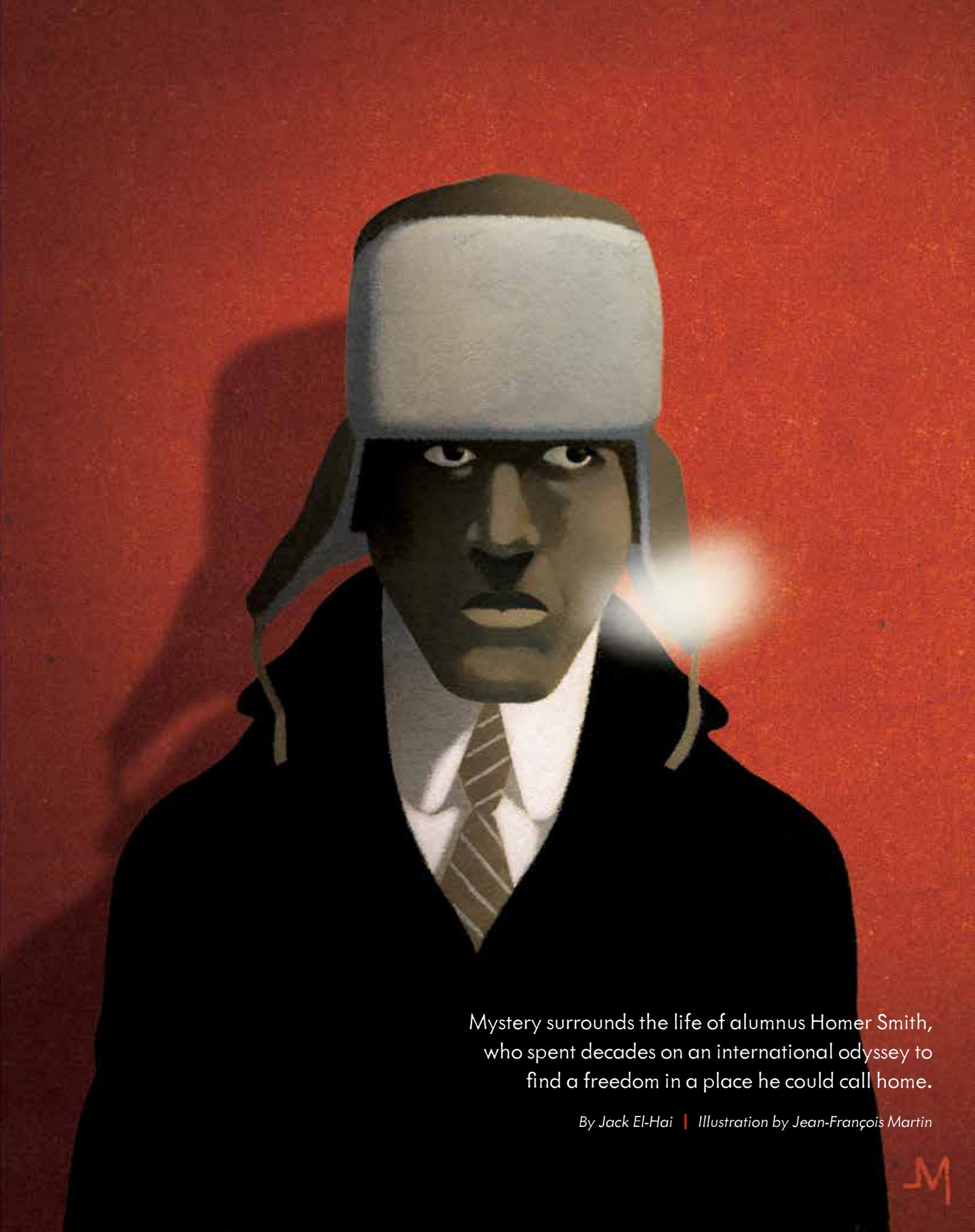
## **Fighting racism at the University**

Even the circumstances of Smith's birth are a puzzle. In its extensive investigations of him over several years, the FBI never determined whether he was born in 1898 or 1899 (other sources say 1910), and whether his hometown was Natchez or Quitman, Mississippi. As a young man of intense gaze and medium build, he moved to Minneapolis sometime after 1916 and, according to the University's records, was enrolled between 1922 and 1928. By then he was already working as a postal clerk in Minneapolis. Advancing within the clerical ranks of

the Post Office was one of the few professional career paths open to black men in the early 20th century.

At the University, Smith studied journalism and joined the staff of the *Minnesota Daily*. He often wrote about racial bias and discrimination in Minneapolis, and in 1922 he sent a letter to the editor of the *Minneapolis Tribune* protesting the newspaper's inequitable inclusion of racial information in crime stories. On campus, he took an interest in the case of a fellow student, Frances McHie. In 1929, McHie, who was black, tried to gain entry to the School of Nursing. University President Lotus Coffman and Dean Elias Lyon blocked her, saying there was no local hospital that would allow McHie or other black nurses on staff to gain clinical experience. Hearing of her treatment, Smith wrote a critical letter to Coffman and was dissatisfied by the president's response that McHie would be better off learning in a black school and working in a black hospital. Smith then published an editorial in the black-owned *Twin City Reporter* accusing the University of resistance to advancing equal rights. (McHie eventually prevailed when the Minnesota Legislature banned racial discrimination in the University's admissions.)

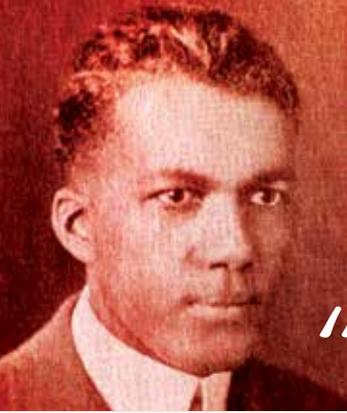
This bigotry dispirited Smith. He wanted to get on with his life, and he was convinced that America offered no future for black Americans with skills and ambitions. Although he had brains, drive, and an incisive pen, no major daily newspaper would hire a black reporter, and Smith had to keep working at the Post Office, whose payroll was full of black students and college graduates. "I yearned to stand taller than I had ever stood[,] to breathe total freedom in exhilarating gulps, to avoid all the hurts that were increasingly becoming the lot of



Mystery surrounds the life of alumnus Homer Smith,  
who spent decades on an international odyssey to  
find a freedom in a place he could call home.

By Jack El-Hai | Illustration by Jean-François Martin

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# "I yearned to stand taller

men (and women) of color in the United States," he later wrote. His patience was running out. But what Smith was learning as a Post Office clerk would unexpectedly help him overcome his dismal prospects in his own country.

## A casting call

In the early months of 1932, Smith heard that Mezhrabpom, a Soviet film production company, was interested in casting black Americans to appear in a movie project titled *Black and White*. Details of the film were sketchy, but a U.S. committee charged with choosing the cast and sending it to Russia described the movie as a sweeping panorama of the black American experience, one that would correct the lies of racists, capitalists, and imperialists who often twisted the history of blacks in America.

Smith wasn't sure if he should abandon his home and career to be in a faraway movie. But the choice forced itself upon him. "One day, after some heated words in a restaurant about not getting waited on," he wrote, "I made my decision." He would have to pay his own way to Europe, but the chance to witness the social experiment underway in the Soviet Union, with its professed veneration of the working classes and disdain for racism, was irresistible.

Although only two of the 22 people selected for the cast had any acting experience, the group included an impressive mix of people who would play important roles in black American culture and politics for years to come. Langston Hughes, probably America's best-known black writer, signed on, along with Harlem Renaissance author Dorothy West, future civil rights lawyer and California Superior Court Judge Loren Miller, National Urban League leaders Frank Montero and Henry Lee Moon, social activist Louise Thompson, and journalist Ted Poston.

In Russia, work on the film began badly. The director, a German named Carl Junghans, spoke English and Russian poorly and knew almost nothing about the lives of black Americans. He complained that many of his actors were too light-complexioned to convincingly play real American blacks, and he lamented their inexperience as

singers of spirituals and slave work songs. Georgii Grebner, a Russian screenwriter, and Lovett Fort-Whiteman, a black American Communist who had lived in Russia for many years, had cooked up a highly improbable script that had pre-Civil War enslaved women dancing in ballrooms with their masters and climaxed with the invasion of Alabama by the Red Army to help striking black steelworkers.

Hughes declared this screenplay too absurd and ill informed about black American history to be filmed. He wouldn't even try to doctor it. For weeks the cast had no script, rehearsals of musical numbers went terribly, and the film's progress halted. Mezhrabpom officials sent the Americans to Odessa to get them out of the way until the movie's future could be untangled.

Despite these setbacks, Smith and the other cast members felt at ease in the U.S.S.R., having lost what one American called "the ever-present thought that my dark skin must circumscribe my activities at all times." Muscovites treated them as honored guests, insisted they take places at the front of buses and queues, invited them to a slew of parties, and viewed them as venerated representatives of an oppressed American working class. The cast enjoyed active social lives. "If I had been looking for racial equality in Russia, I found it so abundant that it proved . . . to almost amount to racial inequality," Smith wrote.

Soon, under American pressure, Russian authorities cancelled the film. Smith and most of the cast members signed a statement protesting the decision, but it had no effect. Smith was among several of the Americans who chose to stay in Russia, and his experience in the U.S. Post Office made him a desirable catch. For three years he worked on a high salary for the Soviet postal system as a consultant, helping launch special delivery service in that vast nation.

In an interview with an American socialist newspaper, he expressed the benefits of working in the U.S.S.R. "For me, as a Negro worker, it is like being released from

## HOW COLOR PROBLEMS ARE CREATED

An exchange of correspondence between a Minneapolis and the Chancellor of the University of Minnesota and the Dean of the Medical School, relative to the McHie case, reveals on the part of the University officials a defensive attitude which is both vulnerable and fraught with the nucleus of an unwelcome Color problem.

When the Dean informs his correspondent that "great difficulties and infinite humiliation" are foreseen for Colored student nurses, he states extremely and anticipatively a possibility which doubtless would arise. But as a preventive of such assumed humiliation, the young Colored woman applicant is offered, indirectly, a humiliation just as great, namely, that she is persona ingrata in the School of Nursing! To your tents! It has arisen in the course in Medicine, according to the Dean, but "by tact and a broadminded view our teachers try to avoid unpleasant situations."

Very well. Here, then, is a splendid opportunity for a continuance of the exercise of "tact and broadmindedness." One of the indisputable causes of the acuteness of the Color problem in our country is that those who often are in a position to use tact and diplomacy are much too eager to desert the ramparts when most urgently needed and to let things drift along in a laissez faire manner.

Suggestion is made by the Chancellor of the University that "facilities for adequate training" might be lacking. Let us see. The Medical School, which includes the School of Nursing, is considered one of the outstanding medical schools of the country. This recognition could not be obtained with an inadequate physical plant or teaching staff. Up until now, the facilities have seemed to be adequate to train scores and scores of nurses.

We do not quite subscribe to the following suggestion, made by the Dean:

"The great leader, Booker Washington, thought that the progress of the Colored people should be made through their own institutions rather than by pressing for social equality in those fields where emotion and prejudice markedly condition the behavior of people."

Now this is the doctrine of one James Crow and the South. In addition, it is impertinent to the present situation. The stale bugaboo and hackneyed subterfuge of social equality is beside the point. What we are discussing is equality of opportunity in every field of public education in Minnesota, a right to which every citizen's child is entitled.

When the Dean speaks of "their own institutions," we confess to being amazed. Since when did the tax-supported public institutions of Minnesota cease to be the institutions of all the citizens of this State? There are no "their own institutions" for education in Minnesota. And it is an unreasonable and haughty proposition to suggest to a citizen of Minnesota that he go to the added expense and inconvenience of sending his child out of his own State, to a distant city, in order to acquire training which is available in the citizen's home State.

The attitude taken by the University officials in the correspondence under discussion, comes with poor grace from the administrative officials of a wholly public institution. Perhaps in their cloistered seclusion they have forgotten that they are public servants administering a public school. The heads of private and semi-private educational institutions have a greater margin of arbitrariness. Not so the officials of a state university.

This we see is not a step in a Color problem being voluntarily taken by persons who ought to know better. Race relations in Minnesota are comparatively harmonious, a fact which both Colored and White Minnesotans must appreciate and wish to nourish. But this condition cannot be maintained if our White fellow citizens spontaneously and unnecessarily raise the question of Color.

H. S.

a straitjacket," he said. "Here, for the first time in my life, I know my color is not a handicap." The only racial discrimination he encountered in the U.S.S.R. came from white Americans, including a visiting woman who refused to share a train compartment with him, and U.S. Ambassador William Bullitt, who objected to a black man calling him "comrade."

### Political purges and war

In 1935, Smith's supervisor in the postal service vanished in one of Joseph Stalin's political purges, and the Soviet secret police suddenly seemed to be everywhere. Smith was shocked to learn of the disappearance and death of the *Black and White* scriptwriter, Lovett Fort-Whiteman, after another roundup. Smith then left government service and began contributing articles, under the pen name Chatwood Hall—a pseudonym he began using as a U of M student—to American black newspapers, often reflections on the life of a person of color in the U.S.S.R. By this time fluent in Russian, he profiled singer/actor and U.S.S.R. visitor Paul Robeson, tracked down the writer Alexander Pushkin's great-granddaughter to learn about the family's black ancestry, and reported on the ratification of a new Soviet constitution by a vote of 2,016 to 0 at the Eighth Congress of Soviets, where he was chilled to encounter Stalin in a back room.

Meanwhile, Smith had met at a New Year's party and married a Russian woman, Marie Petrovna, and together they settled into a Moscow apartment. When Stalin took the country into World War II in 1939, Smith began writing for the Associated Negro Press, which fed war news to such black American newspapers as the *Chicago Defender* and the *Pittsburgh Courier*. No other black American war correspondents covered events in Eastern Europe. "This was not a calculated achievement," he later said. "I had just happened to be on the scene when the shooting started, and all of the civilian correspondents were placed on war footing."

After the 24-month siege of Leningrad, Smith toured the city, entered the Russian Museum, and described to his readers how an enormous bomb left a crater in the center of the building, “stark witness that the Germans aimed only at military objects!” he wrote. In early 1944 he reported on the gruesome discovery of bodies from a notorious massacre of 22,000 Polish military officers in the Katyn Forest four years earlier. Soviet secret police had committed those murders, but censors prevented Smith from even hinting of that possibility. Smith was also on hand in Poland to report on the liberation of the Majdanek concentration camp, where he found evidence that the Nazis had sent to the gas chambers captured black Senegalese soldiers fighting for France.

His University experience unexpectedly flashed before him during a 1944 train trip. The train skirted Russia’s western border, and the man next to him remarked how similar the landscape looked to Minnesota’s. “That’s a fact,” Smith replied, and he learned that his companion was the war correspondent Harrison Salisbury (B.A. ’30). Together they searched their memories for a shared Minnesota experience. They discovered they had worked together at the *Minnesota Daily* and taken the same University classes. Smith unburdened his growing disenchantment with the Soviet system, along with its purges and privations. “And yet here he was still there,” Salisbury later remembered, “with no apparent way to get out.”

### **Escape from the U.S.S.R.**

But Smith felt he must get out. As a foreigner, his safety in the U.S.S.R. was precarious, despite help and protection from fellow correspondents. In Moscow, Smith had met Lorenzo Taezaz, the Ethiopian ambassador. Taezaz invited Smith to move to Ethiopia to write for the government. In 1946 Smith obtained an exit visa without trouble from Soviet officials, but they would not surrender Petrovna. Smith had to leave his wife behind.

After arriving in Ethiopia, Smith edited the country’s only English language newspaper and badgered Soviet embassy workers to issue an exit visa for his wife. With the assistance of Taezaz, Petrovna joined him in 1947. Their two children were born in Addis Ababa.

Now feeling more secure in Ethiopia, Smith confided to American embassy officials his ultimate goal to renounce his Soviet citizenship and return to America. And that’s when the FBI began compiling a dossier on his past and present activities. The agency suspected Smith had been a Communist and Soviet mouthpiece. One FBI memorandum declared that he used his position as a journalist “to disseminate Russian propaganda in the form of protest against alleged racial discrimina-

tion and inequality in the United States.” It also warned of “the possibility that he may attempt to reenter this country . . . for the purpose of engaging in espionage or spreading propaganda for the Soviet Government.”

Those fears were all baseless. Smith simply wanted to see his American relatives again and resettle in a country where he didn’t feel anxious and out of place. In 1962, the U.S. State Department at last allowed him to return, 30 years after his departure from Minneapolis to Moscow. With Petrovna and their children, he came to Chicago, where his sister lived. In America’s anti-Red climate, he tried to establish himself as a critic of the Soviet Union. He wrote for *Ebony* magazine about the political purges, poverty, starvation, and disenchantment he had witnessed in Russia. Although black people did not face racism in the U.S.S.R., he reported, they certainly experienced state terror and a dismal standard of living. Black Americans, he concluded, “must certainly have been better off in the United States. . . . [T]he promised land we sought is here, in the country I left so long ago.” He was “a better American, I am sure, for having been so long away.”

Smith became an editor for a Chicago educational publisher and wrote a memoir, *Black Man in Red Russia*, in which he detailed his ideological and political transformation. Tellingly, he opened the book with a Spanish proverb: “A wise man changes his mind, a fool never.” Perhaps fearing the taint of Communist associations, Smith also withheld the truth about his involvement in the *Black and White* movie project—he denied being a cast member and told the story of the film as an outsider simply observing events. Smith died in a Chicago convalescent home in 1972, and his newspaper obituary did not mention his wife and children among his survivors. Another mystery.

Homer Smith’s contributions to journalism inspired the National Association of Black Journalists to posthumously grant him its Legacy Award in 2006. But his life represents more than praiseworthy journalism. It also shows how societies can fail their citizens. Starting at the University of Minnesota, he protested racism and struggled to feel that he lived in a just world that respected his worth and ambitions. In Minneapolis, the Soviet Union, and Ethiopia, he never believed he found freedom and opportunity, and it’s doubtful he reached his full potential when he returned to America. He deserved better. ■

*Jack El-Hai is the author of The Nazi and the Psychiatrist, and he often writes about history.*

# Preserving a Priceless Record



George Weiblen's  
inestimable gift  
to the world

Students, teachers, and parents of Wanang Conservation School celebrate the opening of the first permanent school classroom at Wanang Village in 2013. Weiblen is standing in the back row.

**P**ROFESSOR OF PLANT BIOLOGY George Weiblen studied plants in the disappearing rain forests Papua New Guinea (PNG) for nearly 25 years. Concerned that a rich store of knowledge was also in danger of disappearing, he wrote a 52-page handbook detailing what he had learned from inhabitants about the area's biodiversity. Three years in the making, the handbook is the first written record of indigenous people's knowledge about the area's biodiversity. He presented it to dignitaries, indigenous leaders, and schoolchildren at Ohu Village near Madang on the country's north coast in late 2016.

In April, Weiblen was named the recipient of the University of Minnesota's 2017 President's Community-Engaged Scholar Award for his work in Papua New Guinea. It is the highest award the U bestows for scholarship conducted in partnership with external communities.

### What is so special about PNG from a biodiversity perspective?

It is one of the most biologically rich and scientifically least explored places on the planet. A forest patch the size of a football field contains as many different tree species as the entire state of Minnesota. Even more impressive is the cultural diversity of the island, where over 800 languages are still spoken.

### What does the handbook cover?

The Wiad handbook grew out of two decades of collaboration between the indigenous people of Ohu village and academic researchers from around the world. Ohu people maintain the Wiad Wildlife Management Area, one of the last intact rainforests of this agricultural community. It is critical habitat for New Guinea's unique biodiversity, and the handbook brings together a scientific perspective with the traditional knowledge of landowners, people who intimately know their forest.

The indigenous wisdom of the area is at risk because the Amele language is unwritten and kids today aren't exposed to storytelling and oral history like they used to be. They've got smartphones and other devices now. The handbook is actually the first written record

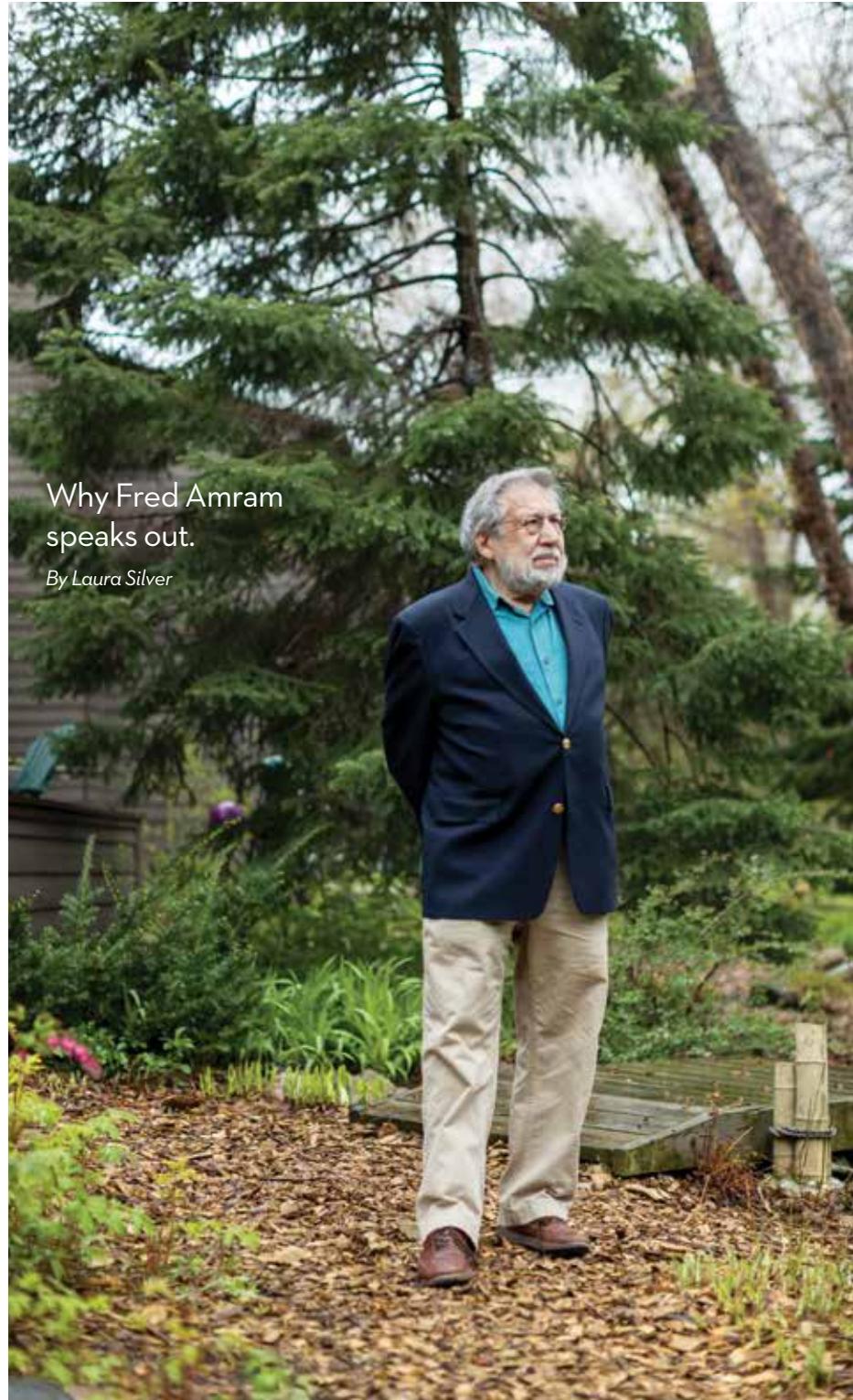


# Shaped by Genocide, Driven by Love

**F**RED AMRAM (M.A. '59) THOUGHT he and Alice Musabende couldn't be less alike. The 83-year-old author, inventor, activist, and professor emeritus of speech communication and creativity at the University of Minnesota often speaks to schoolchildren, military organizations, and civic groups about his experience as a Jewish child in Nazi Germany. When he met Musabende, a young survivor of the Rwandan genocide, she was speaking on the steps of the Capitol in St. Paul. She told how one day when she was 14, she came home from an errand and found that her mother, father, sister, and two brothers had all been slaughtered. At the end of her speech, she raised her fist and shouted, "Never again!"

"At first I was a little upset, because 'Never Again' is our slogan; it's a Jewish slogan—it's what we say about the Holocaust," Amram says. "And then, all of a sudden, I started to cry, and I realized that Alice is my sister. We're both child survivors." Now when Amram, a board member of St. Paul-based World Without Genocide, gives his talks, he tells Musabende's story too. "We survivors share common bonds. In our hearts, we have the same nightmares and the same fears. The same anger and the eagerness to help."

Last year Amram published a memoir called *We're in America Now*. It tells the story of his childhood in Nazi Germany, his father's conscription into slave labor, the family's flight across the border to Amsterdam and then New York, and his experience as a refugee: the bewilderment, the guilt and embarrassment, and his yearning to fit in as an American. The memoir, a series of interrelated short stories, came about as a result of his talks, and



Why Fred Amram  
speaks out.

By Laura Silver

he's enjoyed his foray into creative writing. "I tell people that I retired from the University so that I could write without footnotes," he says with a laugh.

In his talks, Amram also talks about the eight stages of genocide. They're part of a theory that although each genocide is unique, they all tend to evolve in the same way. And, he says, there's a point early on at which the progression can be stopped and atrocity averted. "When I came to the United States," he says, "we had water fountains that said Colored Only and White Only. So there was the same kind of segregation that we experienced in the early days of the Holocaust, where there were benches set aside for Jews and others for Aryans. Ultimately in the United States it got turned around so those water fountains were integrated. In Germany the people didn't speak up, and the separate benches and the separate schools became death camps and slave labor camps."

As a former refugee, Amram believes the United States should be more welcoming to refugees. During the 1930s, he points out, the United States' immigration

●  
"AND THEN I  
STARTED TO CRY  
AND REALIZED  
ALICE IS MY  
SISTER. WE'RE  
BOTH CHILD  
SURVIVORS."  
●

quota for Germans was 25,000—for both Jews and non-Jews—and the nation's laws made it exceedingly hard to obtain visas. "In the early days, Hitler didn't want to kill all Jews; he wanted to get all Jews out of Europe," he says. "All these people could have gotten away if somebody would have taken them. And we're seeing something like that now. Refugees are running for their lives. But the United States has not been very welcoming."

Since retiring from the U in 2001, Amram has continued to live the part of a professor of creativity. He designed and patented a customizable backpack, curated several exhibitions on women inventors, and collaborates with his wife, artist Sandra Brick, on her mixed-media artworks. And he plans to keep writing. He's just returned from a writers' residency with a draft of his first novel, a fictionalized story about his colorful forebears. "My paternal grandfather was, in the old country, a cattle thief," he says. "And his father, in the old country, was a kosher butcher. Now, just knowing that, you know there's a story there." If it's anything like Amram's own story, it's sure to be a tour de force. **MA**

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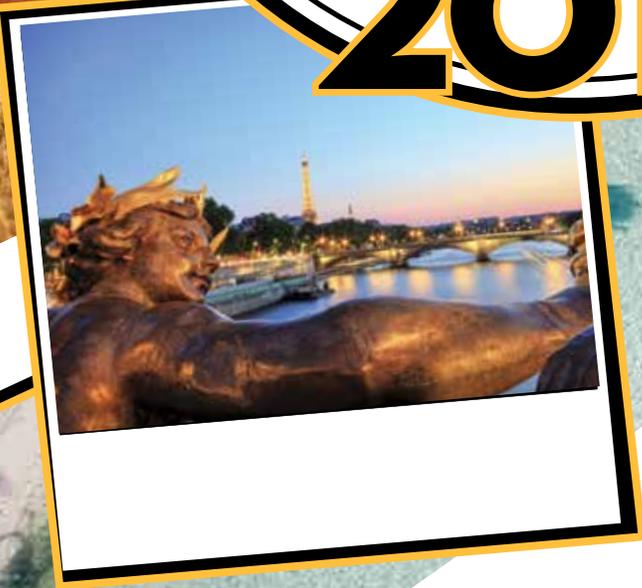




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Dear Gopher Travelers,

As the Director of the Alumni Travel Program and a frequent traveler, I am often asked which country is my favorite place to visit. I have a favorite or three on each continent, but what stands out isn't museums or landscapes so much as the people with whom I had the pleasure of sharing the experience. On the last night of a tour, I ask travelers to share their trip highlights, and it's no wonder so many of you declare getting to know your fellow travelers as a high point. Our tour groups start out with a common bond—the University of Minnesota—and our connections grow throughout the journey.

I am excited to share the destinations we've selected for 2018, including our inaugural 2018 Gopher graduation tour, Essential Europe. Give the graduate in your life a once in a lifetime opportunity to see some of the most breathtaking and historically significant sights in Europe.

When you travel with us you are supporting the Alumni Association's mission. Your generosity contributes to student success, great alumni programs, and furthers the excellent reputation of our world-class institution.



**Audra Gerlach Ferrall ('04)**  
Director of International Alumni and Travel  
University of Minnesota Alumni Association



To: U of M Alumni

123 Main Street

Minneapolis, MN

Please direct alumni travel program questions to [umtravel@umn.edu](mailto:umtravel@umn.edu) or **800-862-5867**. Visit [UMNAlumni.org/travel](http://UMNAlumni.org/travel) for complete tour information.

Look for these icons to help you find the type of trips you are most interested in:

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#### Solo-friendly pricing

Tours marked as solo-friendly have a single supplement cost of \$0-\$999. Please see our website or call for details.

\* Dates, itinerary, and price information are subject to change. All prices are per person, double occupancy.

To register for the trips listed, please contact our featured tour providers:

**AESU Alumni World Travel:** 800-638-7640

**AHI Travel:** 800-323-7373

**Go Next Inc.:** 800-842-9023

**Thomas P. Gohagan & Co.:** 800-922-3088

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**Orbridge:** 866-639-0079

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#### Expedition to Antarctica

JANUARY 4-17 • From \$9,795

Join us for this spectacular 14-day journey featuring a nine-night, exclusively chartered cruise to Antarctica, Earth's last frontier, aboard the intimate M.S. LE BORÉAL. Experience "The White Continent" in its unspoiled state, accompanied by the ship's expert team of naturalists. Spend two nights in vibrant Buenos Aires. Iguazú Falls post-program option. **Thomas P. Gohagan & Co.**

#### Treasures of Thailand

JANUARY 4-18 • From \$4,792

Journey to Siam of old. Spend 3 nights in Bangkok, where highlights include the Grand Palace Complex. Explore Ayutthaya's evocative ruins, and the Damnoen Saduak Floating Market. Take a Thai cooking class. Visit an elephant sanctuary, and conclude your tour in the old city of Chiang Mai.

**Odysseys Unlimited**

#### Tasman Pearls

JANUARY 21-February 5 • From \$6,999

Explore the wonders of Australia and New Zealand on your luxury cruise aboard the Regatta. Unique and amazing wildlife, breathtaking scenery, and relaxed-yet-contemporary lifestyles await you as you sail from Sydney to Auckland. **Go Next, Inc.**

#### Passage through the Panama Canal & Costa Rica

FEBRUARY 3-11 • From \$4,995

A spectacular 9-day journey through the mighty locks of the Panama Canal to the Costa Rican rain forest. Aboard the exclusively chartered M.V. STAR BREEZE, experience a daylight passage through the canal and call at remote island paradises. Explore Costa Rica's terrestrial wonders and tour Panama City. Pre- and post-program options offered. **Thomas P. Gohagan & Co.**

#### Rainforests & Relics

FEBRUARY 10-28 • From \$3,999

Marvel at the exotic wildlife, historic cities, and ancient ruins of Central and South America on this luxury cruise aboard the Sirena. From Miami to Peru, you'll explore the many unique and vibrant cultures of Latin America.

**Go Next, Inc.**

#### Wonders of the Galápagos Islands

FEBRUARY 12-20 • From \$4,995

This incredible 9-day journey features the Galápagos Islands, where the unique wildlife accepts up-close human interaction like nowhere else on Earth. Accompanied by certified naturalists, cruise for 4 nights and enjoy 3 nights on mainland Ecuador. Ecuadorian rain forest eco lodge pre-tour option. 6-night Machu Picchu and the Sacred Valley post-tour option.

**Thomas P. Gohagan & Co.**

## Tanzania During the Great Migration 🚐

FEBRUARY 17-28 • From \$8,295

Experience Africa's premier safari destination by land and air during the annual Great Migration. This 12-day journey includes one privately chartered flight and daily game drives in Tanzania's finest game parks—Lake Manyara, Serengeti, Ngorongoro Crater and Tarangire—with deluxe accommodations in Serena Safari Lodges and a comfortable tented camp. **Thomas P. Gohagan & Co.**

## Mystical India 🚐

FEBRUARY 22-March 10 • From \$5,387

Mystical and spiritual, chaotic and confounding, India overflows with riches. Staying at excellent hotels, your small group travels the classic Golden Triangle—bustling Delhi; Agra, with its sublime Taj Mahal; and Jaipur, the “pink city”—and absorbs the holiness of Varanasi. An optional 5-day and 4-night post-tour extension to Nepal is available. **Odyseys Unlimited**

## Israel: Land of Cultural Treasures 🚐

FEBRUARY 24-March 6 • From \$3,995

Join us for 8 nights in Israel, an inspiring nation showcasing rich history and spiritual milestones. Enjoy stays in Tel Aviv, Tiberias, and Jerusalem and, during included excursions, discover Roman ruins, an archaic fort and the House of Peter. Taste crisp falafels, see the Dead Sea, sail the Sea of Galilee, and more during this small-group experience. **AHI Travel**

## Sparkling South Pacific 🚐

FEBRUARY 25-March 7 • From \$4,299

Embark aboard the Marina for your luxury cruise around the tropical paradise of the South Pacific. You'll find sparkling turquoise lagoons, black sand beaches, flora and fauna not found anywhere else on Earth, and much more as you take in the breathtaking beauty and relaxing island culture of this fascinating region. **Go Next, Inc.**

## Costa Rica's Natural Heritage 🚐

MARCH 15-26 • From \$3,781

In this small Central American democracy kissed by nature, your small group enjoys a relaxed yet comprehensive exploration of four distinct regions, encountering staggering biodiversity from cloud forest to rain forest, Central Valley to Pacific coast. Discover more exceptional biodiversity on an optional 4-day, 3-night post-tour extension to Tortuguero National Park. **Odyseys Unlimited**

## The Wonders of Peru 🚐

APRIL 5-16 • From \$5,995

Immerse yourself in Peru's wonders on this ten-night journey. See Lima's highlights, then experience a three-night, intimate Amazon cruise. Enjoy wildlife watching and a rain forest hike. In the Andes, explore ethereal Machu Picchu with an expert local guide. **AHI Travel**

“The University of Minnesota group on our Go Next Oceania Cruise was exceptional and the UMAA hosts did an incredible job of talking to everyone and planned wonderful get-togethers. The Panama Canal experience was outstanding; the narration and the talks gave you a real story of the difficulties that plagued the creation of the Canal.”

**Bob and Kathy**  
Bridge of the Americas Cruise

## Gateway to Sunshine 🚐

APRIL 6-22 • From \$4,299

Sunny scenery awaits you on this luxurious cruise from Los Angeles to Miami by way of the magnificent Panama Canal. You'll see astounding volcanoes, awe-inspiring rain forests, exotic wildlife, and more as you take in the diverse cultures of Central America. **Go Next, Inc.**

## Dutch Waterways 🚐

APRIL 18-26 • From \$2,495

Experience a captivating 7-night cruise through Holland and Belgium's waterways and canals aboard a first-class ship, featuring guided excursions in Amsterdam, Giethoorn, The Hague, Delft, Bruges, and Antwerp. Enjoy a choice of excursions in several ports, enlightening lectures and delicious meals onboard, including wine and beer with lunch and dinner. **AHI Travel**

## China, Tibet & The Yangtze River 🚐

APRIL 25-May 13 • From \$6,887

This distinctive small group journey combines a special visit to remote, spiritual Tibet with a memorable cruise on the fabled Yangtze. Adding grace notes to this highly popular itinerary: intriguing Beijing, Xian's extraordinary Terra Cotta Warriors, and cosmopolitan Shanghai. Prolong your stay in Shanghai with an optional 3-day, 2-night post-tour extension. **Odyseys Unlimited**

## European Coastal Civilizations 🚐

APRIL 30-May 9 • From \$5,195

This 8-night cruise along coastal Portugal, Spain, France, and England aboard M.S. LE BOREAL features a memorable cruise up the River Thames, an exclusive C'est Bon! CULINARY TRADITIONS™ program celebrating local cuisines, and a visit to the beaches of Normandy with special guest speaker Dwight D. Eisenhower II. **Thomas P. Gohagan & Co.**

## Timeless Beauties 🚐

MAY 2-10 • From \$2,499

Relax into the Mediterranean lifestyle on this luxury cruise through Southern Europe. Renaissance masterpieces, glamorous resorts, and ancient monuments await you as you sail from pristine Spain through to the breathtaking Italian Riviera. **Go Next, Inc.**

## Majestic Passage 🚐

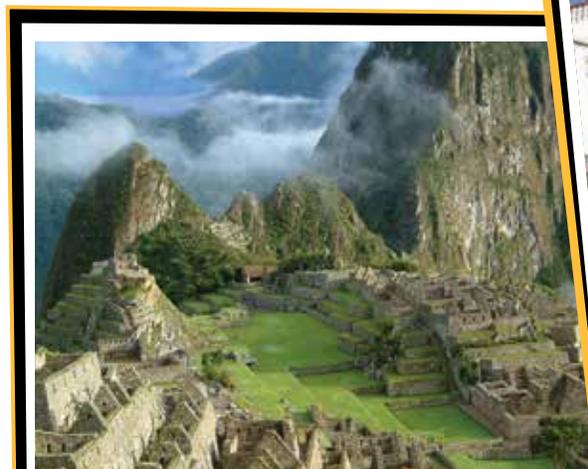
MAY 8-23 • From \$3,999

Connect New World settlements with their Old World roots on your journey from North America to the British Isles. Journey across the Atlantic aboard the luxurious Marina and explore the natural bounty of eastern Canada and the thriving cosmopolitan cities of the United Kingdom. **Go Next, Inc.**

## Scottish Isles & Norwegian Fjords 🚐

MAY 10-18 • From \$4,995

Join us for a unique 7-night journey to Scotland's rarely visited Orkney and Shetland Islands and Norway's majestic coastal fjords. Cruise from Glasgow to Bergen aboard the M.S. LE BOREAL and enjoy two of the world's most scenic rail journeys. Edinburgh and Glasgow pre-cruise and Norway and Copenhagen post-cruise options. **Thomas P. Gohagan & Co.**



### Cuban Cultural Awakening

MAY 11-20 • From \$2,399

Open the door to island culture on this week-long luxury cruise through the heart of the Caribbean, stopping in Cuba and the Bahamas. Go beyond the tourist destinations during your two days in Havana with our unparalleled Go Next Exclusive Excursions, included for all Go Next travelers. [Go Next, Inc.](#)

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MAY 16-25 • From \$2,799

Ancient architecture, colorful villages, and Mediterranean beauty await you on your voyage around Italy and Greece. From Rome, you'll venture to the picture-perfect Amalfi Coast, the imposing Mount Etna, the medieval Adriatic hub of Kotor, and more before finishing your luxury cruise among the mysterious and romantic canals of Venice. [Go Next, Inc.](#)

### Essential Europe Grad Trip

MAY 20-June 7 • From \$3,898

From the pageantry of London to the snow-capped Austrian Alps, from the glorious art of Florence to the sun-kissed beaches of Greece, Europe's infinite variety of people, places, and traditions are the perfect setting for a journey that celebrates and educates. Exclusively for recent graduates and educators, nine wondrous countries. [AESSU Alumni World Travel](#)

**“Our Odysseys Egypt tour director was knowledgeable and enthusiastic. The sites and sights were fabulous, and he explained them well. We also had the opportunity to connect with the people of Egypt on our lunch visit to a family farm in Luxor—it was a marvelous experience!”**

#### **Poldi**

Egypt and the Eternal Nile

### Village Life® Around the Italian Lakes

MAY 26-June 3 • From \$3,795

Experience the true essence of life in northern Italy's fabled Lake District for one week, with charming accommodations in the Palace Hotel in the heart of Como. Enjoy private lake cruises on Como, Maggiore, and Orta and excursions to Bellagio, Villa del Balbianello, the Borromean Islands, and Milan. Verona and Venice post-program option available. [Thomas P. Gohagan & Co.](#)

### Southern Culture & Civil War

JUNE 2-11 • From \$2,499

Take a trip back in time to the era of the Civil War on this riverboat cruise down the Southern Mississippi on the stately and luxurious American Queen. From Civil War battlegrounds like Vicksburg to the magnificent Antebellum plantation of Nottoway, Southern culture and history come alive on this weeklong voyage. [Go Next, Inc.](#)

### The Great Journey

through Europe

JUNE 13-23 • From \$4,595

This extraordinary 11-day tour combines river, rail, lake, and mountain travel and features Switzerland, France, Germany, and The Netherlands. Cruise aboard the deluxe M.S. AMADEUS SILVER II along the most scenic sections of the Rhine River. Ride aboard three legendary railways—the Matterhorn's Gornergrat Bahn, the famous Glacier Express, and Lucerne's Platts Railway. [Thomas P. Gohagan & Co.](#)

### Gaelic Exploration

JUNE 17-28 • From \$4,799

Experience the wonders of Gaelic culture as you sail through Ireland and the British Isles. Discover Ireland's cosmopolitan heart in Dublin and Belfast, delve into its rich history from Waterford to Galway, and explore the natural bounty of Glengarriff and Holyhead. [Go Next, Inc.](#)

### Baltic & Scandinavian Treasures

JUNE 21-July 2 • From \$3,799

Discover the unique personality of Northern Europe as you set sail across the Baltic Sea from Copenhagen to Stockholm on the luxurious Marina. Laze on the unforgettable beaches of the Baltic States in Klaipeda, Riga, and Tallinn; explore the cosmopolitan flair of Helsinki and Berlin; and embrace a two-night stay in St. Petersburg, Russia's window to the West. [Go Next, Inc.](#)

### Alaska's Glaciers & the Inside Passage

JUNE 28-July 5 • From \$4,295

Cruise through the Inside Passage from Vancouver to Juneau aboard the exclusively chartered small ship M.V. STAR LEGEND. During naturalist-led Zodiac excursions and from the comfort of your own spacious, ocean-view suite, enjoy superior views of Alaska's spectacular scenery and abundant wildlife. Ports of call include Sitka, Wrangell, and Ketchikan. [Thomas P. Gohagan & Co.](#)

### Nordic Magnificence

JULY 1-11 • From \$3,995

Join us on a remarkable journey to explore the natural beauty and heritage of Denmark and Norway. Explore Copenhagen. Marvel at royal castles and stroll through the Old Town. Cruise overnight to Oslo. Learn of Norway's Viking past and admire the country's majestic scenery. Travel on the picturesque Bergen railway and cruise on the magnificent Songefjord. [AHL Travel](#)



### Polar Bears & Beluga Whales 🚚

JULY 15-21 • From \$3,995

Discover the beauty and wildness of Churchill, Manitoba. Known as the “Polar Bear Capital of the World,” this small town on the Hudson Bay is famous for these majestic animals who share the area during the summer with more than 60,000 beluga whales. Experience this beauty that can only be found in the Canadian north.

**Orbridge**

### Breathtaking Bordeaux 🚚

JULY 16-24 • From \$3,799

On this luxury cruise around the Bordeaux region of France, you'll have the opportunity to not only taste some of the world's greatest wines, but also explore the underground catacombs in Saint-Émilion, tour the Château de Roquetaillade in Cadillac, and much more on this unforgettable, all-inclusive river cruise.

**Go Next, Inc.**

“*The pace of the tour was great, our guide was excellent and all of the transfers were managed well with the least amount of difficulty on our South Africa trip with Gohagan. It was great to meet two other couples from the U of M and we have created wonderful new friendships.*”

**Colleen**

Pride of South Africa Tour

### Exploring Iceland 🚚

JULY 21-31 • From \$5,442

Discover Iceland's remarkable natural history and rich cultural heritage as you travel the breadth of an astonishing land on this 11-day small group tour. From the stunning Snaefellsnes Peninsula to charming Akureyri, wondrous Lake Myvatn to jaw-dropping Dettifoss waterfall, Iceland's wonders unfold before your final two nights in sophisticated Reykjavik. **Odysseys Unlimited**

### The Majestic Great Lakes 🚚

JULY 27-August 5 • From \$5,999

Explore the verdant wilderness, rocky shores, and pristine islands of North America as you cruise all five Great Lakes aboard the 202-guest M.V. Victory I. Take in fascinating onboard lectures by maritime historian Frederick Stonehouse as you traverse the region's stunning geography and immerse yourself in its pioneer spirit. **Go Next, Inc.**

### Vikings & Royals 🚚

JULY 29-August 19 • From \$8,949

Trace the path of the Vikings on this luxury cruise across the northern Atlantic. Starting and ending in London, you'll explore the otherworldly beauty and extraordinary culture of Iceland and Greenland, as well as have the opportunity to delve into the United Kingdom and Ireland's own Viking heritage.

**Go Next, Inc.**

### Riches of the Emerald Isle 🚚

JULY 31-August 11 • From \$4,095

Experience the finest in Irish culture during stays in Ennis, Killarney, Mallow, and Dublin. Explore lively Galway, traverse the Burren landscape, and admire the resplendent Cliffs of Moher. Enjoy Blarney Castle and Dublin's St. Patrick's Cathedral and Trinity College. This 10-night, small-group experience features first-class hotels and fascinating insights from local guides and experts. **AHI Travel**

### Discovering Eastern Europe 🚚

AUGUST 4 - 20 • From \$5,197

Discover a beautiful, poignant part of the world on this 17-day small group tour that provides a generous overview of five fascinating locales—Warsaw and medieval Krakow, splendid Budapest, Old World Bratislava, proud Prague, and grand Vienna. Experience Germany's cosmopolitan capital on an optional 4-day, 3-night Berlin post-tour extension. **Odysseys Unlimited**

### The Mighty Mississippi 🚚

AUGUST 5-20 • From \$3,599

Experience the full grandeur of the Mississippi River aboard the iconic and stately riverboat American Queen. From the river's trickling beginnings in Minnesota to the Mississippi River Delta where the water flows into the Gulf of Mexico, you'll explore the history and culture cultivated by this massive and majestic waterway. **Go Next, Inc.**



**Canadian Rockies, Parks, & Resorts** 🚗  
AUGUST 23-29 • From \$3,995

A sampling of world-class Canadian resorts combined with breathtaking scenery highlight this 7-day journey into the Canadian Rockies. Find adventure in the vast lands and magnificent ranges of Banff, Yoho, and Jasper National Parks, the crystal waters of Lake Louise and Maligne Lake, and amidst the glacial masses of Icefields Parkway. **Orbridge**

**Southern Africa** 🚗  
SEPTEMBER 2-17 • From \$6,995

Discover the remarkable beauty and vibrant culture of South Africa and Zimbabwe as you explore modern cities, track wildlife on safari and explore the natural wonder of Victoria Falls on the Zambezi River. Talks by local experts, excursions with expert guides, and safari game drives make this an experience of a lifetime. **AHI Travel**

**Reims: Centennial of WWI Armistice** 🚗👤  
SEPTEMBER 18-26 • From \$2,995

Discover the essence of France's Champagne country and explore the history, culture, and joie de vivre of this magnificent region. Sip champagne, stroll through picturesque towns, and more during your 7-night stay in Reims. Experience a program crafted to offer a balance of planned activities and time to follow your own path. **AHI Travel**

“The AHI tour director was absolutely tops, she went well out of her way to make sure everyone was taken care of, well informed about activities, and enjoying the tour. And the other members on our Ireland tour were also exceptionally good company.”

**Jim and Marilyn**  
Ireland Tour

**Imperial Splendor of Russia** 🚗👤  
SEPTEMBER 19-28 • From \$3,495

Explore Russia's grandeur on an 8-night, small-group experience that reveals Moscow's imperial riches, St. Basil's Cathedral, Metro stations, and other treasures. Travel by high-speed train to St. Petersburg to visit the State Hermitage Museum, Peterhof Palace, Mariinsky Theater, and more. Enjoy first-class hotels, enriching lectures, extensive meals and wine with dinner. **AHI Travel**

**Flavors of Sicily** 🚗  
SEPTEMBER 20-28 • From \$4,995

Meet Sicilian guides, chefs, and vintners for a grand discovery of Sicily. With breathtaking natural beauty, deep history, and a fabled cuisine, this journey will allow you to explore Italy's most colorful region. Visit architectural sites, admire stunning vistas, and relax in the cozy opulence of the Taormina's San Domenico Palace Hotel. **Orbridge**

**Grand Danube Passage** 🌊🚗👤  
SEPTEMBER 26-October 10 • From \$4,695

Discover eight European countries, antiquated capitals, charming villages, and the storied Danube River. During this 13-night journey, admire archaic facades, castles, and cathedrals; laud epic panoramas; and enjoy engaging culture experiences. Celebrate each region's heritage and flavors, and personalize your cruise with a choice of excursions in select ports. **AHI Travel**

**Trade Routes of Coastal Iberia** 🚗👤  
OCTOBER 3-11 • From \$4,395

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**Island Life of Ancient Greece** 🚗👤  
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**Ancient Vignettes** 🚗👤  
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**Great Trains & Grand Canyons** 🚗  
OCTOBER 14-19 • From \$2,750

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DECEMBER 2-10 • From \$5,895

Discover Cuba's highlights, architecture, music, and culture for eight nights during stays in Miami, Havana and Cienfuegos. Meet local artists and dancers and learn from local experts during fascinating presentations. Along the way, visit historic sites, museums, schools, and community projects, and enjoy a cigar factory tour. This small-group experience includes round-trip flights between Miami and Cuba and all excursions. **AHI Travel**

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# UPCOMING EVENTS & PROGRAMS

## LEARN

### GOOD AS GOLD

Alumni of all ages and life stages who value lifelong learning value Gold Mind, the UMAA's online resource that provides free, focused, content-rich webinars and videos on a wide range of topics. Why not spend an hour learning from experts in the comfort of your own home, on your own timeline? Webinars added in the past few months include brass tacks budgeting, navigating difficult conversations, the impact of the new administration on health care, and much more. Visit [UMNAlumni.org/goldmind](http://UMNAlumni.org/goldmind).

## RECONNECT

### DON'T MISS OUT!

It's not too early to mark your calendar for Homecoming! The Alumni Association will kick off the week with our immensely popular nationwide Day of Service on October 14. New football coach P.J. Fleck leads the Gophers against Illinois in the Homecoming game on October 21. Mark your calendars now and watch for details as the date draws closer. See you there!

## NETWORK

### GROW YOUR NETWORK

If you're a new grad looking to expand your network or a seasoned professional looking to the next chapter, consider the advantages of connecting with fellow U of M alumni. It's easy through the Alumni Association.

The **UMAA LinkedIn Group** connects you with more than 31,000 fellow alumni.

The **Collegiate LinkedIn Groups** help you keep up with what's happening in your college through fellow alumni. Learn about industry topics, college-specific events, and other ways to stay connected.

UMAA's **Emerging Professionals Network** tailors networking events for alumni who graduated from the U within the past 10 years. The events are geared toward career development in a relaxed, social atmosphere.

Learn more about these opportunities at [UMNAlumni.org](http://UMNAlumni.org).



### CHAIR-ELECT TO TAKE OFFICE

Alumni Association Board Chair Dan McDonald (B.E.E. '82, J.D. '85) passed the gavel at the 2017 Annual Celebration on April 17 to Chair-Elect Sandra Ulsaker Wiese (B.A. '81), who begins her term as chair on July 1. McDonald completes his ninth year of board service on June 30.

In the recent online vote, the UMAA membership reelected four board members to three-year terms: Roshini Rajkumar (J.D. '97), Doug Huebsch (B.S. '85), Laura Moret (B.A. '76, M.B.A. '81), and Tony Wagner (B.S.B. '96). Pat Duncanson (B.A. '83) was elected to his first term.

Joel Morehouse



Go Matsumori



## BRIGHT SPOT IN A CHILLY SPRING

More than 40 members of the Japan Minnesota Association (JMA) attended the annual Ohanami, or cherry blossom viewing party, in Inogashira Park in western Tokyo on April 2. This event is always highly anticipated, as it's a great chance for members to get together and enjoy each others' company while picnicking under the unique beauty of the fleeting sakura blooms.

JMA was initially founded in 1984 for Japanese alumni of the University of Minnesota. It is now open to everyone who is interested in Minnesota, including families, study abroad students, new and experienced professionals, and many others.

One of the participants, Abbey Burtis, a study abroad student at Hitotsubashi University from the Carlson School said, "Ohanami was delightful! It was a pleasure to meet others connected to the

University, share traditional Japanese food, and enjoy the beautiful sakura. I look forward to the next event hosted by the University of Minnesota Alumni Association, Tokyo chapter."

Inogashira Park is a go-to place for cherry blossom viewing, boasting around 500 sakura trees, many of which surround the central pond. Despite this year's unusual cold snap, the park was covered in the unmistakable sakura pink of opening buds and new flowers. Everybody gathered near the pond and enjoyed a potluck-style spread of homemade chirashi-zushi, niku-jaga, and many other traditional foods and snacks.

The Alumni Association has networks in 18 countries outside of the United States where alumni living internationally can connect with each other. To find one in your area, visit [UMNAlumni.org/networks](http://UMNAlumni.org/networks).

—Alex Ehret

## STAY CONNECTED

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## UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION

Update your contact information at [update.umn.edu](http://update.umn.edu).





## MEMBER ADVANTAGES

Thank you for being a member! Don't forget to make the most of your member advantages. Here are just a few:

### PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- ▶ Take part in a quarterly roster of noncredit courses (save 10 percent on continuing education).
- ▶ Invest in yourself with a course in the Carlson Executive Education program (save 10 percent).

### EXPLORE CAMPUS

- ▶ Visit the Weisman Art Museum and Minnesota Landscape Arboretum (discounted membership rates).
- ▶ See the finest Northrop Dance, U of M Theatre Arts, and School of Music performances (member ticket rates).
- ▶ Dine with a view from the Campus Club (local and non-Twin Cities membership discounts).
- ▶ Tour the Raptor Center for a beak-to-nose educational experience (weekend program discounts, save 20 percent on birthday parties).

### MEMBERS-ONLY ACCESS

- ▶ Advance notice and special pricing of exclusive events. Keep an eye on your inbox!
- ▶ Online access to U of M Libraries (subset of student access).
- ▶ Continue reading this award-winning magazine! Membership includes a subscription.

### SPECIAL SAVINGS

- ▶ 20 percent savings on U of M Bookstores apparel and gifts in store and online.
- ▶ Academic pricing on select Apple products at the U of M Bookstores.
- ▶ 10 percent discount at Goldy's Locker Room locations in the Twin Cities
- ▶ Show your member card for alumni rates at the Commons Hotel on campus.

[UMNAlumni.org/advantages](http://UMNAlumni.org/advantages)

## A SPECIAL WELCOME to our newest fully paid Life Members!\*

As a Life Member, you **join more than 18,000** loyal and enthusiastic alumni supporting the U's important work. Dues are invested in a fund that provides a stable support for key Alumni Association programs.

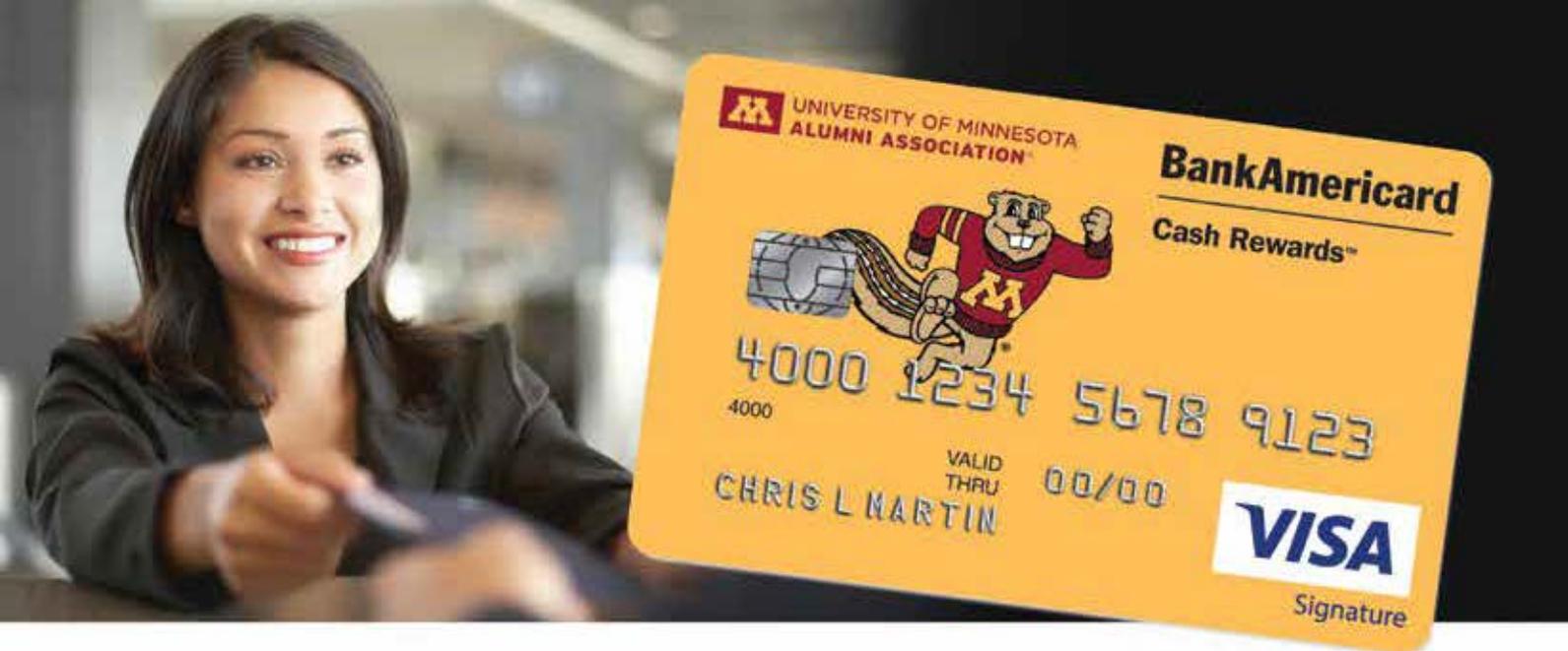
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# Eat, Think, Live



Erica Berry is a graduate instructor and fellow in the University's MFA program in creative writing.

Illustration by  
Miguel Gallardo

By Erica Berry

THE SUMMER I GRADUATED from college, I moved to Sicily to take a job working on a documentary in the middle of the mountains. I had never made a film and I didn't speak a word of Italian, never mind Sicilian. I was clueless, thrilled, and determined to ignore my aching heart.

My senior year I had dated a guy a year behind me in school, and as I applied for one overseas job after another, I convinced myself that an upcoming journey would be an excuse for long-distance phone calls while he finished classes. Instead, the day before my flight, I hugged him goodbye on the hot asphalt of a suburban auto shop, trying not to cry. Neither of us knew what the next years would bring, but he wasn't ready to tether our lives across the ocean. He drove back to our college town. And one bus, two planes, two trains, and one dusty Fiat ride later, I arrived at my new home.

As a teenager, I had binged on the canon of woman-goes-abroad-and-falls-in-love stories, and friends were quick to note that in this regard, my breakup was ideal staging for the journey. The family I was working for had had a string of English-speaking interns over the years, and stories of their love affairs haunted the local village: This was the shepherd who had dated Linda, that was the sommelier who had danced with Fiona. But as each day went on, I came to thrill in a life that didn't oscillate around romantic attachment. I had spent my adolescence enmeshed in various iterations of courtship, but I had never questioned how much energy this took from my life. The head rush of the crush had always seemed harmless. Now, busily occupied in the hum of country life, I was surprised to realize that while I was often alone, I was rarely lonely.

Workdays were long, so I found solace in twilight, when I could slip out and jog through the vineyards before dinner. One evening, a motorcyclist called to me from the top of a hill. The rider looked to be in his 30s, with a swoop of dark hair and a wide smile. By then, I understood enough to figure out that he was offering me a ride home. I smiled—*no, grazie*—and wished him a good evening. But instead of leaving, he hopped off his bike and gestured for me to come stand beside him. Beneath us, the sunset burned through the vines. We managed introductions—he was Salvatore, from a town a few miles away—and then, after a few minutes of stilted conversation, he reached a hand to my flaming cheek and said something I didn't understand. Laughing at my cluelessness, he touched the ring finger of my left hand. My first proposal.

For a minute, I imagined riding off with him. Maybe we wouldn't marry, but still: Wasn't this what being a traveler was all about? But then I remembered the broccoli I had harvested for dinner, and the letter to an old friend I planned to write while I ate. This, too, felt important and new.

From a young age, we are taught to aspire to partnership, both platonic and otherwise. Still, it seems we should practice solitude too. Not only had I never learned to sit tight with the rumble of my own heartbeat, I had never thought that I should try. Instead, I had spent a lot of time aspiring to connection, all the while distracting myself from myself. So I strung together enough smiles and words to thank Salvatore. I told him I hoped to see him around. And then he grinned, touching my arm as he mounted his bike, and disappeared into the pink sky. **▲**

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