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"Overall, schools have historically and contemporarily failed Black children." P. 7

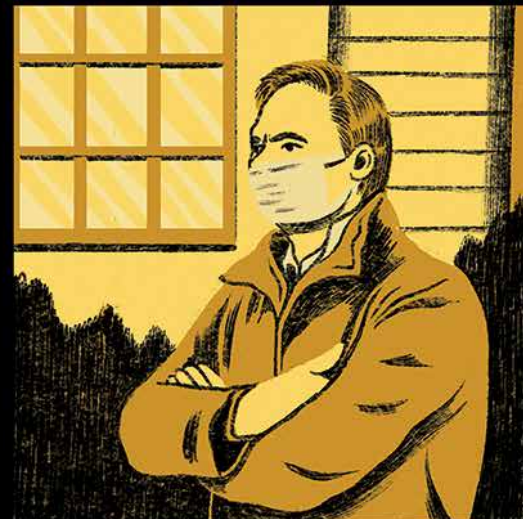
Northwestern

FALL 2020



The Stories of Our Lives

The Northwestern community responds to the coronavirus.
P. 22



Mural Maker
Chicago artist Ryan Tova Katz paints a mural at 829 Foster St. in Evanston to honor Northwestern's class of 2020. The four-story project took three days to complete and features a girl dropping 15 purple hearts from her window. Katz donated the mural, saying that she hopes it inspires celebration and pride for all graduates. Visit alummag.nu/2020-mural to see the completed project.



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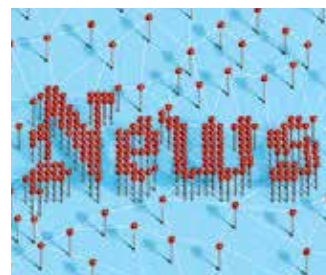


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Fighting for Local News — and Democracy

A new Medill program supports local news organizations, helping keep citizens engaged in their communities. The Local News Initiative brings together experts in digital innovation, audience understanding and business strategy to bolster the sustainability of local outlets in America.

By Erin Karter



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The Write Path

Attica Locke probes class- and race-based inequities through her award-winning mystery novels and popular TV scripts.

By Adrienne Samuels Gibbs



Helping Heal a Wounded World
Wildcats battle COVID through science, medicine and service. In Malaysia, Nizar Ku provides hot meals to low-income workers.

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← “Patients seem to like telehealth because it makes their medical care so much less obtrusive.”

— Richard Bernstein, Northwestern neurology professor in the Division of Stroke and Neurocritical Care and Northwestern Medicine’s medical director of telehealth and Distinguished Physician in Vascular Neurology

ILLUSTRATION: CHRIS GASH; ATTICA LOCKE: LOS ANGELES TIMES



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Star Wars Pitchman Dies

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Shep Shanley hangs up his hat

Confronting the Pandemic and Social Injustice

This has been one of the most difficult years in the history of the world — and, as a consequence, in the history of higher education, here and around the globe.

The coronavirus pandemic has challenged the limits of institutions everywhere to respond and coordinate, and the results of that challenge have been unsettling so far. The global economy has suffered major upheaval along the way.

Then a historic wave of protests rose up against centuries-long anti-Blackness and systemic racial injustice.

Northwestern's commitment to racial and social justice must be unrelenting. My fellow University leaders and I vehemently oppose anti-Blackness and police brutality. It should not be a controversial or a political statement to declare that Black Lives Matter.

We promise to work, individually and collectively, to seek justice and to better support our Black students, staff and faculty. We need to identify and address all forms of implicit and explicit racism and bias on our campuses. We must, and we will, do more.

Toward that end, we have asked leaders across the University to develop strategies to increase diversity within our community; hire, advance and support staff from underrepresented communities; expand diversity training and anti-racism programs and curricula for all faculty, staff and students; expedite the renovation of the Black House; and review the operations of Northwestern's police department to ensure that all of our students, faculty and staff are safe and protected. We also commit to allocating \$1.5 million for fiscal year 2020–21 toward advancing social justice and racial equity in Evanston and Chicago.

It became clear to me this spring that, at moments like this, the Northwestern

community has an especially meaningful role to play. Our alumni, faculty, students and staff have been pacesetters in addressing the medical, economic and social emergencies that have shaken our society.

This issue of *Northwestern Magazine* tells the stories of individuals in our community who have been playing extraordinary roles fighting the pandemic in recent months (see “The Stories of Our Lives,” page 22) and others who are leading change in our society through speaking out against injustices and racism, such as Northwestern professor kihana miraya ross (see “It’s Time to Abolish Schools,” page 7). The crises of 2020 have brought forth the very best in our people.

Members of the Northwestern community are able to lead and have an impact in part because of the strong foundation provided by **We Will. The Campaign for Northwestern.** The Campaign, the most ambitious fundraising initiative in the University's 169-year history, has helped support students facing heightened adversity, bolster high-impact research, and attract, retain and nurture the world-class faculty who expand the frontiers of knowledge and create meaningful contributions across every academic discipline.

Gifts from alumni, parents and friends have enabled our faculty to

perform timely and urgently needed work, such as designing new materials to counteract shortages in personal protective equipment and other supplies during the coronavirus pandemic.

Through their gifts to our Student Emergency and Essential Needs (SEEN) Fund, Campaign supporters have also helped Northwestern students. This past spring, the University distributed more than \$1.3 million in COVID-19 emergency grants to nearly 2,000 undergraduate, graduate and professional students to cover their travel and learning technology needs as Northwestern transitioned to remote learning (see “Showing Support,” “We Will” Update, page 21).

Our donors are also advancing Northwestern's continuing work for social justice and increasing access to students from underrepresented groups. Examples include the Bluhm Legal Clinic, Black Arts Initiative, Northwestern Neighborhood & Network Initiative (N3), Northwestern Academy for Chicago Public Schools and Northwestern Academy–Evanston.

As we head into the final phase of this landmark campaign, we seek increased support for strategic opportunities across the University, while also prioritizing a number of emerging needs.

For example, maintaining a diverse and thriving student body is central to our mission. But because of the devastating economic impact of the coronavirus, we expect that students in the coming years will demonstrate higher levels of financial need. Scholarships have become even more important. And students' need for SEEN funds and our Student Enrichment Services program will continue through the next academic year and beyond.

Also, as one component of our expanded commitments to social justice

and racial equity, we've committed to raise new funds to support the diversification of our student body and of our faculty. We will be proactive in recruiting Black and other students and scholars of color at all levels by immediately providing resources to schools and departments so they can meet this commitment.

Another priority involves improving the academic, co-curricular and campus experience of our students and providing more opportunities for them to thrive.

Through the Campaign, we've been able to establish 445 new endowed scholarships and fellowships that benefit thousands of undergraduate and graduate students. And Campaign gifts are enhancing student mental health and well-being: Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) was able to add five new staff members in Chicago and Evanston during the 2019–20 academic year to better support students both on and beyond campus.

You'll recall that we publicly launched

the “We Will” Campaign in 2014 with joint goals of raising \$3.75 billion from at least 141,000 supporters. When we reached those totals two years ahead of schedule, we decided to extend the Campaign in order to invest further in Northwestern's academic excellence.

The Campaign has continued to make remarkable progress, already nearing the \$5 billion mark as we move toward a grand conclusion this academic year.

For Northwestern to fulfill its potential as one of the world's best universities and for us to amplify its impact on society, all parts of its foundation — its vast array of research areas, its student body, its physical infrastructure and more — require careful attention and investment. The “We Will” Campaign makes it possible for us to do just that, thanks to tremendous support across the entire Northwestern community, including more than 167,000 alumni, parents and friends who have made at least one gift during the Campaign.

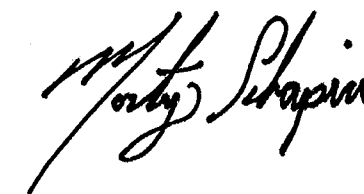
In short, we've achieved so much, but we still have crucial work ahead of us and a short amount of time in which to accomplish it.

Northwestern has a hard-earned and growing reputation for excellence, but that excellence is for a purpose: to be in a position to make the fullest possible contribution to our world precisely at moments like the one that we are in now.

Each and every gift helps us to do just this, by advancing research discoveries and innovation, nurturing artistic excellence, preparing tomorrow's leaders and expanding opportunity and well-being throughout our society.

I thank you for being part of the Northwestern family and our steadfast partner in these efforts.

Best wishes,



Morton Schapiro
President and Professor



MATTHEW GILSON

“The Northwestern community has an especially meaningful role to play. Our alumni, faculty, students and staff have been pacesetters in addressing the medical, economic and social emergencies that have shaken our society.”

Northwestern Magazine

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Northwestern Magazine is published

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Office of Global Marketing and

Communications, 1603 Orrington

Ave., Suite 200, Evanston, IL 60201.

Telephone: 847-491-5000

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Views expressed in Northwestern

Magazine do not necessarily reflect

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Talk Back

SAVING AFRICA'S LAST RHINOS

This was one of the best issues in recent memory. The feature articles were superb.

I was especially taken with “Saving Africa’s Last Rhinos” [spring 2020]. The poaching situation breaks our hearts. So pleased that one of our students has developed a tool in the fight against this terrible type of “hunting.”

Bob Seal '71

McKinney, Texas

The photo of the rhino on the front cover is absolutely captivating — beautiful. I had no clue about the rhino poaching or its severity and extent.

Wyetta Ballenger '76

Lithia Springs, Ga.

I have always really enjoyed *Northwestern*, which I consider not just a good alumni publication but a good magazine, period.

So, in that spirit of appreciation, I have a query about the stunning back page photo from the spring 2020 edition connected to the heartbreaking story of rhino poaching. Why, when the story and the caption deal with South African rhinos, does the (presumptive) park ranger sport a Kenyan flag bracelet while tenderly touching near the closed eye of one rhino? Whatever the answer, the photo was a perfect accompaniment to the story, which I hope, with the help of Mr. Bhatti and other wonderful people, has a happy ending. Chris Doherty '99 MBA Baltimore

Editor’s note: Photographer Ami Vitale took the front and back cover photos of rhinos in Kenya. South Africa is home to about 20,000 rhinos, and Kenya has about 540.

Bhatti’s work is vitally important and inspiring. And while poaching, as your story and graphics highlight, is a tragedy unfolding across many countries, the photo and snapshot stat on the back cover of the spring 2020 magazine highlights the grave situation of rhinos in South Africa. Throughout the feature, only the Stellenbosch professor is named. None of the countless local workers on the front lines of this fight is mentioned by name ... or even passively acknowledged. Please honor the on-the-ground heroes working to stop this slaughter by at least attributing where they are, if not who they are.

Brooke Wurst '95 MS

Boston

Congratulations on your latest issue of *Northwestern*. It’s chock full of interesting and well-written articles and miscellaneous information — the perfect companion during the pandemic lockdown! Chuck Remsberg '58, '59 MS Wilmette, Ill.

PRISON EDUCATION UNLOCKS POTENTIAL

Kudos to the Northwestern faculty and students involved in the Northwestern Prison Education Program [“Prison Education Unlocks Potential,” spring 2020]. You are making a meaningful

and immeasurable difference in the lives of the men at Stateville.

The firsthand account by student William Peeples Jr. literally brought tears to my eyes as I considered his experience, the self-awareness and introspection required to live with it, and the impact that Northwestern has had on him while living — indefinitely — behind bars.

Kym White '86

New York City

TELLING BLACK CHICAGO'S STORIES

This is a critical time in history where our country can finally fix the system to give justice to Black Americans. I was happy to see on the cover of the spring 2020 issue that there was an article on “Telling Black Chicago’s Story” [“Finding Their Triibe,” Class Notes, Close-up, page 63, spring 2020]. I was disappointed to find it in the Class Notes. I was expecting a full article.

Now is the time to bring the Black voice to the forefront, and because Northwestern has two alumni doing this critical work, our magazine should be proud to give them center stage.

Scott Ramsayer '89

Chicago

The Magazine Gets a Gold
Northwestern Magazine has won gold for general interest magazines in the Council for Advancement and Support of Education's Circle of Excellence awards! Here's what the judges had to say: **“Northwestern Magazine is relevant, with a finger on the pulse, and poised for what's next. It's a beautiful publication.”**

Voices

FACULTY OPINION

It’s Time to Abolish Schools

By kihana miraya ross

In a recent *New York Times* op-ed, I argued that racism isn’t the right word to understand the unrelenting police killings of people racialized Black in this country. The right term is anti-Blackness, which illuminates society’s inability to recognize our humanity.

But anti-Blackness is also a useful frame to consider the myriad other facets of society where there are detrimental consequences for being marked as Black in an anti-Black world.

One of those is schools. Yes, schools, where there are often countless dedicated

teachers who work tirelessly against the tide of a neoliberal agenda unwavering in its commitment to privatize the entire enterprise of education and eradicate public schools. These institutions are also sites of anti-Blackness.

Beginning in preschool, Black students are disproportionately disciplined in schools, from teacher-issued referrals, to corporal punishment, to police arrests and their attendant violence. And it is not simply that Black students are over-represented in these areas, but rather it is about the ways our bodies — our skin, our hair, our clothes, our voice, our body language, our cadence, our *presence* — have always represented a dangerous intrusion within educational institutions structured by anti-Black solidarity.

We must also talk about Black erasure and misrepresentation in curricular content where, for example, students may learn that brutally enslaved Africans were “workers” who came to the U.S. in the context of immigration. Students may learn to gather for food and fireworks on the Fourth of July, a nationally recognized



↑ kihana miraya ross

holiday that celebrates the freedom of white men who simultaneously owned human beings and furniture. They may learn about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. without interrogating his dream deferred.

So while W.E.B. Du Bois reminds us that the idea of universal, state-supported public education was originally “a Negro idea,” students and their families are still living in what I call the afterlife of school segregation. Black students remain systematically dehumanized and positioned as uneducable.

This does not mean we cannot also recognize what we may call “Black joy” in schools. Or that we diminish the work of those extraordinary educators who have made it their life’s mission to ignite and nurture a passion in our children for lifelong learning. But overall, schools have historically and contemporarily failed Black children.

In the weeks that followed the gruesome police murders of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd and the release of video that showed white vigilantes hunting and shooting Ahmaud Arbery, the streets erupted in sorrow and rage. Protesters used their voices to elevate the decadeslong work of activists demanding divestment, defunding and even the abolition of police.

While some have begun calling for the abolition of police in schools, what would it mean to consider the abolition of schools themselves? What would happen if we acknowledged that, just as the system of policing in this country has rotten roots, not bad apples, the educational system has never been, and may never be, what Black students need for a liberatory educational experience?

To be clear: Dreams of abolition are born out of a love of Black people and Black children. Conceptualizing the abolition of schools is about recognizing this spectacular historical moment and building on the foundation to reimagine educational spaces where Black students aren’t normalized as other. It is about acknowledging that after decades of school reform, Black students continue to suffer. It is about thinking through what it would mean to completely rebuild in ways where Black children could learn — weightless, unracialized and human.

kihana miraya ross is an assistant professor of African American studies.

SOUND OFF

Leadership in the Time of COVID-19

How can corporate leaders prepare for the unknown, build trust in their companies and transition their teams online?



Harry M. Kraemer '79 MBA, clinical professor of leadership and former CEO of Baxter Healthcare

“Leadership starts with self-reflection. All the decisions a leader will have to make — in both routine and extraordinary situations — ultimately come down to a purposeful reflection on values. From there, it’s easier to surround yourself with a network of advisers who share your values and can help guide your decision-making.

“Self-reflection also minimizes surprise. Leaders who are reflective can predict, and prepare for, most crises before they happen. Knowing your values, knowing that you will do the best you can do and preparing for how you will react to the worry, stress and anxiety that comes in a crisis — before it ever happens — will help make a real crisis more manageable. And last but not least, communication is critical to good leadership. Telling people what you know, what you don’t know and how you are working to find out what you don’t know is critical to the trust-building honesty common among good leaders.”

Nicholas Pearce '10 MS, '12 PhD, clinical associate professor of management and organizations and assistant pastor at the Apostolic Church of God

“Everyone knows Superman is really Clark Kent, and right now we need leaders to display the vulnerability of

Clark Kent. Within organizations, there is a need to prioritize human capital now more than ever.

At the end of the day, leaders are responsible for creating the conditions in which people can bring their very best every day. During this crisis, I’ve had to show up as my whole self — executive and pastor — to provide business and career advice to my congregation and pastoral care to faculty, staff and students at Northwestern.

“Leaders also have to be willing to point out inequities and exclusionary practices in their communities and organizations and make procedural and policy-based changes that will outlast the current time.”

Leigh Thompson '82, '88 PhD, the J. Jay Gerber Professor of Dispute Resolution & Organizations and professor of management and organizations

“Leaders never imagined they’d be negotiating multimillion-dollar business deals and long-term partnerships without meeting each other in person, or fully transitioning their teams online.

In my new book, *Negotiating the Sweet Spot: The Art of Leaving Nothing on the Table*, I share strategies that people need in the (new) virtual world.

“Trust and cohesion are built differently in virtual teams than face to face. In person, trust is built through schmoozing — those short conversations at the beginning of a meeting that allow team members to get to know each other. In virtual settings, teams often forget the fun. That’s a problem because conflict happens more often in virtual settings than in physical settings, and conflict can hurt team cohesion and reduce productivity.”



SOCIAL FEEDS

To celebrate graduation, a #NU2020 grad’s proud brother built a nearly life-size replica of the Weber Arch in their driveway!



“My friend’s brother built this with scrap wood from his side job over the course of a month.”

@alliejennaphoto

“I love how there’s an actual rainbow in the photo.”

@andrewkatchmar

“That’s some proud brother! Congratulations!”

Sandra Knobloch

“Cheers to the grads ... and that replica.”

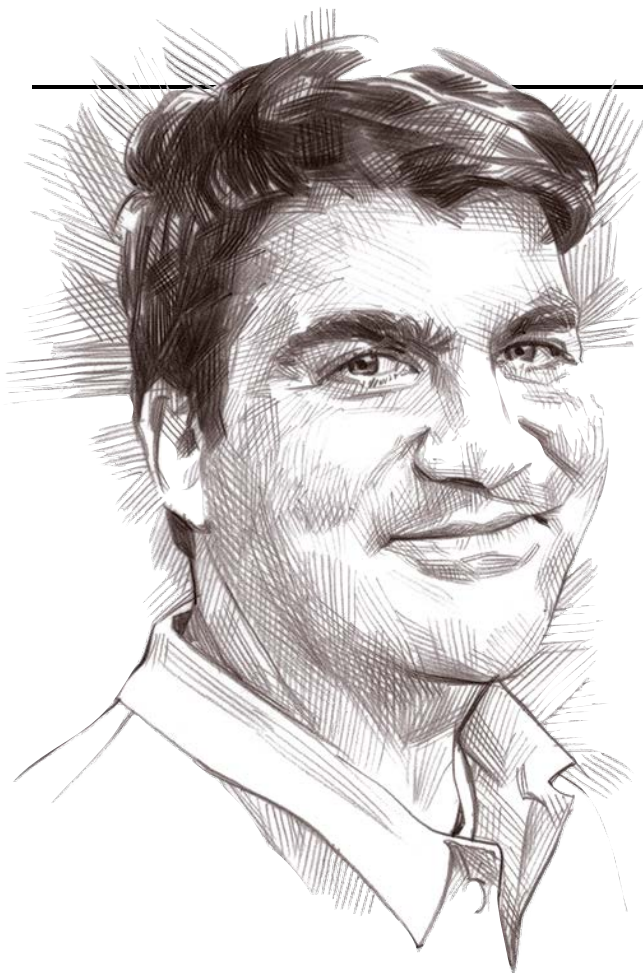
@drronart

“Love it! Congrats to my fellow alumni!”

@nawlin_girl

“Congratulations from this Class of ’64 alum!”

Dottie Kaplan Zoller



By Bill Healy '07 MS, '09 MS

A Chicago-area independent journalist who teaches in the Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications and the School of Communication

MY NORTHWESTERN DIRECTION

Deep Listening Reveals Shared Humanity

In early March — as the coronavirus pandemic began to take hold — I sat with my students on the final day of our Documentary Radio class at Northwestern.

Most of them were grad students from the Sound Arts and Industries program, but there were also some undergrads from the music and journalism schools. Eight students in total reported stories on a range of topics — house music, protests, depression, horses, religion, loneliness. I told students it didn’t matter what they reported on, so long as they were willing to go deep with it.

In my work as a freelance radio journalist and teacher, I spend a lot of time listening. Since 2014 I’ve edited “StoryCorps” for WBEZ, Chicago’s public radio station. The oral history project

records and shares the stories of everyday people. The stories hinge on people expressing genuine emotion that cuts to the core of our shared humanity.

In every class I teach at Northwestern — whether it be on reporting or podcasting — I try to convey an idea that I first learned from Maya Angelou (though I’ve seen it attributed to others too): That people will forget what you say, and they’ll never forget how you make them feel.

The first time I felt anything about Northwestern was in 2005. I had just graduated from Georgetown University and moved back to Chicago to take part in a volunteer teaching program. At the same time, I enrolled in a master’s program in education at Northwestern. My memory of that

time is of being exhausted from teaching all day and then driving to Evanston from the far South Side during rush hour to sit through three-hour classes on educational philosophy. I was overwhelmed.

I pulled back from teaching at the elementary level and returned to Northwestern in 2008, this time to study journalism. In an intro class for the master’s program, I met Alison Flowers ’09 MS, and we stayed in touch after we graduated. I went to work in public radio, and she pursued a career in investigative journalism.

Three years ago, Alison reached out to me about co-producing a podcast focused on a murder from 2016, with the victim’s mother as the narrator. I came aboard, and earlier this year we released “Somebody,” a seven-part narrative podcast hosted by Shapearl Wells, who investigates how her son ended up with a bullet in his back outside a Chicago police station. The podcast explores the tense relationship between police and Black people in America’s third-largest city. (Read more at alummag.nu/somebody-podcast.)

Northwestern gave me the skills and the confidence to pursue a career as a journalist. It also gave me an opportunity to return to the classroom. These days the teaching leaves me feeling energized.

On the final day of the documentary class, one of the students played a story he had produced about the regular customers at the Sher-Main Grill, one of Evanston’s oldest diners. Customer after customer described how this place made them feel less alone. One man, in recovery from alcoholism, said, “I feel loved here ... cared for. Tell me how many businesses you can go to and feel that way.”

Listening to this commentary, I think about how my student documented something that made me feel connected to a stranger. In that brief moment, I was able to share in his vulnerability. As a teacher, and as a human being, I know there is no greater gift.

“Northwestern gave me the skills and the confidence to pursue a career as a journalist. It also gave me an opportunity to return to the classroom.”

WHAT INSPIRES ME

Love and Power

Chicago mental health services provider CEO works to change hearts and minds and structures of oppression.

Mark Ishaug, CEO of Thresholds

“My hero, Martin Luther King Jr., famously said, ‘Power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic.’

“My whole career has been dedicated to working for and with underserved populations. I’ve always felt deep compassion and empathy, indeed love, for those most marginalized and stigmatized, those made to feel less than worthy by those with power.

“And I’ve always believed love is compassion in action, and action is a

display of power. But the only power I’ve ever been interested in is the power to heal, the power to transform and uplift, the power to change hearts and minds, and the power to change systems and structures of oppression.

“So what inspires me? Doing good, doing it well, doing it powerfully and, most important, doing it with love.”

Mark Ishaug ’89 MA has served eight years as CEO of Thresholds, one of Illinois’ largest community mental health providers. Earlier he served 13 years as CEO of the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, which he joined in 1991. Last year Ishaug



↑ Mark Ishaug

was named to Leadership Greater Chicago’s inaugural class of Daniel Burnham Fellows. He is an avid photographer, dog lover and forest preserve aficionado.

IN THE NEWS

Profs Discuss Racial Justice

Northwestern faculty members shared their perspectives with national and local media on the Black Lives Matter protests that swept the nation in the wake of the killing of George Floyd.

“It’s actually very ethical to say that there should be a different order in society, especially when we look at the fact that in cities like Minneapolis, \$1 in every \$3 is going to the police. In Chicago, \$4 out of every \$10 go to the police.”

Steven Thrasher, assistant professor of journalism, to NPR

“Black History Month happens every year. Cops kill all the time. The books [on the anti-racist reading lists] are there. They’ve always been there. Yet the lists keep coming, bathing us in the pleasure of a recommendation. But that’s the thing about the reading. It has to be done.”

Lauren Michele Jackson, assistant professor of English, in Vulture

“It’s important for everyone, regardless of race, to ask, ‘What is my role in this system?’ Ask yourself, ‘Have I been a passive bystander, and how can I change that?’ Perhaps it’s simply speaking up in situations where you may have been disinclined to speak up before.”

Inger E. Burnett-Zeigler, associate professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at the Feinberg School of Medicine, to NPR

“Black people have never been just a localized population. We have national grievances, and it would be narrow-minded to think that Black people therefore would not be involved in social change movements that were aimed at trying to liberate the Black community overall.”

Aldon Morris, Leon Forrest Professor of Sociology and African American Studies, to CNN



News

Doctors discuss benefits of telehealth p 14

An unlikely emissions experiment p 15

New nasal swab could improve testing p 17



HEALTH

Solutions to the COVID Crisis

Northwestern researchers respond to the pandemic.

Scientists from across Northwestern are leading high-impact research, drug trials and innovative projects to help mitigate COVID-19.

One team of researchers has developed a new method for testing for COVID-19 virus antibodies. The method requires only a single drop of blood collected from a simple finger prick.

Current approaches to antibody testing have significant limitations: Point-of-care tests using finger-stick blood are qualitative and often inaccurate, while more precise lab-based tests require venous blood. The Northwestern team has developed an approach that combines the convenience of finger-stick blood sampling in the home with the analytical rigor that can be applied in the lab.

MATTHEW ALLEN PHOTOGRAPHY



Researcher Michael Jewett

“We are testing more samples so we can more formally evaluate the sensitivity and specificity of our antibody test,” says Thomas McDade, professor of anthropology. “Second, we are building a web-based platform to roll out antibody testing across Chicago.”

The project received a rapid response research (RAPID) grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF), which has called for immediate proposals that have potential to address the spread of novel coronavirus.

Northwestern synthetic biologists also received funding to develop an easy-to-use, quick-screen technology that can test for infectious diseases, including COVID-19, in the human body or within the environment.

Similar to a pregnancy test, the tool uses one sample to provide an easy-to-read

“We are building a web-based platform to roll out antibody testing across Chicago.”

— Thomas McDade

negative or positive result. The team envisions that the final product could test patients’ samples from a nasal swab or saliva sample as well as water and surfaces in the surrounding environment.

The team is working to develop and optimize the test so that it will be a single step, taking less than an hour to provide a result and less than a dollar to manufacture.

Another team of researchers is ramping up

production of a promising drug that has proven effective against the SARS virus in cellular cultures. The team hopes that the drug might also be effective in the fight against the novel coronavirus, which is SARS’s genetic cousin.

Materials science researcher Jiaxing Huang received funding to develop a new self-sanitizing medical face mask that deactivates viruses on contact.

The Northwestern project was the first physical sciences and engineering proposal to receive support under the NSF RAPID call.

“Spread of infectious respiratory diseases, such as COVID-19, typically starts when an infected person releases virus-laden respiratory droplets through coughing or sneezing,” says Huang. “To further slow and even prevent the virus from spreading, we need to greatly reduce the number and activity of the viruses in those just released respiratory droplets.”

To reduce the number and activity of viruses, Huang’s team, including graduate student Haiyue Huang and postdoctoral fellow Hun Park, is investigating antiviral chemicals that can be safely built into masks to self-sanitize the passing respiratory droplets.

For more on Northwestern faculty contributions in the fight against the coronavirus, see “3D Technology Helps Meet Face Shield Shortage,” “We Will” Update, page 18.



SMART PPE TO COMBAT COVID-19

Mexico

With a grant from the National Science Foundation, Northwestern computer scientist Josiah Hester is leading a team in developing smart face masks to combat COVID-19. Using energy-harvesting technology, researchers will develop sensors that detect when mask wearers are vulnerable to exposure. With Universidad Panamericana in Mexico City, Hester’s team will pilot and deploy the technology in the U.S. and Mexico before releasing the designs and software to researchers worldwide.

HESTER: © 2019 JASON BROWN/J. BROWN PHOTOGRAPHY

GLOBAL REACH

Northwestern Responds to COVID Around the World

KEEPING SPIRITS UP

Scotland

When COVID-19 hit her hometown of Livingston, Scotland, Jacine Rutasikwa ’10 MS was in a unique position to help. Owner of Matugga Distillers, Rutasikwa immediately shifted her operations from producing artisanal rum to hand sanitizer. Acting quickly allowed her team to make up for local shortages, aiding the community and health care workers at St. John’s Hospital in Livingston.



SAVING THE CHILDREN

Laos

Sara Sylvan ’14 MS is director of strategic portfolio and award management for Save the Children in Laos, where she develops strategy and builds donor support for the group’s initiatives. Her work often takes her to remote villages, where she helps assess the impact of the initiatives in education, health and nutrition, child protection and disaster relief.



PITCHING THROUGH A PANDEMIC

Korea

Though COVID-19 caused sporting event cancellations across the world, a return to “normal” arrived sooner than expected for veteran pitcher Eric Jokisch ’10. A starter for the Korean Baseball Organization’s Kiwoom Heroes, he returned to the mound with ESPN broadcasting the league’s games to Americans, beginning in May. In his first nine starts, the southpaw was 6-2 with a 1.63 ERA for the Heroes.

HELPING THE MOST VULNERABLE

Singapore

As senior assistant director of strategic planning at Singapore’s Ministry of National Development, Geneve Ong ’14 made a dramatic shift due to COVID-19. Rather than creating plans for housing and transportation in a city of 5.7 million, she now helps place residents at high risk in locations — like hotels, campsites and holiday homes — where they can quarantine safely.



↑ Hun Park, left, and Haiyue Huang in Jiaxing Huang’s lab

The Ticker

● Northwestern will host the second **U7+ Alliance of World Universities Summit** Nov. 23–24. The U7+ Alliance brings together university presidents to define concrete actions higher education institutions can take to address global challenges. Northwestern also hosted the first U7+ Worldwide Student Forum in June.



● Twenty-three Northwestern students and alumni earned distinction as part of the 2019–20 **Fulbright U.S. Student Program**.



● Northwestern University Libraries obtained a collection of work and personal papers belonging to former *Chicago Tribune* publisher **Robert R. McCormick**. The papers, a gift of the Chicago Tribune Company, the Robert R. McCormick Foundation and Nexstar Media Group, include letters sent by Abraham Lincoln to the *Tribune*.



● While **Northwestern University Dance Marathon** canceled its big-tent event in March due to the coronavirus, the group still managed to raise more than \$1 million for Children’s Home & Aid and the Evanston Community Foundation. Members of Dance Marathon also took part in nearly 700 hours of community service.



Discovery

HEALTH

Docs Say Telehealth Is Here to Stay

The coronavirus pandemic forced patients and doctors to engage via video and phone — and made virtual visits mainstream.

“I’ve said for 20 years that 80% of what we do in primary care probably doesn’t need the doctor and the patient to be in the same room together,” says Jeff Linder ’92, ’97 MD, the Michael A. Gertz Professor of Medicine.

While there are some medical conditions that require in-person visits, for most interactions, Linder says, telehealth is ideal. The benefits are clear. Patients can see a doctor from work or home, and a 15-minute interaction does not require a half-day commitment. Some diagnostic devices may even be mailed to a patient’s home, allowing physicians to measure vital signs or listen to a patient’s lungs and heart from afar.

“Patients seem to like telehealth because it makes their medical care so much less obtrusive,” says neurology

professor Richard Bernstein, Northwestern Medicine’s medical director of telehealth and Distinguished Physician in Vascular Neurology.

There are major cost savings for medical providers, too. Clinics don’t have to employ as many people. They need fewer exam rooms and less parking.

While doctors likely needed little convincing, the coronavirus pandemic forced Medicare and the major private insurance payers to recognize telehealth’s validity and compensate physicians and therapists for virtual visits.

“It’s ready for prime time,” says Jacqueline Gollan, an associate professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences and obstetrics and gynecology who uses telepsychology to deliver phone-based cognitive

“Telehealth feels a little bit more like intensive care, actually, because we’re getting so much education and treatment done in our sessions.” — Jacqueline Gollan

behavior treatment for depression and anxiety.

Video visits and phone check-ins, she says, advance the delivery of health care by removing physical barriers, while also increasing privacy and reducing stigma.

“The treatment via telehealth is robust,” she adds. “It feels a little bit more like intensive care, actually, because we’re getting so much education and treatment done in our sessions.”

Linder, a general internist who specializes in adult primary care, says there are

additional advantages to video visits, such as seeing a patient’s living conditions. Virtual telehealth visits also allow physicians to engage involved caregivers who might be able to help describe a patient’s symptoms.

“I can also say, ‘Go to your medicine cabinet and show me what medicines you’re taking,’ whereas for an in-person visit, we’re left wondering, ‘Is Mrs. Smith taking the right drugs?’” says Linder, who is chief of general internal medicine and geriatrics in the Department of Medicine.

Challenges remain though. For example, there’s some evidence that telehealth patients are more likely to get inappropriate antibiotics, says Linder. Some older adults may lack access — real or perceived — to the technology or know-how needed to do a video-based visit. And some patients may struggle with the abstract expression of how they’re feeling.

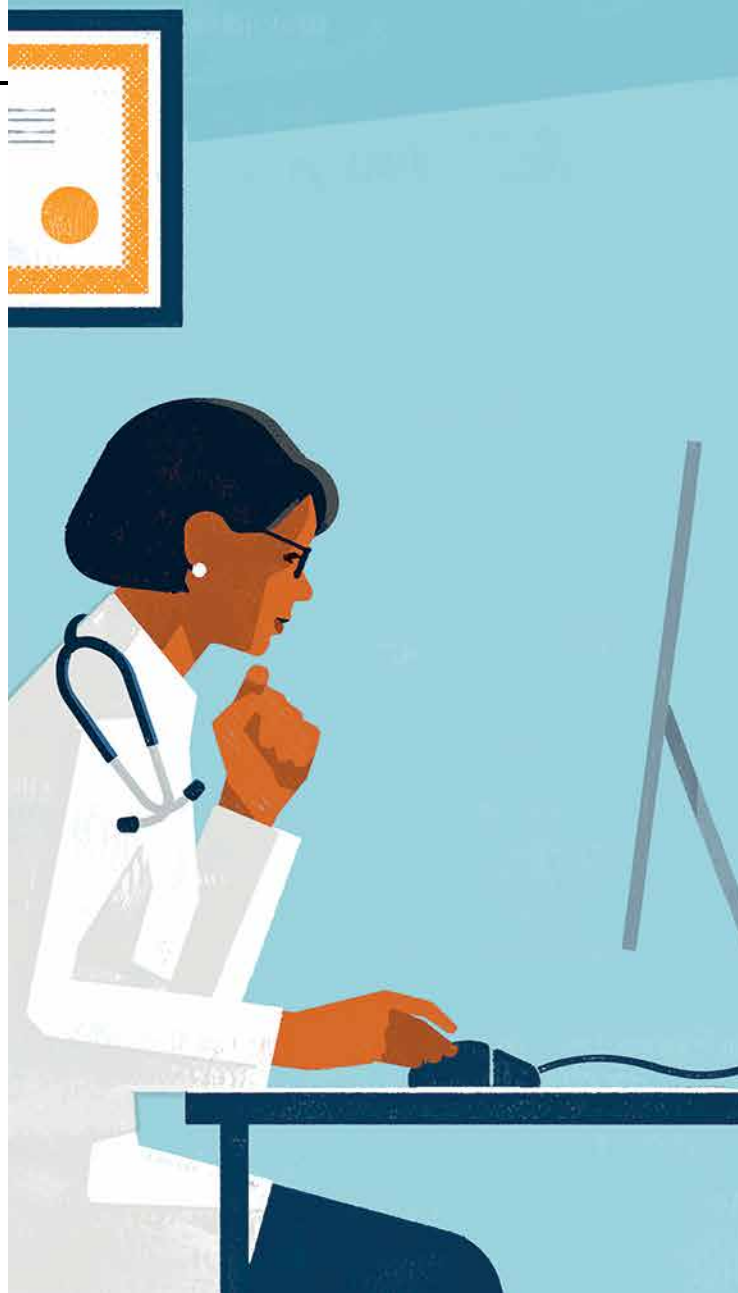
Michael Wolf, associate vice chair for research in the Department of Medicine, is leading the Chicago COVID & Comorbidities (C3) Survey,

which is following a diverse cohort of patients who have complex health care needs that require routine visits — “the frequent flyers of the health care system.”

“Are they getting as much satisfaction with these [telehealth] visits as they were with in-person visits?” wonders Wolf, director of the Institute for Public Health and Medicine’s Center for Applied Health Research on Aging. His center is working to understand what patients are thriving with telehealth, which individuals may need

additional technical support, and what type still needs in-person visits. “We want to make sure that COVID doesn’t create further health care disparities because of a lack of access or capability,” he says.

In the end, Bernstein says, some situations require face-to-face interactions. “You would never want to be told by Skype that your tumor has recurred,” he says. “Some things require human connection. We’ll sort all that out, though. Doctors and patients are both good at knowing what’s best for them.”



CHRIS GASH

RESEARCH

Emissions Experiments

The global shutdown wrought by the pandemic is what Northwestern climate scientist Daniel Horton calls a “big hammer experiment” — hitting a system hard with extreme forcings to see how it responds. Here, the system is the Earth, and the forcings are reductions in emitted greenhouse gases and air pollutants. “The reduction in transportation emissions alone is unheard of,” says Horton, who develops numerical models to study Earth’s systems. “I’m interested to see if the Earth system responds similarly to model predictions.” The COVID-19 pandemic has led Horton to two new collaborations:

1 A group of Earth systems scientists, including Horton, are examining the effects of the current “inadvertent experiment” on different facets of the Earth’s systems and hypothesizing what the short- and long-term responses might be. Horton is particularly interested in air pollution, changes in atmospheric chemistry, and air quality.

2 Horton is also working with University of Illinois at Chicago researchers to evaluate the relationship between air quality exposure and COVID-19 mortality in Cook County. The study will include the role air quality may play in racial disparities that have been observed in COVID-19 death rates.

Innovation

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

LENDing a Hand

Student entrepreneurs help fill vital needs during the pandemic.

An organization run by Northwestern students is working hard to keep Evanston's small business owners afloat during the COVID-19 pandemic. Helped by a \$100,000 contribution from the city of Evanston, Lending for Evanston and Northwestern Development (LEND) is offering no-interest loans of up to \$5,000 to entrepreneurs hit hard by the crisis.

The group is also helping small businesses identify additional relief programs and transition their services to online platforms. LEND alumni who now work in consulting are offering their services pro bono.

This effort is an extension of the work LEND has been doing since 2010, offering two-year, low-interest loans of up to \$10,000 to Evanston's fledgling small businesses.

LEND is one of several

ways that Northwestern students are addressing needs in response to the pandemic.

Started by Northwestern senior Matthew Zients '20 and his two younger brothers, Connect & Care links individuals with remote volunteer opportunities around the world. After completing a questionnaire, which asks volunteers to select the causes they care about and the skills they would like to offer, Zients and his team match volunteers with one of their nonprofit partners.

Since March, Connect & Care has matched more than 50 students with remote volunteer opportunities.

Three lifelong friends have teamed up to create SocraTeach, a free, peer-to-peer remote learning app that lets users teach and learn from one another in live tutoring sessions. Users upload pictures of problems they're struggling

with, and other users swipe right if they know how to solve those problems. Learners and teachers who "match" can then connect via chat and audio calls within the app.

Co-creators Bharat Rao '20, Scott Gregus '19, a first-year student at the Northwestern Pritzker School of Law, and recent Massachusetts Institute of Technology grad Grant Gregus say the app is intended to complement both traditional learning environments and remote education. Robert McBride '88, superintendent of Lockport (Ill.) Township High School

District 205, is helping the team integrate the app into the classroom experience.

Environmental engineering doctoral candidate Yechan Won developed a self-cleaning film that could be used on medical devices in hospitals. Developed in concert with Baxter International and under the guidance of Kimberly Gray '78, chair of civil and environmental engineering, this film resists microorganisms and can be disinfected under ultraviolet light. Won hopes to refine the film so that it can also be disinfected under LED light.



GOOD EATS

Kago Kitchen offers "ancient food for modern people." The brand's first product, Kago Beef, is a packaged jerky snack that contains 100% grass-fed beef steak, organic shiitake mushrooms and Himalayan pink salt. Product design and engineering senior Ryan Teo and his co-founders, economics junior Ansh Prasad and Gary Xia '20, left, hope to offer their products through Whole Foods Market stores nationwide.

INVENTION

An Improved Swab

Early in the coronavirus pandemic it became clear that a shortage of testing supplies was one of the bottlenecks that limited more expansive testing. Matthew Grayson, professor of electrical and computer engineering, assembled a team to design a patent-pending prototype for a nasal swab. The team, which includes polymer engineer Jun Peng, a postdoc in Grayson's lab, and Nancy Rivera-Bolaños, a third-year biomedical engineering doctoral student in professor Guillermo Ameer's group, created a swab that can be mass produced at a low cost

from readily available medical-grade materials. Equally important, this new nasal swab could be mailed to the person's home and self-administered. Susan Park, a fifth-year doctoral student in microbiology and immunology under professor Rich Longnecker, is studying the new swab design's effectiveness using an RNA virus. Using plaque assays to determine virus concentration, she found the team's new swab collected three to four times more viral particles than traditional swabs. More tests are planned, eventually in a clinical setting.



SELF-TESTING

Whereas standard nasopharyngeal swabs require a health care professional to collect a sample from the back of the throat, this swab is designed to be self-administered at the front of the nose. Self-testing is necessary to meet the increased demand to safely open businesses and schools.

TIP RELEASE

The swab tip can be released from the hollow stem with the help of a plunger, so bare hands can be used without risk of sample contamination.

MORE SURFACE AREA

The tip has a mop-like design, creating more sampling surface than a traditional swab, while being more comfortable.

AUTOMATED ANALYSIS

Conventional nasopharyngeal swabs leave a broken stem in the collection vessel that impedes pipetting. The new tip-release feature eliminates this obstruction to allow unimpeded automated pipetting and making massive-scale automated analysis possible.

PERSONALIZED RESULT TRACKING

The swab team is working with computer scientist Nabil Alshurafa, assistant professor of preventive medicine, on developing a smartphone app for result tracking.

For more information, email m-grayson@northwestern.edu, or learn about royalty-free licensing of the patent-pending swab design: nultechnologypublisher.com/tech/A_New_Design_of_Nasal_Swab

T.M. DETWILER



← Northwestern researcher David Walker '14 PhD removes a component for a 3D-printed face shield.

James Hedrick '19 PhD, Mirkin and Walker founded Azul 3D Inc. on the technology underlying HARP, which they licensed from the University with the help of the Innovation and New Ventures Office (INVO). The Azul 3D team leads the headband printing and has partnered with a local manufacturing company to provide the laser-cut, clear plastic shields. A third partner sanitizes and packages the face shield components into easy-to-assemble kits, which are supplied to Chicago-area hospitals. The face shields can be washed and reused.

HARP relies on a new, patent-pending version of stereolithography, a type of 3D printing that converts liquid plastic into solid objects. It prints vertically and uses projected ultraviolet light to cure the liquid resins into hardened plastic. These continually printed parts are mechanically robust and can be used for cars, dentistry, sports equipment and more. HARP will be available commercially in the next year.

As of the end of June 3,886 face shields had been shipped to seven states in need, including Illinois. Most were sent to the Navajo Nation, which has one of the highest rates of COVID-19. Materials also have gone to hospital COVID-19 wings and emergency rooms, first responders, private medical offices, COVID-19 research laboratories, nursing homes, outpatient nurses, skilled nursing facilities, pharmacists and funeral homes.

A gift from actor Johnny Galecki of *The Big Bang Theory* helped make Mirkin and Walker's project possible.



WALKER: SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES

RESEARCH

3D Technology Helps Meet Face Shield Shortage

Researchers have invented a rapid 3D-printing technology that produces 1,000 personal protective equipment components a day.

As the coronavirus pandemic began to surge this spring, hospitals scrambled to provide essential workers with enough personal protective equipment (PPE) to wear while treating patients.

When Northwestern researchers Chad A. Mirkin, the George B. Rathmann Professor of Chemistry, and David Walker '14 PhD, a former postdoctoral associate in Mirkin's lab and an entrepreneur-in-residence, heard about the PPE shortage, their team

sprang into action. Just months prior, in fall 2019, Mirkin and his research group had unveiled a new 3D-printing technique they invented called “high-area rapid printing,” or HARP. Using the technique, a 13-foot-tall printer with a 2.5-square-foot print bed can print about half a yard of material in an hour — a record throughput for the 3D-printing field. Come spring, HARP proved to be a solution for producing face shields at high volumes.

“Even fleets of 3D printers are having difficulty meeting demand for face shields and other PPE because the need is so enormous,” says Mirkin, who also is director of the International Institute of Nanotechnology at Northwestern. “But HARP is so fast and powerful that we can put a meaningful dent in that need.”

→ Northwestern researcher Chad Mirkin and his team are using a new 3D-printing technique to produce face shield components.

Face shields comprise three components: a sturdy plastic headband, a clear plastic sheet and elastic. The plastic sheet clips into the headband, which is then secured to a wearer's head with a stretchy elastic band. HARP produces PPE parts at a rate of 1,000 per day by running the printer round-the-clock. Volunteer team members work in six-hour shifts to keep the production cycle going continuously.

Along with fellow Northwestern researcher

Monitoring from Hospital to Home

Researchers at Northwestern and the Shirley Ryan AbilityLab have developed a novel wearable device and custom data algorithms to catch early signs and symptoms associated with COVID-19 and to monitor patients as the illness progresses.

About the size of a postage stamp, the soft, thin, flexible, wireless device sits just below the suprasternal notch — the visible dip at the base of the throat — and can be worn 24/7. It measures and interprets coughing, respiratory activity, heart rate and body temperature to uncover subtle but potentially lifesaving insights. The device transmits a continuous stream of data to a privacy-protected cloud, where automated algorithms produce graphical summaries to facilitate rapid, remote monitoring.

John Rogers, the Louis Simpson and Kimberly Querrey Professor of Materials Science and Engineering, led the development of the device. Arun Jayaraman, director of the Max Näder Center for Rehabilitation Technologies and Outcomes Research at the Shirley Ryan AbilityLab, led the creation of the custom algorithms.

“We're fully engaged in contributing our expertise in bioelectronic engineering to help address the pandemic,

→ A wearable sensor sits at the throat to monitor coughs, fever and respiratory activity.



“We're fully engaged in contributing our expertise in bioelectronic engineering to help address the pandemic.”

— John Rogers

using technologies that we are able to deploy now, for immediate use on actual patients and other affected individuals,” Rogers says.

In April, Rogers and his team began using its innovations in a study of COVID-19 patients and the health care workers who treat them, both in clinic and at home. Thanks to a generous gift from Northwestern trustees Kimberly K. Querrey and Louis A. Simpson '58, by May the researchers were producing dozens of devices per week. By leveraging manufacturing tools available through the Simpson Querrey Biomedical Research Center, they were able

to bypass the need for external vendors and complex supply chains.

“Quickly developing new technologies internally has never been more crucial,” Querrey says. “This work proves the power of STEM and why it's so critical to the University and beyond to have world-class researchers like John.”

Rogers and his colleagues received a \$200,000 Rapid Response Research grant from the National Science Foundation, which will help them add a sensor to measure oxygen levels in the blood — low oxygen level is a sign of COVID-19 that often goes undetected.





← Students at Northwestern's Knight Lab conduct research for Medill's Local News Initiative.

a partner at Chicago law firm Bartlit Beck Herman Palenchar & Scott, also made a gift toward LNI.

Foundation support has been key to the effort as well. Lilly Endowment Inc., based in Indianapolis, and the Central Indiana Community Foundation were early supporters. So was the Robert R. McCormick Foundation, which awarded Medill \$100,000 two years ago toward local media market research and another \$1 million in March to establish the Metro Media Lab in Chicago, which provides leadership training for community and ethnic media organizations and helps news outlets build sustainable business models. Medill students will be vital to the success of the lab as they work with seasoned journalists to report on the city's most pressing issues and research how Chicagoans get their news.

“Medill has an unparalleled opportunity to share its knowledge with local media organizations to help them thrive,” says Charles Whitaker '80, '81 MS, dean of Medill.

Read more about Medill's Local News Initiative on page 34.



“Without local news, local government and local institutions will corrupt and fail.”

— John Mutz

to improve audience engagement and strengthen business models. Alumni and industry leaders have stepped up to fund LNI's reporting, data and research, which is conducted by students and faculty. Their work was awarded a Google Innovation Challenge grant in 2019.

A lead gift from John M. Mutz '57, '58 MS, former lieutenant governor of Indiana and past president of PSI Energy, the state's largest utility company, helped launch the initiative.

“Trustworthy, sustainable, respected local news sources make our society function,” says Mutz, a member of the Medill Hall of Achievement's inaugural class. “Without local news, local government and local institutions will

JOURNALISM

Bolstering Local News

Medill's latest initiative has received an influx of donor support during this critical time in history.

In kitchens across America, refrigerator magnets hold up clippings from community newspapers. People still watch the evening news for area election results, and throughout the coronavirus pandemic, viewers have tuned in for press conferences with city and state officials. Now more than ever, local news is crucial to the public.

Despite the importance of these information sources, newsrooms are struggling to adapt to the digital era and shuttering operations across the country. To help reinvent the struggling industry, in 2018 the Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications launched the Local News Initiative — a research and development project designed

FINANCIAL AID

Showing Support

Emergency funds help Northwestern students face unexpected financial hardships.

When Northwestern shifted to remote learning for spring quarter in response to the coronavirus pandemic, it altered the lives of every student. For some, leaving campus so suddenly also created financial strain.

In mid-March the University's financial aid team began receiving a plethora of requests from undergraduate, graduate and professional school students in need of emergency financial assistance. Northwestern students hail from all 50 states and

more than 120 countries, so many needed help with unexpected travel costs. The majority sought assistance to upgrade computers, internet service or other technology for remote learning.

Technology expenses were the No. 1 emergency funding request made by students during spring quarter.

Since 2017, the Student Emergency and Essential Needs (SEEN) Fund has provided resources to cover students' immediate

needs, from medical co-pays to emergency travel. Established with support from Northwestern donors, the fund is especially vital for low-income and first-generation students, who have grown in number as the student body has become more diverse. In the wake of the pandemic, timely philanthropic gifts have boosted emergency support for students across the University.

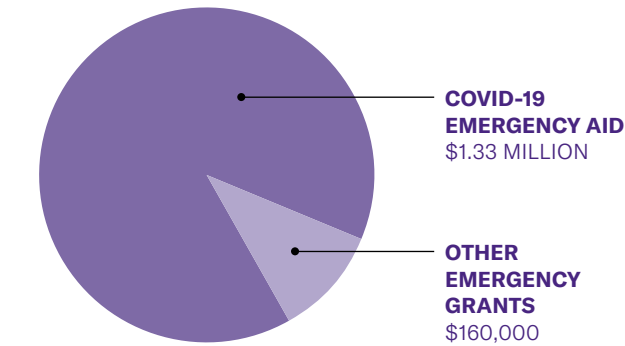


Meeting the Need

“Emergency funding has helped students with the things that matter most to them, when they needed it most. And in the coming year we're going to have more families with financial need than we did before.”

— Phil Asbury, director of financial aid

During the 2019–20 academic year, Northwestern's financial aid office awarded COVID-19 emergency aid grants to **1,868 students** and other emergency grants to **253 students**.



\$1.49M TOTAL

\$200,000+

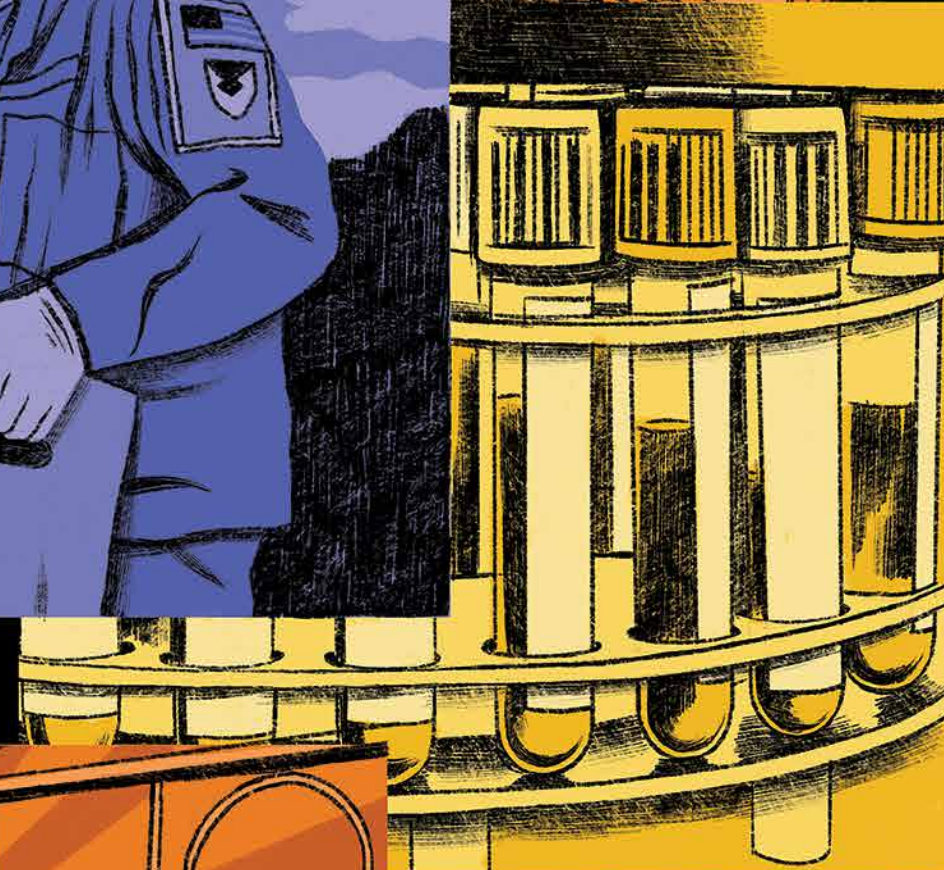
Emergency financial support provided to Northwestern Pritzker School of Law students through its Student Assistance and Relief Fund (from early March to late May)

\$750,000

Internship stipends and hardship grants awarded to MBA students through the Kellogg School of Management's Student Assistance Fund (from late March to early June)

THE STORIES OF OUR LIVES

In a time of challenge and struggle, Northwestern alumni offer hope and resilience.



NORTHWESTERN ALUMNI ANSWER THE CALL TO HELP HEAL A WOUNDED WORLD

IN THE WAKE OF THE CORONAVIRUS

The pandemic erupted in early spring — and it turned the world upside down. Tragically, more than 135,000 Americans had lost their lives to COVID-19 as we went to press in mid-July.

Tens of millions filed for unemployment, and countless others suffered economic hardships as businesses closed their doors in an effort to “flatten the curve.” Social distancing measures radically altered our interactions. Theaters went dark. Parents became teachers. Churches shut their doors. Zoom replaced human contact.

And in a time of trauma, fear and uncertainty, the Northwestern community has stepped up.

Across the country and around the world, thousands of Northwestern alumni are making a difference, large and small — from medical doctors on the front lines in New York City to food truck operators feeding refugees in Malaysia.

Here are a few of their stories — stories of hope and resilience. We know there are many more stories out there, and we invite you to share them with us. Send your story to letters@northwestern.edu.



Doctor Becomes Patient

RYAN PADGETT '95, SEATTLE

Emergency medicine physician Ryan Padgett has a new appreciation for the little things: cooking dinner, playing board games, nights on the couch with his family. And ice chips.

“The most beautiful thing I’ve ever had to eat or drink was the first ice chip I got,” says Padgett. “Envision jumping into a mountain stream. It was the most refreshing thing.”

Padgett was waking up from 16 days on a ventilator, having survived a near-death battle against COVID-19. He was the first patient to survive such a severe case,

and his story has become both a symbol of hope and a cautionary tale of the risks taken on by those on the front lines.

Padgett, a fit 45-year-old, was initially in denial about the severity of his illness. A mild headache over a March weekend became a cough and a fever early the next week. On a Thursday night Padgett was admitted to EvergreenHealth in Kirkland, Wash. — the same hospital where he worked — with low oxygen levels. He was moved to the intensive care unit before 6 a.m. His longtime colleague Dave Baker told Padgett’s then-fiancée,

Connie, that she should cancel their upcoming May wedding. Then Baker passed the phone to Padgett, minutes before he was intubated.

“I understood the gravity of the situation, but I don’t remember being scared,” says Padgett.

A former All-Big Ten offensive guard who helped lead the Wildcats to the Rose Bowl after the 1995 season, Padgett says he didn’t suffer at all, but he knows his loved ones can’t say the same. “That’s actually been the hardest part — understanding the horrific time my family went through,” he says. “They’re incredibly strong. And we made it.”

After two successful experimental treatments,

Padgett was taken off the ventilator on March 27, and he slowly, almost miraculously, regained consciousness from a medically induced coma.

Now recovering at home, Padgett is enjoying time with his family. He and Connie were married a month earlier than originally planned, on a boat with Connie’s two children. “It was the wedding exactly as we wanted it,” Padgett says.

These days, when friends, family and others reach out to Padgett, they tell him he’s incredibly strong. He would like to clarify: “We’ve got to do a football analogy here. This is a team win. This is not a big individual effort. I’m here by the grace of a team who refused to give up.”

Silver Linings

KENNETH J. SCHAEFLE '90, NEW YORK CITY

New York City’s Montefiore Medical Center admitted its first COVID-19 patient on March 11. “That’s when the gates opened,” says Ken Schaeffe, a member of the hospital’s global health faculty group.

An assistant professor of medicine at the Albert Einstein School of Medicine in New York, Schaeffe was pulled in to help with the Bronx hospital’s response.

“I’d seen this level of mortality because I’ve worked in Africa,” says Schaeffe, who spends three months a year in Uganda teaching U.S. medical students and residents how to practice medicine with minimal equipment. “But it is common for an attending physician in an American hospital to do a two-week duty and not have a single patient die. With this disease, doctors watched patients die every day or every other day.”

In response to the emotional devastation, Schaeffe says he and his colleagues implemented some changes in patient protocol, with loved ones in mind. “We call families in advance when things are looking bad and use our own cellphones to do FaceTime so these people can see their loved ones for what could be the last time,” he said in early April. “It gives the family something to hold onto.”

There have been other silver linings, he added, including unprecedented international cooperation among physicians from around the world. “No one was a cowboy claiming to have the magic bullet,” Schaeffe says.

Ramping Up Testing

KAREN KAUL '84 MD, PHD, '88 GME, EVANSTON

When molecular diagnostics expert Karen Kaul ordered reagents and other supplies for her lab at NorthShore University HealthSystem’s Evanston Hospital in early February, she and her team had been following the coronavirus outbreak overseas for some time. They figured they’d better be prepared, just in case.

Within a matter of weeks, Kaul’s team developed a COVID-19 test that is pending approval by the Food and Drug Administration.

On March 12, Kaul’s lab became the first in Illinois to offer large-scale clinical testing beyond the Illinois Department of Public Health. Within a week, they were testing 100 patients a day, and soon they were testing about 1,000 patients daily. To date, the lab has tested more than 100,000 samples from multiple hospitals, nursing homes and the state’s drive-through testing locations.

Test results are available in 24 to 48 hours, compared with seven days or more elsewhere. “We need to provide results quickly so that patients can be appropriately managed and isolated if need be,” Kaul said in April. “And having testing available in hospitals all over is really critical for managing acutely ill patients.”

While she expects the virus “to be with us for a while,” Kaul is buoyed by Illinois’ proactive response and hopes for an effective treatment and vaccine.

Kaul’s department has also launched antibody testing. “An accurate, clinically validated antibody test would certainly indicate exposure, but we don’t know if COVID-19 antibodies will really confer immunity and, if they do, how long-lasting that immunity will be,” Kaul says. “There are still so many questions that we need to answer.”



Food in a Crisis

STUART SCHWARTZ '76, EL PASO, TEXAS

As president of the El Pasoans Fighting Hunger Food Bank (EPFH), Stuart Schwartz has been fighting an uphill battle to get food to everyone who needs it. The number of people struggling with food insecurity across El Paso, Hudspeth and Culberson counties — the three counties served by EPFH — has grown from 200,000 to 300,000 as a result of the economic slowdown caused by COVID-19, says Schwartz, who has worked with EPFH for more than five years and became its president in 2019.

The El Paso food bank's distribution channels — senior centers, schools and church-affiliated food pantries — have been shut down by the pandemic, and as

a result, EPFH has established five mega-distribution centers where residents in need can receive about a week's worth of food at a time. Staffing is another issue, as historically many of the food bank's volunteers had been older individuals who are now staying home for their own safety. Luckily, the National Guard and others have come together to help with EPFH distribution.

"We've got to get food to those who are very anxious about where their next meal is coming from and who have to decide whether to put food on their table or pay the rent or utilities," Schwartz says. "Those are real-life decisions that many of our neighbors need to make on a daily basis."

Cowboys to the Rescue in Malaysia

NIZAR KU '08, SUBANG JAYA, MALAYSIA

Normally, Nizar Ku spends his days running his Texas-inspired Cowboys Food Truck, serving wings, brisket and barbecue chicken sandwiches at corporate events and annual conferences in Subang Jaya, a suburb of Malaysia's capital, Kuala Lumpur.

But in mid-March, the Malaysian government implemented a movement control order, a lockdown in response to a surge of coronavirus cases. The initial outbreak swept through Kuala Lumpur's wholesale markets and their workforce.

"In a situation like this," says Ku, "the hardest hit are the low-income earners — grocers, construction workers, people in blue-collar jobs. They live hand to mouth. My partners and I knew that, yes, we may be struggling, but we still can help."

So Ku and a few friends created a "fund-a-meal" program to provide fresh, hot meals to daily wage earners most affected by the lockdown, including Rohingya refugees. He received support from several Northwestern alumni in Malaysia, Hong Kong and beyond.

"We prepare 300 meals per day, just packing like robots," he said in early May. "But each meal goes to someone. This is a 5-ringgit [\$1.15] box of food, and to the recipient, that is today's meal."



Championing Mental Health

RACHEL BHAGWAT '12 AND ANTHONY GUERRERO '14, '18 MS, CHICAGO

As communities across Illinois respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and brace for its long-term effects, mental health and wellness are central to the recovery strategy. Rachel Bhagwat and Anthony Guerrero are on the team leading that effort at NAMI Chicago, an affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness. They're seeing an unprecedented need for their services.

"NAMI Chicago provides essential support to people on some of their worst days. Lately, those days come a lot more frequently," says Guerrero, who works as a resource manager, providing support to the helpline team that takes calls daily.

Last year NAMI Chicago served 22,000 residents, and in May, Mayor Lori Lightfoot '20 H named the organization a co-chair on the mental and emotional health committee of Chicago's COVID-19 Recovery Taskforce. While mental health is the primary focus, the helpline

team is trained to connect callers with emergency resources, including food, housing and transportation. Building partnerships with government agencies, nonprofits and businesses that provide those services is one of Bhagwat's main job responsibilities at NAMI.

"Whether it's helping a family of five at risk of being homeless or delivering groceries to older adults who are homebound, care is subjective — it's what you need addressed first so that we can even start to have a conversation about mental health," says Bhagwat.

"I think we all know that the impacts of this crisis are going to be long-lasting," she adds. "The financial and safety net insecurities we're dealing with have always been there, and a major part of our work, for the foreseeable future, will focus on addressing those underlying issues. Residents are depending on us to step up as much in the future as we are now."

A Community in Need

CHINAZO OPIA CUNNINGHAM '90, NEW YORK CITY

Since the middle of March, Chinazo Opia Cunningham has been on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic in New York City. A physician and researcher at Montefiore Health System and Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the Bronx, Cunningham has been working tirelessly to care for patients in one of the cities hardest hit by coronavirus.

"When I started in the hospital, I would say 25% of the patients I was taking care of had COVID-19," Cunningham says. "Ten days later, 95% of the patients had COVID-19."

Cunningham, who has worked across many areas of medicine — including HIV, drug addiction and harm reduction — during her 25-year career, says the worst days of the pandemic were an "all hands on deck" period, with everyone working together in chaotic circumstances.

"Things were literally changing by the hour in terms of the number of beds we needed and the number of providers necessary on the floor," she says. "There were urologists, radiologists, radiation oncologists — all these people who would not normally be working in an internal medicine ward — they all came together to meet the need."

For Cunningham, the trauma of her work was twofold: She and her colleagues were faced with so much death and heartbreak, and at the same time, health care workers across New York City faced a shortage of personal protective equipment.

"One of the most challenging and upsetting pieces of this was that the message being put out into the world by politicians and other leaders in medical care was, 'We have things under control,' " she says. "That wasn't true at all. We didn't have the protection that we needed, which put us and our families at risk. I think the world and the country needed to hear the truth."



Rallying the Troops

RYAN LEE '03, BOSTON

Ryan Lee runs a dental oncology practice with four offices in the Northeast, where he works with cancer patients who need reconstructive dental surgeries.

But for several weeks in April and May Lee led 18 Massachusetts Army National Guard strike teams, coordinating COVID-19

testing for some of the state's most at-risk residents.

A dental officer who provided medical supervision and quality control, Lee helped train more than 225 soldiers who administered more than 20,000 tests in nursing homes, hospitals, veterans' homeless shelters and mental health facilities in partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

"It's been an inspirational experience for me," says Lee, a major in the guard's medical command unit. "We ran out of medical folks, so we've been training infantry and field artillery soldiers."

The citizen soldiers received extensive training on how to wear personal protective equipment and conduct a nasopharyngeal swab test. "These are non-health care folks — computer programmers or policemen or firemen — whom I have been honored to lead," Lee says. "They're called by a sense of duty and a sense of community."

Cincinnati Museum Fills Curiosity Gap

WHITNEY OWENS '99, CINCINNATI

Whitney Owens will never forget walking through Cincinnati Museum Center in the city's landmark Union Terminal on the last night it was open to the public, before the coronavirus shutdown in mid-March.

"I walked through the darkened galleries and felt so sad — sad that we wouldn't get to share amazing experiences with our audiences, that families and schools would miss their favorite educators and that this beautiful landmark would sit empty for a time," says Owens, the center's chief learning officer.

But in the days after Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine issued a stay-at-home order, Owens and her staff

quickly pivoted the center's three museums — the Duke Energy Children's Museum, Cincinnati History Museum and Museum of Natural History & Science — to virtual programming. Owens took the lead, producing the first virtual "Story Tree Time" by recording herself reading one of her daughter's books.

Soon the museum was offering three or four learning opportunities each day — from preschool-themed dance parties and at-home science videos using household materials to conversations with women working in the STEM professions and Museum-on-Tap happy hours that combine cocktails with a bit of salacious Cincinnati history.

"One thing I use again and again from my time at Northwestern is the strength of storytelling," Owens says. "Whether it was creating fiction in Reg Gibbons' and Mary Kinzie's classes, editing the *Helicon* literary art magazine or co-chairing a season of performances for

Arts Alliance, I learned the power of creating wonder and delight through story. We strive to share that with others every day, whether we're introducing a teen to a *Torvosaurus*, bringing 1850s Cincinnati to life or learning through play in a pint-sized art studio."

The Next Generation

KARLY RABER '20 MD, CHICAGO

Karly Raber expected to spend her final months of medical school finishing up her last rotations, but her plans were upended by the pandemic. In March the Feinberg School of Medicine, along with other U.S. medical schools, paused clinical rotations for student safety. But Raber, who began her emergency medicine residency in July at Kings County Hospital in Brooklyn, N.Y., wasn't about to sit on the sidelines.

In the spring she got involved in COVID-19 monitoring efforts, calling people across the Chicago area who had tested positive for the virus to track how they were feeling, monitor their symptoms and refer them to more intensive care as needed.

The monitoring work presented unique challenges. "Just talking to someone over the phone, you have to really use all the information that you can," Raber says. "You're listening to how someone sounds when they talk, how many words they can say before taking a breath and how labored those breaths sound."

Raber and her fiancé moved to New York in early June, on what would have been their wedding day — the pandemic forced them to reschedule for 2021. She was eager to get started at Kings County, which had been hit hard by COVID-19.

"I know that I'll be putting myself and the people in my life at risk, and that's very sobering," Raber says. "The doctors in New York have been through an overwhelming situation, and I am hopeful that I can bring new energy to the hospital and help provide some relief."

Stories by Sean Hargadon, Clare Milliken and Monika Wnuk '14 MS, '19 MS

Visit alummag.nu for more stories of the Northwestern community's response to the coronavirus pandemic.



How Life Has Changed

IN THE WAKE OF THE CORONAVIRUS, LIFE WILL NEVER QUITE RETURN TO "NORMAL." WE ASKED NORTHWESTERN PROFESSORS TO WEIGH IN ON HOW LIFE HAS BEEN TRANSFORMED AS A RESULT OF THE PANDEMIC.



HUMAN RIGHTS

Juliet Sorensen, a clinical professor of law at the Center for International Human Rights, focuses on health and human rights, international criminal law and corruption.

"Disparate access to essential health care existed at home and around the world prior to COVID-19. The pandemic has only exacerbated this disparity. The economic fallout of the pandemic has simultaneously had a greater impact on the livelihoods and ability to earn a living of those with the greatest barriers to health care. My hope is that one of many lessons learned from this pandemic is that health care is a human right that can and should be more fully realized than in the past."



THE ARTS

Henry Godinez is a professor of theater and the resident artistic associate at Goodman Theatre.

"It's important to remember that theater has persevered for thousands of years. Storytelling has, from the dawn of humanity, been an essential aspect of human society. However, for the immediate future, theater may find itself abandoning state-of-the-art playhouses and looking more like the distant past, with solo performers and texts that reflect the most urgent social needs, exploring open, nontraditional spaces. Communities long marginalized and intimidated by large, centralized theatrical spaces may find themselves witnessing stories from their own front porches or sitting in lawn chairs in local public squares."

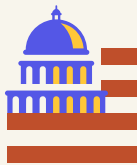


GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Political science professor **Ian Hurd**'s research on international law and politics combines contemporary global affairs with attention to the conceptual frames that serve to make sense of the world.

"Once the coronavirus crisis has ebbed, we may find a world that is poorer, more fragmented and harder to navigate. Local conditions will matter a great deal. Disparities between poor and rich are likely to be even starker, among countries but even more so among regions and classes within countries. The contradictions of the old world will be clearer — a huge underclass with poor sanitation, few reserves and no capacity to self-isolate will be most vulnerable and also will continue to be asked to fulfill crucial tasks, while the elite put their wealth to work to protect themselves and read the stock market as the barometer of success."

T.M. DETWILER



POLITICS

Alvin B. Tillery, an associate professor of political science and director of the Center for the Study of Diversity and Democracy, focuses on American political development, racial and

ethnic politics, and media and politics. "African Americans continue to have unequal life chances more than 50 years after the Kerner Commission proclaimed, 'Our nation is moving toward two societies, one Black, one white — separate and unequal.' The sad thing is that we are fully capable of fixing these inequalities, but we lack the political will to do it. It will take some deep soul searching on the part of our leaders in both parties if we are going to prevent the next national crisis from replicating the tragedy that is playing out before our eyes during this pandemic."



LAW AND PRIVACY

Matthew Kugler, an associate professor of law, explores issues of intellectual property, privacy and criminal procedure.

"COVID-19 has started a conversation about greatly expanding surveillance to allow for better contact tracing for infected people. Some of this is about new capacities — building contact tracing apps, installing more cameras — and some is about better linking existing data. But this raises many questions. If we do expand surveillance, are we doing so permanently, or just for the duration of the pandemic? Who needs to be able to see and use this newly collected data? And, perhaps most importantly, how much will this data actually help?"




BUSINESS

Linda Darragh, the Larry Levy Executive Director of the Kellogg Innovation and Entrepreneurship Initiative, launched the Kellogg Small Business Advisory Initiative,

which pairs small business owners with Kellogg alumni to provide business mentorship as they navigate the pandemic. "We won't truly understand how devastating COVID-19 has been for small businesses until our favorite stores do not open again. The pandemic has forced companies to virtually engage in creative ways that not only retain existing customers but attract new customers from new geographies. In the long run, this might be a good thing for those businesses that manage to adapt."

Stories by Mohamed Abedelfattah, Hilary Hurd Anyaso, Stephanie Kulke '21 MS and Kayla Stoner '12, '12 CERT, '20 MS



Through award-winning mystery novels and popular TV scripts, Attica Locke tells stories of Black Americans' experiences that probe the inequities of class and race.

By Adrienne Samuels Gibbs

The Write Path

When Attica Locke '95 graduated from Northwestern and moved to Hollywood at the age of 21, she was convinced she was going to be the next big movie star. Just give her six months.

But when that six-month alarm sounded, there were no movie roles to be found, and Hollywood looked decidedly less sexy in person than it had from the convocation stage in 1995, when the radio/TV/film major received a degree from the School of Communication.

So she did what any respectable young Black person — and child of political activists — would do in a strikingly nondiverse field where people of color were routinely not hired or promoted: She decided to write her own path forward.

But hers was not a straight line to the top. She scored a screenwriting fellowship and had a gig at the old-school reality show *World's Wildest Police Videos*. Eventually she detoured into fiction writing, and somehow this unusual combination of experiences led Locke to write a number of acclaimed crime and mystery novels and successful scripts.

Today, not only does she win awards for books that feature hyper-memorable, fully fleshed-out characters of all races, but she is also a sought-after scriptwriter who contributed to Fox's primetime Black soap opera *Empire* and Netflix's award-winning *When They See Us*. And all that happened because she was told no. Back in 1995, "I was certain I'd be a star in months, and of course that didn't happen," says Locke, now 46.

"I did get to be a fellow at the Sundance Institute feature filmmakers lab, and I had a movie deal as a director early in my career. But it just fell apart, as these things do. I was young and didn't have a sense that I could have my heart broken professionally."

But it broke. Her film never got made. It was too ... ethnic, she says. And at that time — before *Black Panther*, before *Fruitvale Station* and before #OscarsSoWhite — Hollywood executives mistakenly believed there was not much of a market for truly diverse storytelling.

Locke knew there was limited appetite for Black stories in Hollywood. But she still wanted to make movies — and tell character-based stories — about race, specifically rural Black life, with sociopolitical themes.

"I heard, 'I don't know if there is a business model for who you are right now,'" she explains. "I thought, if these people [white executives] don't want my stories, I can write their stories."

And she did. After a stint in publicity at Warner Bros., she worked on a number

of shows big and small, including *Early Edition* in the late 1990s.

"I worked for every major studio, and I had a lovely career, in the sense that I made money and I was always working — up to a certain point when I had an existential crisis," she says. "All I did was write for other people. It felt like I was chasing my own tail, and I dropped out."

Financing a Novel

The Houston-born writer had been married for nearly a decade to her college sweetheart, Karl Fenske '94, when she grew tired of screenwriting, in the mid-2000s. Fenske was working as a lawyer in Los Angeles, dedicated to helping the downtrodden. He had gone to law school after he and Locke worked together at *World's Wildest Police Chases*, where he was the tape librarian.

"Police agencies around the country would send in tapes," Locke says. "Some of it was car chases and police pulling people out and beating them. And Karl kind of broke. He went to law school and has been a public defender ever since."

With her husband's stable job, the couple decided to take out a loan on their house to finance Locke's true dream: writing a novel. She had a passion for telling a complex story that would show how class, race, big government, major companies and local economies shaped the lives of common people. After all, she'd lived it.

Writing a novel was the ultimate leap of self-faith. "I gave myself a year to write

the book that became *Black Water Rising*," she says. Along the way, "I had panic attacks, thinking 'What are you doing? This should be a script!'"

She completed the novel — about a struggling yet good-hearted attorney who is pulled into a 1980s-era Houston-set mystery involving a union strike, a murder or three, tense race relations in the union and the unyielding power of "Big Petroleum." The country drawl of her characters leapt off the page, and the pacing made it a fast read.

Published in 2009, Locke's debut was short-listed for the Orange Prize for Fiction and nominated for everything from an NAACP Image Award to an Edgar Award for best mystery novel.

After that book, which drew heavily on her childhood observations of her parents and life in east Texas, Locke wrote several more. *The Cutting Season*, released in 2012, featured a protagonist mired in a racially tinged murder mystery that blended the reverberations of slavery with modern racial issues. *Pleasantville* arrived in 2015 and was swiftly followed by *Bluebird*, *Bluebird* in 2017 and *Heaven, My Home* in 2019. This most recent release is still garnering major buzz.

The Attica Locke POV

Locke spends a lot of time reading court documents and watching trials on TV — sometimes just for fun. "I love law and have always been drawn to it," she says. "I'm lucky I have two sources of research at all times: my father and my husband."

“Certainly, the depth of my political beliefs is in my books, and to some degree the depth of my pain, about how I think people of color are treated in this country.”

Her father, Gene Locke, is a well-known Houston attorney.

"When I was researching *Pleasantville*," she says, "I watched everything, including the trials of Casey Anthony and Jodi Arias. I'm fascinated by the storytelling of [legal arguments] and how people use language to get at the truth."

Locke's point of view is one that seeks to expose historical and systemic inequities via storytelling. That's partly why her books seem so real — a lot of what's there isn't really made up at all.

"Certainly, the depth of my political beliefs is in my books, and to some degree the depth of my pain, about how I think people of color are treated in this country," she says.

The author does not shy away from truth-telling about modern events. At the time of the first interview for this story, the COVID-19 pandemic had begun, and Locke was getting ready to shelter in place in Los Angeles County after picking up her daughter from school. Even then, she knew the virus would exacerbate race and class issues, especially if the White

House and health care officials had to work together to help the masses.

Locke gets her fair share of hate mail. Not only does she discuss and dissect racism in her novels — and in her scriptwriting work — but she also talks to the media quite openly about these ideas. She says the way to end racism — although that would remove her ability to draw on it as a plotline in her books — depends on whites.

From Central Park to Little Fires

Back in the early 2010s, African American film director Lee Daniels conceived a ridiculous-sounding new show about a Black record-producing family and shopped it to the Fox network. Only a handful of people thought it would work. Lee Daniels, perhaps best known for directing the films *The Butler* and *Precious*, wanted to create a modern-day, campy soap opera like the 1980s' *Dallas*, except his version would feature rich African Americans.

In 2014 Daniels tapped Locke to join the show's writing staff even though years earlier she had walked away from TV.

"I was trying to figure out income, frankly," she says. When she asked her agent to set her up with a job, "one of the scripts we read was the *Empire* pilot episode, and I thought, 'This is different,' and I was into the idea of how they showed and shattered class lines. Lee was there, and it was just a fit."

Empire wound up being the most successful show on television in 2016, bringing in more ad revenue for its network than any other series. The show won awards and proved that a Black television drama could command attention, ratings and top ad dollars.

Attica Locke with the cast of *Little Fires Everywhere*, including executive producers Reese Witherspoon and Kerry Washington

Danny Strong, an *Empire* co-creator and a reliable gauge of Hollywood temperatures, says that Locke brought her A-game.

"Attica was a true standout in the writers' room for the first three seasons," says Strong, also an executive producer of the series. "I absolutely loved working with her. She's so much fun and has a fantastic energy about her."

Next came *When They See Us*, the 2019 docuseries about the Central Park Five — the Black teens wrongfully convicted of raping a white woman in New York City. In exposing wrongdoing, it fell in line with Locke's civil rights-centered storytelling vision. Oscar-nominated director Ava DuVernay specifically asked Locke to write for the series, which went on to break Netflix streaming records.

Most recently, Locke worked on the Hulu adaptation of Celeste Ng's *Little Fires Everywhere*, now a streaming hit. Ng felt safe leaving her bestselling book in Locke's gifted hands.

"When I visited the writers' room, I was thrilled to learn that Attica was also a fiction writer," Ng says. "It's like having someone who's bilingual on your team: I knew Attica would have a deep understanding of the pace and narrative structure of a novel and that she'd be able to help translate that story to fit the needs of a TV show because she knew that world as well."

"Incidentally, Attica wrote one of my very favorite lines in the show, one that doesn't appear in the book — when Mia [played by Kerry Washington] says to Elena [played by Reese Witherspoon], 'You didn't *make* good choices, you *had* good choices.'"

For Locke, the choices she's made — and perhaps a bit of luck — have set her on a path to success.

"I'm aware of a touch of magic in that I have had great luck," she says. "I will also say that for all of this, I've said no to a bunch of stuff. But choosing to walk away and write novels is the thing that gave me the career I have now, both as a novelist and as a person who works in television. It came at the right time for me to grow up and believe in my voice."

Adrienne Samuels Gibbs '99 is features editor at Zora, Medium's new publication focused on the experiences of women of color.



FIGHTING FOR LOCAL NEWS

— and Democracy

A new Northwestern Medill initiative supports local news organizations, helping keep citizens engaged in their communities.

BY ERIN KARTER

Even before coronavirus cases in the U.S. started to spike in March, newspapers across the country were taking drastic measures to survive.

Yes, news organizations — legacy publications and digital startups alike — are falling victim to the pandemic. But the virus is not the sole cause of death.

Local news as an industry has suffered a slow decline since the dawn of the internet three decades ago, and it never fully recovered from the Great Recession of the late 2000s. Amid plummeting ad revenue, decreasing print circulation and the polarization of American political discourse, many local news outlets were already struggling — and then came COVID-19.

But what if the deadliest pandemic since the Spanish flu of 1918 forces local news onto a new and more hopeful path while reawakening readers and viewers to its essential role in our democracy, our society and, sometimes, our survival?

“The pandemic blew through the old business model of local news like a Category 5 hurricane. But there’s a great opportunity for local news in the rebuilding from this storm,” says Tim Franklin, director of the Local News Initiative (LNI) at the Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications. “We’ve already seen digital subscriptions to news sites skyrocket, by some estimates more than doubling in just a few weeks. If local news organizations can build on that momentum in their digital business models, there could be a silver lining to this crisis. There still are a

lot of headwinds, however, and the next year is going to be critical.”

Today few Americans have print subscriptions, and many local news outlets have struggled to develop a digital audience. These challenges are among the intractable problems the Local News Initiative was created in 2018 to help solve. The initiative brings together experts in digital innovation, audience understanding and business strategy to bolster the sustainability of local news in America.

Developing a new business model is important. But it’s equally important to convince readers that local news is essential to the health of society and democracy — and that readers should support it.

“While journalists and people in the news industry are very aware that local news is in a troubled state, most regular citizens are not,” says Margaret Sullivan ’80 MS, media columnist at the *Washington Post* and author of the new book *Ghosting the News: Local Journalism and the Crisis in American Democracy*. “So we have this very unfortunate disconnect in which our industry is really troubled and people who we need to have on our side, if we are going to save some of these institutions, don’t really know things are so bad.”

WHY WE ALL NEED LOCAL NEWS TO THRIVE

Sullivan’s first job out of college was at the *Buffalo News*. She started as a summer intern and worked her way up to top editor. In three decades at the paper Sullivan came to a deep understanding of the role local news has as a watchdog and in preserving democracy, which motivated her to write the book.

“Local news shows up at the city council meetings,” says Sullivan. “They will look into government records, and they will get commentary on controversial situations. All of these things help democracy in communities function the way it’s supposed to. People can’t really act like citizens without a basis of information to work from.

“One of the things that happens when local news starts to fade away is that people become less engaged in their communities, and they tend to go into their political corners,” she adds. “They vote less, and they don’t vote across party lines as much. They become more polarized. They don’t engage politically as much.”

The Local News Initiative was born after similar concerns prompted an exchange between Tim Franklin and John Mutz, a Medill alum concerned enough about the industry to offer startup funding. He also volunteered his personal network to help raise more money for the project.

Mutz ’57, ’58 MS is a business leader and politician from Indiana who served as state representative, state senator and lieutenant governor. He also ran on the Republican ticket for Indiana governor. While traveling around the state as a candidate, Mutz learned firsthand the critical importance of local news in the democratic process to communities large and small.

“Without any doubt, when you run for office in a state like Indiana, you find out what a major role the local news source plays in the local area,” Mutz says.



“The pandemic blew through the old business model of local news like a Category 5 hurricane.” — Tim Franklin

“It became painfully clear that local news sources were drying up,” he adds. “And it seemed to me, if Medill was going to continue to lead as one of the top journalism schools in the country, we had to be concerned about this problem.”

In addition to enabling civic participation and serving as a watchdog, local news tells the stories of people in a particular place and time — both for the present and posterity.

LEADING THE LOCAL NEWS REVOLUTION

Chicago has long been a “news town,” but the city’s media landscape is in a state of upheaval. The *Chicago Reader*, once a national model with the biggest circulation of any alternative weekly in the country, is attempting to become a nonprofit after narrowly avoiding shutdown several times. Chicago’s Spanish-language paper *Hoy* was shuttered last year. The storied *Chicago Defender* stopped producing a print edition. The *Chicago Tribune* has fallen under the influence of a hedge fund with a reputation for bleeding struggling newspapers of remaining revenues.

Dawn Rhodes ’09 MS joined the *Chicago Tribune* in 2010, when the newsroom was still reeling from the devastation inflicted by real estate mogul Sam Zell, who two years earlier left its parent company \$13 billion in debt. Just short of completing a decade at the paper, Rhodes took a buyout in mid-February.

“Whatever good or bad I have to say about the institution, the people in that newsroom are outstanding, and the work they are doing, especially now, under very, very difficult circumstances, is truly admirable,” says Rhodes. “In the wake of the pandemic, the *Tribune* is going beyond the numbers and working really hard to tell the stories about the people who have gotten sick — the people who have died.”

In spite of the turmoil and instability in the Chicago media scene, a patchwork of startups and collaborations have sprung up to fill the void. Rhodes recently took a new job as a senior editor at Block Club Chicago, a nonprofit dedicated to covering Chicago’s diverse neighborhoods.

“Especially now that I am at Block Club, I think of all Chicago media as being an important part of a patchwork,” says Rhodes. “Everybody has their own niche and stories they tell particularly well, and they all matter.”

To help support local news operations, LNI is expanding its work with Chicago outlets through a \$1 million award from the McCormick Foundation and the launch of the Metro Media Lab, a program designed to strengthen those outlets’ sustainability through partnerships in research, training and student-produced storytelling.

“Chicago right now is one of the most entrepreneurial and experimental local news markets in the country,” says Franklin, senior associate dean at Medill and a past president of the Poynter Institute, a Florida-based nonprofit journalism school and research organization.

Another entrepreneur and champion of innovation is Emily Ramshaw ’03 MS, who is preparing to launch *The 19th*, the nation’s first nonprofit, nonpartisan newsroom focused on the intersection of women, politics and policy.

Ramshaw was part of a generation of newly minted journalists who had to fight their way into an increasingly strained industry in the early 2000s. Her initial career path was typical for a newspaper reporter at the time.

She joined the *Dallas Morning News* and started covering the suburbs. Working her way to the overnight cops beat, she eventually landed a city hall assignment. In six years with the *Morning News*, Ramshaw survived four rounds of layoffs.

“I watched people who had devoted their whole lives, their whole careers, to this craft being discarded, and it was exceedingly painful,” Ramshaw says. “It was a big wake-up call that something needed to

SHANE COLLINS



Margaret Sullivan, *Washington Post* media columnist and author of *Ghosting the News*

change, whether it was the business model or the entire news industry.”

By 2009 Ramshaw was so discouraged that she was considering law school. Then an opportunity pulled her back into the fray.

She helped start and eventually led the *Texas Tribune*, a pathbreaking online publication with a new journalistic model for covering state politics — nonprofit, watchdog and nonpartisan. It was an early success story for that new approach, showing Ramshaw a path toward not just sustainability but also growth. She left the *Texas Tribune* in January to use the same model in launching *The 19th* with Amanda Zamora, the *Texas Tribune*’s former chief audience officer. (Andrea Valdez ’06 MS is the new organization’s editor in chief.)

“We have embarked on this venture with the goal of elevating the voices of women, particularly women of color and women off the coasts, as well as advancing storytelling that exposes disparities, presents solutions and helps advance greater equity for women nationally,” Ramshaw says. “We intersect with local news in that all of our journalism will be entirely free, not just to read but to republish. It is our hope that news organizations around the country will be able to freely distribute our storytelling to their audiences, whether it’s the *El Paso Times* or *NBC Nightly News*.”

BRENDAN BANNON

“One of the things that happens when local news starts to fade away is that people become less engaged in their communities, and they tend to go into their political corners.”

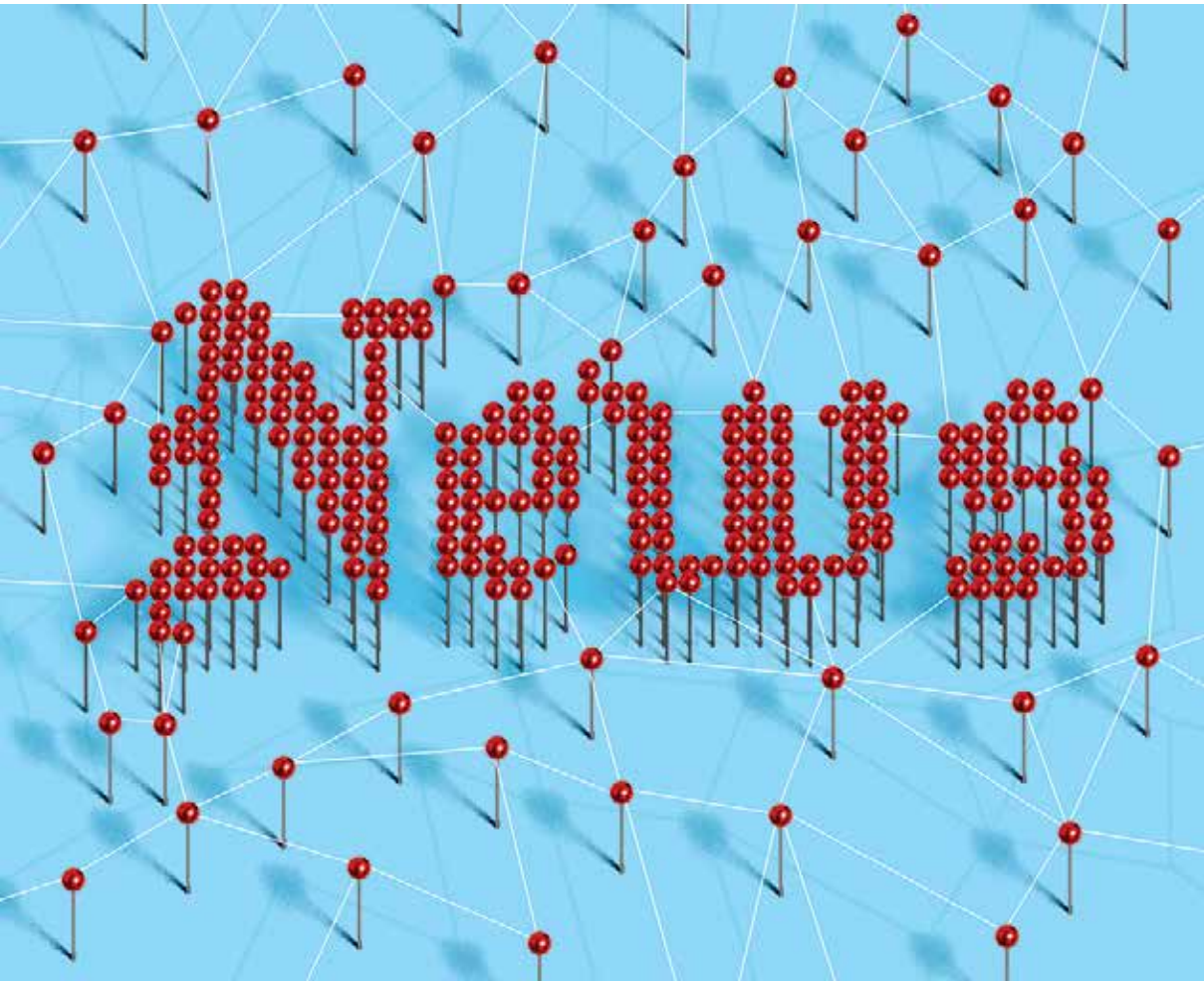
— Margaret Sullivan

JOURNALISTS AS ENTREPRENEURS

Research shows that as local news outlets fade away and news deserts expand, civic engagement evaporates and elected officials become less virtuous without a watchdog to hold them accountable. The core tenets of the Fourth Estate — preserving democracy and accountability and giving voice to the voiceless — are what above all else make journalists public servants.

As noble as that cause can be, today’s journalists must also be innovators and entrepreneurs. And, as Tom Collinger says, journalists must come to know and be directly engaged with those readers willing to pay for news. Collinger is executive director of Medill’s Spiegel Digital & Database Research Center, which serves as LNI’s data analysis arm.

“In newsrooms over the last five years, there has been an explosion of data-driven thinking, and subscriber revenue has become the new lifeblood of local media,” he says. “Every journalist has access to information about how many people are reading a story in real time.



What they don't have — and what we are offering — is an understanding of their subscribers: How are they engaging with content?"

Among several projects aimed at making U.S. newsrooms more sustainable, the Local News Initiative is exceptional for its partnership with Spiegel, which specializes in evidence-based, data-driven analysis of the relationship between customer engagement and purchase behavior — something much of the news industry was late to adopt or has failed to truly integrate into its day-to-day operations.

Spiegel is working to elevate customer engagement in the news industry by merging gargantuan reader- and subscriber-behavior databases to provide an understanding of what paying customers are actually doing, so outlets can maintain and expand their digital audience. For the media industry, it's a novel endeavor.

"We now understand through this research that having one person read you 100 times is of

more value than having 100 people read you once," Collinger says. "There's a lifetime value to a subscriber, but getting people coming to you sporadically through Facebook and Google doesn't really help you financially."

The crisis hitting local news is not playing out for major national outlets like the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*, which are seeing record subscription levels.

Key to their success has been the ability to engage readers in innovative ways. But not all newsrooms can afford to try new things, as Jeremy Gilbert '00, '00 MS, former director of strategic initiatives at the *Washington Post*, points out, because "in order to innovate, you have to leave room for experiments not to work out, and that can be very expensive." The Local News Initiative aims to ease that burden through data analysis, and with the Medill Knight Lab, it pairs students and faculty with partner news organizations to help develop strategies to increase readership and implement actionable intelligence provided by Spiegel's data analysis. (The Knight Lab is Medill's journalism innovation hub.)

LNI also recently launched the Subscriber Engagement Index, which will allow local news organizations to measure their performance with digital subscribers across a wide array of metrics and to benchmark their data relative to peers across companies around the country. It includes

"We must, as a nation, come to grips with what is at stake should our local news outlets disappear. The loss of local news is not just the loss of businesses that succumbed to the advance of technology. It would mean the loss of an important conduit of information that is vital to the functioning and maintenance of our democracy."

— Charles Whitaker



SALLY RYAN

an interactive tool for local news leaders to "war-game" the outcomes of strategic decisions that could increase their digital subscribers and revenue.

"The Local News Initiative, for the first time in audience research, is using academically rigorous methods in forms that are accessible to journalists who are working in the industry and who are making decisions on a daily basis," says Gilbert, who will replace Owen Youngman as Medill's new Knight Chair in Digital Media Strategy in September. "I don't know a lot of other institutions that have the combination of the credibility with the newsroom and the academic know-how that Spiegel and Medill can offer."

"What I hope people will take away from the crisis of the moment — and it is absolutely a crisis — is that it's important to have local news," says Gilbert. "That doesn't necessarily mean that local news needs to look like a newspaper or a local TV news broadcast or a radio news broadcast."

ACTIONABLE INTEL

LNI's research has resulted in major, tangible improvements at its partner news organizations. For example, LNI showed the importance of emailed newsletters in building reader habit and loyalty. All three initial partners — the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Chicago Tribune* and *Indianapolis Star* — have dramatically ramped up their newsletter numbers.

Mackenzie Warren '00, senior director of news strategy at Gannett, says LNI's work prompted the company to make two major strategic changes. First, it eliminated underperforming content as identified by the LNI research and, in response to findings that readers are overwhelmed, began experimenting with paid ad-free and ad-light news products.

Second, Warren says the company made the decision to "focus from a total organizational standpoint" on building reader loyalty, in response to Spiegel research showing that creating reader habit is the single most important strategy in getting people to pay for local news. He says the company created initiatives to increase reader loyalty in each of its newsrooms to drive subscription increases.

The Local News Initiative is also expanding its work to raise awareness about local news' importance among readers.

In June 2019 the *Vindicator* announced that it was going out of business after 150 years of covering Youngstown, Ohio. As the only paper in the region, the newspaper drew a national spotlight as a symbol of growing news deserts across the country and a worst-case scenario in the industry's episodic decline.

But as the *Vindicator* was preparing to publish its final issue, the narrative turned when other media players in the area began developing new strategies to fill the void. The investigative nonprofit ProPublica announced it would fund a reporter for a year; a Google-funded innovation project with McClatchy newspapers opened its first local digital operation in northeast Ohio's Mahoning Valley; and the *Warren Tribune-Chronicle* — a rival paper in the neighboring county — bought the *Vindicator's* name and subscriber list and began publishing an edition under that title.

To showcase the changing media landscape in northeast Ohio, LNI is providing support for a documentary by Medill professor Craig Duff, who grew up in the region. The documentary is part of an effort to rally a nation of readers to the cause of local news.

In 2020 the news is as important as ever, with COVID-19 concerns, racial justice movements and a presidential election headlining a host of local, national and global events. Although the need to stay informed about the coronavirus in particular has driven more people to their local news outlets, the full impact of the pandemic on the industry remains to be seen.

"The heroic and exhaustive work that these hampered news organizations did to chart the spread of the virus and relay essential safety measures from health professionals is but one example of what we stand to lose should our local news ecosystem crumble in the aftermath of the pandemic," says Medill dean Charles Whitaker '80, '81 MS.

"But more has to be done," urges Whitaker. "We must, as a nation, come to grips with what is at stake should our local news outlets disappear. The loss of local news is not just the loss of businesses that succumbed to the advance of technology. It would mean the loss of an important conduit of information that is vital to the functioning and maintenance of our democracy."

Erin Karter is a media relations specialist and writer in the Office of Global Marketing and Communications.

For more on the Local News Initiative, see "Bolstering Local News," "We Will" Update, page 20.

LEADING WITH PURPOSE

By Lindsay Beller and Kari Forsee '02

The recipients of the 2020 Northwestern Alumni Medal — the Northwestern Alumni Association's highest honor — are innovators in their fields, compassionate volunteers and outstanding members of the University community. They join a distinguished group of more than 100 alumni who have received the award since 1932 and exemplified the ideals of Northwestern through their life, work and service.



Voice for Change Judy Belk '75

As African American girls growing up in the 1950s in Alexandria, Va., Judy Belk and her sister, Vickie, were bused across town to a segregated school until their mother made the courageous decision to fight injustice.

With legal and financial support from local civil rights activists and the Jewish philanthropic community, the Belks joined a lawsuit against the city of Alexandria to demand compliance with the U.S. Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling. They won, and in January 1960 the Belk sisters enrolled at an all-white elementary school.

Belk, who never forgot the power of advocacy and philanthropy, has dedicated her life and career to battling inequality. Today she is president and CEO of the California Wellness Foundation, one of the state's largest public-health philanthropic institutions. With nearly \$1 billion in assets, the organization awards \$43 million in grants annually to improve access to health care, prevent gun violence and mobilize communities

to support racial and social justice.

"We are laser-focused on ensuring that all Californians — no matter their race, zip code or immigration status — have the resources they need to thrive and to be healthy and well," she says.

Belk developed her voice at Northwestern, where she pursued her passion for storytelling as a radio/TV/film major and participated in For Members Only, which raises political, cultural and social awareness of the University's Black community. She also served as president of Delta Sigma Theta, a public service sorority, and was an active member of the Black Folks Theatre troupe.

"Northwestern was a window to a world that was so much bigger than my life in Virginia," says Belk, who met her husband, Roger Peeks '74, during her first days on campus.

Belk moved to California to work for CBS News after graduation. With public service in mind, she set out on a path that led to leadership roles in government and corporate and nonprofit sectors.

As vice president of global public affairs at Levi Strauss & Co., reporting to then-CEO Bob Haas, she guided a company initiative to combat institutional racism that was recognized by President Bill Clinton. Belk also co-led a delegation to South Africa to assess the possibility of doing business in the post-apartheid country.

"Judy's personal qualities — her authenticity, capacity to empathize with others and commitment to doing the right thing — enlist and energize people in her organization," says Haas, now chairman emeritus of Levi Strauss & Co.

After leaving Levi Strauss & Co., Belk served as senior vice president of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors before taking the helm at California Wellness, where she advocates for Californians whose well-being is too often determined by their race, income, immigration status or address.

As a writer whose work has been published in the *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal*, Belk supports women and girls of color and speaks out about organizational ethics, race and social change.

Debra Nakatomi, a director on the Cal Wellness board, calls Belk a gifted commentator with an abundance of charisma and charm.

"You see it in her delivery of a powerful keynote address or through a quiet read of one of her many essays or opinion pieces on gun violence, racial justice, parenting or remembrances of growing up in Virginia," Nakatomi says. "She's the consummate storyteller, laying bare the hard issues and revealing a lot about her life, her joy and pain — and in the process, touching our hearts and connecting us to our shared humanity."

"We are laser-focused on ensuring that all Californians ... have the resources they need to thrive and to be healthy and well."

Research Pioneer
Andrew C. Chan '80,
'80 MS

Andy Chan remembers the moment he realized a scientific paradigm of multiple sclerosis was wrong. The immunologist had just reviewed some clinical data on the disease of the central nervous system and was walking back to his office at Genentech Inc., a San Francisco-based biotechnology company that develops medicines for people with serious and life-threatening diseases.

Until then, it was believed that in people with multiple sclerosis, the body's T cells attack the protective layer around nerve cells in the brain, spinal cord and optic nerves. Chan found that B cells also play an important role in the progression of the disease. The discovery led to the development of ocrelizumab, an antibody approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in 2017 for the treatment of multiple sclerosis, which

afflicts more than 2.3 million people worldwide.

As senior vice president of research-biology for Genentech, Chan oversees the company's biological research programs. In his own lab, he examines how changes in the immune system may result in disease, in hopes of developing targeted therapies to save lives.

"As a physician, I have seen patients suffer from rheumatoid arthritis and pass away from lupus and kidney and brain failure," Chan says. "Developing therapies that can change the course of these diseases and have a significant impact on patients is very important to me."

Interested in problem-solving from an early age, Chan arrived at Northwestern in 1976. As a sophomore, he joined chemistry professor Joseph Lambert's laboratory for the next three years.

"Dr. Lambert was a great advocate of undergraduate research," Chan says. "That continued research experience was absolutely critical because I was able to see what research life was all about."



"I have seen patients suffer from rheumatoid arthritis and pass away from lupus and kidney and brain failure. Developing therapies ... is very important to me."

Chan earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in chemistry in 1980. After graduating, he pursued a medical degree and doctorate in cellular and developmental biology at Washington University in St. Louis.

Over the next two decades, Chan worked as a physician and professor at the University of California, San Francisco, and Washington University. The desire to see his science make an impact on patients brought him to Genentech in 2001. He also joined the executive advisory board of Northwestern's Chemistry of Life Processes Institute, where faculty across disciplines translate research into new treatments for diseases.

With his academic, medical and industry background, Chan brings a rare perspective to his role as CLP board chair, says Thomas O'Halloran, the Charles E. and Emma H. Morrison Professor of Chemistry at Northwestern and CLP's founding director.

"Andy understands the challenges of professors who are motivated to learn how disease processes work as well as their importance in translating discoveries into new medicines," he says. "He has provided invaluable advice to our faculty and trainees."

Chan founded and endowed the Lambert Fellows Program, which supports Northwestern sophomores and juniors who gain research experience with CLP faculty. The program honors his undergraduate research mentor, who set Chan on the path to where he is today.

"I think it's incumbent on all of us to give back to the institutions that invested in us, so the next generation of students and scientists can benefit and come up with lifesaving discoveries," Chan says.

PHIL CHANNING

Team Player
Christopher B. Combe '70

One afternoon in New York City about two decades ago, Chris Combe and Tom Butcher '71 were walking to catch a train when Combe detoured into a CVS drugstore. Butcher followed his longtime friend down an aisle that sold personal and health care products. Many of them were manufactured by Combe Inc., the family-held company that Combe led as CEO and chairman.

Combe took one look at the scattered boxes of Just for Men and Grecian Formula — popular Combe Inc. products — before spending 10 minutes carefully organizing the shelves. "He may be a big-picture guy, but he's also focused on the details," Butcher says. "To me, that's Chris Combe."

For more than four decades, Combe has rolled up his sleeves and proven himself to be a team player in business, volunteerism and philanthropy. He learned the importance of hard work and collaborating with people from different backgrounds at Northwestern, where he was a member of the men's tennis team during his first year and earned a degree in economics in 1970.

Combe joined the family business in 1975 and expanded operations globally, launching divisions in Japan, Australia and New Zealand. Along with supporting his employees' growth, he led the company's marketing efforts and acquired new brands like Aqua Velva and Cepacol before retiring in 2014.

The company was started in 1949 by his father, Ivan Combe '33, '36 JD, who passed down to his son an appreciation for Northwestern, a passion for tennis and a commitment to philanthropy.

"My father was very philanthropic, and that has carried on to me and my children," Combe says. "I try to choose areas of philanthropy where I can really have an impact and make a difference — not just by signing checks but by really getting involved."

A longtime volunteer for Northwestern, Combe was a founding member of the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences Board of Visitors in 1981 and joined the University's Board of Trustees in 1997. He also was named one of the inaugural

MICHAEL GOSS



co-chairs of **We Will. The Campaign for Northwestern** in 2015 and served as director of the Alumni Admission Council in Westchester, N.Y., for more than 40 years.

The Combe family has provided transformative financial support for Northwestern — from facilities and endowed positions at the Department of Athletics and Recreation to international health and human rights initiatives at Northwestern Pritzker School of Law and social entrepreneurship scholarships at the Kellogg School of Management and other areas across the University.

In 2008 one of Combe's daughters, Keech Combe Shetty '99, '06 MBA, introduced her father to Andrew Youn '06 MBA, her Kellogg classmate and founder of One Acre Fund. The nonprofit organization provides microfinancing and agriculture training services to

nearly 1 million farmers in East Africa to help reduce hunger and poverty.

Youn says Combe has provided critical financial support and worked tirelessly to promote the organization, exemplifying the One Acre Fund value of humble service. "He's not afraid to get his shoes muddy in service to farm families we support," Youn says.

Combe also brings his passion for global volunteerism to the board of directors of Malaria No More, an organization that works to end malaria-related deaths in Africa, and Heart Care International, which seeks to improve the health of children with heart disease in Latin America.

"There are tremendous opportunities to help people in the United States and all over the world," Combe says. "The key is impact. What impact can you have on people around the world?"

"I try to choose areas of philanthropy where I can really have an impact and make a difference — not just by signing checks but by really getting involved."

Design Visionary Gordon Segal '60

A year after graduating from Northwestern, Gordon and Carole Browe Segal '60 were on their honeymoon in the Virgin Islands when they stopped in a small Danish store. Still furnishing their first apartment, they were surprised to learn that the home goods being sold there — which were higher in quality yet less expensive than those they had found in the United States — came direct from small factories in Europe.

Soon after their trip, Segal turned to his new wife one night after dinner.

“There have got to be other young couples like us who have good taste and no money,” he said. “Why don’t we open a store?”

In 1962 the Segals opened the first Crate & Barrel in a former dumbwaiter elevator factory in Chicago, putting crating lumber over unplastered walls and displaying dishes on the packing crates that had carried the couple’s first merchandise from Europe.

With an eye for contemporary, affordable products, the Segals grew Crate & Barrel into a global home furnishing empire. By the time Gordon Segal retired as founding CEO and chairman in 2008, there were more than 100 store locations and 7,000 employees.

Though Segal studied business at Northwestern, he says his liberal arts courses — on subjects such as American diplomatic history, European philosophy and Irish author James Joyce — profoundly influenced and inspired him.

“These courses created an intellectual curiosity and a desire to travel to other places, learn about other cultures and live other experiences,” says Segal, who took many of these classes with Carole.

Soon after the Segals opened the first store, Shirley Welsh Ryan '61, '19 H walked in and recognized the couple she had met at Northwestern — an encounter that led to a lifelong friendship. “Gordon has a keen eye and sees elegance in the simplest forms,” says Ryan. “He’s very open to new thought and is alive to the world.”

Ryan’s husband, Patrick G. Ryan '59, '09 H, got to know the Segals as well.



**“I think design
is a very important
element in the way
people live their lives.”**

Gordon Segal and Pat Ryan, who founded Aon Corp., became business and civic leaders in Chicago and members of Northwestern’s Board of Trustees.

Segal joined the Board’s educational properties committee in 1990 and became its chair in 1994. After Ryan became Board chair in 1995, he reappointed Segal as committee chair.

From 1994 to 2017, Segal chose building sites, selected top architects and worked closely with University leaders to oversee the planning of several Northwestern buildings, including the Kellogg Global Hub, Louis A. Simpson and Kimberly K. Querrey Biomedical Research Center, Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Center for the Musical Arts and Walter Athletics Center. Thanks to Segal’s efforts, many of the new buildings have an open feel, with views of Lake Michigan and the city of Chicago. Parking lots were relocated from the center of the Evanston campus to the north and south ends as well.

“All the changes on campus from the early 1990s to today have the artistic signature of Gordon Segal,” Pat Ryan says. “He is a very creative individual, a visionary with great design skills and a natural merchandiser who applied this foundation to campus planning and development.”

The Segals also helped create the Segal Design Institute at the McCormick School of Engineering, where students across disciplines and levels gain experience in solving complex problems through human-centered design.

“I think design is a very important element in the way people live their lives,” says Segal, who hopes his philanthropy and service will help make Northwestern an even more creative place. “You want an environment where the best students find inspiration, just like my wife and I did, when they’re developing their perspectives on life.”

Learn more at alumni.northwestern.edu/medal.

MICHAEL GOSS

Alumni

Desmond Wang '10, '12 MS, far right, with, from left, Lena Zhao '15 MS and Lucy Cheng, held a fundraiser with the NU Club of Beijing that resulted in the donation of more than 5,500 N95 masks and two iPads to Northwestern Memorial Hospital — and nearly \$14,000 to Northwestern Medicine’s COVID-19 Relief Fund.



Creation



↑ Lilac Solutions CEO David Snyder, right, with colleagues, from left, Tom Wilson and Nick Goldberg

SUSTAINABILITY

Five Questions with David Snyder '16 PhD

Lilac Solutions CEO aims to deliver a sustainable solution to the global lithium-supply problem.

1

What makes lithium such an important material for batteries?

Lithium is the lightest metal on the periodic table and can charge quickly into a variety of electrode materials, making it uniquely valuable for batteries. If we made a top-five list of the world's best batteries, lithium is the key element in every one. That's why lithium dominates every kind of high-performance battery, from electric vehicles to portable electronics. Demand for

lithium continues to increase as electric vehicles offer stunning performance and become cost competitive.

2

What makes lithium so hard to procure?

Most of the world's lithium is found in the brine deposits underneath salt flats. This salty water contains 0.1% lithium at best, and the remaining 99.9% is low-value salts and water. Currently, to extract that lithium, you need to evaporate everything around it using ponds. Not only do these types of projects leave a massive footprint and affect nearby water resources, they can take 10 years to develop and, at best, capture only 50% of the lithium available. The whole process is antiquated, inefficient and unsustainable.

3

How does Lilac Solutions solve the lithium-supply problem?

Lilac's solution eliminates the need for new evaporation ponds. Instead, Lilac offers a new ion-exchange system capable of extracting 80% of available lithium in a matter of hours, versus years, with a footprint 1,000 times smaller than ponds. Our customers fall into three groups: existing lithium producers looking to expand their operations, existing salt producers seeking to recover lithium for the first time, and new lithium companies. We're currently building pilot modules that we'll deploy in the U.S. and South America beginning this year.

4

Why did you choose clean energy as a career path?

I did my undergrad work in biochemistry, but I saw climate change as this huge global challenge that was about to shape the next century. I knew I wanted to be involved in creating solutions.

5

How did Northwestern prepare you for your life now?

First of all, I couldn't have picked a better program or research group — the Wolverton group — for the materials science training that I use every day. Second, the opportunities offered through the Institute for Sustainability and Energy (ISEN) to take energy seminars, learn directly from energy professionals and take classes that provided insights on the industry prepared me to start this business. I co-founded Lilac after taking the NUvention: Energy course offered through ISEN and the Farley Center for Entrepreneurship, and that experience gave me the business skills, network and confidence to move forward with the company. We also have two other Northwestern engineers on our team — a materials engineer, Garrett Lau '18 PhD, and a chemical engineer, Nicolás Grosso Giordano '13. Northwestern empowered me to fully dive into the energy ecosystem, see every angle of the battery supply chain and turn this vision for Lilac into reality.

Interview by Monika Wnuk '14 MS, '19 MS

MATTHEW BROWN



RETHINKING DINNER THEATER

Broadway actor Adam Kantor '08 celebrates with a team of actors at PrideTable, an interactive culinary experience in summer 2019 that commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall riots. Hosted by Kantor's StoryCourse, PrideTable featured dishes from five LGBTQ+ chefs. Live performances highlighted each chef's life experience. StoryCourse, co-founded by Dinner Lab creator Brian Bordinick and award-winning songwriter Benj Pasek, mixes food and theater, creating "a multisensory, delicious, profound, moving experience," says Kantor. In response to the coronavirus, StoryCourse raised more than \$3 million for the CDC Foundation via *Saturday Night Seder*, a musical celebration of Passover that is being considered for several Emmys. Kantor and his StoryCourse team are now developing at-home interactive theatrical culinary experiences.

FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Healthy Drinks That Taste Good Too

Rosa Li '07 grew up drinking her Chinese grandmother's herbal tonics. Li loved the benefits. "They were great for my health, calming my stress and boosting my immunity," she says. "But they did not have the most approachable taste."

Li made it her goal to make those super herbs tasty and accessible. In March she launched Wildwonder, maker of low-sugar sparkling and healing drinks that pair functional herbs — turmeric, ginger, elderberry and goji berry, for example — with tasty fruits. Formulated for immune and gut health, Wildwonder offers an antioxidant line and three new flavors with prebiotic and probiotic infusions.

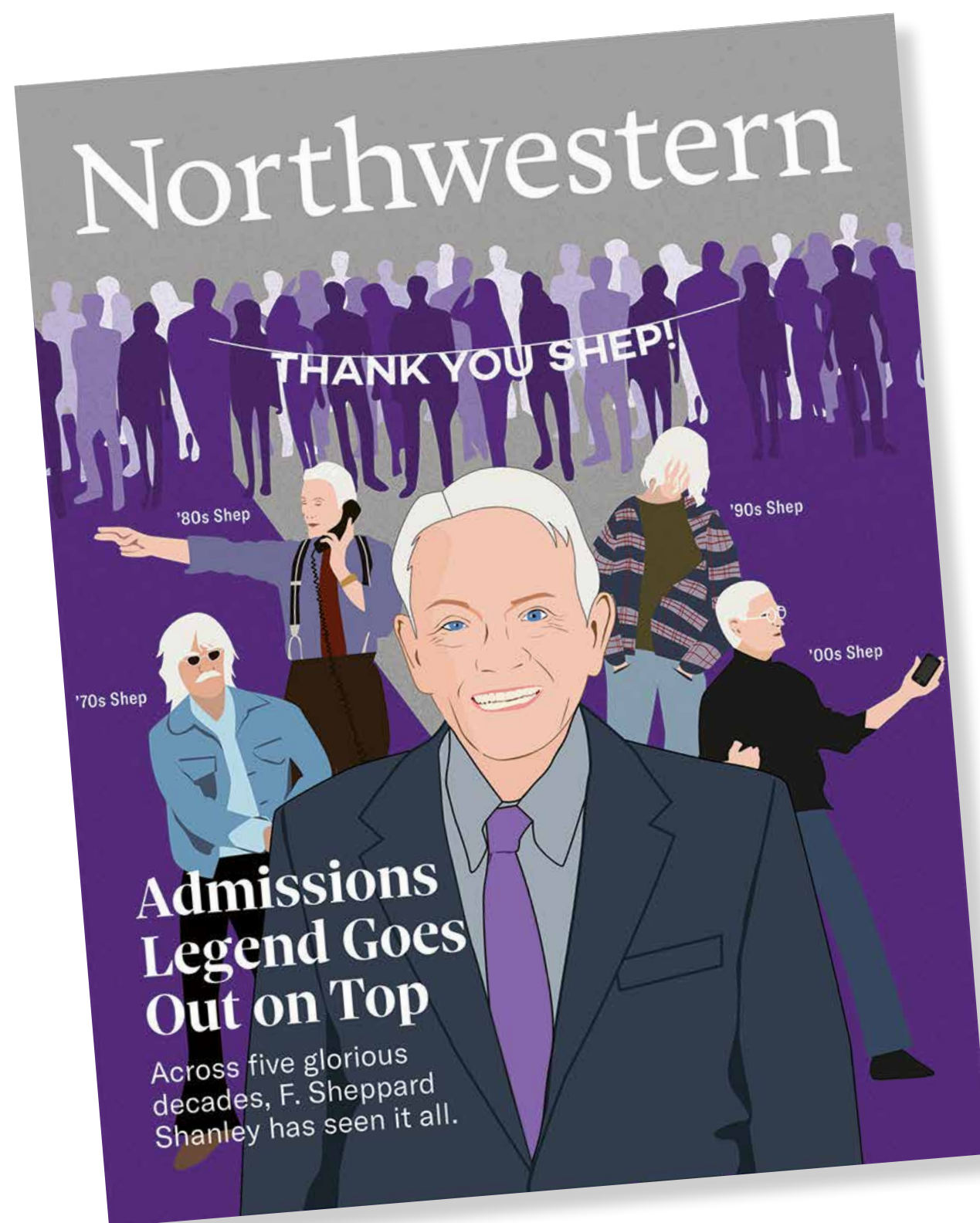
"My goal is to bring these functional



↑ Rosa Li

ingredients that offer health benefits to the masses," says Li, a lifelong tea enthusiast who lives in San Francisco.

Wildwonder, which is available online and at Whole Foods stores in Northern California, is expanding to national organic and specialty foods chains. The company donates a portion of its profits to causes that support women and marginalized communities.



Learn more about Shep Shanley's long-lasting impact on Northwestern. See page 50.

SARINA KAITLIN BENOIT

Ready to take the next step?

Explore how the Northwestern network can help you advance your career.

- Search for jobs posted by fellow Wildcats and recruit highly qualified alumni
- Join the Northwestern Network Mentorship Program and participate in virtual mentor circles to gain industry insights
- Watch career webinars and listen to the *Northwestern Intersections* podcast to learn from experts

alumni.northwestern.edu/career

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Total number of online viewers of Northwestern's Class of 2020 virtual Commencement, held on June 19. Online viewership was about eight times higher than previous years.

