One for the Trophy Case
The Northwestern field hockey team won its first NCAA championship in program history, shutting out Liberty University 2-0 in late November. Head coach Tracey Fuchs and her squad became the ninth Northwestern team overall to bring home a national championship. Maddie Zimmer, the 2021 NCAA Tournament MVP, sealed the win with a third-quarter buzzer-beater. "Couldn’t have done it without my teammates," says the sophomore midfielder. "I trust every single teammate with my life, honestly. As much as individual awards are really exciting, I’m so happy for this team." (Find out what inspires Coach Fuchs. See “Field of Dreams,” page 8.)
Molecular Taste Buds
Julius Lucks and his team created a device that can assess water safety and quality with just a single drop.

Late-Night Life
Jenny Hagel ’09 MFA landed her dream job as a writer and performer on NBC’s Late Night With Seth Meyers. Now she’s added another gig as head writer for The Amber Ruffin Show.

Listen Up
Antonia Cereijido ’14 has always loved podcasts. Today, she’s among the Northwestern alumni audio journalists making a mark in the industry.

“I went into plastic surgery to make a big impact on people’s quality of life. We give patients reassurance that ... they’re going to be in good hands.”
— Sumanas Jordan ’17 GME, assistant professor of plastic surgery, left, with patient Vyctoria Peek
For Valentine’s Day, alumnas and co-directors of the Northwestern Alumni Magazine, Kaye Chavis and Gyeonggi-do, South Korea Poong Yoon ’68, share their memories and heart forever.

I worked at WNUR for three years with Amos and many other great students at that time of political unrest during that time.

My husband and I met Amos at the Phi Gam house, sometimes off of the field. #GoCats

While it was a great education, my wife Catie was probably the best return from my tuition! Go Vintage Catal! — Jim Lammers

Stories from the Black House
Editor’s Note: Archivist Charlie Wilson discussed the artwork curated for the newly renovated Black House. See alummag.nu/blackhouseartworks

Black House is an architecture that pays for itself many times over of the field. #GoCats

I do! — Thanks to NU Editor’s Note: For Valentine’s Day we share a few Northwestern love stories. See alummag.nu/love

My husband and I met freshman year living in the same dorm! He proposed on the Lakeshore, we got married at Alice Millar Chapel. Our wedding bands have “Go Cats” engraved. — @momackmanmerk

While it was a great education, my wife Catie was probably the best return from my tuition! Go Vintage Catal! – Jim Lammers

In one study, former Northwestern professor and the updated information included in this picture is available. See alummag.nu/love

My husband and I met freshman year living in the same dorm! He proposed on the Lakeshore, we got married at Alice Millar Chapel. Our wedding bands have “Go Cats” engraved. — @momackmanmerk

While it was a great education, my wife Catie was probably the best return from my tuition! Go Vintage Catal! – Jim Lammers

In one study, former Northwestern professor and the updated information included in this picture is available. See alummag.nu/love

My husband and I met freshman year living in the same dorm! He proposed on the Lakeshore, we got married at Alice Millar Chapel. Our wedding bands have “Go Cats” engraved. — @momackmanmerk

While it was a great education, my wife Catie was probably the best return from my tuition! Go Vintage Catal! – Jim Lammers

In one study, former Northwestern professor and the updated information included in this picture is available. See alummag.nu/love

My husband and I met freshman year living in the same dorm! He proposed on the Lakeshore, we got married at Alice Millar Chapel. Our wedding bands have “Go Cats” engraved. — @momackmanmerk

While it was a great education, my wife Catie was probably the best return from my tuition! Go Vintage Catal! – Jim Lammers

In one study, former Northwestern professor and the updated information included in this picture is available. See alummag.nu/love

My husband and I met freshman year living in the same dorm! He proposed on the Lakeshore, we got married at Alice Millar Chapel. Our wedding bands have “Go Cats” engraved. — @momackmanmerk

While it was a great education, my wife Catie was probably the best return from my tuition! Go Vintage Catal! – Jim Lammers

In one study, former Northwestern professor and the updated information included in this picture is available. See alummag.nu/love

My husband and I met freshman year living in the same dorm! He proposed on the Lakeshore, we got married at Alice Millar Chapel. Our wedding bands have “Go Cats” engraved. — @momackmanmerk

While it was a great education, my wife Catie was probably the best return from my tuition! Go Vintage Catal! – Jim Lammers

In one study, former Northwestern professor and the updated information included in this picture is available. See alummag.nu/love

My husband and I met freshman year living in the same dorm! He proposed on the Lakeshore, we got married at Alice Millar Chapel. Our wedding bands have “Go Cats” engraved. — @momackmanmerk

While it was a great education, my wife Catie was probably the best return from my tuition! Go Vintage Catal! – Jim Lammers

In one study, former Northwestern professor and the updated information included in this picture is available. See alummag.nu/love

My husband and I met freshman year living in the same dorm! He proposed on the Lakeshore, we got married at Alice Millar Chapel. Our wedding bands have “Go Cats” engraved. — @momackmanmerk

While it was a great education, my wife Catie was probably the best return from my tuition! Go Vintage Catal! – Jim Lammers

In one study, former Northwestern professor and the updated information included in this picture is available. See alummag.nu/love

My husband and I met freshman year living in the same dorm! He proposed on the Lakeshore, we got married at Alice Millar Chapel. Our wedding bands have “Go Cats” engraved. — @momackmanmerk

While it was a great education, my wife Catie was probably the best return from my tuition! Go Vintage Catal! – Jim Lammers

In one study, former Northwestern professor and the updated information included in this picture is available. See alummag.nu/love

My husband and I met freshman year living in the same dorm! He proposed on the Lakeshore, we got married at Alice Millar Chapel. Our wedding bands have “Go Cats” engraved. — @momackmanmerk

While it was a great education, my wife Catie was probably the best return from my tuition! Go Vintage Catal! – Jim Lammers

In one study, former Northwestern professor and the updated information included in this picture is available. See alummag.nu/love

My husband and I met freshman year living in the same dorm! He proposed on the Lakeshore, we got married at Alice Millar Chapel. Our wedding bands have “Go Cats” engraved. — @momackmanmerk

While it was a great education, my wife Catie was probably the best return from my tuition! Go Vintage Catal! – Jim Lammers

In one study, former Northwestern professor and the updated information included in this picture is available. See alummag.nu/love

My husband and I met freshman year living in the same dorm! He proposed on the Lakeshore, we got married at Alice Millar Chapel. Our wedding bands have “Go Cats” engraved. — @momackmanmerk

While it was a great education, my wife Catie was probably the best return from my tuition! Go Vintage Catal! – Jim Lammers

In one study, former Northwestern professor and the updated information included in this picture is available. See alummag.nu/love

My husband and I met freshman year living in the same dorm! He proposed on the Lakeshore, we got married at Alice Millar Chapel. Our wedding bands have “Go Cats” engraved. — @momackmanmerk

While it was a great education, my wife Catie was probably the best return from my tuition! Go Vintage Catal! – Jim Lammers

In one study, former Northwestern professor and the updated information included in this picture is available. See alummag.nu/love

My husband and I met freshman year living in the same dorm! He proposed on the Lakeshore, we got married at Alice Millar Chapel. Our wedding bands have “Go Cats” engraved. — @momackmanmerk

While it was a great education, my wife Catie was probably the best return from my tuition! Go Vintage Catal! – Jim Lammers

In one study, former Northwestern professor and the updated information included in this picture is available. See alummag.nu/love

My husband and I met freshman year living in the same dorm! He proposed on the Lakeshore, we got married at Alice Millar Chapel. Our wedding bands have “Go Cats” it is having in the public benefits from it. The U.S. could expect, by harvesting 3.5 million pounds of corn in one day. On the health side, life expectancy is decades longer, and recent breakthroughs in mRNA-based vaccines, applied to COVID-19, are just the latest in a series of scientific and technological advances that have improved our lives.

People broadly understand that science and innovation are important. At the same time, there is substantial public skepticism about the value of investments in the scientific and innovative enterprise. The esoteric nature of science can make such efforts hard for the public to comprehend. And research itself, as a step into the unknown, inevitably produces many failures, which can breed more skepticism.

Today the U.S. devotes a very small share — less than 3% — of its total gross domestic product every year to research and development (R&D). Federally funded R&D as a share of the U.S. economy is half its level from the 1980s and approaching its lowest level in the last 70 years. Perhaps we should not be surprised that the U.S. has also been experiencing slower economic growth, that it is no longer a leader in the global economy. But we have not taken full account of the importance of research and the return on R&D investment? I’ve been working with colleagues to answer this question. In our study, former Northwestern postdoctoral fellow Mohammad Almahmor and I investigated the link between private sector inventions and prior scientific research. After studying tens of millions of scientific papers, we found that inventions in many of those fields were the product of recent breakthroughs in mRNA-based vaccines, and other advances that have improved our lives.

The U.S. needs to invest in research now.

By Benjamin F. Jones

The advance of science and technology has brought remarkable gains over the last two centuries. In 1870, U.S. per capita income averaged just $6 of what it is today. Most people were farmers and, limited by rudimentary tools and know-how, could produce very little output per hour.

In the 1880s, life expectancy was just six years. Diseases like typhoid and cholera were common, and antibiotics did not exist. But a steady series of advances has produced roots of knowledge for future inventions. Moreover, the inventions with the highest value are the ones most closely related to prior scientific advances.

And the linkages from science to the market are often indirect. Take Uber, for example, which relies on GPS satellites to track our locations. The GPS system works by comparing extremely accurate time measurements to determine the position of the satellites’ atomic clocks. But because satellites move at high speed and experience less gravity, these clocks experience time differently than we do on Earth — which means they must be adjusted according to Einstein’s theory of relativity. A mobile phone on a revolutionary business idea, in reality, depends deeply on essential foundations of GPS.

R&D is an incredibly high-return machine that pays for itself many times over.

But because the benefits are often indirect, the researchers and funders do not often get much compensation — as Einstein’s estate receives no Uber stock. It is therefore up to the public to support science and R&D, just as the public benefits from it. The U.S. could double its investments in R&D and reap enormous returns, producing higher standards of living, better wages and longer, healthier lives. Asking Congress to devote more resources to science should be among our highest priorities.

Benjamin F. Jones is the Gordon and Llura Gund Family Professor of Entrepreneurship and professor of strategy at the Kellogg School of Management.
Hard Choices
How do you make a tough decision?

Bradley Akubuofo ’11, partner at Bully Pulpit Interactive

“Teddy Roosevelt once said, ‘In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing, the next best thing is the wrong thing and the worst thing you can do is nothing.’ So, first I commit to deciding and I accept upfront that some people will not like my decision. Instead of searching for a perfect solution, I look at my alternatives and consider the worst-case scenario for each. If the worst case is not something I can live with, I rule that option out. Then I choose the best of the remaining options. Finding — and this part is key — I embrace the decision, and I don’t look back.”

Lifang Hou, director of the Center for Global Oncology, chief of cancer epidemiology and prevention, and professor of preventive medicine and pediatrics at Feinberg School of Medicine

“In my field, deciding where to focus my efforts is difficult. So many factors contribute to cancer development, and there is still so much to discover. However, this also presents a strength. I know that if my team and I are using our best scientific methodology, researching any of these factors will be fruitful. The key is to continue collaborating and sharing our findings widely. This can lead to surprising connections — and even better cancer prevention and treatment.”

SOCIAL FEEDS

It’s official! Early decision admission letters are here! Wildcat alumni shared their joy with the incoming class of 2026.

“Teddy Roosevelt once said, ‘In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing, the next best thing is the wrong thing and the worst thing you can do is nothing.’ So, first I commit to deciding and I accept upfront that some people will not like my decision. Instead of searching for a perfect solution, I look at my alternatives and consider the worst-case scenario for each. If the worst case is not something I can live with, I rule that option out. Then I choose the best of the remaining options. Finding — and this part is key — I embrace the decision, and I don’t look back.”

Lifang Hou, director of the Center for Global Oncology, chief of cancer epidemiology and prevention, and professor of preventive medicine and pediatrics at Feinberg School of Medicine

“In my field, deciding where to focus my efforts is difficult. So many factors contribute to cancer development, and there is still so much to discover. However, this also presents a strength. I know that if my team and I are using our best scientific methodology, researching any of these factors will be fruitful. The key is to continue collaborating and sharing our findings widely. This can lead to surprising connections — and even better cancer prevention and treatment.”

Tilden Katz ’95 JD, adjunct professor at the Northwestern Pritzker School of Law and vice president and strategic communications and issues management at SmithBecklin

“When I faced a tough career decision about whether to keep practicing law at a big firm, I had to face who I really was (unhappy, mediocre and still young) rather than how I wanted to see myself (someone starting a long, distinguished legal career). My decision to quit law led to a satisfying career in crisis communications, a field where I can put my advocacy skills to better use. And it’s much more genuine to who I am.”

H. David Smith, distinguished senior lecturer in psychology at the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences

“I try to minimize the influence of factors that could lead to bias. One approach is to simply consider the reasons why I might be wrong. If I were a juror, I might purposely focus on the evidence that goes against my evolving point of view. If I were leading a team, I might consult with trusted advisers who are willing to disagree with me. This ‘consider the opposite’ strategy helps direct my attention to factors that I may have disregarded at first.”

Charlotte Oxam, McCormick School of Engineering junior

“I go with my gut. When I founded my startup, Cue the Curves, an online shopping platform for plus-size women, I learned that when people tell you what they want, it’s not always what they actually want. You have to read between the lines. There are still going to be unknowns, but I have to trust that I can roll with the punches.”

“My husband and I are Wildcat alumni, class of 1990. We have another Wildcat in the house. My daughter accepted early decision, class of 2026! So proud! Go U, NU!”

Linnea Shaw Callentine ’00 in

“I remember getting that big packet in the mail 20 years ago. Still one of the happiest days of my life. NU is a special place.”

Dun Wang ’03 in

“Congratulations! My freshman year was 40 years ago, and it still brighty resonates. You have such wonderful experiences ahead of you. Savor every minute.”

Steven Hartstein ’86 in

“Tasteful, bold and beautifully presented. I loved every moment of this class, especially when I got to make a vinaigrette.”

Eric Huang ’09

“An Uncommon Recipe for Success

I’ll be honest. I limped my way across the finish line at my Northwestern graduation. I remember balmy storm clouds creeping across the Evanston skyline on that June afternoon as Wynton Marsalis ’09 H rushed through his Commencement speech. And while it felt good to finally finish this undergraduate experiment in a harried, hurried manner, I had not achieved proficiency in any field of knowledge.

I had cut bait on my history major, which was my goal. When people tell you what they want, it’s not always what they actually want. You have to read between the lines. There are still going to be unknowns, but I have to trust that I can roll with the punches.”

Eric Huang ’09

“Pecking House, a chilli-fried chicken restaurant in New York City. The food is delicious, and the atmosphere is warm and welcoming.”

Our parents had not immigrated here to work a strenuous blue-collar job only for their children to return to the very same trade. We were supposed to turn the narrative around, become a respected professional — a doctor, a lawyer, whatever. Just, for the love of God, don’t let me catch you in front of a stove.

But what can I say? It was an irrational calling of an unconventional nature. I kept in with both feet. Of course, this had to be hidden from my mom, a single mother. You can imagine the heartbreak it would have caused. So I got support from my most important resource at Northwestern — my friends. There were many times when I threatened to repeat a habit of giving up on myself. I didn’t excel in high school, so I cut classes. I barely graduated as a result. I excelled at the cello, but I gave up when it got hard. I was expelled from The Juilliard School.

I had no idea what I was doing at a university like Northwestern, and the freedom to make my own choices was daunting. The school threatened expulsion. But not this time, I told myself. I liked it here too much. I was finally surrounded by people with whom I had mutual respect and genuine camaraderie — good people who wouldn’t let me quit. These friends dragged me to the library, proofread my papers and banged noisily on my door when I didn’t want to go to class. And when I experimented with buttered noodles and grilled pork tenderloins for my friends, they encouraged me to keep at it, despite my barely knowing how to make a vinaigrette.

I didn’t end up using my history degree much. But I did finish the damn thing, and honing the determination to reach a summit no matter the multitude of disadvantages and obstacles in my way would serve me well. I moved back to New York City and began training at Michelin-starred restaurants. Years later I became a sous chef at Eleven Madison Park, one of the world’s best restaurant in 2017. This was a dream come true.

And so my friends saved me. It wasn’t pretty, but we got there, and at Commencement the dissonance of the cheerful trumpet music juxtaposed against an ominous Midwestern rainstorm seemed appropriate in retrospect. No achievement is without its hardship or fear. And no achievement is truly the result of a single person’s efforts. There would be many struggles ahead that I only overcame due to the support of my friends. It’s official: Early decision admission letters are here! Wildcat alumni shared their joy with the incoming class of 2026.

I’ll be honest. I limped my way across the finish line at my Northwestern graduation. I remember balmy storm clouds creeping across the Evanston skyline on that June afternoon as Wynton Marsalis ’09 H rushed through his Commencement speech. And while it felt good to finally finish this undergraduate experiment in a harried, hurried manner, I had not achieved proficiency in any field of knowledge. I had cut bait on my history major, which was my goal. When people tell you what they want, it’s not always what they actually want. You have to read between the lines. There are still going to be unknowns, but I have to trust that I can roll with the punches.”

Eric Huang ’09

“An Uncommon Recipe for Success

I’ll be honest. I limped my way across the finish line at my Northwestern graduation. I remember balmy storm clouds creeping across the Evanston skyline on that June afternoon as Wynton Marsalis ’09 H rushed through his Commencement speech. And while it felt good to finally finish this undergraduate experiment in a harried, hurried manner, I had not achieved proficiency in any field of knowledge. I had cut bait on my history major, which was my goal. When people tell you what they want, it’s not always what they actually want. You have to read between the lines. There are still going to be unknowns, but I have to trust that I can roll with the punches.”

Eric Huang ’09

Our parents had not immigrated here to work a strenuous blue-collar job only for their children to return to the very same trade. But what can I say?”
**Field of Dreams**

On the eve of Title IX’s 50th anniversary, a championship-winning field hockey coach celebrates the success of her women student-athletes, both on and off the pitch.

Tracey Fuchs, field hockey head coach

“‘My players inspire me the most. These young women come in as 17- and 18-year-olds and leave as leaders with a degree from Northwestern. I’m inspired by their growth and leadership, and it’s amazing how they can balance such a tough schedule of academics and athletics and still be so successful. ‘As coaches, we spend the most time with these students of anybody on or off campus. We really get to know them at a different level, and for me to share in their championship and be able to lead them to victory was probably one of the proudest moments of my coaching career. ‘And we want to pursue another one. Defending a championship is the hardest thing to do in any sport, but we have a great team coming back. We’re really looking forward to pursuing another title for Northwestern. This University brings out the best both in athletics and academics. I couldn’t be in a better place.”

Tracey Fuchs won her third field hockey national championship — and her first as a head coach — when Northwestern toppled Liberty University in the NCAA National Championship in late November. A 2014 USA Field Hockey Hall of Fame inductee and arguably the greatest player in U.S. field hockey history, Fuchs has helped the Wildcats achieve a winning record in 12 of her 13 seasons as head coach at Northwestern while also leading the team to two Big Ten titles.

In U.S. field hockey history, Fuchs has helped the Wildcats achieve a winning record in 12 of her 13 seasons as head coach at Northwestern while also leading the team to two Big Ten titles.

**HEARD ON CAMPUS**

**Safety and Justice**

To commemorate Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Nikole Hannah-Jones reminded her audience that we have not yet achieved social and racial justice. Three other guest speakers discussed what it’ll take to keep communities of color safe — and help us all thrive.

"Most Americans have no idea how radical [King] was. He called racism, militarism and capitalism the three evils of the U.S., and he was not actually looking for a colorblind society. He wanted a society that was going to address anti-Blackness."

Nikole Hannah-Jones, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and creator of The 1619 Project, at the Martin Luther King Jr. Day keynote conversation

"[The Office of Firearm Violence Prevention] will make sure that we are a listening body. We will listen to community members and outreach professionals. [Street outreach organizations are] anchoring institutions for neighborhood safety and well-being."

Chris Patterson, assistant secretary for violence prevention at the Illinois Department of Human Services, at the Northwestern Neighborhood & Network Initiative’s symposium on street outreach

"Every person in this country has the right to breathe safe air, drink clean water and live on uncontaminated land. … Environmental justice is social justice. … For decades, communities of color and low-income communities have been given a [disproportionate amount] of the pollution."

U.S. Sen. Tammy Duckworth at the inaugural Buffett Fireside Chat

“If it doesn’t work, stop doing it. If it works, figure out why it works. Only through the process of inquiry and evidence and evaluation and science and story can we get closer to truth. … Through his death we see how far we’ve come and how much work we still have to do.”

Rev. Wheeler Parker Jr., Till’s cousin, at a Northwestern-hosted press conference after the FBI closed its investigation into the 1955 murder of Till without filing charges

**A New Longevity Institute**

Researchers seek to understand aging.

"As our population ages, we know that many of us like to say we’re ‘young at heart.’ But no matter how old you feel, your body’s true age has nothing to do with your birthday. In the not-too-distant future, you’ll be able to check into the Human Longevity Laboratory to find out how old you really are, physiologically speaking."

At the lab, clinicians will check a litany of body systems, as well as your neurological and orthopedic health. And if the diagnosis is less than optimal, you’ll be prescribed an intervention to stave off further decline or — better yet — restore your vitality.

**HEALTH & SCIENCE**
Douglas Vaughan, director of the Potocsnak Longevity Institute

It may sound sci-fi, but it’s actually the mission of the new Potocsnak Longevity Institute, which recently launched at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine.

The Human Longevity Laboratory is just one part of the ambitious, multicenter institute, whose goal is to build on Northwestern’s ongoing research in the rapidly advancing science of aging.

“The biological processes that drive aging may be malleable,” says Douglas Vaughan, director of the institute and chair of the Department of Medicine at Feinberg. “We think we can slow that process down, delay it, even theoretically reverse it. The curtain is being pulled back on what drives aging. We want to contribute to that larger discovery process.”

Funded by a gift from Chicago industrialist John Potocsnak and his family, the institute aims to extend what the Human Longevity Laboratory is doing, and to act on that understanding to build on Northwestern’s expertise in nanoscience, bioengineering and chemistry by investigating anti-aging approaches such as new drugs and therapeutic devices.

“At the Human Longevity Laboratory, we will design clinical trials to study important aspects of aging in order to identify ways to extend the healthspan and delay or prevent harmful aging processes,” says Frank Palella ’83, ’92 GME, associate director of the institute and the Potocsnak Family C.S.C. Professor. “We plan to ascertain those factors that determine not just how long people live but how well they live.”

Cutter Professor of Medicine. “Aging is the most important risk factor for every disease we care for in adult medicine. If we can push that process back, we can push back the onset of disease.”

The institute builds on the decades of work by Vaughan and scientists across the University, unifying programs that study populations who seem resistant to some of the negative consequences of aging. These include certain members of an Amish community in Berne, Ind., who carry a unique genetic mutation that promotes longevity, and a group of cognitively young octogenarians called SuperAgers. Other projects will continue to study HPV’s impact on aging and capitalize on Northwestern’s expertise in nanoscience, bioengineering and chemistry by investigating anti-aging approaches such as new drugs and therapeutic devices.

“The biological processes that drive aging may be malleable,” says Douglas Vaughan, who is also the Irving S. Unites Vaughan, director of the Potocsnak Longevity Institute

At the Human Longevity Laboratory, we will design clinical trials to study important aspects of aging in order to identify ways to extend the healthspan and delay or prevent harmful aging processes,” says Frank Palella ’83, ’92 GME, associate director of the institute and the Potocsnak Family C.S.C. Professor. “We plan to ascertain those factors that determine not just how long people live but how well they live.”

The second Schapiro’s ongoing commitment to improving relations with the city. The engine is the second

Northwestern donated $800,000 to the city of Evanston to fund the purchase of a new fire engine, an example of President Morton Schapiro’s ongoing commitment to improving relations with the city. The engine is the second purchased with University-donated funds.


Just three years after its launch, The Garage’s Propel program earned the 2022 United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship Excellence in Co-curricular Innovation Award. The group also increased the number of women who participate in The Garage’s Residency program by 66%.

The School of Communication launched the Pritzker Pucker Studio Lab for the Promotion of Mental Health Via Cinematic Arts as a participating incubator dedicated to combating inaccurate and stigmatized mental health portrayals in media. It was funded with a $1 million gift from the Pritzker Pucker Family Foundation and Jessy Pucker ’19.
**Inclusive Making**

**CAT TALES**

**ACCESSIBLE DESIGN**

**Flipping Out**

Northwestern captain Yohan Eskrick-Parkinson makes Jamaican diving history.

When Yohan Eskrick-Parkinson was a first-year student at Northwestern in 2018, he reached out via Instagram to pioneering Jamaican diver Yona Knight-Wisdom. 

Eskrick-Parkinson had been diving for Northwestern for just a few months when he learned that the two-time Olympian was competing at a meet in Eskrick-Parkinson’s hometown of Calgary, Alberta. 

“I told Yona, ‘Hope you liked my home pool,’ and from there we chatted about diving,” says Eskrick-Parkinson, who is half-Jamaican and aspired to represent his father’s home country in international competitions. “I didn’t have my [Jamaican] citizenship yet, but we decided to keep in touch.” 

Eskrick-Parkinson kept diving and broke the 1-meter and 3-meter school records at Northwestern, where he is majoring in neuroscience and psychology. He’s now a senior captain on the swimming and diving team. 

After Eskrick-Parkinson gained his Jamaican citizenship, he reconnects with Knight-Wisdom. Last December, the 21-year-old joined Knight-Wisdom on Jamaica’s first-ever synchronized diving team. The duo finished second in the 3-meter synchro at the Scottish National and Open Diving Championships in Edinburgh. 

“It’s been a learning experience to see the lifestyle of a pro athlete,” says Eskrick-Parkinson, one of the Big Ten’s top divers. “To spend a week with Yona, train with him, see his diet and work outside of practice — it’s been really inspiring.”

Discipline and time management — skills he honed while hitting the books in Evanston — have been crucial to Eskrick-Parkinson’s success. While his neuroscience courses can be intimidating, he says he has grown comfortable balancing his sport and his studies.

And helping Jamaica make sports history? He’s finding time for that too.

“Digging in the Dirt”

In 1970 Northwestern anthropologist Stuart Struvee ’60 MA opened an archaeological field school in southern Illinois. For around a decade, dozens of Northwestern students and archaeologists ventured to Kampsville, Ill., every summer to conduct excavations at the Koster site, uncovering thousands of artifacts, including houses, remnants of prehistoric houses and other items.

Struvee’s dig led to the discovery of 25 distinct “horizons” — layers of artifacts from specific cultural time periods — dating back to the Archaic Period (8000 B.C. to 600 B.C.).

The Koster site, which at one time drew more than 10,000 visitors annually, was added to the National Register of Historic Places in June’s.

“I learned a little bit of geology, biology, ecology and human behavior,” says Jim Carper ’79, who participated in the Koster dig in summer 1977. “All these different scientists came together and explained what had happened there. I found that very interesting.”

Read more at alumnag.nu/koster.
Discovery

‘Dancing Molecules’ Repair Spinal Cord Injuries

With a single injection, paralyzed animals regained the ability to walk within four weeks.

Despite major medical advances across many fields, physicians and researchers have made little progress in treating spinal cord injuries. In fact, life expectancy for people with spinal cord injuries has not improved since the 1980s. Now Northwestern researchers, led by professor Samuel I. Stupp ’77 PhD, have developed a new injectable therapy to reverse paralysis and repair tissue after severe injuries. In the study, researchers delivered a single injection to the injury site in paralyzed mice and restored their ability to walk after just four weeks.

During a spinal cord injury, the long tails of neurons (called axons) are severed or damaged, resulting in the loss of feeling in the body or even paralysis. Similar to electrical cables, axons send signals between the brain and the rest of the body. A spinal cord injury forms a scar that prohibits the axons from regenerating, preventing the body from healing.

“For decades, paralysis has remained a major challenge because our body’s nervous system, which includes the brain and spinal cord, does not have any capacity to repair itself after injury or after the onset of degenerative disease,” says Stupp, the Board of Trustee’s Professor of Materials Science and Engineering, Chemistry, Medicine, and Biomedical Engineering at Northwestern, where he directs the Simpson Querrey Institute for BioNanotechnology and the Center for Bio-Inspired Energy Science.

The secret behind the therapy is novel “dancing molecules,” developed in Stupp’s laboratory. Injected as a liquid, the therapy immediately gets into a complex network of nanofibers that mimic the natural environment around the spinal cord. The nanofibers contain hundreds of thousands of dancing molecules that communicate with nearby cells — sending bioactive signals that trigger regeneration and repair in the spinal cord.

“By making the molecules move, ‘dance’ or even leap temporarily out of these structures, they are able to connect more effectively with cellular receptors,” says Stupp, a pioneer in regenerative nanomedicine. “Given that cells and their receptors are in constant motion, you can imagine that molecules moving more rapidly would encounter these receptors more often.”

After the therapy performs its function, the materials biodegrade into nutrients for the cells within 12 weeks and then disappear from the body without noticeable side effects. In the study, Stupp and his team found that the therapy improved severely injured spinal cords in five key ways: Neurons’ axons regenerated, scar tissue significantly diminished, myelin (the insulation around axons) reformed, new blood vessels formed to deliver nutrients to cells at the injury site, and more motor neurons survived the injury.

This year, Stupp will initiate discussions with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to receive clearance for human clinical trials. While the current therapy is best suited to treating recent injuries and eventually eradicating paralysis, Stupp’s team is also adapting the therapy to help patients with chronic older injuries.

“This has been the most important study of my entire career due to its integrative nature with chemistry, materials science, biology and clinical medicine,” Stupp says. “We are going straight to the FDA to start the process of getting this new therapy approved for use in human patients, who currently have very few treatment options.”

The nanofibers contain hundreds of thousands of dancing molecules that communicate with nearby cells.
**Innovation**

**COCKTAIL COLLABORATION**

**Something’s Brewing**

Four MBA students launch the first canned kombucha cocktail.

Confidence Udegbue cooked up the idea for a kombucha cocktail long before he arrived at Northwestern. He was moonlighting in San Francisco as a personal trainer at the time and regularly heard his clients say they wanted a healthier way to drink alcohol while staying fit.

On his first day of orientation at the Kellogg School of Management, he met Ashley Sherman, a fellow MBA student with a background in alcohol distribution. From there, they brought on Catherine Lamb, who had been brewing her own kombucha for 10 years, and Dennis Wong, who had a background in finance. Together they developed Liquid Confidence, a cocktail of bourbon and kombucha (a fermented, fizzy tea chock full of vitamins, electrolytes and probiotics). Sherman says the process of getting started was anything but smooth, recalling the days she and her co-founders spent brewing kombucha out of their own kitchens. “Right after we launched, we got our first really large order from a wine club for a hundred [liters],” she says. At the time, the team hadn’t yet secured a contract packer (or co-packer) to package the beverage. “We didn’t want to say no,” Sherman explains, “but kombucha has to stay cold.”

So the crew got creative: They found a free refrigerator on Facebook Marketplace, borrowed a pickup truck to retrieve it and hauled it up three flights of stairs to one of their apartments. “We all spent the whole day filling 100 bottles for this delivery,” Sherman says. Since then, the team has leveraged resources from both Kellogg and The Garage. “Now we’re in cans and we have a co-packer, but it was a journey to get there. And when our product actually got on shelves, that made it all worth it.”

Liquid Confidence is available online and in 20 stores in the Chicago area, and the team hosts in-store tastings to get live feedback. “Chicagoans love to support local emerging brands,” Sherman says. And for the question on everyone’s minds: Is the drink named after Udegbue himself? “We did some initial brainstorming and just kept coming back to Liquid Confidence,” Sherman says with a laugh. “It’s such a fantastic story to tell when people are sampling the product, because he’s right there in front of them.”

**FOUNDERS CORNER**

Giving a startup pitch can be nerve-wracking. **Rhetoric** gives founders real-time artificial intelligence feedback on their presentations — think speed, tone, energy and the use of filler words — while also creating a shareable recording for asynchronous critique from mentors and peers. Raman Malik, a founder-in-residence at The Garage, built on his work in data science at Lyft to launch Rhetoric. The startup won first place at the student innovation incubator’s 2021 Jumpstart Demo Day.

**INVENTION**

**Rosalind**

Julius Lucks, a professor of chemical and biological engineering, along with postdoctoral fellow Khalid Alam and doctoral candidate Kirsten Jung, created a device to test water for 17 different contaminants. The technology, nicknamed ROSALIND in honor of DNA pioneer Rosalind Franklin, can assess water safety and quality with just a single drop. Using “molecular taste buds,” when the test detects a contaminant, it glows green.

**INNOVATION**

**Rosalind’s powerful and programmable genetic circuits can sense whether or not contaminants are present as well as detect contamination levels. The number of tubes that glow depend upon how much contamination is present.**
Donor Gifts Honor President Schapiro’s Legacy
Alumni and friends are recognizing the president’s service to Northwestern through their philanthropy.

In just a few months, Morton Schapiro will step down as president of Northwestern after 13 years at the helm. During President Schapiro’s tenure, the Evanston and Chicago campuses were transformed by more than 50 major construction projects and the creation of 17 new research institutes and centers. One of the most successful fundraising campaigns in the history of higher education, We Will, The Campaign for Northwestern stands among

his greatest accomplishments. (Turn to page 28 for more about Schapiro’s presidency.)

In recognition of the president’s dedicated service to and impact on Northwestern, alumni and friends have made gifts toward several areas of the University in his honor.

Under President Schapiro’s leadership, Northwestern made a strategic commitment to enhance the student experience by creating campus community. The University opened a new student residence hall at 560 Lincoln Street as part of this effort. Now, in honor of President Schapiro and his wife, Mimi, and their exemplary support for undergraduates, Northwestern will rename the building Schapiro Hall.

More than 60 trustees and their families have contributed to fundraising for the residence hall, led by Board of Trustees Chair Lanny Martin ’68, ’73 JD. The gifts will fund the maintenance and renovation of common spaces and programs for the building’s residents.

“For Morty, students have always come first,” Martin says. “Throughout his tenure, he continued to teach several undergraduate courses, and he and Mimi hosted more than 10,000 students at their home for dinner. Naming Schapiro Hall in their honor is a fitting tribute.”

The Schapiros also are known for their enthusiastic support for Jewish student life on campus. Because of this, Jonathan and Patti Kraft made a gift to name the Schapiro Executive Director of Northwestern Hillel position in their honor. Michael Simon, who became executive director of Northwestern Hillel in 2010, is the inaugural holder of the named position.

“By providing Jewish and non-Jewish students alike with opportunities to learn about and celebrate Jewish heritage, Northwestern Hillel epitomizes what has been so special about Morty’s leadership,” Jonathan Kraft says. “Patti and I are honored that Morty and Mimi allowed us to recognize their legacy with this gift.”

Carol ’64 and Larry Levy ’66, ’67 MBA also decided to honor President Schapiro with a gift benefiting students — specifically, entrepreneurs at the Kellogg School of Management. The Levy’s support will complement the work of the Levy Institute for Entrepreneurial Practice, which the couple established, and enhance students’ personalized journeys by providing funding for career treks and apprenticeships. The gift will bolster the development of Kellogg’s founder-centered approach under David Schonthal ’09 MBA, director of the Levy Institute.

“Carol and I are delighted to celebrate President Schapiro’s remarkable impact and dedication to the student experience by making this gift to create new, hands-on programming that is so important to our students’ entrepreneurial growth,” Larry Levy says.

Other families have made generous gifts to the University in honor of President Schapiro as well.

Underscoring President Schapiro’s commitment to financial aid and research, the Melchiorre family contributed to the Celeste Lizio Endowed Scholarship Fund, created the Melchiorre CFAAR Endowed Fund to advance research and education in the Center for Food Allergy & Asthma Research at Feinberg School of Medicine, and gave to the Morton and Mimi Schapiro Endowed Fund.

And in recognition of President Schapiro’s dedication to the student-athlete experience, Trustee Eric Gleacher ’62 and Paula Gleacher created an endowed fund to support the competitive excellence of Northwestern Athletics’ golf programs. It is President Schapiro’s legacy as an economist and educator that inspired the Patrick G. ’59, ’09 H and Shirley W. Ryan ’61, ’19 H Family to make their most recent gift to the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences. The Ryan Family’s support for the Center for Applied Economics will allow the University to expand its leadership in research and education in this critical field of study by fueling the recruitment and retention of top scholars and funding best-in-class data research teams. The center will be named in President Schapiro’s honor.

“Northwestern strives to be excellent in everything that it does, and our economics programs are a shining example, with world-renowned economists like Morty himself conducting research and educating the next generation,” Pat Ryan says. “Our family is grateful for the Schapiros’ many contributions to Northwestern, which have helped the University to lead in a number of areas.”

+$560 Lincoln will be renamed Schapiro Hall later this year.

+$ Students gather annually to celebrate Hanukkah at Northwestern Hillel.

+$ David Schonthal helps student entrepreneurs successfully launch or acquire new businesses.
**Computer Science**

**Professors Named for First Woman to Lead IBM**

The Ginni Rometty Professorships of Computer Science will bolster Northwestern’s artificial intelligence and machine learning programs.

Tech giant IBM has made a generous gift to endow two computer science professorships in Northwestern's McCormick School of Engineering in honor of Virginia M. “Ginni” Rometty ’79, ’81 H, the first woman to lead the company. Rometty, who is vice chair of the University's Board of Trustees, retired as executive chairman of IBM in December 2020 after working her way up from systems engineer to president and chief executive officer. Her career at the company spanned nearly 40 years. The two Ginni Rometty Professorships of Computer Science will support research and teaching related to artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning. They also align with Northwestern Engineering’s Computer Science Transformation Initiative, which launched in 2016 as part of a plan to hire 20 new faculty members.

“I cannot think of a better role model for our students and faculty than Ginni Rometty,” says Julio M. Ottino, Northwestern Engineering dean. “She has been a trailblazer in her field and has served as a valuable adviser and friend to the McCormick School of Engineering.”

The first Ginni Rometty Professorship is held by Jessica Hullman, associate professor of computer science and journalism. The second professorship, or chair, will fund the hire of a senior scholar who has attained distinction in AI and/or machine learning, with a preference for candidates who have demonstrated a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion.

“Jessica Hullman is an outstanding inaugural recipient of the chair,” Ottino says. “Her pioneering work in uncertainty visualization and modeling of how people interact with data-driven predictions, is key to ensuring that AI and machine learning can reach human users in ways that are both easily understood and actionable.” Hullman, who joined Northwestern in 2018, is a researcher whose work addresses the design and evaluation of software interfaces that let people interact with data-driven models and predictions, combining techniques from interactive visualization, statistics and mathematical models of cognition.

This latest gift from IBM follows its previous support of the University, which included in-kind gifts of analytic software and cloud computing resources to the Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications and equipment to Feinberg School of Medicine. The professorships are supported in part by alumni Patrick C. ’59, ’69 H and Shirley W. Ryan ’46, ’49 H through the Ryan Family Chair Challenge, which matched gifts made by other Northwestern supporters to establish new endowed professorships across a wide range of disciplines.

Rometty’s passion for innovation is matched by her passion for education, making the professorships a fitting tribute. At IBM she was known as a champion of AI and a trailblazer for skills-based learning for the digital age. She also advanced IBM’s diversity and inclusion initiatives.

“I am deeply grateful to IBM and Northwestern University, which have had such a profound impact on my life, for this honor,” Rometty says. “Developing trusted, responsible and inclusive artificial intelligence is a central challenge of our time. Northwestern’s commitment to this endeavor is clear and inspiring, as evident by its Computer Science Transformation Initiative. It is a privilege to have my name associated with these distinguished professorships and the outstanding educators who will hold them.”

“Developing trusted, responsible and inclusive artificial intelligence is a central challenge of our time.”

— Ginni Rometty

**Student Experience**

**A New Generation of Scientists**

The SciHigh Summer Program breaks down barriers for Chicago high school students.

Louis A. Simpson ’88 was a big believer in giving everyone access to education. Prior to his death in January, he spent two decades building a philanthropic legacy at Northwestern. Simpson and his wife, fellow University Trustee Kimberly E. Querrey, supported fields ranging from biomedical research to athletics and recreation. He also was committed to empowering aspiring scientists. (Read Simpson’s obituary on page 70.)

In 2018 the University’s George M. O’Brien Kidney Research Core Center, known as NU Goldkiney, launched the SciHigh Summer Program — a paid, seven-week internship for rising juniors and seniors at Chicago high schools. The program was founded to help students from under-represented backgrounds unleash their untapped potential and develop the confidence and skills to succeed in STEM fields. It provides interactive learning opportunities and mentorship designed to foster growth, self-discovery and wonder in a range of topics in science and medicine. Sessions are led by experienced researchers and physician-scientists, post-docs and medical students.

Simpson and Querrey endowed SciHigh in 2019. Their support has allowed the program to nearly triple in size. “The next great breakthroughs in medicine and science depend upon the future workforce,” says NU Goldkiney Chair Susan Quaggin, the Charles H. Mayo, MD, Professor and chief of nephrology and hypertension at Feinberg School of Medicine. “The graduates of the SciHigh program, my team and I will be forever grateful to Lou and Kimberly for their incredible generosity, compassion and commitment to social and health care justice.”

Last summer students worked in teams to research topics such as the effect of food insecurity on chronic kidney disease. They also received medical school-level instruction at Northwestern Simulation’s Innovations Laboratory and attended virtual sessions on research development and presentation best practices as well.

SciHigh gave high school junior Mia Mendoza insight into what a career in science could look like. “I learned very valuable lessons about the resources that will help me on my own professional and educational journey,” says Mendoza, who dreams of becoming an ophthalmologist or orthopedic surgeon.

SciHigh is modeled after Northwestern Medicine’s Pulmonary and Critical Care Summer Research Program — created by Scott Budinger ’88, chief of pulmonary and critical care, and co-managed by Karen Ridge, professor of medicine — which provides high school juniors and seniors who are interested in the biological sciences with intensive research training. Simpson and Querrey endowed the pulmonary program in 2018.

**2021 SciHigh Stats**

- 6 Chicago high schools partnered with SciHigh
- 13 students made up the summer cohort
- 55 hours of training were completed by each intern

**The 2021 SciHigh cohort with Susan Quaggin, far right**
Vctoria Peek, a college student from small-town Indiana, first knew she was transgender when she was 6 years old, before she even had words for it. “I always thought something went wrong, that God had made a mistake,” Peek recalls. “I am supposed to be a girl,” she remembers thinking to herself. “I thought I must be the only person that this has ever happened to and that no one would believe me.”

Peek kept this a secret for many years. When she was 15, she got up the courage to write her mom a letter explaining that she was trans. She slipped the letter into her mom’s suitcase before her mom left for an anniversary trip with Peek’s stepdad. As it turned out, Peek had nothing to worry about: “She read it, called me, and we cried for a long time. We talked about it for an hour, and she just said, ‘I love you so much,’” Peek says, a smile breaking across her face.

When she returned home, Peek’s mom put in hours of research to find a health care facility that could help Peek with her transition. Options for trans health care were extremely limited in their region. Finally, Peek and her mom found the gender and sex development clinic at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago. “I was getting to a point where my life was so unbearable — but Lurie [Children’s] changed that for me,” Peek says, beaming with gratitude as she reflects on her experience. “They were like my family for three years.”

Peek connected with a team of doctors who coordinated her care seamlessly. She received testosterone blockers and hormone therapy to help with her transition. As she got older, Lurie Children’s referred her to Northwestern Medicine’s Gender Pathways Program, a health program for trans and gender nonbinary adults where Peek underwent several gender-affirming surgeries.

“Every day, I wake up and I am so much happier than I was a year and a half ago, when I was pre-op, struggling with body dysmorphia daily,” says Peek, now a 19-year-old first-year student and the first trans woman to be part of the Kappa Delta sorority at Purdue University. “My life is so much easier and happier and better overall.”
In an ideal world, Peek’s health care experience would be the norm. But most LGBTQIA individuals face challenges when trying to access high-quality care. Nearly 56% of lesbian, gay and bisexual people report experiencing discrimination from a health care provider, including being refused care or enduring verbal or physical abuse, according to a 2009 health care fairness survey by Lambda Legal, the first national survey on the issue. That figure jumps to 70% for transgender and gender-nonconforming people and nearly 63% for those living with HIV. Although the Affordable Care Act prohibits federally funded health institutions from discriminating against people based on gender identity, sex and sex stereotypes, many states do not have similar laws in place, leaving gaps in legal protections. Recent studies show that these forms of discrimination are ongoing.

“When we think of how the world is structured and who it’s been made for, it’s not LGBTQIA people,” says Lauren R. Beach, research assistant professor in the Department of Medical Social Sciences at Feinberg School of Medicine and a core faculty member of Northwestern’s Institute for Sexual and Gender Minority Health and Wellbeing (ISGMH). Beach studies chronic physical health conditions across diverse sexual and gender minority (SSGM) populations and people with HIV. (See “An Inclusive Glossary” above.)

“I think about barriers to care in multiple levels: structural, interpersonal, and individual,” says Beach. For example, you may not receive sex education in school that applies to you. You may lack health insurance, or your insurance company may refuse to cover the cost of gender-affirming care. Your medical chart and paperwork may not use inclusive language. Your doctor may misgender you or may lack expertise about SGM health.

Such roadblocks reflect prevailing societal stigmas and ultimately take a toll on the well-being of SGM populations.

“If you have experienced discrimination from one health provider in the past, you are less likely to want to seek care in the future,” Beach explains. All of these factors have contributed to stark health disparities.

“There’s been tremendous progress in the social standing of the sexual and gender minority community in the last decade,” says Brian Mustanski ’99, professor of medical social sciences, psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Feinberg and director of ISGMH. “But we also have to remember that it wasn’t that long ago that people didn’t even come out because being gay or lesbian was extremely stigmatized.”

That stigma and fear, he explains, have made it difficult not only for SGM populations to be included in health studies but also for researchers and health professionals to pursue careers focused on studying these communities. This dearth of research has contributed to the lack of high-quality health care as well.

Mustanski set out to change that when he founded ISGMH in 2015, leveraging the partnerships he’d built with other University researchers and with LGBTQIA health organizations in Chicago. ISGMH has become a research powerhouse, conducting groundbreaking studies about the health of SGM communities and developing interventions to improve health care quality and access in Chicagoland and across the country.

With 13 full-time faculty dedicated to research and implementation science, ISGMH is one of the largest university-wide research institutes in the nation focused exclusively on SGM populations and one of the top recipients of funding from the National Institutes of Health for SGM health research. Its faculty and staff serve as advisers not only to others at the University but also to federal and local agencies (such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Chicago Department of Public Health), community organizations (such as Center on Halsted and Howard Brown Health) and other institutions across the U.S. that seek to improve SGM health and well-being.

“We’ve put a stake in the ground by creating a space where people can have successful careers doing this work and can be proud of research with the LGBTQ community,” says Mustanski, who has studied SGM communities for about 20 years.

Now, in partnership with Northwestern Medicine, Lurie Children’s and many other community organizations, Northwestern faculty and staff are leading the way on SGM health research — and translating their findings into interventions that can help close the health equity gap.

One of the fundamental problems in addressing health inequities is that public health surveys and hospitals and research centers often do not collect data that inclusively identifies SGM populations. Without information on people’s sex, sexual orientation and gender identity — what’s known as SSOGI data — it can be especially difficult to understand how these minority groups are affected by public health risks such as COVID-19.

When asked how such a widespread, foundational problem might be resolved, Beach gives an unassuming reply: “We change the law.”

Beach is part of a large coalition of public health experts, clinicians and community health organizations (such as AIDS Foundation Chicago and Equality Illinois) that came together to help pass Illinois Senate Bill 2133 into law in August 2021. Sponsored by Sen. Mike Simmons, the first openly gay member of the Illinois Senate, the law requires all state agencies, hospitals and major programs to collect SSOGI data and establishes a new state agency that will compile and maintain a SSOGI database.

“Every day, I wake up and I am so much happier than I was a year and a half ago, when I was pre-op, struggling with body dysmorphia daily.”

— Vyectoria Peek

**HEALTH DISPARITIES**

Sexual and gender minority (SSGM) populations of all ages in the U.S. are at higher risk for certain health conditions and have poorer health outcomes than those who do not identify as SGM.

- Transgender and nonbinary people experience higher rates of heart disease in transgender and nonbinary people.
- Lesbian, gay and bisexual adults are more likely to be cigarette smokers compared with heterosexual adults.

**AN INCLUSIVE GLOSSARY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SGM</td>
<td>Sexual and gender minority. This acronym is meant to be an all-encompassing term to include people who identify as LGBTQIA, Two-Spirit (a term used by Indigenous peoples), gender-fluid or nonbinary, as well as those whose sexual orientation, gender identity or expression or reproductive development falls outside of binary social constructs of sex, sexual orientation and gender.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSOGI</td>
<td>Sexual and gender orientation and identity, referring to data that is often collected via public health surveys and by hospitals and research centers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBTQIA</td>
<td>Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, sexual/asexual.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jordan got her start in gender-affirming care as a Feinberg resident and the first gender-affirming surgical patient. “Dr. Jordan is so passionate about her work and her patients and the trust community in general that I felt completely comfortable putting my trust in her,” Peek says.

Piecing together a care team on one’s own, without the support of a program like Gender Pathways, can be extremely challenging. “Trans folks have been charged with being experts in our own care and scrapbooking together our own care system,” says Ricky Hill, a research assistant professor at Feinberg who conducts qualitative research on SGM communities at ISGMH and has served as an adviser and advocate for Gender Pathways. “It can be a nightmare,” Hill says. “It’s hard for me to navigate the managed care system, and I’m highly specialized and skilled to do this. So imagine how hard it is for the average person.”

Gender Pathways helps alleviate that challenge. “The anxiety of walking into a doctor’s office not knowing whether or not the doctor is going to be affirming it is a big deal,” Jordan says. “We give patients reassurance that we’ve talked to these doctors, and they’re going to be in good hands.”

Jordan has witnessed the program’s effectiveness. “I definitely see it in my patients,” she says. “They are much more comfortable just being in our office. And after surgery, patients are so much happier.”

Peek, for one, is living her best life thanks in part to her Northwestern team. She’s studying fashion marketing and plans to participate in a six-month program at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City. “I am so lucky—I have the most supportive family and friends ever,” she says. “I have an older brother who’s protective of his transgender little sister, and we’re best friends. It just warms my heart.”

“You’re just living my life, trying to be like every other normal college student — and having an amazing time.” — Diana Bahinenu, writer and editor in Northwestern’s Office of Global Marketing and Communications.

“We’ve put a stake in the ground by creating a space where people can have successful careers doing this work and can be proud of research with the LGBTQ community.” — Brian Mustanski, founder of ISGMH
In 13 years as Northwestern University president, Morty Schapiro transformed the campuses, expanded international opportunities and supported faculty research — all while diversifying the student population.

BY ALAN K. CUBBAGE
The Jewish faith encourages followers to strive to improve the world through their actions. For President Morton Schapiro, that principle has guided his four-decade career in higher education, including the past 13 years at the helm of Northwestern.

“My faith has always been the foundation for my personal and professional life,” Schapiro says. “And one of the principles from my Jewish tradition that I most cherish is tikun olam [Hebrew for “repair the world”], which implores me to never stop reflecting, listening, learning and trying. I may not succeed at times, but the goals are constant.”

Working toward those goals exemplifies Schapiro’s tenure as Northwestern’s 16th president. When he steps down this summer, he leaves a university that has been transformed. During his tenure, research activity soared, the number of students increased dramatically, the University’s fundraising reached record levels, Northwestern expanded its global footprint, and new buildings changed the face of the University’s campuses.

The University also faced financial challenges and several controversies, as well as an unprecedented pandemic. But, thanks to Schapiro’s leadership, Northwestern now stands as an internationally recognized research powerhouse that attracts top students and faculty from all over the world.

A FIRST-NAME PRESIDENT

As soon as he arrived at Northwestern in 2009 from his post as president of Williams College, Schapiro began engaging with students on their own turf, from fireside conversations in residence halls to meals at fraternity and sorority houses.

“Morty is an undergraduate student president,” says Julie Payne-Kirchmeier, vice president for student affairs. “He wants to be with the students in their environments. When they have access to a president in a casual setting, it helps students feel heard.”

Schapiro’s self-deprecating humor and quick wit instantly made him a popular and approachable figure. He and his wife, Mimi, opened their Evanston home to students, inviting them over for dinners with faculty and distinguished guests. Over the course of his tenure, he estimates that as many as 10,000 students dined with them at their home.

Nolan Robinson ’21 had dinner with the Schapiros and guests at least 10 times as a student, and several times he was invited to deliver “the dessert speech,” including during a visit by U.S. Rep. Adam Schiff in October 2019.

“When he introduced me that night, Morty said, ‘Nolan is a filmmaker, an actor, a dancer — and he really has become part of the family.’ That touched my heart,” says Robinson, who has an album of selfies from the many times he has put on shaking hands, making connections. … It’s like he’s the mayor.

“Morty’s done so much for the school, he just delivers,” says Gracie, who birthed a baby at a Thrice Greater birth center. "And throughout her pregnancy, I’ve seen herつなる."
CHANGING THE FACE OF — AND FACES ON — CAMPUS

The new and renovated buildings on Northwestern campuses are an obvious sign of transformation, but perhaps a more important change is the increased diversity of the student body — a change spurred on by Schapiro’s commitment to make higher education more accessible.

“Access to and affordability of higher education is my academic field,” says Schapiro, a professor of economics at the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences. “When I got here, we didn’t give as much aid as our peer institutions, and that was a barrier for potential students. I wanted to take that limitation off the table.”

Carol Lee says Schapiro had a plan — and the confidence — to address this problem from the start. “I served on the committee that vetted candidates for the presidency in 2009,” says Lee, a professor emeritus at the School of Education and Social Policy. “We asked all candidates how they thought about addressing the challenges of enhancing diversity at the University. Everyone talked about how hard it was.

“When we asked Morty, he looked at us and smiled. At that time he was president of Williams College. ‘Addressing diversity is not a big deal to accomplish,’ he said... That sold me on Morty. And when he arrived as president, one of his first initiatives was to build relationships and support for students from Chicago Public Schools to come to Northwestern.”

On Schapiro’s watch, the University significantly increased financial aid for undergraduate students and eliminated loans in financial aid packages for undergraduates.

“It was critically important to provide the resources to recruit students who traditionally were not considering Northwestern — first-generation college students, Chicago Public Schools students, underrepresented minorities,” says Christopher Watson, associate vice president of student outreach and dean of undergraduate enrollment. “President Schapiro saw that and committed the resources to recruit and enroll those students.”

MORTY MOMENTS

“Whether he’s teaching a class, conducting his academic research or expanding the Northwestern community, Morty is focused on moving the University to the next level,” says Bob McQuinn, vice president for alumni relations and development. “Morty’s legacy will clearly include repositioning Northwestern as a destination for the most talented students, regardless of their family’s financial circumstances, as well as building the global reputation of the University.”

Northwestern is now a national leader among selective universities in enrolling and retaining first-generation and low-income students, including those who qualify for the Federal Pell Grant. At the same time, the median ACT and SAT scores of the entering class increased throughout Schapiro’s tenure, and applications soared as Northwestern changed from a school that often was a second choice for the very best students to one that is now among the most sought-after universities in the country by those students.

MORTY IN THE CLASSROOM

Even with the never-ending demands on a president’s time, Schapiro has maintained his economics research and teaching at Northwestern. “I like interacting with students in a variety of settings, particularly in a classroom,” Schapiro says. “Having a class where you’re engaged in a lively discussion, exchanging ideas and opinions, is when higher education is truly exciting.”

In his previous roles as president of Williams and dean of the College of Letters, Arts and Sciences at the University of Southern California, Schapiro also found time to teach. And his enthusiasm for teaching is infectious.

“I have never met a teacher as inspiring as Morty, and he makes it look so easy,” says professor Gary Saul Morson, who has co-taught a popular undergraduate course with Schapiro for the past decade. The course, Alternatives: Modeling Choice Across the Disciplines, explores the intersections of literature, economics and a variety of other disciplines — and is always fully enrolled.

“Morty’s students learn not only the subject matter and how to reexamine their own most cherished ideas but also what the life of the mind really is,” says Morson, the Lawrence B. Dumas Professor of the Arts and Humanities and professor of Slavic languages and literatures at Weinberg College. “Years later, students write to say, ‘That was when I realized how much fun it can be to play with ideas.’”

Schapiro co-wrote two books and co-edited a third with Morson and collaborated with other colleagues on commentaries, articles and essays that have appeared in numerous publications.

“His energy as a scholar is apparently boundless,” says David Figlio, dean of the School of Education and Social Policy (and soon-to-be provost of the University of Rochester). “Whenever Morty goes on ‘vacation,’ the new text and analysis come flying toward me at breathtaking speed. I even had to admonish him once when he called me from the beach in Maui to discuss edits.”

Schapiro, who holds faculty appointments at Weinberg College, the Kellogg School of Management and the School of Education and Social Policy, has taught an upper-level economics seminar and is a regular guest lecturer in engineering, law, marketing communications and education classes, including Figlio’s Economics of the University course.

“It’s very rewarding for a president to continue to do research and to stay in the classroom,” Schapiro says. “Doing so keeps you in touch with faculty and students in ways that you wouldn’t otherwise be able to do.

“That might just make you a better leader, which benefits the University. But even if it doesn’t, I would do it anyway for the sake of my sanity.”
**Morty Moments**

“My favorite memory of Morty was his role in a 2017 memorial for Sanford ‘Sandy’ Sacks ’56 in Manhattan,” recalls William “Willie” Weisbahn ’82, ’83 MS, an ESPN producer and writer. “Under normal circumstances, Morty’s participation wouldn’t have been unusual. After all, Sandy was a Wildcat nonpareil as a student and alum. But this was extraordinary, as Morty had come from Salt Lake City, where the ‘Cats were in the NCAA men’s basketball March Madness for the first time.

To pay his respects, Morty — Northwestern athletics’ biggest presidential fan ever — missed the epic second-round game against powerhouse Gonzaga. Morty’s uplifting remarks were the ultimate honor. I sat beside him as a fellow eulogist, and when I tearfully whispered thanks, he said there was nothing about where he would be that day.”

President Schapiro accompanies football team captains to a pregame coin toss.

From his first fall on campus, when he opted to watch football games from the sidelines rather than the Ryan Field skybox, Schapiro has been a vocal supporter. “There is no more passionate Wildcats fan than Morty, and his belief in our students is unmatched,” says Pat Fitzgerald ’97, director of Northwestern Athletics. “There is no more passionate Wildcats fan than Morty, and his belief in our students is unmatched,” says Pat Fitzgerald ’97, director of Northwestern Athletics. “Under normal circumstances, Morty’s participation wouldn’t have been unusual. After all, Sandy was a Wildcat nonpareil as a student and alum. But this was extraordinary, as Morty had come from Salt Lake City, where the ‘Cats were in the NCAA men’s basketball March Madness for the first time.

To pay his respects, Morty — Northwestern athletics’ biggest presidential fan ever — missed the epic second-round game against powerhouse Gonzaga. Morty’s uplifting remarks were the ultimate honor. I sat beside him as a fellow eulogist, and when I tearfully whispered thanks, he said there was nothing about where he would be that day.”

Reflecting on his tenure, Schapiro explains, “That Morty is not an adventurous eater, and he won’t eat many of the things that he insists students and friends must try. “Once, in a fancy restaurant, the chef came out and started giving us the menu. And I laughed, thinking, ‘There is nothing here that Morty is going to eat.’ So, we all had a fabulous meal — except Morty. He just derives pleasure from everyone else’s enjoyment of a global experience.”

Cheering on the 'Cats

In his first few weeks at Northwestern in fall 2009, Schapiro — an enthusiastic Wildcat backer — dropped by a field hockey game.

“He was on our sideline,” recalls head coach Tracey Fuchs, “and my assistant asked me if I wanted her to move ‘that guy’ to the other side of the field. I laughed and said, ‘No, that’s our president!’”

Field hockey team won the NCAA title last fall, and Wildcats also won individual national championships in wrestling and diving.

Northwestern student-athletes’ success extends to the classroom. According to the NCAA’s 2020–21 Graduation Success Rate (GSR) data (a long-term assessment of student-athletes’ academic success), Northwestern scored a 98% GSR, which ranks second among the institutions and best in the Big Ten.

“I’ve had the privilege to work for the best university president in higher education,” Fitzgerald says. “The transformational past decade for Northwestern Athletics and Recreation simply would not have been possible without his unwavering support, leadership and vision.”

Facing Challenges

All university presidents deal with controversies, and Schapiro is no exception. During his tenure, Northwestern experienced faculty members engaging in inappropriate relationships with students, football players seeking to unionize, a reexamination of the problematic history of University founder John Evans and allegations of sexual assault at fraternities. Those issues and others, and the University’s response to them, drew attention and criticism from students, faculty, alumni and the public.

In fall 2020 a number of students engaged in off-campus demonstrations. Following student protest, Schapiro responded by sending an email to the campus community criticizing some of the demonstrators’ actions and characterizing some of the language and actions used as antisemitic. Some felt the response exacerbated the problem rather than easing it. In response, Schapiro and other senior leaders held a series of listening sessions with students, faculty, staff and alumni and then stepped up efforts to follow through on social justice commitments.

Northwestern also endured a financial crisis in 2017–18, when the University found itself facing a multimillion-dollar budget deficit. As a result, more than 80 staff members were laid off — the first layoffs in more than 40 years — budgets were reduced, a temporary hiring freeze was implemented, and Northwestern had to withdraw more money than usual from its endowment earnings in order to balance the budget. However, the fiscal restructuring brought the University back to a stable financial status within two years. And while the University weathered the pandemic better than many other institutions, COVID-19 resulted in significant additional expenses and required similar cost-cutting measures.

When asked if he regretted how he handled some of the controversies, Schapiro was philosophical. “There are always things you say and do and write that could have been better,” he says. “I just try to learn and not make the same mistakes twice.”

Through it all, Schapiro has remained grounded, says Michael Simon, executive director of Northwestern Hillel. “Morty Schapiro has been a courageous leader, called by his tradition to do the right thing, and providing an inspiring example for a generation of Northwestern students and alumni.”

Every Shabbat, Schapiro recites a prayer that reads: “For human community, our common past and future hope, our oneness transcending all separation, our capacity to work for peace and justice in the midst of hostility and oppression.”

“While it’s in the Hebrew prayer book, it was written down by a rabbi or Jewish biblical scholar. That prayer comes from a poem written by a Unitarian minister, reminding me once again that healing the world, building peace and justice, is a universal precept,” says Schapiro, who encourages his students to engage at Northwestern and focused on faith and humanity at the annual Baccalaureate Service. For the past four years Schapiro remains modest about his success in leading Northwestern. “I just hope that when people look back at my presidency, they think, ‘That’s the person I’m worth being mentioned in the same breath as Henry Bienen [‘09 H] and Arnie Weber [‘95 H],’” says Schapiro. “They did an unbelievable job setting the stage for me and this university, and I hope that I did the same for my successor. I’ve had a good run, and it’s worked out well. I think things are in good shape for the next president.”

Alan K. Cubbage ’78 MS, ’87 MS served as Northwestern’s vice president for university relations for more than 20 years. He wrote, “Trained in a University: Northwestern in the New Millennium.”

**More Morty Learn about Schapiro’s efforts to improve relations with Evanston and read more “Morty Moments.” See alummag.nu/morty.**

**COLLECTING KUDOS**

In the past 13 years Northwestern faculty and students and the University as a whole have gained increasing recognition. Here are a few examples:

2 Nobel Prizes awarded to Northwestern faculty — to Sir Fraser Stoddart, the Board of Trustee Professor of Chemistry, in 2016, and to Dale Mortensen, a former professor of economics, in 2009.

200+ Students and alumni awarded Fulbright grants in the past 10 years, the sixth-most among all U.S. universities.

No. 9 Northwestern has been ranked among the top 10 U.S. universities for undergraduate education by U.S. News & World Report for the past four years.

No. 70 Northwestern faculty memberships in the National Academies of Sciences, Medicine, Engineering and Education.

**FACING CHALLENGES**

Northwestern also endured a financial crisis in 2017–18, when the University found itself facing a multimillion-dollar budget deficit. As a result, more than 80 staff members were laid off — the first layoffs in more than 40 years — budgets were reduced, a temporary hiring freeze was implemented, and Northwestern had to withdraw more money than usual from its endowment earnings in order to balance the budget. However, the fiscal restructuring brought the University back to a stable financial status within two years. And while the University weathered the pandemic better than many other institutions, COVID-19 resulted in significant additional expenses and required similar cost-cutting measures.

When asked if he regretted how he handled some of the controversies, Schapiro was philosophical. “There are always things you say and do and write that could have been better,” he says. “I just try to learn and not make the same mistakes twice.”

Through it all, Schapiro has remained grounded, says Michael Simon, executive director of Northwestern Hillel. “Morty Schapiro has been a courageous leader, called by his tradition to do the right thing, and providing an inspiring example for a generation of Northwestern students and alumni.”

Every Shabbat, Schapiro recites a prayer that reads: “For human community, our common past and future hope, our oneness transcending all separation, our capacity to work for peace and justice in the midst of hostility and oppression.”

“While it’s in the Hebrew prayer book, it was written down by a rabbi or Jewish biblical scholar. That prayer comes from a poem written by a Unitarian minister, reminding me once again that healing the world, building peace and justice, is a universal precept,” says Schapiro, who encourages his students to engage at Northwestern and focused on faith and humanity at the annual Baccalaureate Service. For the past four years Schapiro remains modest about his success in leading Northwestern. “I just hope that when people look back at my presidency, they think, ‘That’s the person I’m worth being mentioned in the same breath as Henry Bienen [‘09 H] and Arnie Weber [‘95 H],’” says Schapiro. “They did an unbelievable job setting the stage for me and this university, and I hope that I did the same for my successor. I’ve had a good run, and it’s worked out well. I think things are in good shape for the next president.”

Alan K. Cubbage ’78 MS, ’87 MS served as Northwestern’s vice president for university relations for more than 20 years. He wrote, “Trained in a University: Northwestern in the New Millennium.”

**More Morty Learn about Schapiro’s efforts to improve relations with Evanston and read more “Morty Moments.” See alummag.nu/morty.**
Are You Listening?

Northwestern journalists stand out in the exploding podcast industry by telling important and immersive stories.

BY CLARE MILLIKEN
I

n the 4,000-person town of Austin, Ind., addiction to an opioid painkiller led to the largest HIV outbreak in the state’s history. The drug, called Opana, was linked to more than 200 cases of HIV in the southern Indiana town.

“Why are people doing this particular drug?” Kelly McEvers ’97 MS asks in the first episode of Embedded, a podcast that dives deep into issues in the news. “Why are they sharing needles? What is this drug?”

During the half-hour episode, McEvers introduces Clyde, whose son is in a drug rehab facility. Jeff, a veteran who became addicted to Opana after returning home from Iraq, says, a nurse whose addiction began after a back injury; and Devin and Samantha, an HIV-positive couple with a plan to move into recovery.

Listeners learn what these individuals’ lives were like before Opana. They hear about the social, financial and emotional impact of addiction, and what withdrawal feels like.

By the end of the story, McEvers realizes that people who are addicted to opioids can’t just quit on their own. She wants listeners to have that takeaway too.

“You want people to have empathy,” McEvers says. “My goal was for listeners to understand that opioid addiction is hard, that it messes with your brain, that it shouldn’t be criminalized, that we need to help people medically for a medical condition. That’s what I learned in the reporting, and that’s what I wanted everyone else to learn.”

As a former foreign correspondent and daily news radio host for NPR, and now host and executive producer of Embedded, McEvers wants you to feel like you’re sitting on her shoulder.

“I am a storyteller for the listener. So how do I make them feel like they’re in the middle of this?” she asks. “And if I can make them feel like they’re standing right where I am, then they will give a shit about what’s going on, right?”

McEvers’ ability to bring listeners into a story made her a natural fit for a transition from radio to narrative nonfiction podcasting.

These highly produced podcasts incorporate interviews, narration and sound editing into immersive, intimate audio stories. Unlike interview-based podcasts like Conan O’Brien Needs A Friend or political commentary podcasts like Pod Save America, narrative nonfiction podcasts are similar to documentary films, story-drivers and McEvers says, audio leaves something to the imagination.

“You hold back enough that your mind has to work to fill in the blanks,” she says. “You’re only hearing words and sounds, and so your brain has to fill in the image. I love that so much — that the person who’s listening completes the story themselves.”

McEvers is among the Northwestern alumni who are applying their journalism training to narrative nonfiction podcasting. Whether they’re transporting us to faraway places, helping us understand all sides of a complex situation or digging into a single story to shed light on broader social issues, these alumni are delivering diverse, compelling experiences straight to your earbuds.

“Audio holds back enough that your mind has to work to fill in the blanks. ... I love it so much — that the person who’s listening completes the story themselves.”

WE’RE ALL EARS

41% Share of the U.S. population age 12 and older who listened to at least one podcast in a given month last year, up from 9% in 2008

80 million People who listened to a podcast in the past week in 2021

1.7 million+ Podcasts available at the beginning of last year

$2 billion Projected advertising revenue for U.S. podcasts by 2023

In a given month last year, 41% of the U.S. population age 12 and older listened to at least one podcast, up from 9% in 2008, according to Edison Research, and 28% listened to a podcast in the past week, compared with 7% in 2013. And there’s no shortage of podcasts to choose from: According to Nielsen, there were more than 1.7 million podcasts at the start of 2021.

Some of the biggest media companies are getting in on the action. In 2019, Spotify paid a reported $230 million to acquire podcast company Gimlet Media. The following year, SiriusXM bought podcast platform Stitcher — an acquisition valued at up to $325 million — and in 2021 Amazon acquired podcast network Wondery in a deal valued at a reported $300 million.

Celebrities are paying attention too. Jason Bateman, Brie Larson and Meghan Markle ’13 are involved with podcast projects. Even Barack Obama ‘06 H and Bruce Springsteen teamed up last year for an eight-episode podcast series.

The appeal of podcasts is multifaceted, says Neil Verma, an assistant professor of radio/TV/film in the School of Communication who taught McEvers and has stayed in touch with her throughout her career.

As a former foreign correspondent and now host and executive producer of Embedded, McEvers wants listeners to have that takeaway too. “My goal was for listeners to feel like they’re sitting on her shoulder. Embedded is the story they complete,” she says. “We want people to have empathy.”

“I had all kinds of crazy tricks,” she says. “Counting was one of my favorites. I could say, ‘Five tanks just rolled by;’ or, ‘Oh my God, oh my God, here come the tanks. One, two, three, four, five.’”

“Part of the theater is acting it out. I want you thinking, ‘Holy shit, what does it feel like to be a prisoner when your own government’s tanks roll in to attack you?’ Give me five seconds to feel that.”

Embedded is now in its 11th season, having covered such disparate topics as homelessness and policing, coal country, and the 2018 mass shooting at the Capitol Gazette. The Capitol Gazette season was named by The Atlantic as one of the best podcasts of 2021. This spring Embedded is diving into police reform in Yonkers, N.Y., where the police force is under U.S. Department of Justice oversight.
PODCAST PICKS

Kelly McEvers, James Edwards and Antonia Cereijido share some of their favorite podcast series.

Kelly McEvers

This American Life: A weekly show focused on a single theme each week.

Serial: An investigative podcast from the creators of This American Life. “There’s nobody better in the business, period, than This American Life and Serial.”

Floodlines: A series about Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath. “Masterfully, wonderfully great. I would love to know everything about how they made this.”

James Edwards

Bear Brook: A podcast about a cold case in New Hampshire. “Might be the best true-crime podcast I’ve ever listened to.”

Moonface: A fictional show about a Korean American man struggling to come out to his mom. “I don’t listen to a lot of audio fiction, so I’m glad I was lucky to find my way to this one. Really beautiful storytelling.”

Antonia Cereijido

The Turning: The Sisters Who Left: A podcast about the Missionaries of Charity, “A complicated look at Mother Teresa.”

Louder: A show about the history of reggaeton. “Ivy Queen is a perfect host. This series is thoughtful, epic and makes you want to dance.”

Despite his initial reservations about hosting a podcast, particularly during a pandemic, Edwards soon came to embrace the role. “With Unresolved, it was really different [from my previous in-person podcast work] because it was all remote. It was just me in my closet with my laptop and microphone,” says Edwards, who moved to Boston just weeks before the city shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic. “We would ship out microphones to folks and walk them through the setup. I was worried, going in, that we were going to lose the intimacy of the conversations, but after the first couple interviews, it was just like having a phone call with somebody. A lot of those interviews ended up going two or three hours.”

During the series, Edwards speaks with Emma Jean Jackson, whose brother Jimmie Lee Jackson was killed by police in 1965. Jackson describes growing up with Jimmie Lee — who some refer to as the first martyr of the voting rights movement — in segregated Marion, Ala. In another episode, listeners meet Cordero Ducksworth, who was 5 years old when his father, Roman Ducksworth Jr., was killed at a bus station on his way home to his pregnant wife.

Throughout the podcast, listeners hear Edwards reflect on these conversations and connect them to his own lived experience.

“I think about all that’s changed, and all that hasn’t,” Edwards says in the third episode. “I even think back to when I was in school … and how I usually never had more than one or two white classmates until I got to college … where for the first time I was in the minority.”

Born and raised on Chicago’s South Side, Edwards was steeped in radio from an early age. “Chicago is a place where the DJs are celebrities,” he says. “Herb Kent on WYON [1690 AM] and Tom Joyner on WGCJ [105.7 FM].” At Medill, Edwards honed his investigative skills, taking an urban reporting class with former Chicago Tribune columnist John McCarron ’70, ’73 MS, which Edwards says “opened me up to the urban affairs, policy-driven journalism that I was really passionate about.”

At WBEZ, Edwards worked as lead producer on 16 Shots, a critically acclaimed podcast that covered the shooting of Chicago teenager Laquan McDonald and the subsequent murder trial of Chicago police officer Jason Van Dyke. A collaboration between WBEZ and the Chicago Tribune, 16 Shots was, for Edwards, an opportunity to widen the lens and tell the stories surrounding the shooting.

“We would be a fly on the wall,” Edwards says of producing the 2019 series. “We went out to this nightclub called the 50 Yard Line for the episode about steppin’ [a form of partner dance with roots in Chicago]. This is a Monday night, and we were there for four or five hours, just talking to people: ‘How long have you been steppin’? What brings you here?’”

“It’s cool to have that time and space. Being able to have these conversations at length, it’s just a joy for me.”

“We’re seeing a diverse crop of podcasters who are tackling subjects and issues and stories that feel really relevant. I think that’s so exciting.”
THE NEW GUARD

Northwestern students are eager to get in on the podcasting fun, and the University is responding to that demand. In addition to audio reporting courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, the Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications also offers podcast-specific courses, including a narrative podcasting course just launched this spring.

“I think many students see [podcasting] as an opportunity to extend their reporting to new spaces,” says journalist and Medill lecturer Arriana Nettles ’16 MS, who teaches both audio reporting and podcasting, WBEZ reporter and Chicago Sun-Times columnist and adjunct lecturer Natalie Moore ’99 MS also teaches audio reporting at Medill.

SOUND MAKERS

Podcasting has been a key part of the School of Communication’s Sound Arts and Industries graduate program since it was created six years ago, says radio/TV/film professor and program co-founder and director Jacob Smith.

“There are many folks who are interested in music production and sound design,” Smith says, “but then there’s also a growing cohort of very podcast-specific students who love the storytelling and social engagement that’s happening through podcasting.”

SKILL BUILDERS

At the undergraduate level, the School of Communication offers a sound design minor, which Smith says is being reimagined to address the growing interest in podcasting.

“Our students are going to move from one medium to another throughout their careers. That’s what we want to prepare them for,” says radio/TV/film assistant professor Neil Smith.

“Their projects often aren’t strictly about one topic but then could probe things to see whether they would hold up to an episode or a segment.”

Cereijido was most drawn to multifaceted stories — stories that were ostensibly about one topic but then could be probed deeper to illuminate all the intersectional issues.

“I love a true-crime podcast. But so often they don’t go the extra step to think about issues like wrongful incarceration, overpolicing or the politics of the moment,” she says. “I think all of those things really add to the story. I think you miss out on a lot of important context if you’re not thinking from those perspectives.”

Anything for Selena blends personal narrative with an exploration of the life and legacy of American performer Selena Quintanilla-Pérez, the “queen of Tejano music” who was murdered in 1995. Hosted by Selena superfans and journalist Maria Garcia, the show’s nine episodes examine issues of race, body politics, language and the history of Tejano music, among other topics.

“One of the things I loved about Anything for Selena is that it took the concept of pop stardom seriously,” says Cereijido, who co-produced the series and wrote two of the episodes. “What are pop stars if not a reflection of us? They don’t make themselves; we make them.”

Cereijido moved into hosting in 2021 with Norco ’80, a true-crime podcast based on a book by Peter Houlahan. Over eight episodes, the podcast tells the action-packed story — and aftermath — of an attempted bank robbery in Southern California in the 1980s. Billed as “part caper, part human drama, part cautionary tale,” the series explores hot-button issues around law enforcement, guns, survivalism and economic uncertainty.

In the second episode, Cereijido interviews Deputy Sheriff Andrew Delgado-Monti, who discusses the racism he faced within his own department.

He recalls one incident when one of his fellow deputies called him derogatory names while their colleagues looked on.

“That squabble might have seemed unimportant in another person’s telling of that story,” Cereijido says. “But to me, it was very indicative of the dynamics inside the department. When you’re able to tell a story about one thing but then show all the [other] dynamics — that, to me, is thrilling.”

Now the executive producer at Los Angeles’ LAX/KPCC, one of the largest public radio stations in the country, Cereijido oversees more than eight podcast projects. Among those, she is producing a podcast in partnership with the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures in Los Angeles. Each season of Academy Museum is based on an exhibit in the museum, with the first season — released in March — focused on the Academy Awards ceremony. In each episode, former Northwestern associate professor Jacqueline Stewart, the museum’s chief artistic and programming officer and a 2021 MacArthur Fellow, examines a different year at the Oscars “and the stories behind the scenes that illuminate what we were dealing with as a country at the time,” Cereijido says.

As the number of podcasters grows, Cereijido says, attracting increasingly segmented audiences becomes more challenging. Even so, she is encouraged.

“Ira Glass and Jad Abumrad [creators of This American Life and Radiolab, respectively] did a very cool thing by taking audio stories and making them cinematic pieces on their own,” Cereijido says. “That’s what got me into radio. And I think that now we’re seeing a diverse crop of podcasters who are tackling subjects and issues and stories that feel really relevant. I think that’s so exciting.”

Clare Milliken is senior writer and producer in Northwestern’s Office of Global Marketing and Communications.

Alumni

A SELFIE OF SORTS

“A SELFIE OF SORTS

“I’m the one in the Speed Queen dryer,” says Diana C. Mutz ’84. “And I still hate laundry!” Mutz captured this image as part of the Syllabus yearbook’s self-portrait project.

Keep Listening: Curious to hear one of James Edwards’ ambitious podcasting projects? Or what Antonia Cereijido considers a great privilege of her work? Hear from our podcasting alums. Visit alummag.nu/podcasts.

THE NEW GUARD

Northwestern students are eager to get in on the podcasting fun, and the University is responding to that demand. In addition to audio reporting courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, the Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications also offers podcast-specific courses, including a narrative podcasting course just launched this spring.

“I think many students see [podcasting] as an opportunity to extend their reporting to new spaces,” says journalist and Medill lecturer Arriana Nettles ’16 MS, who teaches both audio reporting and podcasting, WBEZ reporter and Chicago Sun-Times columnist and adjunct lecturer Natalie Moore ’99 MS also teaches audio reporting at Medill.

SOUND MAKERS

Podcasting has been a key part of the School of Communication’s Sound Arts and Industries graduate program since it was created six years ago, says radio/TV/film professor and program co-founder and director Jacob Smith.

“There are many folks who are interested in music production and sound design,” Smith says, “but then there’s also a growing cohort of very podcast-specific students who love the storytelling and social engagement that’s happening through podcasting.”

SKILL BUILDERS

At the undergraduate level, the School of Communication offers a sound design minor, which Smith says is being reimagined to address the growing interest in podcasting.

“Our students are going to move from one medium to another throughout their careers. That’s what we want to prepare them for,” says radio/TV/film assistant professor Neil Smith.

“Their projects often aren’t strictly about one topic but then could probe things to see whether they would hold up to an episode or a segment.”

Cereijido was most drawn to multifaceted stories — stories that were ostensibly about one topic but then could be probed deeper to illuminate all the intersectional issues.

“I love a true-crime podcast. But so often they don’t go the extra step to think about issues like wrongful incarceration, overpolicing or the politics of the moment,” she says. “I think all of those things really add to the story. I think you miss out on a lot of important context if you’re not thinking from those perspectives.”

Anything for Selena blends personal narrative with an exploration of the life and legacy of American performer Selena Quintanilla-Pérez, the “queen of Tejano music” who was murdered in 1995. Hosted by Selena superfans and journalist Maria Garcia, the show’s nine episodes examine issues of race, body politics, language and the history of Tejano music, among other topics.

“One of the things I loved about Anything for Selena is that it took the concept of pop stardom seriously,” says Cereijido, who co-produced the series and wrote two of the episodes. “What are pop stars if not a reflection of us? They don’t make themselves; we make them.”

Cereijido moved into hosting in 2021 with Norco ’80, a true-crime podcast based on a book by Peter Houlahan. Over eight episodes, the podcast tells the action-packed story — and aftermath — of an attempted bank robbery in Southern California in the 1980s. Billed as “part caper, part human drama, part cautionary tale,” the series explores hot-button issues around law enforcement, guns, survivalism and economic uncertainty.

In the second episode, Cereijido interviews Deputy Sheriff Andrew Delgado-Monti, who discusses the racism he faced within his own department.

He recalls one incident when one of his fellow deputies called him derogatory names while their colleagues looked on.

“That squabble might have seemed unimportant in another person’s telling of that story,” Cereijido says. “But to me, it was very indicative of the dynamics inside the department. When you’re able to tell a story about one thing but then show all the [other] dynamics — that, to me, is thrilling.”

Now the executive producer at Los Angeles’ LAX/KPCC, one of the largest public radio stations in the country, Cereijido oversees more than eight podcast projects. Among those, she is producing a podcast in partnership with the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures in Los Angeles. Each season of Academy Museum is based on an exhibit in the museum, with the first season — released in March — focused on the Academy Awards ceremony. In each episode, former Northwestern associate professor Jacqueline Stewart, the museum’s chief artistic and programming officer and a 2021 MacArthur Fellow, examines a different year at the Oscars “and the stories behind the scenes that illuminate what we were dealing with as a country at the time,” Cereijido says.

As the number of podcasters grows, Cereijido says, attracting increasingly segmented audiences becomes more challenging. Even so, she is encouraged.

“Ira Glass and Jad Abumrad [creators of This American Life and Radiolab, respectively] did a very cool thing by taking audio stories and making them cinematic pieces on their own,” Cereijido says. “That’s what got me into radio. And I think that now we’re seeing a diverse crop of podcasters who are tackling subjects and issues and stories that feel really relevant. I think that’s so exciting.”

Clare Milliken is senior writer and producer in Northwestern’s Office of Global Marketing and Communications.

Alumni

A SELFIE OF SORTS

“I’m the one in the Speed Queen dryer,” says Diana C. Mutz ’84. “And I still hate laundry!” Mutz captured this image as part of the Syllabus yearbook’s self-portrait project.

Keep Listening: Curious to hear one of James Edwards’ ambitious podcasting projects? Or what Antonia Cereijido considers a great privilege of her work? Hear from our podcasting alums. Visit alummag.nu/podcasts.
In baseball, three hits out of 10 at-bats is elite. Does a similar ratio for comedy writing get demoralizing? Once you’ve failed enough, it’s extremely empowering. When you first start out you think, “What if I say something and nobody laughs? Then I die?” Once that happens a few times and you’re still alive, you realize, “Oh, this is a whole emperor’s new clothes situation.”

Now I’m also the head writer at The Amber Ruffin Show, and I always say when we hire a writer, “I do not care if every pitch of yours is funny, I do care that you are trying.” I just care that we’re all taking swings because eventually something will connect.

How do you balance your jobs at both Late Night and The Amber Ruffin Show? They work different parts of my brain. At Late Night I write as many jokes as I can and set them free like a baby bird from the nest and hope they fly. Then at Amber’s show I get to think big picture. Do these five sketches create a well-balanced show? What order should they go in? I still get to write jokes, but it’s neat to be part of comedy problem solving.

I also get to help other writers revise. I like when a writer brings in a sketch that’s three-fourths of the way there, and I can tell what they’re trying to say and help them say it more clearly.

How does Seth Meyers respond to your jokes? Either he laughs or he doesn’t. But when he does, the moment is so well-balanced with his voice, delivery, and comic timing, that it’s a great feeling. He sees the potential in your joke, which is really empowering. I wish I could write like him, and I will continue to try every day.

When you first start out, it’s extremely empowering. When you first start out you think, “What if I say something and nobody laughs? Then I die?” Once that happens a few times and you’re still alive, you realize, “Oh, this is a whole emperor’s new clothes situation.”

Now I’m also the head writer at The Amber Ruffin Show, and I always say when we hire a writer, “I do not care if every pitch of yours is funny, I do care that you are trying.” I just care that we’re all taking swings because eventually something will connect.

What does Seth Meyers mean when he says “Please give me more?” Does he mean please give me more jokes or more of my personality?

I think he means please give me more of your personality. People love the people who make their shows, and the more of us you show in your jokes, the better. Seth is always very encouraging and supportive of our writing. He makes us feel like we’re part of a team.

What part of your routine at Late Night is the most fun?

I love writing and performing jokes. I love the adrenaline rush of putting a joke on television. I love the feeling of delivering a joke to a live audience and getting instant feedback. I love the sense of accomplishment when a joke works.

What is the most challenging thing about writing jokes for Seth Meyers?

The most challenging thing about writing jokes for Seth Meyers is finding the funny in failure. Seth has a great sense of humor and is able to find the funny in even the most difficult situations. He is always willing to try new things and take risks, which makes it fun to work with him.

How do you balance your jobs at both Late Night and The Amber Ruffin Show? They work different parts of my brain. At Late Night I write as many jokes as I can and set them free like a baby bird from the nest and hope they fly. Then at Amber’s show I get to think big picture. Do these five sketches create a well-balanced show? What order should they go in? I still get to write jokes, but it’s neat to be part of comedy problem solving.

I also get to help other writers revise. I like when a writer brings in a sketch that’s three-fourths of the way there, and I can tell what they’re trying to say and help them say it more clearly.

What do you enjoy about being a part of Late Night and The Amber Ruffin Show?

I love the adrenaline rush of putting a joke on television. I love the feeling of delivering a joke to a live audience and getting instant feedback. I love the sense of accomplishment when a joke works.

What is the most challenging thing about writing jokes for Seth Meyers?

The most challenging thing about writing jokes for Seth Meyers is finding the funny in failure. Seth has a great sense of humor and is able to find the funny in even the most difficult situations. He is always willing to try new things and take risks, which makes it fun to work with him.

What is the most challenging thing about writing jokes for Seth Meyers?

The most challenging thing about writing jokes for Seth Meyers is finding the funny in failure. Seth has a great sense of humor and is able to find the funny in even the most difficult situations. He is always willing to try new things and take risks, which makes it fun to work with him.

How do you balance your jobs at both Late Night and The Amber Ruffin Show? They work different parts of my brain. At Late Night I write as many jokes as I can and set them free like a baby bird from the nest and hope they fly. Then at Amber’s show I get to think big picture. Do these five sketches create a well-balanced show? What order should they go in? I still get to write jokes, but it’s neat to be part of comedy problem solving.

I also get to help other writers revise. I like when a writer brings in a sketch that’s three-fourths of the way there, and I can tell what they’re trying to say and help them say it more clearly.

What do you enjoy about being a part of Late Night and The Amber Ruffin Show?

I love the adrenaline rush of putting a joke on television. I love the feeling of delivering a joke to a live audience and getting instant feedback. I love the sense of accomplishment when a joke works.

What is the most challenging thing about writing jokes for Seth Meyers?

The most challenging thing about writing jokes for Seth Meyers is finding the funny in failure. Seth has a great sense of humor and is able to find the funny in even the most difficult situations. He is always willing to try new things and take risks, which makes it fun to work with him.

What is the most challenging thing about writing jokes for Seth Meyers?

The most challenging thing about writing jokes for Seth Meyers is finding the funny in failure. Seth has a great sense of humor and is able to find the funny in even the most difficult situations. He is always willing to try new things and take risks, which makes it fun to work with him.

How do you balance your jobs at both Late Night and The Amber Ruffin Show? They work different parts of my brain. At Late Night I write as many jokes as I can and set them free like a baby bird from the nest and hope they fly. Then at Amber’s show I get to think big picture. Do these five sketches create a well-balanced show? What order should they go in? I still get to write jokes, but it’s neat to be part of comedy problem solving.

I also get to help other writers revise. I like when a writer brings in a sketch that’s three-fourths of the way there, and I can tell what they’re trying to say and help them say it more clearly.

What do you enjoy about being a part of Late Night and The Amber Ruffin Show?

I love the adrenaline rush of putting a joke on television. I love the feeling of delivering a joke to a live audience and getting instant feedback. I love the sense of accomplishment when a joke works.

What is the most challenging thing about writing jokes for Seth Meyers?

The most challenging thing about writing jokes for Seth Meyers is finding the funny in failure. Seth has a great sense of humor and is able to find the funny in even the most difficult situations. He is always willing to try new things and take risks, which makes it fun to work with him.

What is the most challenging thing about writing jokes for Seth Meyers?

The most challenging thing about writing jokes for Seth Meyers is finding the funny in failure. Seth has a great sense of humor and is able to find the funny in even the most difficult situations. He is always willing to try new things and take risks, which makes it fun to work with him.

How do you balance your jobs at both Late Night and The Amber Ruffin Show? They work different parts of my brain. At Late Night I write as many jokes as I can and set them free like a baby bird from the nest and hope they fly. Then at Amber’s show I get to think big picture. Do these five sketches create a well-balanced show? What order should they go in? I still get to write jokes, but it’s neat to be part of comedy problem solving.

I also get to help other writers revise. I like when a writer brings in a sketch that’s three-fourths of the way there, and I can tell what they’re trying to say and help them say it more clearly.

What do you enjoy about being a part of Late Night and The Amber Ruffin Show?

I love the adrenaline rush of putting a joke on television. I love the feeling of delivering a joke to a live audience and getting instant feedback. I love the sense of accomplishment when a joke works.

What is the most challenging thing about writing jokes for Seth Meyers?

The most challenging thing about writing jokes for Seth Meyers is finding the funny in failure. Seth has a great sense of humor and is able to find the funny in even the most difficult situations. He is always willing to try new things and take risks, which makes it fun to work with him.

What is the most challenging thing about writing jokes for Seth Meyers?

The most challenging thing about writing jokes for Seth Meyers is finding the funny in failure. Seth has a great sense of humor and is able to find the funny in even the most difficult situations. He is always willing to try new things and take risks, which makes it fun to work with him.

How do you balance your jobs at both Late Night and The Amber Ruffin Show? They work different parts of my brain. At Late Night I write as many jokes as I can and set them free like a baby bird from the nest and hope they fly. Then at Amber’s show I get to think big picture. Do these five sketches create a well-balanced show? What order should they go in? I still get to write jokes, but it’s neat to be part of comedy problem solving.

I also get to help other writers revise. I like when a writer brings in a sketch that’s three-fourths of the way there, and I can tell what they’re trying to say and help them say it more clearly.

What do you enjoy about being a part of Late Night and The Amber Ruffin Show?

I love the adrenaline rush of putting a joke on television. I love the feeling of delivering a joke to a live audience and getting instant feedback. I love the sense of accomplishment when a joke works.

What is the most challenging thing about writing jokes for Seth Meyers?

The most challenging thing about writing jokes for Seth Meyers is finding the funny in failure. Seth has a great sense of humor and is able to find the funny in even the most difficult situations. He is always willing to try new things and take risks, which makes it fun to work with him.

What is the most challenging thing about writing jokes for Seth Meyers?

The most challenging thing about writing jokes for Seth Meyers is finding the funny in failure. Seth has a great sense of humor and is able to find the funny in even the most difficult situations. He is always willing to try new things and take risks, which makes it fun to work with him.

How do you balance your jobs at both Late Night and The Amber Ruffin Show? They work different parts of my brain. At Late Night I write as many jokes as I can and set them free like a baby bird from the nest and hope they fly. Then at Amber’s show I get to think big picture. Do these five sketches create a well-balanced show? What order should they go in? I still get to write jokes, but it’s neat to be part of comedy problem solving.

I also get to help other writers revise. I like when a writer brings in a sketch that’s three-fourths of the way there, and I can tell what they’re trying to say and help them say it more clearly.
Looking ‘Pritty’ Coming-of-age film showcases radical acceptance.

A year out of Northwestern, Keith Miller ’10 was working at a youth mentoring program and moonlighting as a model in New York City when he wrote a manuscript focused on Jay, a queer African American young man coming of age in the Deep South in the early 2000s.

Now that manuscript is the basis for an animated short film, Pritty, and a two-book deal with Harper Collins. Miller has completed the first novel in the series. And after a Kickstarter campaign that raised more than $115,000 in spring 2021, Miller worked with filmmaker Terrance Daye and Powerhouse Animation Studios on the 20-minute rough animatic, the final step before having the film animated.

Miller also studied Race, Gender and Society as he talked about taboos topics, from homosexuality to gender politics. “I remember looking over my shoulder like, ‘Is someone gonna come in? Can she say that?’”

Miller came to Northwestern from Savannah, Ga., as a Gates Millennium Scholar, intending to major in chemistry. “But I ended up going on this interesting journey,” says Miller, who double-majored in dance and gender and sexuality studies. “I remember being blown away in [professor emeritus] Nicola Bleis’ Gender and Society class as she talked 

Smart Startup

A Better Cranial Drill

At just 22 years old, Casey Grage ’19 became CEO of a startup set on revolutionizing neurosurgery. As an undergraduate, Grage earned a spot in N1Vention Medical, a graduate-level course offered through the Farley Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation that challenges students to solve problems faced by physicians. Grage’s company, Hubly Surgical, and together they invented the Hubly drill, an instrument that Grage says offers key advantages over conventional drills used to gain access to the brain in cases of stroke, aneurysm, trauma or other emergencies.

About the hit documentary Tiger King — would go viral.

“I did a sketch where I imitated different celebrities and characters auditioning to play [animal rights activist and Tiger King star] Carole Baskin,” Arnold says. “I did a bunch of impressions of people saying ‘Hey, all you cool cats and kittens’ — just that one line — and that did pretty well.”

“Pretty well” is putting it mildly. Arnold’s video got hundreds of thousands of likes. “I started doing more impression videos, and it just skyrocketed,” he says. Arnold now has about 2.2 million followers on TikTok. His videos range from quick puns or impressions — some as short as 8 seconds — to random musings about life. In one video he asks, “Hey, why are there no cute conspiracy theories? All conspiracy theories are way too intense; they’re like, ‘The Earth is flat!’ or ‘The elections are rigged!’ … I would love it if someone tried to convince me that Aztec invented the cannon!”

Arnold also develops sketch series that touch on social issues. One series, for example, compares shopping for women’s clothing to a demonic form of torture. The idea came to him when he was trying to buy women’s leggings online for a Halloween costume and became frustrated by the inaccurate sizing. “The more I looked into it, the more it seemed confusing by design,” he says. In the video, he plays the role of a “fiendish, Colleen-like dude thinking up ways to make shopping for clothes more difficult for women.”

Arnold took the opportunity to use his platform to promote brands that defy these common fashion pitfalls, doing branded posts for Stag, a clothing brand that is women-owned, women-run and environmentally friendly.

While he can’t deny that he’s now a “TikToker,” Arnold does not want to be pigeonholed. “I just want to be thought of as a good stand-up comic, that’s all.”

Read more at alummag.nu /abkarlarnold.
To read about a real kombucha cocktail, see page 16. And for a look back on “The Morty Years,” see page 28.

The Northwestern Alumni Association is developing bolder and more innovative ways to inspire all alumni through programs that spark lifelong growth and connection with each other and the University. We're proud to share the core values that guide these efforts.

- **inclusivity**: We build communities where all alumni feel welcome, represented, and valued.
- **connection**: We bring alumni together, bridging interests, geographies, and cultures.
- **innovation**: We continuously explore new paths for enrichment and engagement.
- **collaboration**: We work together, recognizing each other’s unique strengths and perspectives.
- **curiosity**: We embrace lifelong learning, creative exploration, and lively discussion.
1.7 million

The number of podcasts available at the beginning of 2021. Find out how Northwestern alumni are leading the podcast explosion. Turn to page 36.