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Knowledge Stream
Once upon a time, Hillman Library was a quiet cloister, primarily dedicated to solitary reading, research, and study. Not anymore. Instead, Pitt’s library system is leading the way in reimagining what’s possible in today’s evolving world of learning and scholarship.
—By Sally Ann Flecker

The Phoenix Vessel
Can living arteries arise from a synthetic polymer? That’s a question being explored by a small team of graduate students and faculty. The Pitt Innovation Challenge is helping them—and others—take risks and solve big challenges in health care.
—By Jennie Dorris

Voices of Color
Who decides what art hangs on the walls of galleries and museums—and what do those choices say about our society? A recent campus gallery exhibition, planned and curated by undergraduates, looked for answers.
—Cover story by Ervin Dyer
What’s New?

At work, I typically go online to do research, browse archives, and read source materials. But one afternoon, as we were preparing this issue, I made an actual visit to Hillman Library. I left my office, walked past Heinz Chapel, crossed Schenley Plaza, and entered the ground floor of the University’s central library, one of 14 libraries on the Pittsburgh campus.

I didn’t recognize the place. The last time I studied at Hillman was at least a decade ago. Instead of a hushed setting, people were talking, interacting. It was busy, crowded even. There were clusters of students studying together. There were long tables, full of folks tapping on keyboards in the glow of open laptops. I smelled coffee brewing. Maybe I had, inadvertently, stepped into a giant Starbucks?

But, no. I had entered today’s world of library services, where collaborative study and shared digital tools provide a dynamic—practically rambunctious!—setting for learning. The feature, “Knowledge Stream,” describes this transformed landscape of digital scholarship, arising within top academic libraries like Hillman.

The story doesn’t end there, though, because creativity and collaboration are hallmarks of University-wide enterprise in 2016. “The Phoenix Vessel,” for instance, shows how innovation blossoms when seeded by an entrepreneurial campus environment. The cover story, “Voices of Color,” explores creative enterprise through the lens of a larger national conversation about exclusion and inclusion. And, if you need time to de-stress from such weighty issues, find a cat and read the story on pages 18-19.

The world of Pitt offers something of value for everyone! I invite you to “walk through” these pages and discover what’s new.

Cindy Gill
Editor in Chief
In Deeds and Stories

I want to thank you for the wonderful story in Pitt Magazine (“Legacy Lessons” Spotlight, Fall 2015). It is a great honor to be featured in a magazine dedicated to one’s alma mater. I was especially thrilled to see that the picture included Coach Bob Oravitz, who passed away on 9-26-76, the morning after we defeated Temple at Pitt Stadium 21-7. Coach Oravitz and Coach Majors have been the biggest influences in my life, and I guess it is because they paid attention to the small details of the game, which translated easily to life. I want you to know that all of the ’76 Panthers feel that way about Coach Majors. Although our season of triumph ended long ago, the lessons of that era and time continue through the people we’ve touched since then in deeds and stories.

Carson G. Long
Arts & Sciences ’80
Ashland, Pa.

Unrattled

Very much enjoy reading the articles in Pitt Magazine. One of my favorite departments is the “Now & Then” photographs and captions. However, I take exception with the Fall 2015 caption beneath the photo of Pitt students having a snowball battle while a Pittsburgh Railways PCC streetcar travels eastward in the background. I do not recall any of these streetcars “rattling” anywhere in the city, let alone on Fifth Avenue in Oakland. These cars glided over even the worst of track, and the most you’d hear was a whirring noise as they coasted to a stop. Granted, there was some clattering over special work, where tracks intersected other tracks, but that was about it. I would imagine the writer of the caption never experienced the pleasure of riding this non-fossil fuel powered form of transit.

Matt Barry
General Studies ’91
Munhall, PA

Broccoli for All

I am in Qidong, China working on our next study. I received a raft of nice e-mails about the magazine article (“Bite into Life,” Fall 2015). I am humbled by all of it, but want to express my thanks for the wonderful presentation of the story. I have already shared it with some of my colleagues here at the Qidong Liver Cancer Institute. They appreciate that their efforts are recognized in the United States as well as in China. The “Qidong Story” was also featured on Jiangsu (Province) TV recently, so it has been quite a week for us all—especially on top of our frenetic full days screening hundreds and hundreds of residents for eligibility in the upcoming study. It is still growing season in the fields here. Broccoli is the key crop at the moment and is just being harvested.

Thomas Kensler
Professor of Pharmacology and Chemical Biology
Pitt School of Medicine
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Hope to Share

I read with great interest the article by Pamela Goldsmith entitled “The Hope Maker” (Fall 2015). I am a Pitt alumnus with a PhD in counseling psychology who had the wonderful opportunity in 2000 to produce a film entitled Voices for Peace: Videocases of Jews and Arabs in Israel. This material has been used in political science, sociology, and psychology classes at Metropolitan State University of Denver, and I would love to share it with William Strickland Jr.

Mary Ann (Montgomery) Watson
Education ’69G
Denver, Colo.

Arts and Understanding

I am the founder of Crossing Limits, Inc., which uses poetry and the arts to bring people together who otherwise would not come together. I am interested in what Mr. Strickland is doing (“The Hope Maker,” Fall 2015). I’ve been working with the Muslim community for years and was in the PBS POV film, New Muslim Cool, that took place in Pittsburgh and was released in June 2009. I have maintained my relationships with the Muslim community of Pittsburgh and hope to begin a Pittsburgh chapter of Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom (www.soss.org).

Carol Elkind
Pittsburgh, Pa.
Pitt Works

A new communications campaign emphasizes the many ways in which the University of Pittsburgh has a positive impact on the City of Pittsburgh and the surrounding region. The campaign debuted in January with the posting of billboards and the unveiling of www.difference.pitt.edu. Over the next six months, Pitt will post a variety of billboards in different locations throughout Pittsburgh, reflecting Pitt’s three main objectives: education, research, and service. Social media, a website, newspaper ads, and a print brochure will help share the message.

The campaign’s purpose is to highlight Pitt’s contributions to the greater community, said Senior Vice Chancellor Kathy Humphrey. “We have some of the best professors, researchers, staff, and students in the world here,” she said. “How do we tell that story, and how do people learn about us? That’s what this campaign is about.”

This endeavor is just one aspect of a broader initiative to spread the word about the University, including an electronic advertising campaign in several airports nationwide.
Brain Drama

In 2002, when Bennet Omalu worked as a forensic pathologist in the Allegheny County coroner’s office, he conducted an autopsy on Mike Webster, a former Pittsburgh Steelers star, who died at age 50. Omalu’s findings led to the discovery of chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) in NFL players. The neurodegenerative disease, which significantly interferes with brain functioning, affects those who have suffered repeated head trauma.

In 2009, the article “Game Brain” was published in GQ magazine and brought wider attention to the findings of Omalu, a Pitt alumnus. The author, Jeanne Marie Laskas, a Pitt English professor and director of the University’s Writing Program, went on to write Concussion, published by Random House in November 2015. Her writings inspired the recent Hollywood film of the same name, starring Will Smith, based on the pathologist’s life and research.

In December, Omalu (GSPH ’04)—who is now a pathology professor at the University of California, Davis—was in Pittsburgh to highlight the launch of The Bennet Omalu Foundation, which will fund research and raise awareness surrounding CTE and traumatic brain injuries. Pitt, with its world-class Brain Institute and top neuroscience researchers, will serve as a founding academic affiliate for the foundation. Laskas (A&S ’85G) has been named the foundation’s vice president.

Omalu’s Pittsburgh visit included a ceremony attended by Chancellor Patrick Gallagher and other officials, a private screening of the film, and a panel discussion.

“The University of Pittsburgh and our city is home to Dr. Omalu’s CTE discovery, and we are proud to lead with our research on the understanding, diagnosis, and treatment of brain disease in this important issue,” said Chancellor Gallagher. “Science, however, is one half of the full equation. To spark such a national conversation requires storytellers to work alongside researchers and help translate their findings for a larger audience. At Pitt, we are proud to have both the deep scientific expertise and trained storytellers who help new discoveries make an impact in the public forum—who are able to express the humanity of science.”

—Micaela Corn

Room to Learn

At a royal academy in 15th-century Korea, scholars delivered important lectures and held meaningful ceremonies in the Hall of Enlightenment. Two small rooms hugged the hall on either side, offering space for faculty research and private meetings. This center of academic insight, still in use today, is the inspiration for the design of the newest Nationality Room in the Cathedral of Learning. The Korean Heritage Classroom, which opened in November, resembles the Hall of Enlightenment (“Myeongnyundang”) at South Korea’s Sungkyunkwan University, founded in 1398. Pitt’s Nationality Room depicts three connected rooms with a loftier central room featuring a pair of wooden phoenixes crafted by Korean artisans and inspired by the palace of Korea’s Joseon Dynasty. The classroom is the 30th Nationality Room at Pitt.

GOOD WORD

The Confucius Institute at Pitt has been honored as an Outstanding Global Confucius Institute of the Year, an award given annually to only a few institutes among the more than 510 worldwide. This is the fourth time Pitt’s Confucius Institute has garnered the accolade for excellence in teaching the Mandarin language and Chinese culture to students from kindergarten to college.

GOOD WORD

The University of Pittsburgh is ranked 47 out of 750 universities worldwide on the U.S. News and World Report’s 2015 list of the Best Global Universities, which rated institutions based on factors including global reputation and academic research performance.
Congressman’s Trove

In the 1950s, a Marine Corps veteran and father of three children managed the Johnstown Minute Car Wash, where his staff spiffed up as many as 1,200 vehicles on Saturdays. When he wasn’t at the car wash, he attended classes in Johnstown and, later, Pittsburgh on the GI Bill, ultimately earning a bachelor’s degree in economics in 1961. That father—John P. Murtha—went on to volunteer for service in the Vietnam War, where he became a decorated colonel. Upon his return, he served in Pennsylvania’s House of Representatives and, in 1974, was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, where he served for 36 years. After Murtha died in 2010, his widow, Joyce Murtha, donated his papers to the University of Pittsburgh. The 400 boxes of photos, newspaper clippings, military awards, constituent letters on the Iraq War, and more have been organized by the University Library System. In November, the website of the John P. Murtha Congressional Papers (murtha.pitt.edu) became available to the public, showcasing highlights of the complete archive.

Mind Explorers

Two Pitt neuroscientists have been selected as McKnight Scholars to support their promising exploration of the brain. The prestigious accolade, which includes an annual $75,000 grant for three years, is awarded to scientists in the early stages of establishing independent laboratories and research careers in neuroscience. In the past decade, only two institutions besides Pitt—Columbia and Stanford universities—have had two McKnight Scholars named in the same year.

Susanne Ahmari, a physician and assistant professor of psychiatry, is using new imaging technology and other techniques to identify abnormal neurocognitive functions in patients with obsessive-compulsive disorder. This work may contribute to the development of potential treatments.

Marlene Cohen, assistant professor of neuroscience, is studying how the brain encodes visual information and uses it to guide decisions and actions. She plans to use the grant to test the hypothesis that mechanisms underlying attention involve interactions between cortical areas.

Justice for All

At a White House conference on enhancing public trust in the criminal justice system, law professor David Harris spoke about reducing implicit bias in prosecution. The gathering last fall was part of President Obama’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing. The author of Failed Evidence: Why Law Enforcement Resists Science; Good Cops: The Case for Preventive Policing; and Profiles in Injustice, Harris has influenced the national debate on criminal profiling, leading to federal legislation to address the practice, as well as internal efforts within police departments nationwide. Based on these and other contributions to community and country, Harris was honored in 2015 with a prestigious Jefferson Award for Public Service for exceptional achievement on behalf of communities and the public. The recognition, he says, was humbling and encouraging: “It’s a special privilege to have the opportunity to use what I know and what I do to address problems that affect the lives of so many people.”

Community Cause

Thousands of Pitt students, staff, and faculty fanned across the Pittsburgh region to lend a hand to local nonprofit organizations on Pitt Make a Difference Day during the fall semester. The volunteers repaired homes, gardened, cleaned up litter, and stocked food pantries. More than 3,600 students signed up to volunteer—the highest number since the annual community service event began in 2006.

GOOD WORD

The University of Pittsburgh’s five campuses awarded 10,284 degrees and certificates in 2015 alone. That’s a lot of learning!
**Better Chance for a Cure**

Predictions of which treatments will be the most effective for individuals with cancer may become more accurate through knowledge generated by the Big Data for Better Health project. A Pittsburgh research team is developing methods for integrating, analyzing, and modeling large volumes of diverse data on cancer patients to better predict patient outcomes with funding from a $5 million, three-year Commonwealth Universal Research Enhancement (CURE) grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Health. The project is being led by Gregory Cooper, professor and vice chair of biomedical informatics at Pitt, and Ziv Bar-Joseph, professor of computational biology at Carnegie Mellon University. The collaboration also includes UPMC and the Pittsburgh Supercomputing Center.

—Adam Reger

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**Birthday Suit**

A Pitt law librarian aided a high profile court case about one of America’s most-sung songs. Crooning “Happy Birthday to You” for commercial purposes—say, in a movie or TV show—has long been off-limits unless a fee is paid to Warner/Chappell, the company with copyright ownership of the famous song. That is, until recently, when a team of lawyers in California built a case arguing that no one legally owned the ditty.

It all came down to a printed version of the song that preceded the 1935 copyright date, establishing that the song should have entered the public domain nearly a century ago. Unfortunately, a critical line of text was too blurry to read. But it was soon discovered that the University of Pittsburgh had another, even earlier copy of the song, printed without copyright. Upon the request of plaintiff attorneys, Linda Tashbook, a librarian at Pitt’s School of Law, tracked down the 1927 version and scanned it for use as evidence. In the end, it helped convince a judge that Warner’s claim was invalid—and that “Happy Birthday to You” officially belongs to the public.

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**Artsy Neighborhood**

There’s a new glow in Oakland, just across the street from the neon lights of the Original Hot Dog Shop on Forbes Avenue. The 21st Century Digital Plaza, an outdoor digital art gallery and pedestrian space, is lighting up the corner of Forbes and South Bouquet Street, where video screens and audio speakers are showcasing a kaleidoscope of digital works by local, national, and international artists. The project was sparked into being by the Oakland Business Improvement District with help from Pitt and other local partners.

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**Winning Documentary**

*Ghosts of Amistad: In the Footsteps of the Rebels,* a film by Distinguished Professor of History Marcus Rediker, has been awarded the 2015 John E. O’Connor prize by the American Historical Association (AHA) for the best historical documentary of the year. The award recognizes “outstanding interpretations of history through the medium of film or video,” according to the AHA.
A Pitt professor has been tapped to take the reins of the Latin American Research Review, the journal of the Latin American Studies Association, the largest professional group for individuals and institutions engaged in the study of Latin America. Aníbal Pérez-Liñán, professor of political science and a core faculty member in Pitt’s Center for Latin American Studies, has been named editor-in-chief of the journal, which publishes research on geopolitics, North-South relations, and other topics of inquiry related to the field. “Pitt is a focal point for Latin American studies worldwide and is a natural home for this journal,” Pérez-Liñán said.
On the Air

BY ADAM REGER

A light flashes an electric red on the fourth floor of the William Pitt Union. Inside the master control room, it’s show time at Pitt’s student-run radio station.

“You’re listening to WPTS with DJ Paige, out of my normal time slot, as usual,” says Paige Fosse, broadcasting into the on-air microphone. The junior, with a major in Media and Professional Communication, is also the station’s training director. As she reads the weather—rainy at 11:25 p.m.—four undergrads hoping to become the station’s newest student DJs watch silently as they sit clustered around the control board.

“Maybe we’ll have some rainy music here at WPTS radio,” Fosse says on air. A song starts up as she switches off the microphone.

Then she turns to the student observers. “Now I’m going to log my break,” she says to them, swiveling in her chair to a computer where she types in the time of her mic break—when the disc jockey talks between music sets—and checks a box indicating which announcement she made. The newbies nod, taking it all in.

“If you ever forget, just look around you,” says Fosse. Taped to equipment and pinned beside shelves overflowing with CDs are handwritten reminders about the messages that must be read or played on the air every hour.

“And notice I said the station name at the start of the mic break and again at the end. That’s really important.”

Producing a radio show can be overwhelming, and that’s why WPTS thoroughly trains new DJs before they ever step in front of a mic. Tonight’s broadcasters-in-training have already been through “DJ Essentials,” a classroom training session, and at the end of tonight’s in-studio training they’ll receive the “DJ Bible,” a handbook to help them study for a test they’ll need to pass before broadcasting alone.

There’s a high standard to live up to at WPTS, which first hit the FM airwaves in 1984. Years of radio curated by dedicated Pitt students earned it a reputation as one of the nation’s top University-owned stations. Last March, WPTS was awarded the coveted mtvU “College Radio Woodie.” Bestowed by the college-themed branch of the MTV television network, the award named WPTS 2015’s best university radio station for connecting students to emerging music groups and genres. The award itself, a wooden stump, rests on a shelf behind the station’s front desk.

Fosse, who spends about 25 hours a week at the station, was drawn as a freshman to WPTS by her love of music. “My radio show gave me a new means of expression,” she says, “and a vehicle for sharing the things I love most—favorite songs and artists.” It’s also given her perspective on the music industry, which she could see herself working in, perhaps as a band manager.

As Fosse demonstrates how to use the record players, sophomore Jaimie Barca leans in, craning her neck for a better view. She’s just begun collecting records and expects to play some on the indie/alternative show she’s planning to host on WPTS. But, first, this is definitely going to be on the test.
Hillman Alfresco

BY SARAH POLICE

It’s a sweltering day early in the fall semester, and nowhere on Pitt’s Oakland campus is busier than the stone plaza outside Hillman Library’s first floor. A number of white tents, each flanked by blue and gold balloons, have attracted hundreds of students. Many wait in snaking lines for free hamburgers and hot dogs. Others mill about, chatting and snacking.

Library staff members tend to booths stacked with informational brochures, where undergrads play book-themed games to win prizes. There’s even a tongue-in-cheek selfie station, where students can pose in front of a banner picturing rows of shelved books. “Greetings from Hillman” it reads in big, blue and white text.

It’s the third annual Hillman Alfresco Party on the Plaza, hosted by Pitt’s University Library System, to inform undergraduates about the resources available to them at the University’s biggest library. More than 3,200 students enjoy the afternoon’s festivities, but food and swag aren’t all they walk away with. Dozens of librarians, easily identifiable in blue t-shirts emblazoned with the words “Ask Me,” are available to answer questions, connect students with a library specialist in their subjects of interest, and find new ways to help students succeed in their studies at Pitt and beyond—as they do from inside the library all year round.

Just such a connection occurred when junior Kara Boutselis, majoring in psychology and communications, arrived at Hillman last year in search of a librarian’s assistance on a research project.

Boutselis was excited, but unsure. She had been accepted to the London International Field Studies Program, a two-week interdisciplinary research endeavor, organized by Pitt’s Office of Undergraduate Research, in which undergrads explore a topic of their choosing in England’s capital. A fan of the Harry Potter books, Boutselis decided to focus her project on how elements of British culture are portrayed through literature. She wanted to know whether fictional boarding schools—like the kind depicted in the novels about the boy-wizard—were at all similar to actual boarding schools in the United Kingdom. The trouble was, she didn’t know where to begin.

The Pitt student was put in touch with Clare Withers, Hillman Library’s primary liaison for children’s literature. To prepare for her trip abroad, Boutselis worked with Withers, crafting a plan to tackle the research project. The librarian showed Boutselis how to use the facility’s extensive archives and online databases.

Withers also connected her to a book that would become essential to her project: Tom Brown’s School Days, a novel by Thomas Hughes, set in the 1830s at England’s Rugby School. Once she arrived in rainy London, Boutselis was able to tour the famous institute, interviewing faculty and students and even meeting with Rugby School’s deputy head.

“Clare made herself very accessible to me,” says Boutselis. “She recommended articles, lent me her personal copy of a book, and helped me formulate my proposal.”

With the librarian’s help, Boutselis was able to explore new worlds—both in person and from the horizon-broadening halls of Hillman Library. As another semester begins, Withers and her colleagues remain busy, helping other Pitt students find scholarly success.

Shared Light

BY MICAELA CORN

When the music starts, the dark-haired girl begins to sing.

She’s a seasoned performer of Carnatic music, a genre originating in South India. Her melody, and the entrancing tanpura drone that accompanies it, captivate the audience. Some listeners still hold plates heaped with spicy chakri and kaju barfi, an Indian sweet made of cashews, along with potato latkes and chocolate gelt coins. Glowing menorahs are scattered all around the O’Hara Student Center ballroom. Onstage behind the singer, an overhead screen reads “Happy Diwanukkah!”

This multiethnic array marks the second annual joint celebration of the separate Hindu and Jewish festivals of light, Diwali and Hanukkah. The event, hosted by Pitt’s Hindu Students Council (HSC) and Pittsburgh’s Hillel Jewish University Center (JUC), honors cultural common ground. “We wanted to celebrate our activities together because it provides an outlet for celebrating diversity and unification,” says Pitt senior Reena Naik, president of HSC, who is pursuing Africana, global, and legal studies. The party is also a great way to brighten an early winter evening.

Festivities include music, games, and a smorgasbord of food. Students mingle at a confetti-covered table, practicing their dreidel-spinning skills. Others move to upbeat Indian pop music playing from the speakers. Glittery informational posters pepper the ballroom to explain the traditions and symbolism behind these holi-
days. They show that, in essence, both Diwali and Hanukkah commemorate the triumph of good over evil.

The chatter lulls as Harsh Agarwal of the HSC and Sarah Shaykevich of Hillel JUC take the stage to talk about the stories that inspire these festivals of light. The twinkling chandeliers dim, and animated videos flicker to life on the overhead screen to recount the folklore behind the holidays.

Celebrating these joyous holidays creates the perfect excuse to form connections. “For most of us, we enjoyed the traditions with our families growing up, and no matter how religious we see ourselves, we still want the holidays to feel like something special,” says Meital Rosenberg, vice president of Hillel. Diwanukkah offers a new spin on tradition: the chance to learn, celebrate, and form bonds with students of different backgrounds. “We all have similar struggles and desires as college students,” says Rosenberg, who majors in economics and global studies at Pitt. “Coming together through Diwanukkah has been truly special.”

Ground Work

BY NICK KEPPLER

Five undergrads stroll through Pittsburgh’s East Liberty neighborhood as the surroundings literally change before their eyes. Urban redevelopment is transforming the scene. Looming overhead is a colossal construction crane at work. The beginnings of new apartment buildings rise over the historic business district, offering a modern contrast to the East Liberty Presbyterian Church, whose cross-capped steeple once ruled the local sky.

It might not look like it, but the students are actually in class—an urban studies research seminar taught by Michael Glass. The Pitt professor leads the annual course that takes students off campus to learn how to study the dynamics of local neighborhoods while working with community partners.

Last year’s course explored the nightlife-fueled South Side Flats area, and the conflicts that arise when different groups of people share the same community space. The class worked with Pittsburgh City Council to analyze the attitudes of South Side Flats residents and visitors toward the neighborhood. The results are now helping to inform future policies.

Now, the focus is on East Liberty, where decades of neglect are giving way to revitalization, says Glass. It’s an ideal site for his class to study urban development in real time.

Today, the students’ goals are simply to walk the streets and get a feel for the neighborhood. They’ve just wrapped up a meeting with the rest of their classmates at East Liberty Development, Inc., a community nonprofit that welcomes the students’ efforts to get up-to-date information on resident opinions based on a survey of local households. Meanwhile, the students gain practice in research skills.

Sean O’Connor, a junior majoring in architectural and urban studies, carries a camera as he and his classmates cruise the sidewalk. He stops on a street corner to take a picture while junior Caitriona Daly logs the location using her iPad. She calls up images from a historic database of that same corner, so that the group can see how the block looked decades ago.

“I think we should go into one of the businesses,” proposes classmate Maura Kay, a sophomore majoring in urban studies and political science. The research class is required for the urban studies major, but the neighborhood focus makes the learning real. “It’s an urban studies paradise,” she says.

The students trek through a shoe store and then the Dollar Tree, a discount chain store. Next, they step into Zeke’s, a coffee shop with a young history in the neighborhood. There, a bearded barista greets customers as a few 20-somethings type away on Macs.

The coffee-shop vibe is decidedly different from the nearby shops. Glass says the course’s goal is to expose students to on-the-ground observations, including the gathering of real-time data. “You can read about something in a book, but there is something about field work that changes you,” he says. The students’ work will help transform the neighborhood, too.
Once upon a time,
Hillman Library was
a quiet cloister,
primarily dedicated to
solitary reading, research,
and study.  Not anymore.

Instead, Pitt’s library
system is leading the way
in reimagining what’s
possible in today’s
evolving world of
learning and scholarship.
“Libraries are doing vastly different things than people realize,” says Wisniewski, a web services and communications librarian. “Things that, in the past, would have taken hours or days or weeks of expensive computing time, as well as expensive storage space, can now be done almost instantaneously.”

Pitt is a leader in the recent trend of “library as publisher,” says Deliyannides, and the University is a founding member of the Library Publishing Coalition. “We’re also the first and only North American library to be a member of the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association,” Deliyannides adds. “It is a very valuable place to help set standards and to have a voice.”

Open access removes cost and access barriers so that research—and emerging ideas—can be shared among global communities of scholars and even among the general public. “It’s the underlying principle for all that we do in our publishing activities,” says Deliyannides (A&S ’93, SIS ’87G), who is also director of the library’s Office of Scholarly Communication and Publishing.

The University Library System initially got its feet wet in open-access publishing when creating Pitt’s first global subject-based digital archive. In 2001, the Departments of Philosophy and the History and Philosophy of Science—both consistently ranked among the best in the world—approached Hillman Library to assist in setting up an “electronic repository” to share new research and theoretical manuscripts with other scholars. At the time, the first step of peer review by fellow scholars typically took a year or more before initial ideas and theories were deemed ready to share with a wider scholarly community. A digital repository would enable scholars to timestamp an idea as well as disseminate it rapidly for feedback and critical analysis.

“He was a spectacularly brilliant autumn day—the kind that makes you want to play hooky. But if Hillman Library is missing any patrons to the compelling weather, it’s hard to tell. On the ground floor, clusters of students sit in circles of comfortable chairs, leaning toward each other, conferring about shared class projects. Their discussions are peppered with personal chitchat. Across the room, a whiff of fresh-brewed coffee drifts over from the Cup and Chaucer Café to long wooden tables, equipped with built-in power strips, where students work at their laptops in pairs or alone, but all are engaged in a community of enterprise. Upstairs, the high-tech study rooms are all in use. An ant-farm busyness is everywhere in the five-level building.

The idea of libraries as still, quiet repositories for print books—declining relics of the 20th century—is a miscalculation, says Pitt librarian Jeff Wisniewski. “There was a narrative that went something like this: With the ascendancy of Google, and the ease with which people can access information, libraries were going to become increasingly irrelevant in this digital era.” Instead, he says, business is booming.

In Pitt’s University Library System, more people are coming through the doors now than ever in its history. Last year there were 2.1 million visits throughout the system. The stats for September 2015 cite 30,000—30,000!—visits above the previous September. That increase doesn’t show any signs of abating. And it’s not just because of the on-site coffee bar—although there’s nothing like a little caffeine to grease the wheels of academic endeavor.

Some of the increase in foot traffic has to do with the library’s eagerness to meet the coursework needs of students and their professors. But that’s only a slice of what is happening at Hillman, the University’s largest of 14 libraries. The big story is that in this age of digitization, there’s a transformation going on. Hillman is not only keeping up. It’s leading the way.

“Libraries are doing vastly different things than people realize,” says Wisniewski, a web services and communications librarian. “Things that, in the past, would have taken hours or days or weeks of expensive computing time, as well as expensive storage space, can now be done almost instantaneously.”

In fact, Wisniewski describes this moment as a digital revolution for the library. Fundamentally, the transformation is about connecting people to ideas rather than bytes to bits.

“We are actively seeking partnerships with students, with graduate students, with faculty—all with the goal of trying to apply new tools, techniques, and services to remain indispensable parts of the intellectual life of campus,” says Wisniewski.

The big story is that in this age of digitization, work needs of students and their professors.

In a move that is characteristic of the library’s embrace of the digital era, Tim Deliyannides, head of information technology, and his staff readily ventured into the unknown. They identified a good open-source software platform and got to work, collaborating with the faculty editors to develop a digitally based editorial workflow system with useful tools and features for readers and authors to share research online and to track impact through online metrics.

This early approach to digital publishing not only saved money (by forgoing paper and printing costs), it also increased the potential to reach scholars globally while improving efficiencies through online submissions and vetting.

Word-of-mouth buzz was so positive that Deliyannides started fielding inquiries from journals outside the University, and Hillman now provides this academic publishing service not only nationally but internationally, too.

“We were motivated by the desire to make scholarly research more accessible worldwide,” says Deliyannides. “Now we publish 40 peer-reviewed scholarly journals. We’re growing each year, and we will take applications or proposals from anybody wanting to publish in an open-access format and willing to follow our selection criteria, which include a solid peer-review process and an internationally recognized editorial board.”

What resulted from those initial conversations was the PhilSci Archive, a digital “pre-print” server containing early versions of new work by philosophy of science scholars worldwide. The content is accessible online and widely indexed by major search engines.

The archive set the standard for vetting emerging scholarly work, and it remains highly successful. “It has become the world’s go-to place for preprinted manuscripts in this field,” says Deliyannides. Another shining example
of online scholarly gems is Pitt’s Archive of European Integration. “This now contains almost 50,000 documents,” notes Deliyannides, “and it is the largest online repository of European Union documents outside of Europe. Very heavily used.”

The early successes with online repositories at Pitt for subject-specific communities led to the University’s Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD) program, which offers access to the vast scholarly work produced in graduate and PhD programs. Pitt ETDs now number close to 7,000. That, in turn, was followed by D-Scholarship@Pitt, an institutional repository, meaning that anyone with a current Pitt computer account can upload the fruits of their scholarship—not only articles, but data sets, book sections, video and audio segments, even performances and exhibitions.

These early forays into digital scholarship have paved the way for a culture of innovation in Pitt’s University Library System. “We’re armed with a whole suite of tools, including good supporting technology infrastructure and organizational skills, as well as respect for the content and for the academic process, which really helps us to serve the community,” says Deliyannides.

A clear sign of the times can be found toward the back of Hillman Library’s ground floor. The Digital Scholarship Commons occupies the space where the microform collection used to be. (Don’t worry, inveterate microform users. They’ve been moved, not discarded.) It’s an open space, designed with flexibility so that classes, small groups, and individuals can all work there at the same time.

Situated within the Commons is the office of Digital Scholarship Services (DSS), with a specialty team headed by Aaron Brenner. He joined the library in 2001 in what he calls a “back office” role, building digital collections from the library’s archives and special collections. Today, those collections include Documenting Pitt, Historic Pittsburgh, Audubon’s Birds of America, and many more that are accessible through the library system’s web site at www.library.pitt.edu.

In 2014, Brenner was tapped to do an audit to help the library determine present and future needs to support digital scholarship. Specifically, with all of the changes in the way that people use and access information, what kinds of tools and support would be needed, looking ahead?

So, Brenner went out into the University community to meet with scholars and other researchers across the disciplines—from English to Slavic languages and chemistry to computer science—who were using digital methods in their work.

“We were motivated by the desire to make scholarly research more accessible worldwide,” says Deliyannides. “Now we publish 40 peer-reviewed scholarly journals. We’re growing each year, and we will take applications or proposals from anybody wanting to publish in an open-access format and willing to follow our selection criteria, which include a solid peer-review process and an internationally recognized editorial board.”

What he learned became the white paper that has guided the library forward.

“Libraries were never meant to be just warehouses for books, says Brenner. “They
always had a role in helping to support scholarship, preserving and stewarding culture and cultural memory, supporting all of the systems around publishing and scholarship—classification, indexing, catalogs, literature searching, and scholarly publishing.” Those roles are still relevant in the digital age.

“Now we have faculty whose scholarship involves creating online resources. And those faculty are as interested in having that kind of scholarship preserved and sustained and made accessible as they are their books and their journals,” Brenner adds.

Some of the faculty Brenner surveyed use digital information as their source material for research. Others use digital tools for the analysis of text, data, and images. Some do computer simulation and modeling, creating onscreen visualizations of molecules or disease processes or climate patterns, as part of their research. Still others create products of scholarship that are solely digital. Brenner also learned that many are interested in teaching students to use digital methods, compose digitally, or blend physical and digital resources.

With the storage of print collections occupying a less primary role for libraries at Pitt and elsewhere, the nature of support that libraries and librarians offer has shifted and continues to change. “We have different relationships now with people coming into our space,” says Brenner. For instance, scholars who once focused on research with texts now are likely to have access to those texts online and don’t need to visit the library physically. “But they might still need support in how to organize those texts for analysis or might benefit from guidance on how best to analyze them for their research purposes,” notes Brenner.

Librarians are also getting out of the library to where the work is happening. Hillman’s Digital Scholarship Services group welcomes collaborations that take place outside of the library building, including a recent project to create a regional data portal in partnership with Pitt’s University Center for Social and Urban Research and the city and county governments. The Western Pennsylvania Regional Data Center offers a shared technological and legal infrastructure to make public information easier to access. The center supports research, analysis, decision-making, and community engagement involving regional data.

“That project is a lot like what libraries do—taking information, storing it in a centralized way, making it accessible, taking care of it, describing it,” says Brenner. “But the library is not the center of that project. We have been a part of the project team. And, as a result, we end up working with people who wouldn’t otherwise be walking through our door.”

“Libraries were never meant to be just warehouses for books,” says Brenner. “They always had a role in helping to support scholarship, preserving and stewarding culture and cultural memory, supporting all of the systems around publishing and scholarship—classification, indexing, catalogs, literature searching, and scholarly publishing.” Those roles are still relevant in the digital age.

Langmead also offers a PhD seminar in digital humanities. At the close of her fall 2014 sessions, her students wanted to continue exploring the use of digital tools and techniques, based on what they had just learned. So, Brenner and other DSS team members met with the students and some faculty every Friday for what Langmead describes as a mass student hackathon.

“A hackathon is where people working on different projects and machines come together and work like a community on their separate projects,” says Langmead. “It was an amazing experience where the faculty and the librarians worked together to help a group of very engaged students move their projects forward.”

DSS staff helped the students, for instance, to represent their ideas in digital form, to share their work in progress, and to become proficient with digital tools and strategies.

“Aaron and his team and I actually wrote it up as an informal paper and presented it at a conference last summer,” she adds.

Langmead characterizes Brenner as a very scholarly librarian. “He has done a lot of research on studio-based learning, and he discovered that our students learned a lot,” she says. But, the professor adds, the people who probably learned even more were the other students and faculty who were also working in DSS during the Friday sessions. “It’s an open environment, and there were other people in the space,” says Langmead. “They started asking Aaron about the stuff we were talking about and getting excited about it—which was amazing, because it was in the library.”

It’s a clear sign of exactly how much has changed in this new era of library services and support. Instead of lone individuals studying in isolated silence, today’s Hillman Library is all about the collaborative exchange of ideas and wired scholarship, aided by the latest digital technologies. It is, in fact, an extraordinary hub of activity.

Here, in the end, is how Jeff Wisniewski looks at it: “The library has gone from a place where people simply seek knowledge to a place where knowledge is actively being created.” And that is a revolution indeed.
Chosen
BY LAURA CLARK ROHRER

In a fast-food hangout in the Cathedral of Learning, a student sits with his writing professor talking about...writing. As they had many times during the semester, the two met after class to discuss the craft of fiction.

“But, how do I know if I’m a writer?” the student asks earnestly.

“Writing isn’t something you choose,” answers the professor. “It is something that chooses you. And you’ll either write or you won’t.”

At the time, the student, Philip Beard, was in his second year of law school at Pitt, following in the career footsteps of his father and grandfather. But law school didn’t diminish his love of creative writing. So, while many of his peers supplemented their legal education with business courses, Beard enrolled in a writing workshop with Lewis “Buddy” Nordan, a beloved Pitt writing professor and gifted author. The professor’s influence lingered, even after the student became an attorney.

“Ten years went by after that conversation,” Beard recalls. “I practiced law and didn’t write a single word of fiction. Then, all of a sudden, sitting at my desk in my office, I knew Buddy was right. I knew I needed to write.”

Beard (LAW ’88) scaled back his Pittsburgh law practice and devoted much of his rewarding writing life to his time at the University of Pittsburgh, and to the mentorship of Nordan, who died in 2012. “Ironically,” he says, “I think if I had not been at Pitt Law School, I would never have become a novelist.”

The Perfection Deception
Attempting to be perfect isn’t mentally or physically healthy, says educator and author Jane Bluestein. In The Perfection Deception (Health Communications, Inc.), she outlines the differences between striving for excellence and trying to live up to impossible standards, explores what drives us towards perfection, and offers solutions for finding confidence and happiness in an imperfect world. Bluestein (EDUC ’73, ’74G, ’80G), who says that most people battle perfectionism to some degree, hopes her book “inspires growth and helps people want to move forward.”

—Sarah Police

Across the Aisle
When the military draft ended after the Vietnam War, U.S. Congressman G.V. “Sonny” Montgomery worked to provide an incentive to attract volunteers for military service by creating a new incarnation of the GI Bill, including improved support for postsecondary education and training. Across the Aisle: The Seven-Year Journey of the Historic Montgomery GI Bill (University Press of Mississippi) explores how the congressman and his colleagues transformed the idea into law, enacted in 1987. Based on content created by Montgomery before his 2006 death, the book is coauthored by Daryl Kehrer (CGS ’81) and Michael McGrevey.

—SP

The Brentwood Anthology
Since its formation in 1974, the Pittsburgh Poetry Exchange has connected local wordsmiths through readings, forums, and a monthly open poetry workshop where writers learn from each other. The Brentwood Anthology (Nine Toes Press) is the first compilation of verse produced by workshop participants and features 120 compositions by 22 poets. Edited by Judith R. Robinson (CGS ’80) and Michael Wurster, the collection represents a diverse and vibrant community of writers exploring subjects ranging from the soulfully wistful to the humorously whimsical.

—Laura Clark Rohrer

City of Steel
As a third generation mill worker, Kenneth J. Kobus (ENGR ’85) knows steel. “You could hear it, see it, and smell it. You couldn’t get away from it,” he says, remembering his 44-year career with Jones & Laughlin Steel Corporation’s Pittsburgh Works and U.S. Steel. In City of Steel (Rowman & Littlefield), Kobus delves into more than 20 years of industry research to examine the rise of metal production in Pittsburgh. The book explores how innovative technology and dogged hard work elevated the city to the steel-making capital of the world, a stature that endured for more than 80 years.

—SP
Café Culture


A anthropologist ducks into a small café. She orders a cup of tea and finds a seat on an overstuffed couch. Before long, a large cat saunters toward her from a back room, his tail flicking with contentment. The café regulars know this feline’s schedule well. “His shift just started,” one says with a smile.

The anthropologist, Amanda Robinson, is pursuing a PhD at Pitt. She has passed many afternoons in Japanese cat cafés like this one—but not because she has any special affinity for the animals. Rather, the graduate student has been conducting ethnographical fieldwork for her dissertation on the cat café as a business model, and the role it serves in Japanese society. What she’s discovering sheds light on the dynamics of human culture in Japan and across the world.

Growing up in the Bronx, Robinson observed the larger world through family travel and a love of reading. She was especially fascinated by international folk- and fairytales because of their cultural insights. By age 13, she resolved to become an anthropologist. In high school, Robinson fell in love with Japanese culture through anime and manga, stylized forms of animation and comics. That new curiosity drove her undergraduate ambitions at Cornell University, where she majored in Asian studies and anthropology. Along the way, she became intrigued by how people in various cultures socialize, especially with the rise of Internet social networking. She arrived at Pitt for graduate school, eager to explore online communities.

Then, a casual conversation about the emerging trend of cat cafés changed everything. “I remember thinking, this is something I have not seen before,” Robinson recalls. She wanted to know more about these businesses, where people pay money to spend time around cats in a social setting. These cafés seemed to be a different type of social network, she thought.

Between 2012 and 2014, she spent 18 months in Tokyo, interviewing business owners, employees, and customers from a smattering of Tokyo’s more than 30 cat cafés. Robinson discovered that these places aren’t just about the cuddly creatures—they are about finding a way, in complex modern cultures, to connect with the world and find comfort.

In the 1990s, Japan experienced deep economic turmoil, forcing many young people into temp jobs and contract labor. Their circumstances isolated them from workplace communities, says Robinson, leading many to look elsewhere to fill the social gap. That’s when iyashi (which translates to emotional healing) businesses began popping up across Japan. Cat cafés found business success in people’s need for emotional comfort, helping thousands to socialize and relieve stress. Nowadays, Japan’s economy has stabilized, but cat cafés remain very much a part of Japanese life.

Back in the States, where cat cafés are beginning to find a foothold, Robinson is deep into writing her dissertation. She’s excited to study these businesses at a time when they appear to be globalizing. Luckily, she knows at least one proven method of relaxation, should she need to de-stress.
Can living arteries arise from a synthetic polymer? That’s a question being explored by a small team of graduate students and faculty. The Pitt Innovation Challenge is helping them—and others—take risks and solve big challenges in health care.
The graduate student, Chelsea Stowell, pursues research that could improve the health of more than 800,000 people every year. In the electrospinning room, she focuses her attention inside the box, where bits of synthetic filaments fly through the air and collect on the rod, like tiny feathers starting to grow on a wing. The student-bioengineer is working to create something transformative, something entirely new.

Deep in one of the labs on Pitt’s campus is a room for electrospinning. Each time the PhD student enters, she steps on sticky paper to get all the dirt off her shoes. There are vents working overtime above her. No dust allowed. Inside the room is a large, clear box with a metal rod the size of a knitting needle. But this rod, charged with 11,000 volts, spins something like a rubber band and bounces back when squeezed. This flexibility helps the body’s cells to accept the synthetic material.

Wang’s new polymer—an original synthetic compound—is now center stage in Stowell’s PhD research. Significantly, this rubbery material is designed to promote the natural growth of new tissue, and Stowell’s research is advancing these next-generation regenerative properties: Once the graft is surgically inserted, it slowly disappears. As it breaks down over time, regenerated biological tissue grows over the temporary polymer-graft structure. Eventually, Voila!, a new actual artery forms.

But, to be viable in humans, the research requires extensive development and clinical exploration.

So far, much of the research has occurred on bio-scaffolding in a laboratory and in rat models. Stowell’s PhD work aims to push this advance beyond the laboratory into hospitals and clinics where actual patients will benefit. But that will take scientific grit and a lot of funding support.

Lack of early-stage funding for initial research is a barrier in the quest to improve medical and surgical care. Opportune projects languish or die without start-up funding.

To address this early obstacle, the Pitt Innovation Challenge, or PInCh, financially seeds promising sprouts of research aimed at improving people’s health. Founded by the University’s Clinical and Translational Science Institute, in partnership with the Office of the Provost and the Innovation Institute, PInCh is designed to rev up the engine of innovation at Pitt and in the region.

The program’s motto is “challenging creative minds to tackle difficult health issues,” and the idea is to support emerging science and reward researchers who are willing to take risks in making health-related breakthroughs.

So far, three PInCh competitions have provided $1.15 million in awards, from $25,000 to $100,000 each, to winning teams of researchers whose innovations show exceptional prospects for practical use and potential commercialization, including translating laboratory research into clinical and patient-focused applications.

“We are looking for something that is new, perhaps does not have preliminary data, or is ‘outside the box,’” says PInCh program director John Maier, an assistant professor in the School of Medicine. “A key aspect is that the work is focused on an actual problem as opposed to continuing an existing path of investigation that primarily leads to more knowledge.”
In 2014, Stowell and Wang formed a team including several other bioengineering graduate students to advance the Pitt artificial artery research. The students—who were all interested in learning more about the business of product development—included Piyusha Gade, Daniel Long, and Yen-Lin Wu.

The team’s immediate plan: win the PInCh competition and use the funds to develop Wang’s regenerative polymer graft and move it toward testing in humans. It was time to take things to the next level and prove the graft could work beyond rats in a lab.

But getting the funding wouldn’t be easy: 46 teams entered the 2015 competition, consisting of researchers not only from the Pittsburgh campus but also from other universities, start-ups, incubators, and labs in the region. A requirement is that each team includes at least one Pitt faculty member.

Immediately, Stowell and her research colleagues prepared to compete. They watched videos about how to assess their markets and how to evaluate the regulatory environment. There were plenty of questions to answer: How were they going to sell this product? What obstacles would they face? What did a regulatory strategy look like? Would medical insurance cover the cost of the end-product, and why?

“It’s a very different mindset,” says Stowell. “When you’re in research, you’re thinking about how something works, why it works, and how you can make it work better. In business, it’s more about how to convince people to use...
If all goes well, Wang and Stowell estimate that it will take another decade to complete a series of such trials to assess the ultimate future of the Phoenix graft, which could not only eliminate the need for additional surgical procedures for arterial grafts and replacement blood vessels but could also reduce health care costs. Currently, an individual Phoenix graft costs about $300, while competitors’ synthetic grafts can run up to $2,000 each. But the rise of Phoenix biotechnology is just beginning.

The two were sitting next to one another, and began to chat about their work.

“Professor Wang was describing a really neat technology, and I was describing a clinical problem,” recalls Roy-Chaudhury, who has expertise in kidney and vascular disease, as well as with dialysis and its complications. The surgeon regularly inserts artificial-vestel grafts in patients for dialysis, and he is frustrated by the narrowing that results when the synthetic grafts contract and restrict blood flow, requiring additional procedures. “Professor Wang wasn’t yet thinking about dialysis access, and we realized we could take his technology and apply it to this niche.”

Now, when Stowell finishes crafting the Phoenix grafts, she sends them to Roy-Chaudhury. His surgical team inserts the grafts in larger-animal models and monitors progress to make sure the grafts are working and blood is flowing properly. They also study the graft surgical sites under a microscope, hoping to find less narrowing of the Phoenix graft compared to traditional synthetic models.

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Stowell knows that good science takes time and requires sustained funding from multiple sources. Future research and required clinical trials will cost an estimated $200 million before the Phoenix artery might be marketed to surgeons and their patients. “They told us that this would be a long haul,” Stowell says about the PInCh judges’ feedback. “And that it wouldn’t be cheap.”

But the quest for improved health for millions of people keeps the Phoenix team looking up, into the bright unknown.
When William Knight moved from Pittsburgh to Mexico City to be with his girlfriend and her young son, the Pitt graduate was confronted with the biggest challenge he’d ever faced—and it wasn’t adapting to a new language and culture. “I had to learn about we, instead of me,” he says of his new family life.

At the time, Knight (BUS ’10) was also launching a company focused on helping people in Latin America optimize their business communications skills for the global market and achieve high performance. While honing his own skills in Mexico City, Knight crafted a speech about the lessons of “we, instead of me” for his local chapter of Toastmasters International, an organization that builds leadership and public speaking skills for its more than 330,000 members worldwide.

That lesson—and its presentation by Knight—inspired others. In 2015, his speech won Mexico’s Toastmasters International Speech Competition, and the Pitt graduate went on to compete in the World Championship of Public Speaking semifinals in the United States. Today, his company, MasterYour24, LLC., offers tools, training seminars, and workshops to professionals throughout Latin America.

What do you think are the most important elements of an effective speech?

Attention, connection, and focus. Grabbing the audience’s attention and interest within the first few seconds can be critical, because it will set the tone for the rest of your presentation. Connecting with the audience is how we help them relate to our message in a way that’s personal for them. If the audience is able to relate to your message on a personal level, they are more likely to remember your message in the future and be able to apply it in their own lives. Focus allows us to make our message easily understood.

The delivery of your winning speech, “Who’s in Your Script?,” involved a lot of movement and gesturing. Did this come naturally to you?

I have an introverted personality, and I tend to be more reserved, so my body language while speaking didn’t come naturally. But through practice and watching many notable speakers, I was able to use my body language on stage to help reinforce my message and stories. The idea is to help the audience live the stories—to see the story and hear the story. When I’m using more senses, it helps the audience remember the message.

Is giving a speech in the United States different from giving one in Mexico?

My speech went through a transformation from presenting in front of a bilingual audience in Mexico to an international audience at the world semifinals contest in Las Vegas. The stories and message were the same, but for the international contest, I eliminated the few Spanish words I had incorporated, had slightly less dramatic body language, and even changed some of the humor.

How did your time at Pitt help you to get where you are now?

Pitt played a big role in my transformation from a student into a business professional. The career and leadership development department provided the right networking opportunities that led to an incredible internship and, after graduation, a full-time position with Pittsburgh-based Legend Financial Advisors. My time at Legend was the best opportunity I could have asked for.

How do you think being a good public speaker has affected the rest of your life?

Speaking has been a critical influence for my marketing and networking efforts as an entrepreneur. We all have ideas, but those who have good ideas and can speak well will lead.
Remote Control
Is too much screen time bad for health?

By Micaela Corn

In a living room in Pittsburgh’s South Hills, a boy sits in front of his family’s television set, enjoying his favorite sitcom about a Manhattan lawyer who convinces his sophisticated wife to move with him to a farmhouse in rural Hooterville. The show’s premise focuses on how the new and vastly different environment affects the couple, with comedy ensuing. The sitcom, Green Acres, was a popular TV series from 1965-71.

Interestingly, Anthony Fabio’s childhood sitcom experience connects with his adult pursuits as a researcher in Pitt’s Graduate School of Public Health.

With televisions in almost 99 percent of U.S. households, Americans are increasingly tuned in. At Pitt, Fabio uses epidemiology—the study of disease—to examine how pervasive screen time can affect public health. His most recent work links television viewing to higher rates of obesity and injury in certain populations, providing insight into how we can all live healthier lifestyles—and still enjoy our favorite shows.

For his research, Fabio and colleagues tapped into data from a massive, national, 15-year project that began in 1990. The Coronary Artery Risk Development in Young Adults (CARDIA) study, sponsored by the National Institutes of Health, recruited thousands of participants from Birmingham, Ala., Chicago, Ill., Oakland, Calif., and Minneapolis, Minn.

In one analysis of CARDIA data, Fabio looked at adults’ self-reported TV viewing habits, along with body mass index and waist circumference measurements. He discovered that more hours spent in front of the television per day at approximately age 30 resulted in a greater likelihood of obesity five years later, compared with participants who had less TV time at the same age. Fabio, a Pitt assistant professor of epidemiology, suspects the association could be linked to mindless snacking habits while watching TV, or to the seduction of junk food advertising on television. The results were reported online in the journal SAGE Open.

But it doesn’t stop there. “When we look at an exposure like television,” Fabio notes, “it has a broad range of effects. And so focusing just on one disease doesn’t really make sense.”

So, in a separate but related analysis of CARDIA data, Fabio and his team investigated his specialty: injury and violence. The findings, published in the International Journal of Injury Control and Safety Promotion, indicate that among people predisposed to hostility, watching more TV than their peers poses a greater risk for injuries requiring hospitalization—potentially because they are more susceptible to television’s influence on violence and risk-taking behaviors.

Fabio first became interested in studying injury and violence as a Pitt PhD student, working in what is now the Consortium for Injury Research and Community Action (CIRCA)—of which he is the current director. His experiences there got him thinking about epidemiology on a larger scale: How do environmental and societal factors affect an individual’s health behavior?

“A lot of the traditional epidemiologic research is, ‘what are my risk factors?’” he says. “So—my weight, my own behavior, my genetics… It’s all looking at individuals.” But through his time at Pitt Public Health, he says, “It became really clear to me that it wasn’t just about the person, it’s about the situation.”

Now, Fabio is digging deeper. In studying TV, he’s “trying to figure out how nature and nurture interact,” he says. A large body of research supports the results from Fabio’s two most recent
Stem Cell Revolution
Ipsita Banerjee in the Swanson School of Engineering recently received $300,000 from the National Science Foundation to test her theory on the successful mass production of human pluripotent stem cells. Presently, these cells, which can become virtually any tissue, have low survival rates when cultured as single cells, as they need mutual contact to survive. But, if cell survival could be enhanced, scientists might be able to mass-produce stem cells in labs around the world, which would transform what's possible in medical and biological research. That's the goal of Banerjee, associate professor of chemical and petroleum engineering and of bioengineering, and co-investigator Prashant N. Kumta, professor of bioengineering.

Dengue Discovery
A team of international researchers led by Pitt's Graduate School of Public Health has linked Southeast Asian dengue epidemics to the unusually high temperatures that can occur during the El Niño weather cycle. The dengue virus is spread by mosquitoes—which thrive in higher temperatures. This link between weather patterns and disease may help to predict, monitor, and control outbreaks during the current El Niño weather pattern, which is projected to be one of the most intense in nearly two decades.

The Nose Knows
How do bloodhounds track missing people? A Pitt team is part of a multicenter project to understand how animals localize smell. With $6.4 million from the National Science Foundation, coprincipal investigators Nathan Urban, professor in Pitt's School of Medicine's neurobiology department; G. Bard Ermentrout, Distinguished Professor in Pitt's mathematics department; and other multidisciplinary experts from five other universities will build models and develop algorithms to discover how animals respond to odor sources in the environment. A better knowledge of how animals search for odors in the natural world could improve national security, law enforcement, and public health.

studies. There are many possible explanations for television's correlations with obesity and injury risk, including but not limited to psychological arousal, desensitization to violent or unhealthy content, and mimicry of high-risk behaviors.

But many unanswered questions linger. With the popularity of video streaming sites like Netflix and Hulu, the exposure of what we traditionally think of as "television" is changing rapidly. Fabio has endless avenues for future research.

There are things we can do in the meantime, he notes, to curb the public health issue. "Prevention programs should target both the content of television programs and the amount of time people spend watching television," he says. Promotion of less sedentary behaviors is equally important.

For his part, Fabio (SHRS '90, GSPH '94G, '99G) is now grappling with screen time as the parent of a 3-year-old. The ultimate goal, he says, is to be flexible in the limitations imposed.

Without his early exposure to environment-shaping behavior in his childhood favorite, Green Acres, it's possible that Fabio might have taken a different path to academic success. In studying television as an epidemic, he is exploring the downstream effects of widespread media consumption, and how we can better control our remotes—and our health.
Drumbeat for Shango by Charlotte Ka
Who decides what art hangs on the walls of galleries and museums—and what do those choices say about our society? A recent campus gallery exhibition, planned and curated by undergraduates, looked for answers.
he sharp-eyed young artist sits on the crowded No. 6 train leaving the Bronx. He surveys the clash of humanity as the subway clatters along, bound for Manhattan. As usual, hardly anyone makes eye contact.

Amid the strangers, he spots a face too beautiful to ignore. He pulls out his paper and pencils and begins to sketch. Natiq Jalil is the artist. A son of Montgomery, Ala., he first began drawing as a child, doodling spot-on recreations of the popular cartoon Ninja Turtles with his crayons. His parents cooed their encouragement.

In time, Jalil grew up, left the South, and migrated anywhere and everywhere for his art: Denver, Pittsburgh, and New York City, among other places. The sketch he roughs out on the train later becomes *Where the Wind Blows*, a watercolor featuring ink and gold leaf, showing an ethereal image of a Black woman seemingly walking on air.

For Jalil, the canvas is a tool to capture a story. *Where the Wind Blows* is a visual and emotional diary of much of what the artist was thinking and seeing that day. It contains the colors of a billboard advertisement he spied as the train rumbled along the track. He noticed his untied shoelace, and it inspired a blue ribbon-like material that billows around the woman.

Jalil’s canvas—his story—was part of *Exposure: Black Voices in the Arts*, a groundbreaking art exhibition recently showcased at the University Art Gallery in the Frick Fine Arts Building of the University of Pittsburgh. The show’s installation—and the buzz around it—put Pitt at the forefront of an emerging conversation about the mainstream art world: Why are the faces at the top mostly White? That question probes what factors influence the artwork placed on the walls of galleries and museums throughout the nation and around the globe.

Historically, mainstream art institutions have proffered the currency of respectability and legitimacy. If artists are chosen by curators to show there, then their work must certainly matter. It’s a sanctioned message of acceptance and a sure imprimatur that an artist’s work has value. Too often, though, a messy amalgam of privilege, race, and commerce puts the societal forces of inclusion and exclusion in play.

At Pitt, the idea for the eye-opening gallery exhibition first took root in the classrooms that sit above the Frick Fine Arts gallery space. There, instructor Janet McCall teaches an intriguing course, the Museum Studies Exhibition Seminar, offered annually by the Department of History of Art and Architecture in Pitt’s Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences. The course gives undergraduate students the unusual opportunity to plan, curate, design, and mount an exhibition for the art gallery.

In her own planning for the fall 2015 seminar, McCall contemplated her 40 years of working in the arts community. She had been troubled by something during those decades—the absence of Black curators and artists in many galleries and museums, she says, along with a lack of progress in the museum field in addressing the issue.

McCall’s observation resonates with a recent national study from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Association of Art Museum Directors, and the American Alliance of Museums, which found that only 4 percent of museum leadership—curators, conservators, educators, and top executives—is African American.

McCall also realized that, for Black artists to have a larger presence in galleries and museums, the change would have to come mostly from the people who currently inhabit the mainstream curatorial space—executives, directors, and owners—and those people are not typically African American.

So, she decided to be the change. She would raise awareness of the issue through her museum studies class.
“The world is changing. People are mixing and connecting across identities, race, and in lots of different ways. If done right, gallery spaces become opportunities for a deeper understanding. They can inspire.”
—Janera Solomon

Not surprisingly, her seminar often mirrors the broader art world. Most of the students who enroll to learn about arts leadership are White. So, in 2015, McCall—who also is the executive director of Pittsburgh's Society for Contemporary Craft—turned to her students, the next generation of arts leaders.

How do we change the landscape? she asked.

To begin, the Pitt students first had to confront their own identities and perceptions about race, class, and privilege. What did they know and not know? How could they judge Black artworks? Would their outreach be accepted or shunned? These were difficult challenges, but with McCall's guidance and their own examination of the issues, the students persevered.

They were inclusive. They created a team of allies, drawing upon knowledgeable and talented Black Americans connected to the art world. They went into the nearby town of Braddock to work in tandem with its innovative art lending library, Transformazium, which gives ordinary citizens the chance to be their own curators. Then, they issued a call for artists.

The call first rang out on a Monday morning in October. It resounded across social media. One friend told another friend. The news energized the local Black arts community. The artist Christine McCray-Bethea got an e-mail and a late-night phone call. “When I first heard of this, I was thrilled. I was overjoyed,” she says. “Visibility for Black artists is difficult.”

But the Pitt call for artists not only tapped into something hopeful, it also embraced the future. “The world is changing,” says Janera Solomon, a Pittsburgh-based cultural and arts leader who directs the Kelly Strayhorn Theater, a performing arts and exhibition space in Pittsburgh's East Liberty neighborhood. “People are mixing and connecting across identities, race, and in lots of different ways. If done right, gallery spaces become opportunities for a deeper understanding. They can inspire.”

Black art has been American art, even before the founding of the nation. The people who were enslaved brought their artistic culture with them: wood carving, pottery making, weaving, drawing, sculpting. But exclusion renders artists invisible, along with their ideas of family, sacredness, social exchange, and political culture.

“This show confronts the notion that Black people don't have art,” says Solomon, who goes on to cite the work of local artists through the years—iconic Pittsburgh photographer Charles “Teenie” Harris, the Women of Visions, Inc., Shona and Oronde Sharif with Black dance
In all, there were 54 artists represented, 54 mesmerizing stories. They were individual stories, but together they created a community, a quilt from the fabric of the African American artistic journey.

The Exposure: Black Voices in the Arts exhibition was trailblazing. A diverse crowd of more than 300 supporters jived and jostled on opening night. They snapped cell-phone photos and chatted about the art. For the Black artists community, it was like a family reunion. They hugged, exchanged admirations, and basked in the show. It was the largest recorded gathering for a show at the gallery and one of the most buzzed-about in recent years.

In all, there were 54 artists represented, 54 mesmerizing stories. They were individual stories, but together they created a community, a quilt from the fabric of the African American artistic journey.

The show encompassed many media, everything from comics illustrations, to abstract painting, to sculpture. It featured the work of Jacob Lawrence, Romare Bearden, and Mozelle Thompson, three revered Black masters who have links to Pittsburgh, but it also spotlighted living, local artists, too, like Pitt alumnus and celebrated sculptor Thaddeus Mosley.

Natiq Jalil’s watercolor, Where the Wind Blows, was there. And so was the work of McCray-Bethea. Her mixed media sculpture, Adam and Eve, stood prominently in the gallery space. She trained to be a journalist, but soon found her joy in the visual arts. Her abstract figures cry out that Black artworks resist stereotyping or pigeon-holing. “You don’t need to draw funeral processions, cotton fields, or jazz to be a Black artist,” says the sculptor pointedly.

Paintings by George Gist were there, too. A Detroit native who once served as a courthouse illustrator, Gist arrived in Pittsburgh four decades ago and stayed. The

Exposure exhibition, says Gist, is a new step forward for the city.

Two main threads were woven into the collection: All of the artists were connected both to Pittsburgh and to the larger swath of human drama expressed by the diverse community of Black artists in America.

Tracy Murrell is an artist and curator for Hammonds House Museum in Atlanta. Her grand-size silhouettes of Black female figures have gained acclaim. It’s appropriate that the exhibition came out of a university, she says, because they are the centers of innovation and advancement. “There you have permission to be exposed to new ideas, new creations.” She also believes these kinds of trendsetting endeavors, combined with ongoing national exposure for Black artworks will help to “create a discourse that says Black art is not minority art. There is nothing lesser or minimal about it.”

Thelma Golden—The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s first Black curator, who now heads the Studio Museum in Harlem—suggested in her popular TED Talk that museum spaces can be reinvented into “think tanks.” They can, she says, be catalysts for change, for cross-cultural dialogue, places to both define and redefine Black culture—and American culture.

In her 2015 Museum Studies Exhibition Seminar at Pitt, McCall’s aim was to seed a consciousness in her students about inclusion and exclusion, race and privilege, power and bias. The Pitt exhibition was a starting point for cultural change and a beacon for what galleries and museums can aspire toward.

Pitt’s Exposure exhibition in the University Art Gallery calls for a new awareness about what is selected to hang on the walls of galleries and museums—and who makes those choices. The ramifications extend well beyond the framework of art.
Andy and Margaret Benedict were in the stands of the Michigan International Speedway outside Detroit, cheering on the University of Pittsburgh’s Formula SAE team as its custom-built race car competed against those of 120 other collegiate crews.

Earlier in the day, the couple had noticed the trailer used to transport the Pitt race car. It was gray and featureless—a rental. Other teams had their own spiffy trailers emblazoned with school names and colors.

Later, as the Benedicts watched the cars whiz past on the racetrack, a thought crossed Margaret’s mind, and she posed it to her husband: “Why doesn’t Pitt have its own vehicle trailer?”

Andy Benedict didn’t have a good answer to his wife’s question. But as a mechanical engineer who had spent 35 years designing cars for the Ford Motor Company, he was in a unique position to help Pitt’s team. And, as a proud alumnus and Pittsburgh native, he was happy to help.

The engineer was already deeply impressed by the Panther Racing team. The group, hosted by the Swanson School of Engineering, brings Pitt gearheads together to participate in a student design competition organized by SAE International (formerly the Society of Automotive Engineers). Each year, with help from faculty advisor and associate professor William Slaughter, around 50 student-volunteers design and build a Formula-style race car to compete against other teams in categories including fuel economy, cost and manufacturing analysis, and endurance. Preparing a car worthy of the Speedway, Benedict knows, takes dedication and months of hard work.

After a meeting with Slaughter and U.S. Steel Dean of Engineering Gerald Holder, Benedict (ENGR ’71) decided to loan the team the 22-foot trailer he used to transport his Ford GT across the country during summer vacations. For a team that often spent up to $1,000 to rent a trailer, the loan freed valuable funds for use on tires, tools, and other expenses.

This wasn’t the Benedicts’ first gift to the team, or to the Swanson School: in 2007 they created the Benedict Engineering Legacy Fund with a gift of $10,000, providing scholarships to engineering students.

They also host a yearly dinner for the Formula SAE team prior to the annual Michigan race. Since the first dinner in 2009, the event has expanded from just 10 or so guests to around 80, including alumni, team members, and their parents.

The satisfaction of helping the team in a direct way ultimately moved the Benedicts to sign the trailer over to the team permanently. “It feels like you’re giving away a little baby,” Benedict says of the gift. “But we knew it was very much appreciated, and we knew it was going to a good home.”

“We liked how hardworking they are,” he adds, “and they’re in a career that’s going to serve them well.”

He would know. As a child visiting relatives in Michigan, Benedict toured a Ford plant and knew instantly that he wanted to work for the car company—a goal that informed his choice to attend Pitt, where, he says, “I knew I could get a top-flight engineering degree.”

It was a wise choice: five days after graduation, Benedict loaded his Mustang with all of his belongings and headed to Detroit to begin his career with Ford.

At the first race after his and Margaret’s gift to the team, Benedict examined the trailer and came away delighted. “I was happy to see it just full of all sorts of automotive hardware,” he says. “It’s being used for exactly what it needs to be used for.” Assisting a new generation of Pitt students on their road to success.
Making Waves

DOMINIC GIORDANO

BY MICAELA CORN

Dominic Giordano stands 32 feet above the ground. His heels hang off the platform's edge, toes splayed wide for steadiness. His thoughts are as calm as the pool's water below. Just have fun, coach Julian Krug's voice echoes in his ears. He draws a breath. He says a quick prayer for strength, peace, joy. Then—with confidence—he jumps.

After transferring to Pitt in January 2015 from Florida State University, Giordano quickly established himself as a dedicated member of the Panthers diving team. Two weeks after arriving on campus, the Wexford, Pa., native set a University record in platform diving. Three times this past fall, he was selected the Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Diver of the Week—rounding out an even four for his career. But Giordano is more motivated by his team than he is by winning awards. "Our motto this year is 'don't worry, be happy,' which I think is really great," says the junior, who is majoring in humanities.

As Giordano sets his sights on this summer's Olympic trials in Indianapolis, Ind., the University of Pittsburgh is preparing to give Trees Hall—where Pitt's underwater athletes spend hours training and competing—a face-lift. The multimillion-dollar fundraising effort will not only support state-of-the-art renovations but will also nourish the championship aspirations of athletes like Giordano. Construction of new locker rooms, a team meeting room and lounge, nutrition center, and legacy wall to celebrate the swimming and diving team's history is scheduled to begin in March 2016. With luck, the project will be finished in time for Giordano's senior season.

Back above the pool's still waters, the diver falls through the air—his body twisting three and a half times around and turning one and a half backwards—just in time, he straightens and enters the water with barely a splash. Giordano resurfaces to the sound of his teammates' cheers. He knows he's done well. He's happy.

For more information about the Trees Hall renovations, visit www.giveto.pitt.edu/trees.

Band Together

BY MICAELA CORN

In 1948, when Pitt's varsity marching band arrived at music camp one bassist short, the director called up engineering student William Gernert and asked him to get there right away. "We need you!" Gernert recalls him saying.

The undergraduate was the only freshman in the band that year—and, according to him, the very first freshman to play in the Pitt band's history. Gernert (ENGR '52, BUS '63) remained a bassist with the band for all four years of his undergraduate career, but his involvement didn't stop after graduation. For decades, as his engineering career flourished, he spent free time volunteering with the marching band and assisting the group in practices and on the sidelines during football games at home and away. The booming music of percussion and brass mixing with the roar of the crowd still brings Gernert a soaring joy.

In 2003, the alumnus donated $100,000 to an annuity trust he established to benefit Pitt's marching band, the Department of Athletics, and the Swanson School of Engineering—the three areas of Pitt that are his particular favorites. The funds are split annually between each entity, and are used wherever they are needed most. One year, his support helped the band to purchase new trombones; another year, the funds helped replace worn-out band uniforms.

"Every moment I've spent with the band was a plus to my life," Gernert says. He remains happy to play his part.
A Living Lesson

By Ervin Dyer

Natalie Kaplan’s career as an educator sprouted early in her life. She recalls after-school walks along a block in Squirrel Hill where, as a youngster, she ambled along the avenue, a few friends in tow behind her. Along the way, she often remarked on points of interest—blooming flowers, impressive trees, unusual clouds in the sky—offering her schoolmates some of the ABCs of local discovery.

“I always knew I’d become a teacher,” says Kaplan.

Eventually, as a young woman in the 1940s, she left Pittsburgh to study child development at Penn State but later returned to attend Pitt graduate school. Her instructors included the influential pediatrician Benjamin Spock and child psychologist Margaret McFarland, whose work deeply influenced Fred Rogers of Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood fame—and helped Kaplan understand that every child is special in his or her own way.

Shaped by her time at Pitt, Kaplan initially taught children in kindergarten and first grade. Then, in 1974 in Squirrel Hill, she founded the Carriage House Children’s Center, with the intention of giving each child the self-confidence to get a strong start in life.

“At the time, it was one of the few all-day preschool programs in Pittsburgh—and its mission continues today, notes Kaplan, who also cofounded the Children’s Center of Pittsburgh at Magee-Womens Hospital.

Carriage House not only welcomes children but also Pitt undergraduate and graduate interns, giving them the experience to be better educators.

Now, Kaplan (EDUC ’53) is giving back to Pitt students in another way. She and her husband, Lawrence, have established The Natalie A. Kaplan and The Honorable Lawrence W. Kaplan Student Resource Fund in support of the Psychology in Education Department in the School of Education. The $10,000 endowment will provide support for books, lab fees, or travel for students in the Applied Developmental Psychology Program—a nod to McFarland’s specialty. Preference will be given to students interested in serving as interns at Carriage House and the Children’s Center of Pittsburgh.

“If you’ve had a fulfilled life, if your school has helped you give your profession, you should give back,” says Kaplan, an educator for more than 60 years. The gift enables her to continue the mission that sprouted so early in her life—educating those who follow in her footsteps.

Support the Stacks

Who hasn’t stepped foot into at least one of Pitt’s libraries? Even in the age of growing digital resources, the library continues to be a center for research, study, and collaboration, a place where students, faculty, staff, and the greater community come together. Donations made to The Library General Gifts fund or the Book Fund help support Pitt’s top-notch information centers. For more information: www.giveto.pitt.edu/where-give/university-library-system.

Field of Opportunity

By Kristin Bundy

In the waiting-room bathroom, she slides on a pair of yellow rubber gloves and begins to clean each fixture. Nothing is overlooked. Every surface shines as she frees it from grit and grime. The rest of her tasks at the dentist’s office that day get the same undivided attention.

“It’s the summer before Theresa

Smostryski’s senior year at the University of Scranton. When she’s not working as a waitress, bartender, or Estée Lauder consultant, her mom—an office manager for a dentist—keeps the college student busy by having her help at the office. The work is unpaid, but the unexpected benefit to the young woman’s future will be priceless.

Smostryski’s work ethic and ambition caught the eye of the dentist, Jeffrey Walker (DEN ’90). She was studying to become a high school chemistry teacher, but Walker thought she might have what it takes to succeed in dentistry. As encouragement, he invited her to observe a tooth extraction.

“He said, ‘If you can sit through this, you are going to be great at dentistry,’” she recalls. “And I swear, that one appointment completely turned it.”

With Walker’s influence, the newly aspiring dentist set her sights on Pitt’s School of Dental Medicine—and was accepted. But her busiest days weren’t behind her. To help finance her education, she followed a family tradition of military service and joined the U.S. Army Medical Department. The benefits helped, but she still had to balance extra jobs, studies, and active duty. “I didn’t come from money,” she says. “I had to do everything on my own.”

Ten years after graduating from Pitt, Theresa Smotryski Heaton (DEN ’05) is still working hard. In addition to her successful dental practice near Dallas, Texas, she’s also a major in the Army, a licensed pilot, and the owner of an investment company.

“If it wasn’t for the opportunity that got me into Pitt, I wouldn’t be able to do what I do today,” she says. Now, she’s providing valuable opportunities to future Pitt students. In addition to making other annual donations, Smotryski Heaton has promised a generous gift to dental students who will follow in her army boots. She has bequeathed her estate to help support students who have been accepted to Pitt’s dental school, have a connection to the military, and receive only partial scholarships.

“I would hope that it gives somebody who wants to attend dental school but can’t afford it, the opportunity to do so,” she says. “Money should not be an obstacle.”
The Crowd Goes Wild

By Matt Cichowicz

At a sports complex outside Phoenix, Ariz., the Pitt Women’s Club Soccer Team is tied with the University of Texas, 0-0.

As the first half nears its end, a Texas player kicks the ball out of bounds and possession goes to Pitt. Abby Takacs, who plays the outside back position, throws the ball in from the sideline. After a quick pass, center midfielder Janna Brown gains control, lines up a shot, and kicks. The ball glides through the air, over the heads of the Texas defense, bounces past the goalkeeper, and swishes into the net. Pitt takes a one-nil lead. In the heat of the second half, the defense lives up to its brick-wall reputation, and Pitt wins, advancing forward in the championship bracket of the National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association tournament.

The fall 2015 season was the Pitt team’s fifth year qualifying for the national championship, and getting there can cost the athletes more than just commitment and sweat. The team has always managed to find a way to pay for the trip to the tournament, but this year the women hit their goal in record time using EngagePitt™—the University’s online crowdfunding platform launched in December 2014. The endeavor connects donors with causes that match their interests while supporting Pitt students and faculty.

“As soon as the EngagePitt™ page was up, we created a Facebook post, tweeted about it, and asked all the team members to share the link,” says Takacs, a senior majoring in natural sciences and president of the Pitt Women’s Club Soccer Team. “We had more than $1,000 donated on the first day.”

The team initially set the fundraising goal at $5,000—which it reached in just two weeks. Funds continued to roll in during the month-long campaign, earning a total of $7,260. The team plans to roll over leftover funds to help cover next year’s expenses.

“It was overwhelming to see how many people were willing to support us financially,” says Takacs.

At the championship’s end, Pitt’s team placed among the top 16 in the nation—a hard-earned accomplishment shared by both the players and the donors who helped get them there.

Gifts: Boxed

Mary Jane Kuffner Hirt (GSPIA ’75G, ’86G) recently organized a tribute in honor of Professor Emerita Christine Altenburger, who was the first woman on the faculty in the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, where she taught for 34 years. The tribute raised more than $5,000 for The Christine Altenburger Endowed Fund, which provides support for students who have an interest in public administration and urban affairs.

A couple who earned MBAs at the Katz Graduate School of Business recently made a generous contribution to their namesake endowment—the Robert E. Taylor, Jr. and Joyce H. Taylor Student Resource Fund. Dedicated to covering educational expenses for those pursuing a career in human resource management, the funds gifted by Robert (BUS ’72) and Joyce (BUS ’79) Taylor have already benefited three graduate students and will continue to help many others in the future.

Surprising the attendees at the Science Unleashed 2015 event, Michael G. Wells (EDUC ’90 ’92G) announced that he would double the prize money of the Michael G. Wells Student Health Care Entrepreneurship Competition by adding another $250,000 to his original gift. Through the fund, $3,000, $5,000, and $10,000 awards are provided to selected Pitt students who are developing and showcasing innovative technologies that fill unmet needs in healthcare. Wells also generously supports Pitt Athletics through the Michael G. Wells Men’s Basketball Endowed Scholarship.

A gift to Pitt of any size can make a real difference. Our annual Chancellor’s Circle Celebration gives us an opportunity to meet and mingle with some of the 5,000-plus donors who made annual gifts of $1,000 or more to Pitt. Donors like Lowell D. Shaffer (EDUC ’58, ’82G), pictured here, who have been longtime and generous supporters, are enriching the University and giving us many reasons to celebrate.

—Al Novak
Vice Chancellor for Institutional Advancement

Learning Legacy

As assistant director of academic affairs at Pitt’s Center for Russian and East European Studies, Susan Hicks helped expose her students to new worlds. She organized study abroad programs and encouraged them to immerse themselves in culture, community, and language. After the popular and accomplished educator tragically died in a bicycle accident in October, the Susan Hicks Memorial Fund was founded in her honor. In tribute to Hicks’ life, it will continue her legacy by supporting Pitt students who study abroad. To learn more, visit www.giveto.pitt.edu/hicks.
During his childhood in Baltimore, there were times when Dawan Owens and his family had only tea and toast for supper. Some evenings were spent in darkness, with no money to pay the power bill. But even on the gloomiest nights, Owens and his siblings were sustained by their mother’s strength—and by laughter. “When things were rough, she would make us laugh so that we wouldn’t cry,” he recalls. “Comedy became the way I dealt with life’s unexpected mishaps.”

Education, too, helped Owens thrive. The self-professed computer geek excelled in high school and attended the University of Pittsburgh, where he earned a degree in information sciences. After graduating, he was recruited by a multinational management firm and began a successful consultant career. But Owens began to itch for something new. That’s when he again found refuge in comedy.

At the suggestion of a Pitt friend, Owens (SIS ’00) began to study stand-up comedy for fun, enrolling in after-work improvisation classes. Within a year, he was performing regularly and opening for big name acts. He soon made the move to Los Angeles to try out a career in show biz.

Now, after acting classes and many auditions, Owens is a true rising star. He has performed stand-up on Comedy Central, and appeared in dramatic roles on television hits including Criminal Minds and NCIS: Los Angeles. He’s currently starring as the character Quan in director Tyler Perry’s drama If Loving You Is Wrong, broadcast on the Oprah Winfrey Network.

“I found myself at Pitt,” he says. “I found a love for culture, a love for people. And that’s the basis of my character work in acting.”
All eyes are on the helicopter hovering above the South Lawn of the White House. The aircraft’s pilot is expertly at work in the cockpit. With confidence, he lowers the helicopter just 10 feet above the lawn, lines up its wheels with landing marks, and gently brings the craft back to Earth.

Lieutenant Colonel Peter Reitmeyer spent four years serving with the Marine Corps’ Helicopter Squadron One. Best known by its call sign, Marine One, the unit is responsible for the helicopter transportation of the President of the United States. Piloting the president is an honor shared by very few. It takes proven instincts, battlefield experience, and special training to be chosen. Reitmeyer, who served as a Naval aviator for more than 20 years, was ripe for the job.

A Pittsburgh native, he comes from a long line of military service members—and a long line of Pitt graduates, too. “Everything I’ve done throughout my career revolves around my time at Pitt,” says Reitmeyer, (A&S ’96) who majored in history as an undergraduate. “Having an understanding of the past and using that to plan for the future has benefitted me greatly.”

In 2015, Reitmeyer took a new position as a Marine Detachment Chief of Staff with the U.S. Naval Academy in Maryland. Yet, he still recalls the thrill of his Marine One days. “No matter how many times you go to the South Lawn of the White House,” Reitmeyer says, “when you’re waiting for the U.S. President, you’re thinking, ‘I can’t believe I’m sitting here doing this.’”

**Top Chopper**

by Matt Cichowicz

Edward “Ted” Knafelc A&S ’06 has joined Strassburger McKenna Gutnick & Gefsky as an associate. He will practice from the law firm’s Beaver, Pa., location.

Patricia Lonsbary A&S ’77 has joined the American Red Cross as individual major gift officer serving Allegheny, Greene, and Washington counties in western Pennsylvania.
Physicians of the World ’87G was recently recognized by Leading Physicians of the World as a 2015 Top Doctor in the Region for his work in psychology and addictions. His psychology practice is in Monroeville, Pa. Paul Shrivastava BUS ’81G has been named to the inaugural list of “100 Influential Leaders” chosen by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. He is the executive director of Future Earth, a U.N.-chartered organization that brings together more than 60,000 scientists to address the effects of climate change.

1982

G. Timothy Conboy LAW ’82 ♦, who has been practicing law in Pittsburgh for more than 30 years, recently founded Conboy Law in Mt. Lebanon, Pa. Donna Tocco-Law in Mt. Lebanon, Pa.

1983

David Chavern A&S ’83 ♦ has been selected as president and chief executive officer of the Newspaper Association of America. Nancy Flanigan SOC WK ’83 was interviewed by CBS News in December regarding her advocacy for Peace Corps volunteers like herself, who says, have not received appropriate medical funding for illnesses and injuries endured while serving. Vincent Van Hasselt A&S ’83G has been named the 2014-15 Distinguished Professor of the Year at Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale-Davie, Fla. He is a professor and director of the Family Violence and Adolescent Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment Programs in the Psychology Services Center.

1986

Robert Heary MED ’86 has been chosen as president of the Cervical Spine Research Society. He is the medical director of the Spine and Pain Center at HackensackUMC Mountainside hospital in Montclair, N.J.

1988

Candace McGraw LAW ’88, chief executive officer of the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport, was named one of six Outstanding Women of Northern Kentucky for 2015. She was also honored with the Career Women of Achievement Award by the YWCA of Greater Cincinnati. Michael Rizzo A&S ’88 has been hired as president and chief executive officer of Artel Video Systems in Westford, Mass.

1990

Ben Ginsberg A&S ’90 ♦ has been named director of institutional advancement at AIM Academy in Conshohocken, Pa.

SPOTLIGHT

BY LIBERTY FERDA

Before Stephen and Julie Potts met and married, they both had formative experiences of growing up with siblings with disabilities. Julie’s brother Eddie has an intellectual disability, and Stephen’s brother Tom has Down syndrome. Watching their brothers face such challenges inspired both Stephen and Julie, separately, to study law and become advocates for those with disabilities. And it cinched their connection when they first met.

In 2011, Stephen (LAW ’02) created a website to help special needs families connect with information and resources customized to their circumstances. As an estate lawyer, he helps families to set up trusts to supplement Social Security benefits for special needs family members. Often, family members are overwhelmed by the complex legal issues surrounding the care of a person with disabilities; and many families are unaware of available social outlets like summer camps or the community dances in which both Eddie and Tom enjoy participating.

“So I thought, why don’t I categorize this information online, in plain language, all in one place?” says Stephen. With support from Julie (A&S ’01) and long hours in front of the computer, the Kokua Network was born. (Kokua means “to help people” in Hawaiian.) Within two months of publicizing the site, it attracted 300 new members.

As kokuanetwork.com continues to grow, the couple prepares to move Tom and Eddie into their West Chester, Pa., home. The added responsibility will be challenging, but they know the benefits to the whole family will be great—particularly for the three Potts children, who will learn, like their parents did, the joys of helping others.
J.T. (John Thomas) Spangler CGS ’90, BUS ’05G, is president of ITSENCLOSURES, which contributed $10,000 to Fanny Edel Falk Elementary, Pitt’s laboratory school, through Pennsylvania’s Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit program. The company’s sales and marketing representative Matthew Forsman UPJ ’02 and sales director Jennifer Staff-Bissell UPJ ’04 are also alumni.

1993
John Rushton MED ’93 has been named chief operating officer for Empire Genomics in Buffalo, N.Y.

1994
David Lee White A&S ’94 premiered his play Panther Hollow during November’s United Solo Festival in New York. The dark comedy also played at the Arcade Comedy Theater in Pittsburgh in January.

1995
Shari Payne A&S ’95, EDUC ’09G recently became vice president for enrollment at Waynesburg University in Waynesburg, Pa.

1996
Timothy Burke MED ’96 recently served as interim director for the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System.

1998
Dana Davis SOC WK ’98G, an assistant professor of social work at Youngstown State University, is spearheading a program to house local, chronically homeless HIV-positive people. The program is an offshoot of the HIV Project 933, an initiative led by Dr. Jeffrey H. Fink and Pitt graduate student Jennifer M. O’Callaghan. The program is based in Youngstown but is designed to serve the entire Mahoning Valley.

Candice Komar A&S ’82 is a partner at Pollock Begg Komar Glasser & Vertz, which has been recognized as a Tier One Best Law Firm in the area of family law, according to rankings released by U.S. News Media Group and Best Lawyers for 2016. Her partners include Pitt alumni Daniel Glasser LAW ’90, Brian Vertz BUS ’91G, LAW ’91, and Todd Begg LAW ’89.

Dave Kuzy ENGR ’83 has been promoted to chief executive officer at Carus Group, a global provider of environmental solutions based in Illinois.
of The Open Door, a nonprofit she founded and ran in Pittsburgh. Matthew Thiel ENGR ’98 has been chosen as president of AIMA-USA, a leading manufacturer of electric actuators and valve gearboxes. The company is headquartered in Canonsburg, Pa.

2000
Heather Lynn (McNeish) Gray A&S ’00 o, of Pittsburgh, won third place and $2,500 in seed money in a Steeltown Film Factory competition for her short screenplay Life After Deaf. She works as an actor, photographer, writer, and certified ASL interpreter.

2002
Darrell Bell CGS ’02 has been chosen as vice president of institutional advancement at Roberts Wesleyan College and Northeastern Seminary in Rochester, N.Y. Andrew Schaeffer A&S ’02 won his second Emmy Award as director of production for an episode of The American Law Journal, a weekly television program. He was also nominated in two other categories. Brian Thompson SIS ’02 is a cyber threat analyst at the United States Computer Emergency Readiness Team, part of the Department of Homeland Security. He and his wife Lori had their second child, Kathryn, in July. Chris Workman LAW ’02 o has been appointed by West Virginia’s governor as a family court judge in Logan County, W.Va.

2003
Becky Mancuso A&S ’03 has been hired as vice president of marketing and public relations at 84 Lumber in Eighty Four, Pa. Eric Rubin BUS ’03 has been elected partner at Dechert, LLP, a global specialist law firm where he advises clients in all areas of executive compensation and employee benefits. Matthew Tranter A&S ’03 has joined the KingSpry law firm in Bethlehem, Pa. He will practice business and real estate law.

2004
Jennifer Ranck SIS ’04G has been named director of the Worcester County Library system in Maryland.

2005
Carrie L. Sulsky Weaver A&S ’05 o, an instructor in Pitt’s History of Art & Architecture department, recently published The Bioarchaeology of Classical Kamarina: Life and Death in Greek Sicily (University Press of Florida).

2006
Christina Baktay NURS ’06, ’08G, a professor of nursing at La Roche College in McCandless, Pa., has been inducted into Sigma Theta Tau International, an honor society for nurses. Donna Imhoff EDUC ’06G o has been chosen as president of Cuyahoga Community College’s Western Campus in Parma, Ohio. Peter Porcaro LAW ’06 founded Porcaro Law Group, which concentrates on personal injury and cannabis law in Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade counties in Florida. He is on the national legal committee for NORML, an organization which works to reform marijuana laws.

2007
Melissa A. Chapaska A&S ’07 o has joined the law firm of Hawke McKenna & Sniscak of Harrisburg, Pa. She will focus her practice in the petroleum, electricity, and natural gas sectors. Stephen Gonzalez A&S ’07 o has been named a Certified Consultant by the Association for Applied Sport Psychology. He is an assistant professor of sport psychology at the College of Brockport, State University of New York, and the owner of Performance Mindset Consulting. Kelly (Kochamba) Wesołosky BUS ’07G has been awarded the Gold Hispanic Achievement Award for a non-Hispanic employee by the Pittsburgh Federal Executive Board’s Hispanic Employment Program Committee. She is a community outreach specialist for the FBI.

2008
Jeffery Gentile BUS ’08 has joined the Pittsburgh-based CPA firm CrawfordEllenbogen as a manager with responsibilities in accounting, tax compliance, and planning.

Betty Mae Tatman (Donovan) NURS ’78, ’98G and Kevin Tatman A&S ’78 head for the hills overlooking Manila, Philippines, with their favorite magazine.

Suzanne Ketler A&S ’97G has been promoted to partner at Roetzel & Andress in Akron, Ohio. Her practice focuses on trademark and intellectual property law.

Harry F. Kunselman A&S ’85, LAW ’89 o, a shareholder at Strassburger McKenna Gutnick & Gefsky in Pittsburgh, has received the Professionalism Award from the Civil Litigation Section of the Allegheny County Bar Association.
2009
Amanda Gregg A&S ’09 recently completed a PhD in economics at Yale University and has begun work as an assistant professor of economics at Middlebury College in Vermont.

2013
Elizabeth Bishop EDUC ’13G recently published Becoming Activist: Critical Literacy and Youth Organizing (Peter Lang Publishing). She serves as the deputy director at the Center for Institutional and Social Change at Columbia Law School.

Alexis Fitzgerald A&S ’13 studied terrestrial, coastal, and coral reef communities in Belize last summer as part of a course in pursuit of her master’s degree from Miami University’s Global Field Program. She is an education specialist at the Pittsburgh Zoo and PPG Aquarium. Rachel Shoemake SHRS ’13 won both her height class and the overall championship at the 2015 National Physique Committee Natural Northern Championship.

2014
K. Holly Shiflett EDUC ’14G served on a panel discussing the future of distance education in the United Kingdom at the New Landscape for Higher Education Conference at Regent’s University in London.

2015
Ryan McNeely LAW ’15 has joined the Pittsburgh firm Frank, Gaie, Bailis, Murcko & Pocrass as an associate attorney.

Arlene Adelman SHRS ’63, ’64, CGS ’68, August 2015, age 72, of Pittsburgh. She worked as a physical therapist for almost 40 years.

Jeffrey P. Blick A&S ’90G, ’93G, December 2015, age 52, of Macon, Ga. He was a professor of anthropology and interdisciplinary studies at Georgia College and State University in Milledgeville, Ga. His archaeological research took him to Colombia, South America; San Salvador Island in the Bahamas; and Weyanoke Old Town in Virginia.

Martina Thomas Coll EDUC ’66, June 2015, age 70, of York, Pa. She was a teacher before earning an MBA and working as an insurance underwriter for Glaftefer Insurance until retirement.

Seabury Landon Davies MED ’85, November 2014, age 55, of Park City, Utah. He practiced anesthesiology in Atlanta, Ga., and Park City, Utah.

Carol Jean (Klaber) Elvers EDUC ’61, November 2015, age 77, of Cary, N.C. She had a love of languages, and spoke German and Russian. She taught high school civics and German, and later managed several Olan Mills Photography Studios.

Robert E. Feathers ENGR ’50, March 2015, age 85, of Harris City, Pa. He served in the U.S. Navy as an officer aboard the destroyer USS Cone during the Korean War. He then had a long career as a chemical engineer with PPG Industries.

Allan Gunderson A&S ’55, August 2015, age 84, of South River, N.J. He earned a full scholarship to Pitt through track, served in the army, then taught and coached at The Kiski School in Saltsburg, Pa. He later worked at Bethlehem Steel, retiring as superintendent of personnel services in the shipbuilding division.

Beth Ann Klar NURS ’51, February 2015, age 93, of Indiana, Pa. She enlisted in the Army Nurse Corps during WWII and served in the Pacific theater before returning to Pennsylvania to become a respected nurse and nursing instructor for more than three decades. After her passing, her family received a Presidential Memorial Certificate recognizing her military service and “selfless consecration to the service of our country.”

James Earle Lamport PHARM ’58, December 2015, age 78, of Sierra Vista, Ariz. He served in the Army Medical Service Corp for 24 years, earning a Bronze Star and serving in Vietnam. After retiring from the military, he was a hospital administrator at Temple University in Philadelphia and West Penn Hospital in Pittsburgh.

Martha Besmark Michalik EDUC ’46, October 2015, age 91, of Church Hill, Tenn. A 35-year employee of the University of Pittsburgh and the first director of special events, she was the associate director of governmental relations representing Pitt in Harrisburg when the University became a state-related institution. She later established the Edmund R. Michalik Distinguished Lecture Series in the Mathematical Sciences in honor of her husband. She was named an Outstanding Alumna in 1961 and received the Distinguished Service award from the Alumni Association in 1975.

William P. O’Connor Jr. A&S ’79, BUS ’00G, March 2015, age 50, of Green Tree, Pa. He worked as a chemist at Neville Chemical Company. An avid drummer all his life, he played briefly with the newly formed band Blondie in the 1970s. For the past ten years, he was the drummer for the Pittsburgh-based band The Elliotts.

Susan L. (Mitchell) Rittenhouse A&S ’86, March 2015, age 50, of Franklin, Mass. She worked as a marketing manager for the former Hills Department Stores and served on the board of directors for the Franklin Public Library. She also raised a therapy dog for the Mt. St. Rita Health Center in Cumberland, R.I.

Donald Edmond Wegener A&S ’52G, November 2015, age 89, of San Diego, Calif. While at Pitt, he worked with Jonas Salk on the team that developed the polio vaccine. In 1963, he helped establish the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in La Jolla, Calif., where he worked for more than 30 years before moving on to Johnson and Johnson Pharmaceutical Research and Development.

2009

Lance Woods A&S ’11 has joined the Pittsburgh law firm Meyer, Unkovic & Scott as an associate. Previously, he served eight years in the U.S. Army, with tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, and in 2011 was named to the New Pittsburgh Courier’s “Fab 40” list of influential African Americans under the age of 40.

Steven Ettinger A&S ’09 has been hired as an associate at the Pittsburgh law firm Dickie McCamey & Chilcote. He will concentrate his practice in health care and medical negligence.
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______ Surprise us. Wow!
$250 A storied gift.
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A gurney speeds through the hospital’s halls, destined for the Emergency Department (ED). On the stretcher is an unresponsive 21-year-old man suffering from multiple gunshot wounds. Within seconds, he’s pulled into C-Booth—the ED’s dedicated area for the most critical cases—and the medical team swarms around him. More than a dozen doctors, residents, medical students, and nurses go about their quick, skilled work to resuscitate him. Amidst the beeping of machines and exchange of instructions, the group works together calmly, seemingly by instinct.

Capturing it all through the lens of a video camera is Pitt medical student Ryan McGarry.

Eventually, this scene will become the opening to *Code Black*, McGarry’s award-winning documentary on the Los Angeles County Hospital’s Emergency Department. “If you’re an outsider, this looks like total chaos,” he says in the film’s opening lines. “But as a doctor, I see unity in that chaos. There’s a team here in all that, coming together to save someone’s life.”

McGarry (MED ’09) didn’t plan to make a documentary when he was first assigned a clerkship and research rotation at Los Angeles County Hospital. It was his fourth year of medical school and he was eager to learn what he could in one of the nation’s busiest EDs. Yet, the department’s unique environment rekindled in him a long-held creative streak. As a child, he loved reading about cinematography, and when he got to college, he majored in English. A personal health crisis, coupled with a growing desire to help reduce the suffering of others, soon turned his attention to medicine.

The rare dynamics of C-Booth, however, inspired McGarry’s cinematic eye. The collective hive of humans at work in C-Booth stood in contrast to some modernized emergency departments. In the 20- by 25-foot open area, which housed four gurneys side-by-side, there was no separation between providers and patients. “The patients were in the middle, and they were the focus,” McGarry says. Today, patient privacy measures and administrative requirements can create a more fragmented and paperwork-oriented environment.

With the necessary approvals, McGarry began to film life in the ED. When his rotation ended, Pitt’s School of Medicine gave him an academic extension so that he could continue filming in Los Angeles. Yet, it wasn’t until he returned to LA County Hospital for his residency in 2012 that the documentary’s full vision materialized. By then, the ED had moved to a new building, and C-Booth was gone. In its place was a modern emergency department, where, McGarry says, practitioners struggle to keep up with the regulations requiring a high volume of documentation and limiting the time they can spend with patients.

The young doctor saw the opportunity to document the effects of a major shift in emergency care. So, when he wasn’t practicing medicine, he returned to filming. The documentary, which follows McGarry’s fellow doctors-in-training in the ED, explores how the complex protocols of modern medicine affect the fast-paced, collaborative, demanding dynamics of emergency medicine.

The Pitt alumnus says the project was particularly formative for him because it helped him to consider his generation’s contribution to medicine. “Part of what we’re trying to figure out now is who we are. What does it mean to be a doctor in these times in America?” he asks.

Released in 2013, *Code Black* was met with wide acclaim. It netted Best Documentary at the Los Angeles Film Festival, Audience Favorite in the documentary category at the Aspen Filmfest, and would go on to win many more awards. McGarry, who was named a Sundance Institute Fellow in 2012, is now working on another project that he hopes will further explore the dynamics of healthcare in this new era.
McGarry’s work also caught the eye of television network CBS. They collaborated with him to create a medical drama by the same title, which debuted in fall 2015.

Meanwhile, McGarry is busier than ever. He’s executive producer of the CBS series, a practicing physician at New York-Presbyterian Hospital, and an assistant professor of emergency medicine at Cornell University. He says he owes much of his success to attending medical school at Pitt, where faculty and administration encouraged him on his unconventional path. “If it wasn’t for Pitt, none of this would have happened,” he says.

What could motivate hundreds of Pitt students, alumni, faculty, and staff to rise before the sun on a chilly winter morning and trek across half of Pennsylvania? The opportunity to advocate for higher education—and, in particular, the University of Pittsburgh.

Each year, Pitt Day in Harrisburg attracts roughly 500 Pitt supporters to the state capitol building to share with legislators personal stories about how the University has enhanced their lives, careers, and communities. For those who travel to Pennsylvania’s capital from Pittsburgh, the day begins before 7 a.m., when chartered buses filled with Pitt people set off for a day of presentations, meetings, and mingling with representatives. The event provides a valuable opportunity to inform and engage the lawmakers, many of whom have personally benefited from higher education (including some proud Pitt alumni).

Pitt Day in Harrisburg has become a yearly tradition. For about 10 years, Arnold Epstein (EDUC ’69) has taken part in the annual trip to the capitol. An attorney and instructor in Pitt’s legal studies program, Epstein serves on the Pitt Alumni Association’s executive board. The son of immigrants, he received his Pitt education with help from state funding, loans, and scholarships, so he has both an affinity for his alma mater and a keen understanding of the importance of governmental support for higher education. He also knows that personal stories make a bigger impact than simple facts and figures.

“Tell the senators your career hopes, and why you chose Pitt,” Epstein advises the students who join him for meetings with legislators. “We remind legislators that the University generates job makers and voters,” he adds.

Yet, the day isn’t simply about appealing for state funding support. “We’re building relationships,” says Jeff Gleim, associate vice chancellor for alumni relations at Pitt. “The legislators know us and that makes a difference.” The importance of those relationships is why the Pitt group makes the annual trek. “There’s always room to say thank you,” says Gleim, who also is executive director of the Pitt Alumni Association.

For information on Pitt Day in Harrisburg 2016, visit www.alumni.pitt.edu/alumni/groups/pitt-day-in-harrisburg.
Every year, Student Alumni Association members and their guests dress up and have some fun at Pitt’s Cathedral Ball. More than 400 students took a break before finals in December to join the festivities. Among the merrymakers were, from left, Austin Crull, director of Young Alumni & Student Programs, and Fareedah Haroun; Jessica Bellis; and Theresa Dickerson and Jaron Moore.

New friends. Before meeting at a Pitt Club of Atlanta pregame event in the fall, Clayton Youngs (BUS ‘08G), left, and Dexter Edmonds (SIS ‘84) had no idea that they work for the same company—and that they will both be relocating to the same office building.
Register today for the new Pitt Alumni Online Services. You can find classmates through a searchable online directory, create a unique profile, update your contact information, share photos, and post class notes. The services are available now at www.alumnionline.pitt.edu. An e-mail sent out in January provided instructions on creating your new account, but if you missed it, write to us at webmaster@ia.pitt.edu, and we’ll help you get started. Hail to Pitt!

—Jeff Gleim

Associate Vice Chancellor for Alumni Relations and Executive Director, Pitt Alumni Association

BY ADAM REGER

After a 5 a.m. start and two hours in Dhaka traffic, Susan Iannuzzi is greeted by 65 curious first graders. They giggle as the visitor takes her seat at the back of the classroom. Waiting for the teacher to begin, Iannuzzi silently scans the classroom, noting everything from the instructional posters to the students’ backpacks.

As an independent consultant in education and publishing, Iannuzzi travels the globe, overseeing a team of writers, editors, designers, and illustrators who help nations create and update textbooks. Over the last two years, the jetsetter made seven trips to Bangladesh to help rewrite materials for primary school children. Before that, she consulted with educators in countries including Brazil, Egypt, Eritrea, Kyrgyzstan, and the Ukraine.

The Pitt alum calls her unique career “totally accidental.” It all began after Iannuzzi moved to Egypt with her soon-to-be husband. Though she had just earned a law degree from Boston College, she had no license to practice in her new home, so she found a job teaching English to Egyptian kindergartners in an English-language school in Cairo. Eventually, Iannuzzi impressed a British-Egyptian publishing company with her constructive feedback on their educational materials, and she was asked to become a consultant. Before long, she branched out—writing, editing, and working with other nations’ ministries of education.

“I enjoy working in other cultures with the possibility to effect change on a large scale,” she says. But she’s careful to be sensitive to cultural, religious, and political considerations, along with educational preferences. “It has to work for them,” notes Iannuzzi. “I don’t have any illusions that I have all the answers, or that the Western way of teaching is going to work everywhere.”

Iannuzzi (A&S ’88, ’00G)—who returned to Pitt in the early years of her consulting career to earn a master’s degree in linguistics with a concentration in second language acquisition—credits the University of Pittsburgh for fostering in her an openness to different ways of thinking and a passion for working with people from other countries and backgrounds. “I’ve been able to appreciate and draw on that in my work,” she says.

Now, Iannuzzi’s daughter is tapping into that Pitt perspective, too. Mira Shenouda is a freshman on the Pittsburgh campus and a distinguished Stamps Scholar, preparing to effect her own change in the world.
NOW AND THEN

The Oakland Zoo, the super-enthusiastic student section at Pitt basketball games, cheers during the annual "Pink the Pete" Breast Cancer Awareness Game at the Petersen Events Center. Every year, a portion of the game's ticket sales is donated to fight the disease.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY AIMEE OBIDZINSKI/PITT CIDDE
HAIL TO OUR LOYAL FANS


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