

Winter 2019

# Macalester Today Winter 2019

Macalester College

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/macalestertoday>

---

## Recommended Citation

Macalester College, "Macalester Today Winter 2019" (2019). *Macalester Today*. 126.  
<https://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/macalestertoday/126>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Communications and Public Relations at DigitalCommons@Macalester College. It has been accepted for inclusion in Macalester Today by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Macalester College. For more information, please contact [scholarpub@macalester.edu](mailto:scholarpub@macalester.edu).



4



12



18

## FEATURES

**Changing Company Culture 12**

Caroline Karanja '12 is helping organizations talk about equity—and take action.

**We Are Here:****Learning in the Twin Cities 14**

In more than 60 courses, holding class off campus adds new dimensions to what students learn.

**A Lesson from Marlon James, Epic Storyteller 18**

Mac's writer in residence brings us behind the scenes of his new novel, *Black Leopard, Red Wolf*.

**Decoding Algorithms 24**

Algorithms are embedded in our lives. What are computer scientists watching?

**Lecture Notes:****The Diversity of Islam 30**

Students explore how the world's 1.5 billion Muslims interpret and practice their faith.

**Theatrical Practice 32**

Stephen Fedo '72 juggles multiple roles: actor, director, playwright, and general counsel.

**ON THE COVER:**

"I'm a big believer in that if you establish a routine, the muses show up," says English professor, writer in residence, and acclaimed novelist Marlon James. Photograph by Mark Seliger



24



32

## DEPARTMENTS

**Correspondence** 2

**Household Words** 3

**1600 Grand** 4

Theater and dance collaborations,  
Macathon, and athletics accolades

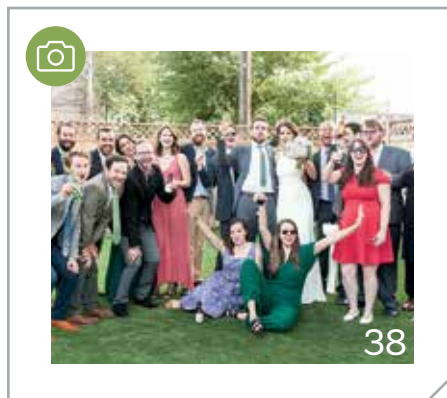
**Class Notes** 34

**Books** 36

**Weddings** 38

**In Memoriam** 45

**Last Look** 48



## STAFF

### EDITOR

Rebecca DeJarlais Ortiz '06  
dejarlais@macalester.edu

### ART DIRECTOR

Brian Donahue

### CLASS NOTES EDITOR

Robert Kerr '92

### PHOTOGRAPHER

David J. Turner

### CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Julie Hessler '85

Mike Vangel

### ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT FOR MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Julie Hurbanis



MACALESTER

### CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Jerry Crawford '71

### PRESIDENT

Brian Rosenberg

### VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADVANCEMENT

D. Andrew Brown

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF

### ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

Katie Ladas

### MACALESTER TODAY (Volume 107, Number 1)

is published by Macalester College. It is  
mailed free of charge to alumni and friends  
of the college four times a year.  
Circulation is 32,000.

### TO UPDATE YOUR ADDRESS:

Email: [alumnioffice@macalester.edu](mailto:alumnioffice@macalester.edu)

Call: 651-696-6295 or 1-888-242-9351

Write: Alumni Engagement Office, Macalester  
College, 1600 Grand Ave., St. Paul, MN 55105-1899

### TO SHARE COMMENTS OR IDEAS:

Email: [mactoday@macalester.edu](mailto:mactoday@macalester.edu)

Phone: 651-696-6123



### Jazz greetings

There were unique Macalester moments with **Kofi Annan '61** that have stayed with me for close to 60 years. Back in the day, Kofi and I were track teammates and used to have friendly conversations about who were the best American female jazz performers of the era. During early spring practices, the sprinters used to warm up in Mac's old gymnasium, utilizing the gymnastics mats for our stretching exercises. Always interested in understanding the finer points of American culture, Kofi often engaged me with questions about the jazz scene while we stretched. We talked about Ella, Sarah, Billy, Dinah, and others. A few times I shared jazz albums with him.

While on campus we had unique ways of acknowledging each other. Approaching him, I would say, "Sarah" and he would often reply, "Ella." We would smile! The last time we exchanged our "jazz greeting" was in May 2009, when Macalester honored Kofi with a bronze bust of his likeness.

**LeRoy Martin '62**  
Port Angeles, Wash.

### Remembering Sandy Hill

I had the good fortune to meet **Sandy Hill '57** during my senior year at Mac, when I was the student representative on the search committee that would hire Brian Rosenberg. He was a wonderful mentor for me, helping me to feel more confident as I prepared to transition to life post-Mac.

In particular, I appreciated how he helped me see myself less as a college student and more as a professional who had much to offer the world (as well as a lot to learn). He also helped me dress the part. Towards the end of the year, he invited me over to his house for dinner—and to help

him clean out his closet. I walked away with piles of fine wool sweaters (he kept saying, "they are too itchy for me now") and a nice pair of dress pants ("take them, I will never fit into them again") but "you have to buy your own wood hangers." And he was so relieved when I finally got a proper pair of dress shoes just in time for graduation! To this day, these articles of clothing still form a big part of my professional wardrobe, and when I wear them I think about Sandy's mentoring and friendship.

As the various obituaries noted, he would invite students over to his home

where he would provide amazing meals and then ask us to talk about our experiences at Mac. Were we receiving adequate mentoring? What could Mac do better in order to serve its students? Why weren't students protesting even more vocally about things going on in the world? I don't believe I've ever met anyone quite like him; he made quite an impression on me when I was in that challenging time of transitioning from Mac student to Mac grad.

It seemed to me that he had several lifetimes' worth of friends, and he invested a great deal into those relationships. He left an undeniable mark on Macalester, and I hope we can remember him well.

**Patrick J. D'Silva '03**  
Boulder, Colo.

### Correction

In the spring 2018 *Household Words* column, we did not credit **Kori Suzuki '21** for his photography. We apologize for the error.

**MAC SOCIAL**

**brandonhill777**

**brandonhill777** To this amazing group of talent and laughter. Love every single one of you!  
 #acapella #chromatics  
 #singer #singers #musicgroup  
 #macalester #heymac



**CONNECT WITH US**

Visit Mac's social media hub at [macalester.edu/macsocial](http://macalester.edu/macsocial) and join in by using the **#heymac** hashtag when you post on Twitter or Instagram.

### CORRESPONDENCE POLICY

We invite letters of 300 words or fewer. Messages may be edited for clarity, style, and space and will be published based on their relevance to issues discussed in *Macalester Today*. Share your thoughts:

- Email: [mactoday@macalester.edu](mailto:mactoday@macalester.edu)
- Tweet: @macalester using the hashtag #macalestertoday
- Mail: *Macalester Today*, Macalester College, 1600 Grand Ave., St. Paul, MN 55105

PHOTO: ISAYSHA MCCAULEY '19

PHOTO: KORI SUZUKI '21

# REALITY BITES\*

BY BRIAN ROSENBERG

*"Reality is that which, when you stop believing in it, doesn't go away."* —Philip K. Dick

Reality has had a hard time of it during the past decade or so.

The vast proliferation of information on the internet made it more difficult to distinguish the reliable from the half-baked. Social media has made things exponentially worse, creating intellectual cocoons impenetrable by facts or by inconvenient dissent. Then came the deluge: bots and trolls, "fake news," "alternative facts," a distasteful stew of dissembling and distortion too extreme even to be called Orwellian.

Yet reality doesn't go away.

To be clear, philosophical debates about the nature of reality have a long and distinguished tradition. From Heraclitus to Bishop Berkeley to Timothy Leary, intellectuals and quasi-intellectuals have been arguing about what is and is not "real" for centuries. Samuel Johnson's refutation of Berkeley's immaterialism by kicking a stone is among the more famous Samuel Johnson anecdotes. (There are many. I recommend them.)

There is, however, an important distinction between these philosophical debates and what we are witnessing today. However heated the disagreements between supporters of Plato and Aristotle or Descartes and Hume about what constitutes "reality," these arguments never truly formed the basis of public policy. For the most part, the assumption has been that what we see and hear, what rigorous scientific research tells us is true, should be at least the starting point for discussions of how we conduct ourselves as a society.

Yes, there have been exceptions: the Catholic Church's prohibition against the Copernican theory of the earth's motion; Joseph Goebbels's assertion that "when one lies, one should lie big, and stick to it." But these are not among the highlights of

human history or models for how to behave in a democracy.

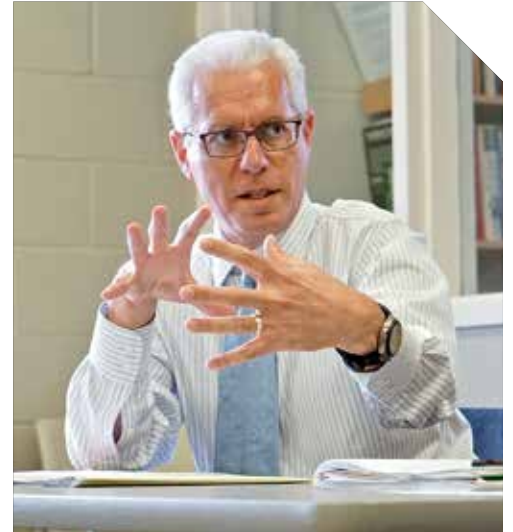
The crumbling of a consensus about what constitutes reality is affecting our politics and our public discourse in numerous ways, but without question the most consequential impact is on our discussions of and response to climate change. There is overwhelming scientific consensus about the fact that human behavior is affecting the earth's climate in ways that are already being felt and that are likely, if unchecked, to prove catastrophic. Yet confronted by the most serious existential threat in human history—I do not consider this an exaggeration—we cannot even seem to agree as a society that the threat exists, let alone formulate policies to address it.

Which brings me to some observations about the proper work of a college.

Learning to distinguish between opinion and argument, to discover and present reliable evidence, to bring a rigorously critical mindset to the examination of complex ideas, has always been an important component of a serious education. It is today, if anything, more important. A student leaving a college at this moment unequipped to differentiate between facts and fiction, between lies and truth, is being sent into the world unprepared to function effectively as a professional or even as a citizen.

This does not mean that colleges should try to inculcate in students a particular worldview—quite the opposite. It means they should provide students with the tools and capacities to develop informed worldviews of their own. It means that students should be able to distinguish between the assertion that "something is so because I claim it to be so" and "something is so on the basis of this set of reliable evidence."

I sense that it is harder than ever before for today's students to make this latter distinction: not because they are less discriminating, but because they have to navigate a minefield of disinformation



and deception and unsupported opinion that simply did not exist in the days when I responded to an assignment by heading to the card catalogue in the library.

Try doing a Google search for "global warming." The first "video from the web" that appears is one from Fox News in which Mark Levin makes the case that global warming is a fiction. People much smarter than I am can probably explain how that video ended up first, but, whatever the cause, this is the world of information our students must learn to navigate. Perhaps in the end they will decide to agree with Mark Levin, but they should at least have the capacity to contextualize his views within the broader scientific consensus about climate change.

(By the way, Google "migrant caravan" and the first story that appears is also from Fox News. I invite you to try your own search engine experiment.)

Right now a substantial portion of the American population seems to have stopped believing in reality. The good news is that, as the writer Philip K. Dick reminds us, reality will not go away.

The bad news? Reality will not go away. **M**

Brian Rosenberg is president of Macalester College.

\*A cult classic starring Winona Ryder and Ethan Hawke

# 1600 GRAND

## CREATIVE COLLABORA

Made possible by gifts to The Macalester Moment fundraising campaign, Mac's new theater and dance building opened in time for spring semester, marking the end of a year featuring alternative creative performance spaces while the building was under construction.



## THEATER

In December the department presented its final production before moving into its new home:

*Distacted*, by Lisa Loomer, at Mixed Blood Theatre in Minneapolis. Led by director **Jack Reuler '75** (Mixed Blood's founder and artistic director) and assistant director **Isabel Nelson '04**, *Distacted* tells the story of a mother trying to gain a better understanding of her son's ADHD diagnosis.

For **Kavya Shetty '19** (Newton, Mass.)—who played the mother—collaborating with the two alumni directors was an honor. “I’ve admired their work for a long time, and my initial impressions were only enriched by the opportunity to work with them these past few months,” says Shetty (pictured at left). “In a year in which the theater department found itself without a physical home, these alumni truly welcomed and took care of us with open arms.”

# TIONS

## DANCE

**Tess Mueller '20** (Vashon, Wash.) and **Ziyue (Grace) Xue '22** (Beijing, China) take the stage in “How I Hold You,” a modern dance piece choreographed by **Linnea Fox '19** (Wettswil am Albis, Switzerland). “We share weight and balance with each other—the moves can’t be completed by a single person,” says Xue, pictured (far right) with Mueller. Fox’s work was one of three pieces of original student choreography featured at St. Paul’s SteppingStone Theatre in *Breath Bound*, the fall dance concert.





## ATHLETICS ACCOLADES

After fall competition wrapped up, two Mac athletes received national recognition.

### FOOTBALL

#### Alec Beatty '19

**Hometown:** Topeka, Kan.

**Position:** Receiver

**Major:** Political science

**Award:** Named to the 2018 Division III Coaches' All-America second team by the American Football Coaches Association (AFCA)

**Honors:**

- 2018 Midwest Conference Offensive Skill MVP
- Single-season record holder: receiving yards and touchdowns
- Career record holder: receiving yards, receiving touchdowns, and total touchdowns

**Mac history:** Beatty is the first Macalester football player to be named an AFCA All-American since the coaches association began selecting All-America teams in 1945.





## SOCCER

### Jackson White '20

**Hometown:** Danville, Calif.

**Award:** The College Sports Information Directors of America's Google Cloud Division III Men's Soccer Academic All-America second team

**Position:** Defender

#### Stats and honors:

- Three-year starter
- Led all field players in minutes played (2018)
- 4.0 GPA with majors in economics and applied math and stats

**Mac history:** White is the fifth Mac men's soccer player to be named an Academic All-American and the first since 2011.

# BUILDING A SHARED VISION

*As Macalester's new Dean of Multicultural Life, Marjorie Trueblood is supporting campus-wide conversations about equity and inclusion.*

## What's new in the Department of Multicultural Life (DML) this year?

Through my previous work at Kenyon College and then Southern Oregon University, I knew that people at Macalester try to break out of the mold and think of innovative ways to support the community for success. That's exciting to me. This year, we're thinking more broadly about who we're serving. We've preserved signature DML programs such as our Trezas student-led dialogues, Allies training workshops, identity collectives, and the beautiful ceremonies around Commencement in the spring—but we're thinking about what we're doing in addition to those key programs. We've shifted the DML's structure to include staff and resources dedicated to college access, retention, and success. That expands how we support first-generation students, undocumented students, and students of color.

## How is the campus community talking about diversity?

This year's first-year class is both highly diverse and the largest class we've ever had. That positions us to think about how we want to be inclusive and equitable, not just relying on diversity in terms of being in proximity to one another. When President Rosenberg brought in diversity consultant Jamie Washington to work with our community this year, it was the first time that a consultant has been hired at Mac to work with senior leadership, faculty, staff, and students—everyone—so that we're all grounded in the same language and building a shared vision. Through this work, we're creating a foundation from which we'll centralize diversity efforts, so our initiatives can be more fruitful.

How do we provide support for all of our students? And how are we equipping all of our students—including those who might not see themselves within the DML's work—so they can be more interculturally competent folks when they leave here? That's a needed skill for whatever positions alumni have in this increasingly diverse world. How do we provide skill-building for people who are going to become leaders in the world when they leave?

## What issues are on students' minds?

Students want to build better bridges among cultural organizations, expand peer mentorship opportunities, and connect with alumni more. They want more diverse representation in the Health and Wellness Center, they're thinking about what it would look like to have more culturally based campus housing beyond the Cultural House, and they want to connect with students from other higher ed institutions.



## How do Mac students today identify with multiculturalism?

Multiculturalism means different things for different people. It's not just about our students of color. We've had a few bias incidents on campus involving the swastika, a symbol that has problematic impacts on a lot of groups but especially for our Jewish students. They felt targeted. In some of the forums that we've had, Jewish students have talked about how they identify not religiously or spiritually but culturally as Jewish and want to have more connection with the DML. I see international students who might have been part of a majority population in their countries and then come here and be minoritized or racialized. What does multiculturalism mean to them?

## What can people do to advocate for equity and inclusion?

Listen and leverage, wherever you are. Notice who you pay attention to, who you don't pay attention to. Take the opportunity to listen to those voices that are often silenced. If you have privileged identities, leverage that privilege to make positive change.

# OVERNIGHT INNOVATION



Nineteen Macathon teams worked through the night in Olin-Rice, navigating roadblocks and breakthroughs alike.

AT 4:30 ON A FRIDAY AFTERNOON in November, 100 students (plus 14 alumni judges) kicked off the seventh annual Macathon overnight innovation and creativity competition. Each of the 19 teams had 24 hours to identify a problem or need, come up with an innovative solution, create a prototype, and present it to a panel of expert alumni.

By 10 p.m., **Panje Nambao '19, Dawn Sagoe '19, and Traci Badu '21**—team L.I.T. Naturals—were hurrying over to Whole Foods for shea butter, aloe vera gel, and apple cider vinegar. Their product: Crème Brulée, an organic and raw hair-care product that naturally elongates the hair of women with tighter curl patterns. They identified a need for this low-cost, natural product, noting that relaxers contain damaging chemicals and existing natural hair-care products are often expensive. “All of us in the team have kinky hair, and a lot of the products on the market did not really work well with our hair,” Nambao says. “That motivated us to figure out a cream that would not only moisturize but also help stretch the hair out.”

Throughout the night, alumni-mentors ranging from the classes of 1982 to 2018 visited teams to give constructive feedback. “We didn’t sleep. We kept ourselves up with candy, energy drinks, and Diet Coke, and played loads of music too,” Sagoe says.

*“We were all friends and we shared the same struggles—so it was easier to figure out what we wanted the products to do specifically for our hair. Our team dynamic was great, so it made it a little easier to get through all the hard stuff.”*

—Traci Badu '21

In the Idea Lab around 8 a.m., team L.I.T. Naturals started working on its hair cream formula and building hair elongation plates from

perler beads and rubber bands. Minutes before the first-round pitch at 1 p.m., the trio finally tested the products successfully. In the finals, L.I.T. Naturals beat out five other teams for the top prize. The group plans on investing in more ingredients and research to further develop and improve its products.

—Livvie Avrick '19



From left: Dawn Sagoe '19, Panje Nambao '19, and Traci Badu '21



## Countdown to Commencement

With just one semester until graduation, the Class of 2019 celebrated class pride with new senior sweatshirts in December. We hope to see the shirts in (well-loved) tatters at this group’s 20th Reunion in 2039.

Have some gear that has reached that milestone? Share it with us: email [mactoday@macalester.edu](mailto:mactoday@macalester.edu) or use the #heymac hashtag on social media.

1600  
GRAND



# A DAY IN THE LIFE

Each semester, “Day in the Life” videos provide snapshots of life at Mac and are among our most popular website and social content. Last fall, biology major **Pietro Tardelli Canedo '19** (São Paulo, Brazil) filmed his day. Watch the video: [macalester.edu/pietro](http://macalester.edu/pietro).



9:15 A.M.  
LEAVING THE HOUSE TO RUN ERRANDS BEFORE CLASS



9:25 A.M.  
MEETING MY BEST FRIEND FOR COFFEE



9:30 A.M.  
RAN INTO MY FRIEND AT THE LIBRARY. WE'RE GOING TO THE SAME CLASS—AND WE'RE MATCHING.



9:40 A.M.  
COMPUTER SCIENCE CLASS: EXPLORING A DATA SET ON FLIGHT DELAYS IN THE U.S.



1:10 P.M.  
MY FAVORITE CLASS AT MAC: INVERTEBRATE AND ANIMAL DIVERSITY WITH SARAH BOYER



8 P.M.  
CLUB VOLLEYBALL PRACTICE



11:15 A.M.  
WORKING ON MY HONORS THESIS ON DADDY LONGLEGS IN NEW ZEALAND



1:30 P.M.  
TODAY IN LAB WE'RE GOING TO BE LOOKING IN THE MICROSCOPE FOR SOME FLATWORMS. HI, GARY!



9 P.M.  
"MAC ON THREE! ONE, TWO, THREE: MAC ATTACK!"



11:30 A.M.  
FINISHING A DNA EXTRACTION | STARTED WORKING ON YESTERDAY



4:30 P.M.  
GOING TO THE LIBRARY WITH RAINAH TO WORK ON AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY



10:15 P.M.  
BACK HOME AND READY FOR BED

# CHANGING COMPANY CULTURE



## ■ Caroline Karanja '12 is helping organizations talk about equity—and take action.

BY REBECCA DEJARLAIS ORTIZ '06

In a recent business meeting, two women of color—including **Caroline Karanja '12**—were the decisionmakers. But you wouldn't know it, based on how the prospective clients steered the discussion. "There were three white men in the room, and the folks pitching to us only directed their questions and eye contact to those men," she says. "It was so pronounced that after the meeting, our male colleagues said, 'Did you notice they didn't give you the time of day?'"

That's the type of workplace interaction that contributes to disparate rates in how organizations retain people of color, Karanja says. Minneapolis and St. Paul rank first nationally in retaining professionals, but just 14th in retaining professionals of color, according to Greater MSP, a regional nonprofit focused on jobs and economic development. Karanja can list plenty of similar stories from just her own workforce experience—interactions that aren't explicitly sexist or racist, perhaps, but chip away at morale and make other job opportunities seem more enticing. "Those little moments add up; it's death by a thousand paper cuts," she says. "When you have a skill set that gives you a lot of employment options, what keeps you in an organization is the community you build and that organization's culture. If that culture facilitates exclusivity or microaggressions, if you don't feel like your voice is being heard—when someone comes along with a better offer, you're more likely to take it."

Company cultures need to change, she says, and there's no time to waste, given the rapidly changing demographics in Minnesota and around the country: through 2030, the number of people of color in Minnesota is expected to grow twice as quickly as the number of white people. "Those are going to be your employees," she says. "If we can't retain them, how are we going to attract business here? You have to think about what equity means in your organization and take steps toward it. It's no longer enough to just have conversations about it."

Karanja is using her own skill sets to transform the workplace—at tech companies, in schools, and even in state government. Her solution: 26 Letters, a tech-based platform that Karanja co-founded in 2017. Named as a reminder of the power of language choices, 26 Letters provides tools to help organizations facilitate inclusion, diversity, equity, and awareness. Part of the platform focuses on an organizational assessment that provides inclusion and engagement scores, with feedback on current strengths and opportunities for growth. Each set of recommendations is tailored specifically to an organization's people, needs, and goals. Even departments and branches within one company may receive different recommendations: "What are the inclusion and equity gaps in your Toronto office? How can we address those? What does having a sense of belonging mean for someone in your IT team?" Karanja says.

In addition to the organizational assessment, 26 Letters conducts individual assessments that produce personal development plans to help employees build awareness about what kind of media they consume, where they build community, and how they can broaden their perspectives. Karanja's team is also

testing a text-messaging consultation service.

Karanja's fascination with the intersection of culture and technology began to flourish at Mac, when the American studies major started to see technology as a way to level the playing field—the idea that if you can learn how to code, you can build solutions. She taught herself how to code, and her first job after graduation was as a corporate data analyst for Best Buy. Karanja later worked at a start-up, where she learned how to build both a product and a team—experience that came in handy when she launched 26 Letters.

Throughout those years, says Karanja, whose family moved from Kenya to Wisconsin when she was 10, she also experienced how women and people of color navigate work environments that don't represent them equitably. When she started wearing her hair naturally, for example, she didn't think much of it, until a coworker started squeezing her hair. "As a black woman, I'd heard stories about people touching your hair, but it had only happened to me with younger children," she says. "This was someone who was older than me, in a higher position, and I was new and in need of a job."

As she connected with more women and people of color in tech, she learned that she wasn't alone in her experiences. Karanja dug into research on diversity and inclusion in the workforce and started consulting.

In early 2016, she had another lightbulb moment. She found herself meeting for coffee with staff from a large corporation for the third time, in increasingly deep conversations—with Karanja essentially providing free consulting about how to improve the company's culture. "That's when I realized I wanted to do this full-time," she says. "Woman can't live on coffee alone."

Her clients now include the state of Minnesota, Minneapolis Public Schools, nonprofits, and tech companies from Minnesota to the Bay Area. Last summer 26 Letters joined the Lunar Startups accelerator, a St. Paul-based incubator designed to support a diverse group of entrepreneurs. Lunar was launched by American Public Media and supported in part by a \$1 million investment from the Knight Foundation.

Splitting her time between her Lunar desk and Minneapolis apartment, Karanja often divides her workday into early morning and late night shifts ("peak productivity happens from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m.," she says). Her workload ranges from communicating with clients to building applications to fix bugs, a breadth of challenges that require the critical thinking skills that she credits to her American studies coursework at Mac.

As Karanja eyes expansion, she's thinking about her ideal client—and realizing that it's not one type of company. She simply wants to partner with organizations that are ready to take action and effect change. That includes her work with Minneapolis Public Schools, as evidenced by recent conversations at a statewide educators conference. "People were approaching us to tell us they're putting together groups to discuss what they're learning," Karanja says. "It's exciting to see our platform changing how people view the world." **M**

WE ARE HERE:

# Learning in the Twin Cities



Swopnil Shrestha '21 and her classmates present midterms to judges at a St. Paul entrepreneurship hub—an exercise that's designed to be a little bit daunting, says their professor.





**Tiny Footprint Coffee** created the world's first carbon-negative coffee. "This is an example of action," says biology professor **Devavani Chatterjea** during a tour with her first-year class.

BY REBECCA DEJARLAIS ORTIZ '06

Last semester, Macalester classes met—as usual—in spots like Old Main and Olin-Rice. They also met all over the Twin Cities, in places ranging from a concert hall to City Hall. More than 60 courses in 17 departments now include assignments that send students around the metro area to explore, research, and collaborate. Whether those excursions are one-time guided field trips or semester-long partnerships with local organizations, holding class off campus adds new dimensions to the theory students learn in the classroom.

We tagged along with seven Mac classes as they took their education into the Twin Cities.

## Touching shoulders

On a Saturday afternoon in October, Ntozake Shange's *for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf* is playing at the Penumbra Theatre in St. Paul. It's a small space, and the 14 students in history professor Crystal Moten's Narrating Black Women's Resistance course are packed into their seats. The setting itself is one of community: the stage is close to the seating, actors move among and engage with the audience, and there's not much wiggle room between chairs.

That's part of Moten's philosophy. "Those chairs are really close—you're touching shoulders with someone in the audience," she says. "How does that impact what you think? How does being in community with other people teach you something? I really value the learning that happens within communities. I think about the ways in which our intellectual growth happens—not just in the classroom but in what's happening in our hearts, in how we interact with people who aren't like ourselves. To me that's just as important as sitting in the classroom and poring over a text."

All semester, the class is studying autobiographies and memoirs written by black women. For **Maddie Schumacher '19** (Madison, Wis.), seeing stories presented through a different lens at Penumbra was powerful—and so was the theater company's multiracial casting, involving black, Latinx, and Asian American actors. "It just felt like this utopian vision of solidarity and shared power," Schumacher says. "I'm half Chinese, and I realized this was the first time I had seen an Asian woman on stage being honest and frank. Every line hit me. It made me think about my own identities. The following weekend I bought tickets to go see it again."

## Ethnographic legacies

One of the longest-running community-based courses at Mac is the anthropology department's Ethnographic Interviewing class, launched nearly 50 years ago using an approach pioneered by professors James Spradley and David McCurdy. Thousands of students have completed the course, which requires them to choose a microculture—and an informant in that microculture—and conduct seven hourlong interviews, then use that information to write a 30-page research paper. Although students aren't required to go off campus for their project, about half of them do—and Mac's urban location creates an especially rich variety of options, says professor Arjun Guneratne, who has been teaching the class for 15 years.

Over the years, his students have explored microcultures that range from firefighters to funeral home directors. To complete the assignment successfully, students must build good rapport with their informants.

"Every line hit me," says Maddie Schumacher '19 (front row, far right) of the Penumbra Theatre production her class attended.



PHOTOS: (OPPOSITE), DAVID J. TURNER, (RIGHT), COURTESY OF BEMINET KASSAYE



Elizabeth Abramson '19 (second from right) and her classmates used GIS technology to analyze access to early-childhood programs in St. Paul—and presented their findings at City Hall.

the music performed live brought a lot to the table that I wouldn't have gotten from listening to a couple of sections online."

### Mapping early childhood education

Elizabeth Abramson '19 (West Newton, Mass.) and her classmates in geography professor Laura Smith's Urban GIS [geographic information systems] class spent the semester analyzing access to early-childhood education in St. Paul. Using GIS technology, the students examined three angles: the demographics and areas of highest need, current distributions of childcare programs, and the barriers families face in accessing programs. The project was a collaboration with St. Paul City Council member Rebecca Noecker, who is

PHOTO: COURTESY OF LAURA SMITH

For anthropology major **Aberdeen McEvers '19** (Houston, Minn.), Guneratne's Ethnographic Interviewing course last fall marked her third (and most intensive) ethnographic project at Mac. Each assignment shaped her perspective beyond what she gleaned from the interviews. "Studying a microculture off campus strengthens my interpersonal communication—it pushes me because it's less comfortable to interview a stranger in a new place than someone you know in an environment you're familiar with," says McEvers, who focused her most recent project on what tools a public library uses to make all community members feel welcome. "I'm always surprised at the relationships I develop with my informants. They've always been very open and giving people, and this has had a profound impact on my confidence in interpersonal interactions with people outside academic research as well."

driving an initiative to implement universal childcare for all St. Paul three- and four-year-olds. The class visited City Hall twice to discuss the project and present their findings to an audience that included Noecker and her team, other council members, education consultants, and the St. Paul Public Schools superintendent.

**"When we work with these community partners, we have to learn to balance their priorities with what we think is interesting. Obviously, we take a GIS class because we want to improve our GIS skills. But it's not useful if we show our client a complex multilevel analysis that we think is really cool but isn't productive for them. We're taking into account what's going to be most useful for our client and then adjusting—even if that means changing what we originally thought we were going to do."** —ELIZABETH ABRAMSON '19

### Live performance

On a Sunday afternoon in early October, a group of Medieval to Mozart students clusters at the 63 bus stop at Grand and Snelling before heading into downtown St. Paul to the Ordway Concert Hall. The Mac students take their seats in the massive hall with a high ceiling above them and hundreds of audience members surrounding them. Along with their professor, Mark Mazullo, they're about to listen to the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra perform Bach's *St. John Passion*. A harpsichord is positioned in the middle of the stage, and music major **Karl Schuetzle '20** (Minneapolis) considers it for a little while before identifying it. "I don't see a lot of harpsichords," he says.

When the performance begins—an oratorio that Schuetzle likens to an opera in form and style—the students follow along with the lyrics in a program divided into two columns, one for the original German and one for the English translation. Some of the lyrics come directly from Martin Luther's translation of the Bible; others come from Lutheran hymnals and other sources.

This piece was meant to be played in front of a live crowd, Schuetzle explains, and after the concert, he understands it differently. "It's one thing to listen to a recording in your room—it's another to hear the music in a setting that's more in tune with the intention of the piece," he says. "It's easier to follow along and relate all the ideas we're talking about in class. Engaging with

### Midterms, amplified

In late October, 12 Introduction to Social Entrepreneurship students are presenting midterm projects in downtown St. Paul's Osborn370, a new Twin Cities entrepreneurship hub. In a large open space with start-up employees working nearby, the students are in front of three judges with expertise in marketing, sales, and human resources. The judges' incisive questions keep teams on their toes.

In groups of three, the students identify a social problem and pitch their solution—beginning to navigate the challenge, as professor **Kate Ryan Reiling '00** writes in her syllabus for the sociology and international studies course, of taking an idea and turning it into reality. **Tori Gapuz '21** (Plainfield, Ill.), **Juan Diaz '22** (Little Rock, Ark.), and **Swopnil Shrestha '21** (Minneapolis) outline the problem they've identified: despite many student organizations and identity collectives on campus, there aren't individual outlets for students to showcase their hometowns and cultures to share with their Mac community what life looks like back home (and vice versa). They want to devise a visual platform: a social media campaign, perhaps, or a YouTube channel for vlogging.

Their goal: to build more connections for students—especially those from underrepresented cultural backgrounds or who are the first in their families to attend college. "There's power in bringing

your college experience back home, and then your home back to Macalester,” Gapuz says. “Students renegotiate their sense of self at Macalester, and they don’t always have an opportunity to show where they grew up, how they were raised—and how that shapes you and your experience at Mac.”

By semester’s end, each group will have built a prototype, tested it, and presented what they’ve learned to Reiling, the rest of the class, and another group of judges. And this midterm check-in is intentionally structured to be a little bit daunting. “Coming to a space like this can make you feel more nervous,” Reiling tells the students after the presentations are over. “That’s part of the reason why we bring you here: to make you feel more uncomfortable. That way, when you’re out in the professional world, you’ve had practice doing this in an unfamiliar setting.”

## Experiencing architecture

**“Architecture is about more than what a building looks like—it’s also about how it makes people feel. When you look at pictures of buildings, you don’t have a sense of scale or what it feels like. Minnesota’s State Capitol has the second-largest freestanding dome in the world, and I can understand that without seeing it, but being there in person shows me how big the building feels and how light filters through the windows to fill the room. Being able to experience those spaces in person is crucial. Once you read about architectural elements in class and then see them in person, it’s hard to forget them.”**

—ALEXANDER THOMAS ’22

In his first semester at Macalester (and in the United States), **Alexander Thomas ’22** (Kerala, India) explored the Twin Cities through political science professor Patrick Schmidt’s *Politics of Architecture* first-year course. On a Saturday in September, the class used the Green Line light rail to visit three St. Paul sites—the new MLS soccer stadium, the Neighborhood Development Center, and the State Capitol—with a break for lunch on University Avenue.

## Actions of hope

It’s early December, temperatures are in the mid-20s, and finals start in under two weeks—so it’s no surprise that the students gathered at Tiny Footprint Coffee gasp with delight when co-owner and co-founder Alan Krohnke welcomes the group and adds, “We’ve got coffee brewed!”

The coffee creates a cozy atmosphere at the Brooklyn Center, Minn., roasting facility, and right away, the conversation digs deep. Krohnke and his team field questions about coffee farming, fair trade logistics, farmer compensation, climate change, and sustainability. In the past 10 years, the company has dedicated itself to creating the world’s first carbon-negative coffee by supporting reforestation efforts in Ecuador, where Tiny Footprint will fund the planting of its 100,000th tree this winter. Later in the visit, the group tours the warehouse, where giant burlap coffee bags are stacked on pallets and batches of beans churn through a rumbling roaster.

The Tiny Footprint visit is part of the syllabus for biology professor Devavani Chatterjea’s first-year course *Health in the Anthropocene*, which examines the forces that shape the interconnected health of humans and our planet. The conversation with Krohnke touches on many of these issues, such as extreme weather, equity in the supply chain, and business challenges including how to distribute the coffee more broadly without increasing the carbon footprint. “We’ve grappled with this question of scale all semester: the efficiency of scaling anything up to support more humans and human activities also scales up the footprint in lockstep,” Chatterjea says.

And though some of the ideas Krohnke mentions have come up in the classroom already, Chatterjea says it’s important to bring her students out here because Tiny Footprint is taking action in the face of human-forced climate changes that can and do feel insurmountable. “What do you do in the face of great despair?” she says. “These forces feel so big, this process almost inevitable. But you want to get up in the morning and do something hopeful. This is an example of action. This is an action of hope.” **M**



**“Once you read about architectural elements in class and then see them in person, it’s hard to forget them.”**  
—Alexander Thomas ’22 (third from left, at the State Capitol)

A close-up portrait of Marlon James, a Black man with long, dark dreadlocks. He is looking slightly to the left of the camera with a thoughtful expression. He is wearing a black leather jacket over a white t-shirt. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

A LESSON  
FROM

MARLON  
JAMES

EPIC  
STORYTELLER

# Writer in residence **Marlon James** brings us behind the scenes of his highly anticipated new novel, *Black Leopard, Red Wolf*.

BY MIKE VANGEL / PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK SELIGER

**D**espite the eclectic paintings on the walls and the giant windows overlooking South Minneapolis and the Mississippi River beyond, Marlon James insists there's nothing particularly inspiring about the place he calls home, even though it may seem like an artistic oasis from the outsider's perspective. For one thing, he says, none of the creative magic happens here, anyway. For another, he'd probably object to applying the term "creative magic" to his work at all—having just published his fourth novel, he knows by now that good writing is the result of daily routine, not random acts of inspiration.

A dozen years ago, the idea of a fourth novel might have seemed fanciful. Overcoming now-legendary difficulty (to the tune of 70+ manuscript rejections), James published a promising debut, and joined Macalester's English department in 2007 as a visiting professor. After that initial travail, his career trajectory has been nearly straight upward: he was promoted to a tenure-track professor before being named the college's first writer in residence in 2016. He has taught and inspired hundreds of students through his courses, including Introduction to Creative Writing, American Literature, and advanced workshops that guide students through writing a novel in a semester. And, of course, he kept writing himself, publishing two more novels about his native Jamaica: *The Book of Night Women*, which won a Dayton Literary Peace Prize and a Minnesota Book Award, and *A Brief History of Seven Killings*, which won (among other things) the Man Booker Prize, perhaps the most prestigious award in all of English literature.

His latest novel—*Black Leopard, Red Wolf*—was listed among the most anticipated works of 2019 in publications ranging from book blogs to the *New York Times*. We recently visited James at home to ask him about the book (excerpted on pp. 22–23), his thoughts on writing and teaching, and why he still believes in fiction.

*The following interview has been edited and condensed.*

## **Tell us about *Black Leopard, Red Wolf*.**

The book is the first part of a trilogy called *Dark Star*, the significance of which I'm going to reveal way in the future. It's one story: a slave trader hires seven mercenaries to find his child and they completely botch it. The child is dead and there are only three witnesses, and each novel is a different witness telling the story. They're telling versions of the same story that don't add up at all.

The trilogy plays a lot with African history and mythology. As much as I'm hugely inspired by European mythology and history, I really wanted to write something that has nothing to do with those traditions. One thing that's different, for example, is what we associate with night: the witching hour, midnight, darkness is scary. These mythologies lead into troubling perceptions in the West that have spilled over into everything from race to how we look at evil.

None of that exists in African mythology. In African mythology, it's high noon that's the scariest time of day. Vampires have no problem killing you in the daylight. It's like a Western—it's high noon that's deserted, it's high noon when people don't go out. Midnight, on the contrary, is called the noon of the ancestors. It's when your great-grandmother shows up, and who wouldn't want the great-grandmother to show up? She's way cooler than your mother.

## **Why was telling three versions of the story important to you?**

The first thing I got rid of was the idea that there's one version that's authentic. In African storytelling, a lot of storytelling is done by the trickster. It's a very European thing to think that because I'm telling you a story, the story is true. A lot of ancient storytelling didn't look for truth in that way. Even when I was growing up, a lot of the stories my parents and grandparents told me every day were the same story—they just changed the ending. I don't go back to ask, "Well, which one of these is true?" They're all true and they're all false. That's a more realistic idea about storytelling.

In this book, the reader is going to have to decide: who are you going to believe? What do you think is justice? I'm not going to decide for them. I'm just going to put out these three people who are telling the same story. Who do you trust?

## **Is that what you set out to write, or did it change over time?**

None of my books end up the way I intended. The one thing that they all have in common is that I'll have a pretty solid idea, and then a character shows up and completely wrecks it. In my second novel, there was this character who was supposed to be a cleaning woman in a bar. I wondered: "Well, what's her story?" And that rabbit hole went on for 600 pages, and it became her novel. *A Brief History of Seven Killings* started as a crime novel set in New York and Chicago in 1985. The main character was a hit man who was born in Chicago who is probably the sloppiest hit man ever, and he's having romance troubles. And somehow that novel became a story about the Bob Marley assassination, which begins in 1976.

For this novel, I started out trying to write a fantasy novel, and standard fantasy novels tend to be about the fall of a royal house: it usually starts at the top and filters down. But this novel just wasn't happening that way. Even though I had two years of research, and I knew all the characters, it couldn't happen until I flipped it—so instead of starting in the throne room and ending up on the street, it started in the street and ended up in the throne room. And that worked.

Carlos Fuentes says there is no greater tragedy than a book ending exactly the way you planned it. And I think if that happens, maybe the writer's having too firm a grip on the story.

## You've called this book an "African Game of Thrones." How did you make that jump fully into the fantasy world?

In the realities I write about, the distinction between real and surreal isn't there. Even my last novel is still anchored by a ghost who knows he's dead. I guess people call it magical realism, but nobody who practiced magical realism called it that. Gabriel García Márquez wasn't writing magical realism—he was writing reality. A world where there is real-life corruption and political intrigue, and a world where there are dragons and fairies, can be the same world without anything special about that.

I grew up reading fantasy. I learned more from comics than I did from any literary novel. It wasn't as dramatic a turn for me as it might seem. What was more dramatic for me was letting go of the very same kind of Eurocentric beliefs because that's what I was raised on. One of the running gags in the new novel is this ridiculous idea of the magical child, the child who shall rise up to lead armies against the tyrant. In my book, people make fun of it. They say, "What sort of stupid magical child are you?" And the magical child in the novel ended up doing a lot of things that magical children aren't supposed to do.

## How do you relate to your characters?

You do develop a relationship with characters, particularly the villains. It's pretty easy to fall for the heroes, but you have to love everybody when you're writing a story. You have to love that villain into existence. When I'm done with a book, I do end up missing my characters quite a bit. I spend a lot of time with these people, and I get to know them in ways that nobody else knows. It's not different from getting super-involved in a relationship that ends.

A huge part of writing is knowing when to say goodbye to a character and to resist writing more than you should. It's almost like knowing when to leave a party or when to leave somebody's house. You can wear out your welcome with a novel. I like novels that leave me imagining what happened 10 days after the story ended. They continue another life in your head—or maybe your fanfiction account. I love the idea of fanfiction: people who have fallen for characters and don't want to let them go. That's when you know you've written a good character.

## Do you ever get stuck while writing—and if so, how do you get unstuck?

All of my writer's blocks happen before I start a book. Figuring out what story to tell: that's its own crisis that can take me two years. Figuring out who's going to tell it? That's another year. I'll do tons of trial and error to figure out just whose story it is. When I'm actually writing, then I write pretty fast. I wrote this novel in 16 months. I wrote my second novel in 18 months, but it took me two years to get there. It's still a three-year process to write a book.

People ask me about my process. My process is: having a really cool bunch of friends who will say random stuff, and somehow I end up with a novel. That's why I don't believe in the myth of the reclusive author. There's no good reclusive author. You need people. Writing is a very solitary profession that can only happen in a community of people.

## What happens in two years of research?

Well, lots of depression and paranoia, that's what happens. I start every novel pretty much a wreck. Most of the time I have a character and a situation, but it's usually research that gives me a storyline. A lot of times, I'd be researching something and think, "This novel is writing itself."

I tell my students you don't create stories, you find them. I go through dozens if not hundreds of pages of fiction that won't go anywhere because it's me again trying to figure out what to write—and there's no other way to figure out what to write other than to write. It's trying on ideas for size and seeing if they work.

## What's your writing routine like?

When I sit down with my laptop, I go to work. To me, writing is work: that's part of my process, that it's a job. I'm a big believer in that if you establish a routine, the muses show up. I love when people say they write when they're inspired. I'm like, "Oh my God, I haven't been inspired to write since the Carter administration. How does that work?" I've got to pay bills. I can't wait on inspiration to write a novel. I'd never write anything.

It's a vocation. It's practice. Dancers, musicians, and actors know what I'm talking about—I don't have to convince them. But writers will say things like, "I couldn't write today because I didn't feel inspired." And I'm like, "That's lovely." It's about doing the work—and knowing that inspiration or creativity will show up once they realize you're serious.

Writing is something I still approach with fear. I'm terrified when I start anything. I reach every blank page thinking this is the story where it will all crash and burn. There's a difference between fear and being afraid. Fear is super useful. There's a part of your brain that springs to action when the stakes are high. You have to write like this is going to be your last book, that they're coming to take your pencils if you don't write. Even if you have to invent stakes, you have to believe it matters. You'd better bring your best game.

## What do you like to read?

I approach reading two different ways. If I'm writing a book, I usually have a reading list, and that can be dozens of books: for style, for factual research, some I'm reading just because I want to be inspired or because they pave the way I want to go. If I'm writing, it's very hard to read books for fun, so I have a huge stack now that I'm trying to get through before I start writing the next book.

When I'm not writing, then I can go back to reading books—I





“WE TELL OURSELVES FANTASTICAL STORIES TO PROCESS THE WORLD.”

—MARLON JAMES, interviewed at home in Minneapolis

don't want to say for pleasure, because all reading is a pleasure for me. I read pretty much everything: tons of crime fiction, loads of sci fi, comics, literary fiction (but not as much as the other genres). I'm always on a mission to recapture the feeling of the first time a book blew my mind.

### **As successful as you've been with writing lately, what keeps you teaching at Macalester?**

It's fun to teach. It's even fun to watch students challenge stuff I've taught them, because I say, "Bear in mind that everything I'm telling you is still one person's opinion." I learn a lot from these students. It's certainly helped me to become a better writer.

Outside of teaching, I'm surrounded by professional writers who already have a very narrow idea of what they're here to do. At Macalester, I'm constantly surrounded by students who are still defining that, for whom the literary universe is wide open and almost every day is a day of discovering something. That's really, really infectious. That's really why I keep doing it. Seeing people unlock something that they probably never even knew they had, or seeing them become better writers in huge leaps is inspiring.

### **What do you want students to take away from your classes?**

I hope they realize they can write their way out of anything, that

they can confront issues and problems through writing, examine the complicated nature of the world through it. Hopefully I'm not just equipping them with tools for writing but some kind of tools for living, too.

I hope they learn that writing is a craft. It's an art, yes, but it's also a craft and a practice. I also really want them to learn that writing is fun. It should be like any art: it should be the most fun and the hardest work you've ever done. And if it's not both of those things? Make it both of those things, or quit. (I'm not telling my students to be quitters, by the way.)

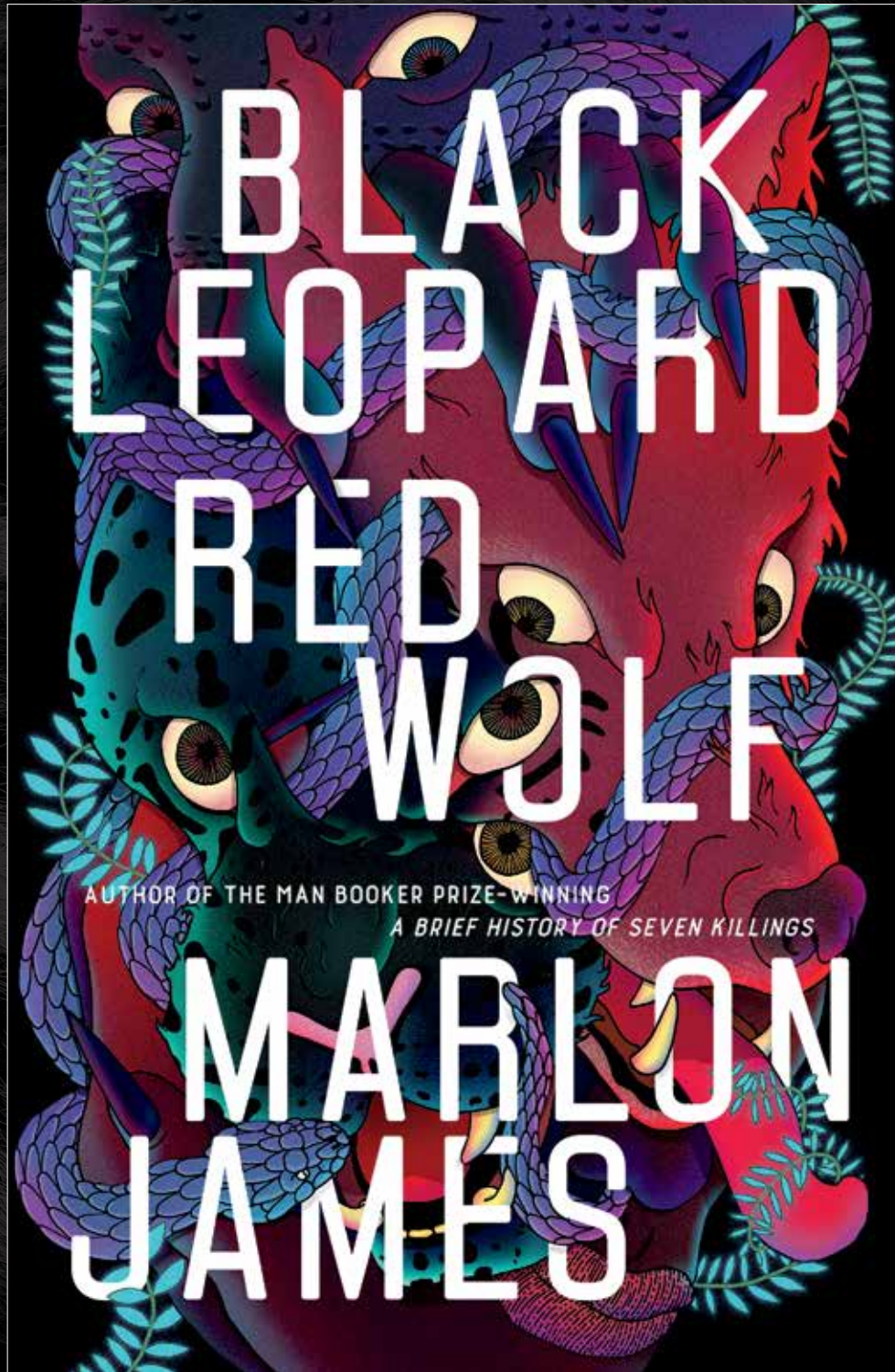
### **Why is fiction important?**

We tell ourselves fantastical stories to process the world. It's one of the things I think ancient and present-day African storytelling has known all along. That's why we have dragons. That's why we have monsters. Hell, that's why we have Bigfoot. The myths are what tell us about ourselves. We always use these fantastical creatures and stories to talk about what's right in front of us. Our minds want the leap, we want the fantasy. That brings us closer to reality than reality itself. That's something that the ancient storytellers already knew, but we need reminding.

Art is one way of seeing the world and dealing with the world—the only thing that can do both things at the same time. That's why we need it. That's why we need fiction. **M**

AN EXCERPT FROM  
*BLACK LEOPARD, RED WOLF*

Chapter 4



From *Black Leopard, Red Wolf* by Marlon James. Published by arrangement with Riverhead Books,  
a member of Penguin Random House LLC. Copyright © 2019 by Marlon James.



# WE TOOK ONE BOW, MANY ARROWS, TWO DAGGERS, TWO HATCHETS, A GOURD TIED TO MY HIP WITH A PIECE OF THE CLOTH INSIDE, AND SET OUT BEFORE FIRST LIGHT.

"Are we finding the boy or killing him?" I said to the Leopard.  
"He's seven days ahead. These are if someone finds him first," he said behind me, trusting my nose, even though I did not. The boy's smell was too strong in one spot, too weak in the other, even if his path was set right before me. Two nights later his trail was still ahead of us.

"Why didn't he go north, back to the village? Why go west?" I asked.

I stopped and the Leopard walked past me, turned south, and stopped after ten paces. He stooped down to sniff the grass.

"Who said he was from your village?" he asked.

"He did not go south, if you're trying to pick up the boy."

"He's your charge, not mine, Tracker. I was sniffing out dinner."

Before I said more, he was on all paws and gone into the thicket. This was a dry area, trees skinny as stalks, as if starving for rain. The ground red and tough with cracked mud. Most of the trees had no leaves, and branches sprouted branches that sprouted branches so thin I thought they were thorns. It looked like water had made an enemy of this place, but a water hole was giving off scent not far away. Near enough that I heard the splash, the snarl, and a hundred hooves stampeding away.

Leopard got to me before I got to the river, still on four paws, a dead antelope in his mouth. That night he watched in disgust as I cooked my portion. He was back on two legs but eating the antelope leg raw, ripping away the skin with his teeth, sinking into the flesh and licking the blood off his lips. I wanted to enjoy flesh the way he enjoyed flesh. My burned and black leg disgusted me as well. He gave me a look that said he could never understand why any animal in these lands would eat prey by burning it first. He had no nose for spices and I had none to put on the meat. A part of the antelope was not cooked and I ate it, chewed it slow, wondering if this was what he ate when he ate flesh, warm and easy to pull apart, and if the feeling of iron spilled in your mouth was a good one. I would never like it. His face was lost in that leg.

"The trees are different," I said.

"Different kind of forest. The trees are selfish here. They share nothing under the earth; their roots send nothing to other roots, no food, no news. They will not live together, so unless rain comes they will die together. The boy?"

"His scent is north. It grows neither strong nor weak."

"Not moving. Asleep?"

"Mayhaps. But if he stays, we find him tomorrow."

"Sooner than I thought. This could be your life if you wish it."

"You wish to go on when we find him?"

He threw down the bone and looked at me. "What else did Asani tell you before he tried to drown you?" he said.

"You will send me back with the boy, but will not return."

"I said I might not return, not will not."

"Which is it?"

"That depends on what I find. Or what finds me. What is it to you?"

"Nothing, nothing at all."

Leopard grinned, stood up, and came over beside me. The fire threw harsh lines on his face and lit up his eyes. "Why do you go back to the village?"

"My family is there," I said.

"You have no one there. Asani told me all that awaits you is a vendetta."

"That is still something, is it not?"

"No."

He looked to the fire. His mouth goes sick from the sight of cooking, but he made the fire. From the gourd I pulled the piece of cloth carrying the boy's scent. These were not trees he could sleep in, even if he preferred to sleep off the ground.

"Come with me," Leopard said.

"Where?"

"No. I mean come with me after this. After we find the boy. She has no interest in him; she wants her foul bladder to place in her foul hair. We find him, scare him, send him back. We go west."

"Kava wants—"

"Is Asani lord over anyone here?"

"Something came to pass between you two."

"Nothing came to pass. That is the stick between us. He passes you in years, but in every other way he is the man younger. Gambles with lives and kills for sport. The disgusting features of your form."

I knew he was looking at me. I was staring into the flames but could feel him turn his head. The night wind was sending a fragrance I did not know. Ripeness from fruit, maybe, but nothing was fruitful in this bush. This made me remember something.

"What happened to them who were following us?" I asked.

"Who?"

"The night we came to the Sangoma. The little woman said somebody was following us."

"She is always fearing something or someone is after her."

"You believed it too."

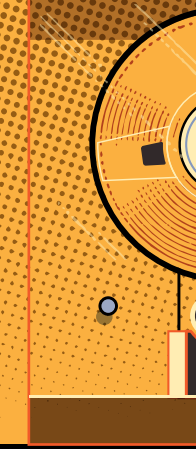
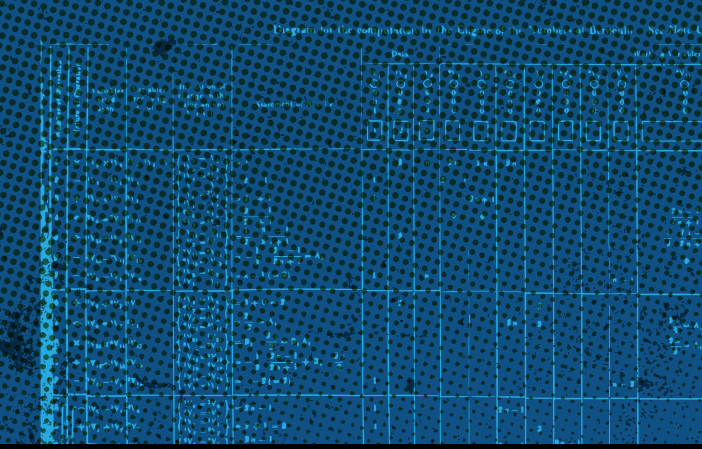
"I don't believe in fear, but I believe in her belief. Besides, there are at least ten and six enchantments to throw off hunters and wanderers."

"Like vipers?"

"No, those are always real," he said with a wicked smile.

He reached over and grabbed my shoulder.

"Go be with pleasant dreams. Tomorrow we find the boy." **M**



$$\begin{cases} 1V_2 = 1V_2 \\ 0V_7 = 1V_7 \end{cases} = 2 + 0 = 2$$

$$\begin{cases} 1V_6 = 1V_6 \\ 0V_{11} = 3V_{11} \end{cases} = \frac{2n}{2} = A_1$$

$$\begin{cases} 1V_{21} = 1V_{21} \\ 3V_{11} = 3V_{11} \end{cases} = B_1 \cdot \frac{2n}{2} = B_1 A_1$$

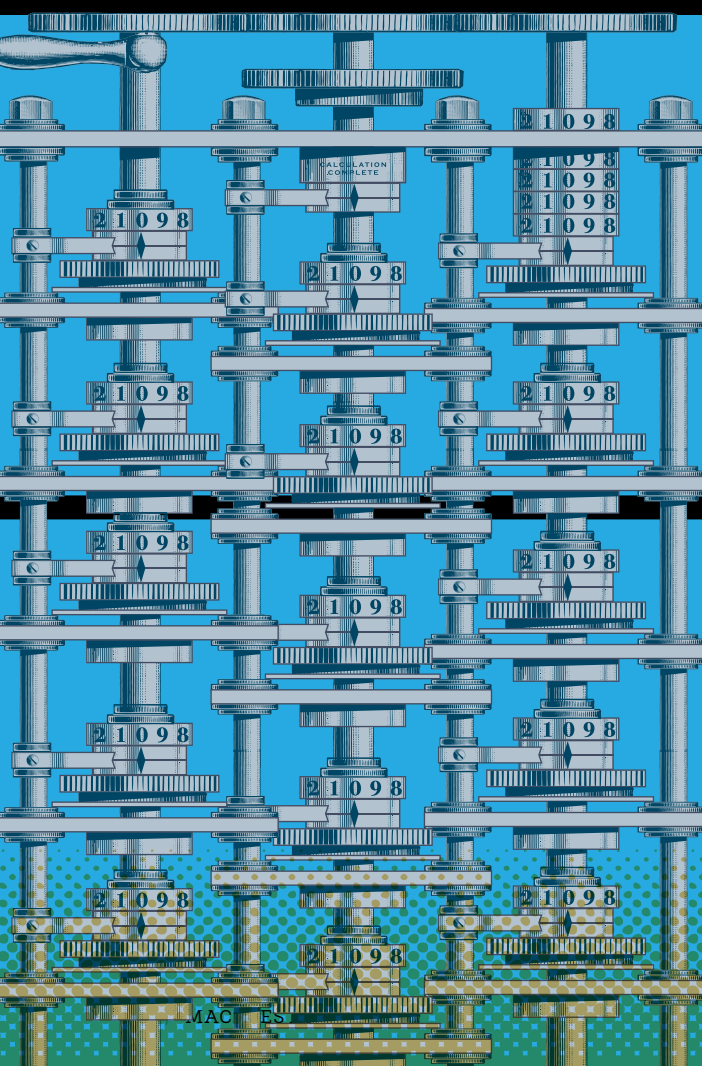
$$\begin{cases} 1V_{12} = 0V_{12} \\ 1V_{13} = 2V_{13} \end{cases} = -\frac{1}{2} \cdot \frac{2n-1}{2n+1} + B_1 \cdot \frac{2n}{2}$$

$$\begin{cases} 1V_{10} = 2V_{10} \\ -1V_1 = 1V_1 \end{cases} = n - 2 (=2)$$

$$\begin{cases} 1V_6 = 2V_6 \\ 1V_7 = 1V_7 \end{cases} = 2n - 1$$

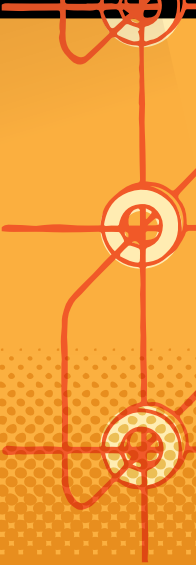
$$= B_1 \cdot \frac{2n}{2} = B_1 A_1$$

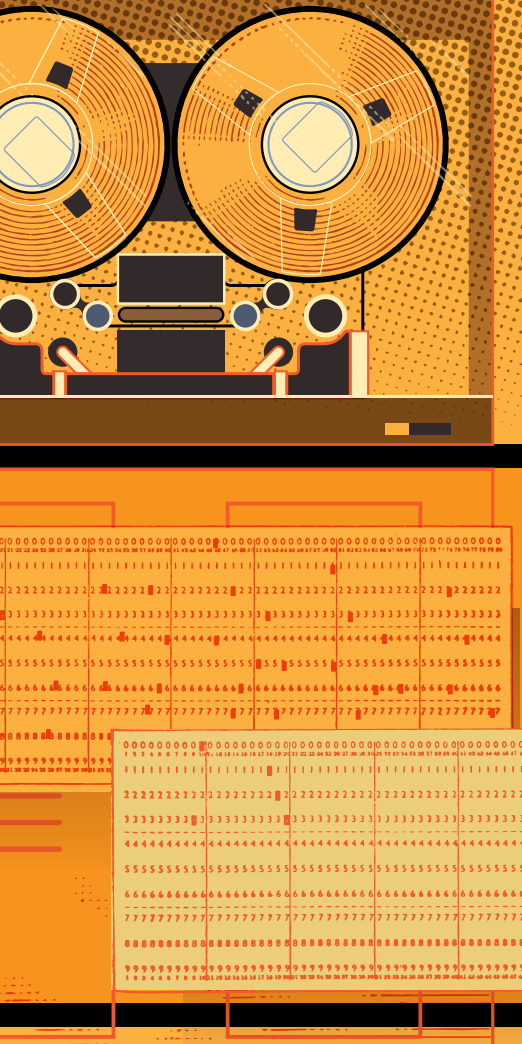
$$\left\{ -\frac{1}{2} \cdot \frac{2n-1}{2n+1} + B_1 \cdot \frac{2n}{2} \right\}$$



$$-\frac{1}{2} \cdot \frac{2n-1}{2n+1} = A_0$$

$$= n - 2 (=$$





# DE-CODING

# ALGO-RITHMS

BY JANET CASS '81

ILLUSTRATIONS BY CARL WIENS / i2iART.COM

Ada Lovelace probably didn't foresee the impact of the mathematical formula she published in 1843, now considered the first computer algorithm.

Nor could she have anticipated today's widespread use of algorithms, in applications as different as the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign and Mac's first-year seminar registration. "Over the last decade algorithms have become embedded in every aspect of our lives," says Shilad Sen, professor in Macalester's Math, Statistics, and Computer Science (MSCS) Department.

How do algorithms shape our society? Why is it important to be aware of them? And for readers who don't know, what is an algorithm, anyway?

## WHAT IS AN ALGORITHM?

“An algorithm is just a set of step-by-step instructions, like a recipe,” explains **Ruth Berman '17**, who majored in neuroscience and computer science and works as a software engineer at Airbnb.

A computer algorithm can process large quantities of data, which is why one proved to be the recipe for improving satisfaction among the roughly 500 incoming Mac students who need to be assigned to one of 35 first-year seminar courses each year. Before 2009, two staff dedicated one week each summer to maximizing, by hand, the number of first-years placed in the students' first- or second-choice seminars.

Enter MSCS professor Andrew Beveridge, professor emeritus Stan Wagon, and **Sean Cooke '09**, who collaborated in 2008 to create an algorithm optimizing student placement in seminars. First used in 2009 and now standard procedure at Macalester, the algorithm places more students in their preferred seminars than the manual method did, while vastly reducing staff time spent on the task.

## BOON OR BANE?

The algorithm was a boon to incoming students and Academic Programs and Advising. While its use hasn't caused unanticipated problems for the office, that's not the case for all algorithms. The trouble is, Berman points out, that “algorithms are built by people, and so we build all of the biases we carry into algorithms.”

A relatively innocuous example of personal bias was revealed when people's photos were appearing upside down on their phones, she explains: “It turns out that people who are left-handed turn their phones the opposite way of people who are right-handed when they take a landscape photo, causing the final image to be stored upside down.” Since there are more right-handed people than left-handed ones, it's likely that right-handed programmers wrote the algorithm telling a cell phone the steps to follow to take a picture. “This is a problem that right-handed programmers might not notice on their own, so only left-handed users experienced this problem,” she says.

Other biases, though, built into algorithms by programmers unaware of their own prejudices, can have far more serious implications.



## BUILT-IN BIAS

Unintentional bias may have influenced earlier versions of facial recognition software, which historically has been produced in the United States by white males. This software is trained to recognize visual components of human faces, including those that signify gender, in a process called Machine Learning (ML): A computer scientist chooses photographs of faces (i.e., a training dataset), and tells the computer to scan them and to identify facial characteristics that the scientist specifies. The computer develops algorithms as it learns which pixels of an image denote a nose, for example.

The way that bias can enter this training and the algorithms that the software develops during ML, suggests Berman, is that “When programmers, particularly those from dominant social groups, compile a training dataset of faces, they might not think to include a diverse array of races or genders in that dataset. It's not deliberate; it's simply a reflection of who they see around them.”

Software trained only with photographs of white male faces is most accurate when it's presented with faces of white men. It's less



“If we can make sure we have a more diverse group of engineers building these systems, we'll see a reduction in algorithmic bias.” —Airbnb software engineer Ruth Berman '17

accurate at correctly identifying the gender and facial features of white females, even less accurate at recognizing faces of light-skinned females of color, and least accurate when presented with faces of dark-skinned females.

This type of algorithmic bias can create problems that disproportionately affect women and people of color. Because facial recognition software trained on white male faces is less accurate at recognizing people with darker skin and incorrectly identifies women more often than men, people in those categories are more likely to be erroneously identified as not matching their photo ID. Consequently, they could be targeted for additional scrutiny more often than white men unless the scanning algorithm's ML bias is removed.

An example of how this bias could play out in real life was reported in July 2018 by the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California, which tested facial recognition software using photographs of then-current members of Congress and mug shots of other people who had been arrested for crimes. The result, reports ACLU's *Free Future* blog, was that 28 members of Congress were incorrectly matched with mug shots. The blog didn't mention whether female representatives were mismatched more than their male counterparts or whether any mismatches were between genetic relatives, who might have similar facial features. Nonetheless, 39 percent of the false matches were people of color, despite that population composing 20 percent of Congress.

## ELIMINATING BIAS

The first step toward solving any problem is to recognize that a problem exists. "I think one of the biggest reasons that we struggle with bias in algorithms and ML models is that the field of computer science lacks diversity," Berman says. "If individuals from different backgrounds come together to build a model, they're able to recognize oversights that a homogenous group might miss. If we can make sure we have

a more diverse group of engineers building these systems, we'll see a reduction in algorithmic bias." There's reason to hope that reduction is coming: Algorithms' potential for perpetuating bias is a hot topic among computer scientists today, notes Sen.

**Brent Hecht '05** agrees. Hecht, a geography and computer science double major, is an assistant professor at Northwestern University and the director of the university's People, Space, and Algorithms research group, which seeks to "identify and address societal problems that are created or exacerbated by advances in computer science." In a lecture on algorithmic bias that Hecht presented at Macalester in 2018, he shared his belief that computer scientists should disclose potential negative societal repercussions of their research in any paper they publish about that research.

For example, wrote Hecht and co-authors in March 2018 in the *ACM Future of Computing* blog, imagine a hypothetical robot prototype that automates home-care chores for people who have a physical disability. The robot might reduce the cost of that care. But it also might contribute to large-scale job loss among home healthcare workers who formerly performed those chores.

To address that scenario, Hecht and co-authors argue for a more rigorous peer review process for computer science research papers, to ensure that researchers are aware of and transparent about potential negative impacts of their research. They believe a more stringent review process should, long-term, incentivize the computer science field to more deeply engage with and address potential downsides of its innovations.

In the home healthcare example, researchers would have to disclose job loss and other potential downsides of the robotic prototype, and suggest technical and policy refinements to alleviate those downsides and maximize the robot's net benefit to society. This stringent review would also address algorithms built into the robot.



## DATA PRIVACY

Can a cost to society arise from exposing personal data to algorithms by sharing it online? Sure, you can decide how much information to post on your Facebook page. But once it's posted, data-mining companies can collect it. That's what whistleblowers alleged happened in 2016, when a now-shuttered data-mining company harvested data from millions of Facebook profiles without the knowledge of the owners of that data. Harvested information was used by the Republican presidential campaign to construct and deploy a marketing strategy, say the whistleblowers.

According to *The Guardian*, which published the whistleblower report, social media sites were used to target voters with messages custom-tailored to those voters' social media profiles. In the report, whistleblowers said the data-mining company monitored the effects of its messaging on different types of voters by tracking their online activity. That kept the company and the campaign aware of levels of voter engagement with various social media sites.

Information about targeted voters' online activity allowed the



PHOTO: BEN SHNEIDERMAN

# ADA LOVELACE

Englishwoman Ada Lovelace (1815–52) grew up privately tutored in mathematics and, at age 17, began collaborating with University of Cambridge mathematics professor Charles Babbage to solve mathematical problems.

Babbage developed plans for the Analytical Engine, considered the first programmable computer. In 1842, Lovelace translated an article about the Engine from the French, adding notes, equations, and a mathematical formula she wrote. (The translation was published in 1843.)



This formula, intended to apply the Engine to calculate complicated numbers, is considered the first computer algorithm and Lovelace, the first computer scientist. Her notes propose using the Engine to translate music, images, and text into digital format.

Lovelace's visionary understanding of computer algorithms' potential was proven true by British code-breaking work during World War II, when an algorithm enabled coded text within German messages to be converted to numbers, analyzed, and converted back into human-readable text. Lovelace's name lives on in a computer language the U.S. Department of Defense named after her in 1980, and in Ada Lovelace Day, established in 2009 as the second Tuesday of every October to celebrate women's achievements in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) careers.

company to constantly update its algorithms to more precisely target messages that the campaign sent to voters. This resulted in different categories of voters being presented with different messages based, in part, on geographical information about voters who visited YouTube's home page, where the campaign bought ad space.

Voters whose geographical information suggested they were swing voters—uncommitted to the Republican nominee but open to persuasion—received ads showing some of the nominee's high-profile supporters. Voters in geographical areas where the campaign believed people would support the Republican Party saw an image of the nominee looking triumphant, and information designed to help them find their nearest polling station.

## GRAPPLING WITH DATA PRIVACY

Given the public's increasing awareness of a lack of individual control over personal online data, are Mac students sharing less information on social media than they used to? Sen has taught at Macalester for a decade and doesn't think so: "They share everything."

In the past five years, though, "they've become more aware of labor and equity implications of algorithms," he observes. "People are starting to think about the creation of online data as labor." To understand data as labor, consider that, "People create data (reviews, ratings, searches, web clicks, etc.) that are a critical resource for a tech company's algorithms and therefore its bottom line."

In addition, personal data you post online may be sold to a data broker, which can sell it to marketing companies. Bottom line? Businesses can profit from your data but you do not. To push back against use of personal data posted online, California passed the California Consumer Privacy Act of 2018, the first such law in the United States. Once it goes into effect in 2020, Californians will be able to opt out of having their personal online information sold. They'll also have additional control over, and knowledge of, how their data is handled by companies doing business in California. If those companies don't protect personal data, the law will allow them to be sued by the people who posted the data and the state's attorney general.

## GRAPPLING WITH EQUITY

Companies' ability to derive revenue by using algorithms, in part, to collect personal online data has led to another prominent issue within the field of computer science today. That's the observation that algorithms used by large companies to collect and manage data can lead to a serious redistribution of wealth, with the com-

"Algorithms can mislead us into believing that more people agree with us than actually do. It warps our outlook."

—Political science professor Adrienne E. Christiansen



panies as beneficiaries. “Macalester students are watching this,” Sen says.

Algorithms’ potential to skew outcomes extends to news distribution. This especially affects people who acquire most of their information about current events online, says political science professor Adrienne E. Christiansen. As someone who studies technology’s role in shaping socio-political change, she cautions that algorithms “can mislead us into believing that more people agree with us than actually do. It warps our outlook.” That’s because our capacity to personalize what news gets sent to us electronically, whether it’s social media clickbait or formal news from reliable online sources like respected newspapers, “unquestionably shapes our perspectives unless we’ve developed a systematic practice of ‘casting the net widely’ to acquire information.”

Online news feeds, regardless of their source, decrease the likelihood you’ll encounter different perspectives. That’s because the feeds are personalized to your preferences, which a news provider’s algorithm has learned from your previous likes and clicks. Not encountering different ideas deprives you of opportunities to consider them.

“This can lead to a divided society,” Christiansen says. “I value the clash of ideas. It’s a way to test my own ideas, [but] it’s harder and harder to do that. Our enemies in other parts of the world will take advantage of those schisms [in a divided society] by exploiting them to foment discontent. What I fear terribly is that people will shrug their shoulders at that.”

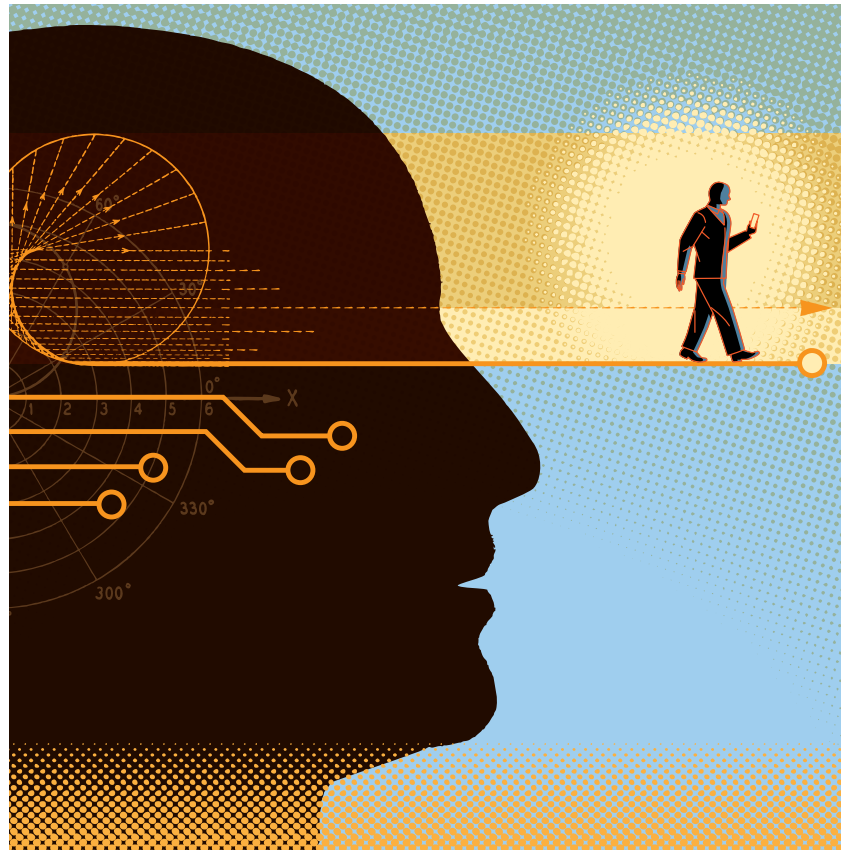
## THE LONG VIEW

Not all algorithms are problematic. Berman’s anti-discrimination team uses algorithms to replace subjective information on Airbnb’s website with objective information, in order to remove opportunities for the company’s hosts and guests to make biased decisions. Hecht and his colleagues are working to maximize algorithms’ net benefit to society. Algorithms help people study by undergirding self-paced computer teaching programs, like the one Christiansen used to learn Danish in preparation for her 2019 sabbatical in Denmark.

Sen suggests that everyone who uses the internet should consider the consequences of their online behavior. Next time you’re using your computer, he recommends, “think about what AI [artificial intelligence, a type of algorithm] is learning from the actions you’re taking online.”

## THE MACALESTER LENS

Hecht believes his combined geography and computer science education at Macalester “has allowed me to see subjects in a different light than most of my colleagues. That combination was



a big factor in our early identification of bias in algorithms as a major risk factor, and our ability to raise early warning signs of it.”

Berman took a class in computer science “by accident” her first semester at Mac, but by the end of the semester had decided to major in it. “We learned how to solve problems and answer questions using programming as a tool,” she says. “The MSCS professors were incredible mentors and helped me understand the many opportunities to apply computer science to solve real problems.”

Acquiring a wide-angle view of the world via a liberal arts education, learning to use computer science to solve real problems: “There is no one better positioned to tackle the human effects of algorithms than Macalester students,” Sen says. “They are broad thinkers, fearless, and have a strong moral compass.” **M**

Janet Cass '81 is a St. Paul-based writer and editor.

## Have algorithms made the world better or worse?

MSCS professor Shilad Sen will dig into that debate on April 4 in Boston as part of the college’s Big Questions event series. For more details on attending or watching a recording: [macalester.edu/campaignevents](http://macalester.edu/campaignevents)

# THE DIVERSITY





# OF ISLAM

BY REBECCA DEJARLAIS ORTIZ '06

INTERNATIONAL STUDIES PROFESSOR Jenna Rice Rahaim is a cultural anthropologist who studied Arabic in Morocco and Syria and focuses her research on charity, Islamic humanitarianism, and religious co-existence in Lebanon. In her class Comparative Muslim Cultures, Rice Rahaim's students memorize the Qur'an's first chapter and explore how the world's 1.5 billion Muslims interpret and practice their faith—around the globe and across town. *Macalester Today* sat down with Rice Rahaim to learn more.

## When you teach about the global Muslim diaspora, where do you start?

Often we associate Islam with the Arab world, but many people don't know that the vast majority of Muslims live in south and southeast Asia. The four countries with the largest Muslim populations are Indonesia, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. I want to strike a balance between thinking of Islam as a global religion, but one that always operates in local contexts. Muslims refer to the *ummah*, the global Islamic community that connects them all. But then—within one town, even within one street in that town—you find Muslims practicing in such varied ways. The class is organized around the nuances of these practices.

## Who takes your class?

Last fall I had Muslim students from Pakistan, Palestine, and Egypt, as well as a Jordanian American and a Minnesotan whose heritage is Somali. Some students are studying Arabic or preparing to study away in the Islamic world. But I also teach students who never met a Muslim before coming to Macalester—and they're taking my class because they haven't received this education in high school and they're curious.

## What role does the Qur'an play in your course?

One of the first things we do is listen to the Qur'an. Many students come in thinking that the Qur'an is primarily a matter of dogma—and of course its message is crucially important. But a fundamental part of this message is a visceral feeling of majesty and beauty. There are legends about people who were so moved by the sound of the Qur'an that they converted on the spot. And there are many ways to recite it; I like to play them a recording of the most famous Qur'anic reciter in Indonesia, for example, a woman named Maria Ulfah.

My students memorize the Qur'an's first chapter (pictured at left) in Arabic. It's pretty short: just seven lines long. But I ask them to memorize it in the same way that students of the Qur'an do in many parts of the Muslim world: by ear. I encourage them to find a recording that they especially like and then listen to it again and again before they even understand the meaning of it, just to connect with the sounds. And we practice reciting it in class. Within a month or so, every student can recite the first chapter—and that's something they carry with them their whole lives.

## How do your students learn about Islam in Minnesota?

Minnesota has a large Somali population, so when we study Muslims in the United States, Somalis in the Twin Cities are often our model. Each semester, Ahmed Hassan, a Somali-speaking psychotherapist, comes in to talk about working with the Somali refugee community here. A lot of what he does is try to negotiate different modes of finding psychological relief. One thing we discover is that Somalis have a very rich language for conceptualizing in spiritual terms what we would refer to as psychological illness. His patients might use metaphors about the heart or stomach. So he tells us about how biomedical models mesh with and clash with practices like seeing a Qur'anic healer or seeking solace through prayer.

In addition, I also have taken students on a variety of field trips over the years. We've attended Mizna's annual Arab Film Festival, sat in on a Qur'an recitation class at a Minneapolis mosque, and toured the Somali Museum. I encourage my students to closely follow current events across the Islamic world, with a special focus on our own community in Minnesota.

## How do you draw on your own research in discussions?

I tell a lot of stories from my ethnographic fieldwork. For example, a lot of my research has to do with *zakat*, an annual donation that Muslims are required to make. *Zakat* is like a tax on one's wealth—but it can be a very joyous act, like any act of giving. As something required, you don't get praised for it (just as we don't say, for example, that someone is so generous for paying their federal income tax). So I like to tell students about the experience of sitting down and helping a Lebanese judge calculate his *zakat* for the year, and the lengths to which he goes to ensure that the distribution of his *zakat* is anonymous. He takes a secret pleasure in hearing his relations describe him as stingy, when in fact he has been supporting them financially for years. I want to provide that nuance to students so that they can understand how people relate to something that's often just seen as a very cut-and-dried dictum—*thou shalt give zakat*.

## What do you want students to remember from your class?

I surely want them to walk away with concrete images and texts and knowledge about Islam, but I also want to foster a sense of curiosity about diverse practices, which I think is central to a Macalester education. Students are often surprised when we start by reading religious studies scholar Robert Orsi's wonderful chapter about snake handlers and evangelical Christians in Appalachia, on how to approach practices that might be uncomfortably different. It's a blueprint for the semester, and it's an invitation to students to take what might initially seem unusual or even uncomfortable, and approach it with a sense of curiosity, wonder, and even empathy. **M**

# Theatrical Practice

**Stephen Fedo '72** juggles multiple roles: actor, director, playwright—and general counsel.

BY JULIE HESSLER '85 / PHOTO BY MARIAH KARSON

Six months before Piven Theatre Workshop was scheduled to premiere a new play about its hometown of Evanston, Ill., Piven's literary manager, **Stephen Fedo '72**, still didn't have a script. Piven's 2017–18 season was exploring the theme of “home,” and in collaboration with Evanston's Fleetwood-Jourdain Theatre, a company whose focus is the African American community, Piven had commissioned a new play by a local playwright about housing and displacement in Evanston. The show had been announced for a four-week run beginning in April, but in December, the theaters and the writer parted ways. That's when Fedo and his collaborator, Tim Rhoze, Fleetwood-Jourdain's artistic director, decided to write the play themselves.

The timeline would be tight. Casting, designing, and rehearsing a new show usually took a couple of months—and that's with a finished script. Another complicating factor: Fedo's day job as general counsel at Neal Gerber Eisenberg in Chicago. “I've been a lawyer for 37 years, and I was an actor and playwright before that, and then really put theater aside for 18 years,” Fedo says. “I went back to it in 1999, when I both decided that I couldn't stay away from it any longer, and I also had greater control of my working life and schedule.” Lawyer by day, Fedo has also acted in 22 productions, directed five, and written or adapted eight productions in the Chicago area. In his part-time position as Piven's literary manager, Fedo reads and evaluates plays, provides advice about potential productions, drafts press releases, and leads post-performance talk-backs.

*A Home on the Lake*, the play that he and Rhoze wrote, was informed by older Evanston residents' oral histories, as well as by historical research Fedo conducted. He explains that in the early part of the last century, black homes in Evanston that “existed near white neighborhoods were picked up, put on flatbed trucks, and actually physically moved. It was a strong visual emblem of segregation.” After several long conversations, Fedo and Rhoze decided to structure the play using parallel fictional stories that move back and forth between two time periods, the 1920s and the current day. “That way we could really explore what was done, which was the very conscious and deliberate segregating of a northern suburban city, and what the effects of that are in the present day through the current generation,” Fedo says. The playwrights began to write scenes, and the play took shape.


At Macalester, Fedo—a dramatic arts/theater and English double major—studied with Peter Murray, then chair of the English department. “I read with him all of Shakespeare and probably 100 other plays,” Fedo says. “I learned how to approach a text and really mine it not for one thing, but for the many things that the text can reveal. That has been important to me throughout my work as an actor and director.”

Fedo then pursued a PhD in English at Stony Brook University in New York, where he met his wife, **Ann Speltz '72**, a Macalester graduate who was finishing her PhD in the same department. “The notion that both of us could find an academic job on the same continent just seemed kind of impossible, so I decided to try and do something else,” Fedo says. “I thought, well, lawyers use words, and I do too, so maybe that would work. And I knew not much more about it than that.” His wife got a job in Chicago, Fedo went to law school at the University of Chicago, and they stayed. Their daughter, **Amelia Fedo '13**, is finishing a PhD in French literature at New York University.

Both spheres of Fedo's life, he says, depend on paying close attention to what is being said, whether on stage or in a courtroom. “I've always thought that one thing I bring to my own practice of law is a willingness to listen and an ability to assess character and to assess what someone may really be saying, even if the words aren't saying that specifically,” he says. “I think that has helped me as a counselor of clients. It has helped me understand adversaries better. It has helped me get to the heart of the matter more than I otherwise would.”

Directed by Rhoze, *A Home on the Lake* premiered in April 2018. Talk-backs—often using community members as co-moderators—were held following many performances, and Fedo says the play accomplished what the two theater companies set out to do: bring people together to share an event about their community and provoke conversation about how it is today, and what might be involved in changing the shape of the community. *Chicago Tribune* theater critic Kerry Reid wrote that when the play “delves into the emotional resonance of what ‘home’ means for these characters, it soars.”

In December, Fedo stepped aside from his general counsel position at Neal Gerber Eisenberg and will spend time advising other lawyers in smaller firms that don't have the benefit of a full-time general counsel. “I've been lucky to have two really satisfying careers for the last 20 years or so, simultaneously,” he says. As his legal practice winds down, he expects to devote more time to his position at Piven and do more acting, directing, and writing.

“The liberal arts in general, and Macalester in particular, prepared me for all of the work I've chosen to do, but not by training me for any of it,” Fedo says. “There's not much in the substance of what I do now as a lawyer, actor, or playwright that I'd trace back directly to Macalester, but I did learn the value of trying things and of sticking with them till they can be done reasonably well. And I also acquired the critical faculty of appreciating that ‘reasonably well’ isn't where you stop.” 



## 1935

**Ruth Goetzinger Lange**, 104, died Sept. 23, 2018, in Fergus Falls, Minn. She taught business at the high school level in Elbow Lake, Minn., and was a librarian at Shattuck Military Academy in Faribault, Minn. Ruth and her husband, Herbert, opened the Star Theater in Clara City, Minn., in 1946 and operated it for 25 years. Mrs. Lange is survived by her daughter, **Barbara Lange Goldenstein '63**, a son, and two granddaughters.

## 1941

**Alice Marie Wilson Fruth**, 99, died Nov. 18, 2018. She worked as a librarian at Grandview Public Library and a real estate agent with Century 21. Mrs. Fruth is survived by a daughter, three sons, four grandchildren, and 11 great-grandchildren.

## 1943

**Philip A. Anderson**, 96, died Sept. 26, 2018, in Claremont, Calif. He served as minister of Glenview Community Church in Chicago from 1949 to 1953 and was dean of students and professor of pastoral theology at Chicago Theological Seminary, retiring in 1987. He was the author of the book *Church Meetings That Matter* and co-author (with his wife, Phoebe Mellinger Anderson) of *The House Church*. Mr. Anderson is survived by daughter **Amy Anderson Doman '76**, sons **Ross Anderson '74** and **Ray Anderson '74**, and three grandchildren.

## 1944

**Lilla Pappas Eakins**, 96, died Nov. 14, 2018. During her 45-year career as a teacher, Mrs. Eakins worked in Oregon and Minnesota. She is survived by three sons (including **Thomas Eakins '76**), six grandchildren, and many great-grandchildren.

## 1945

**Howard F. Kidder**, 93, of Jonesborough, Tenn., died April 25, 2016. He served in the U.S. Army during World War II and was a longtime employee of Honeywell Aerospace.

**Grace Bremer Lester**, 95, of Naples, Fla., died Oct. 7, 2018. She trained as a nurse and was active in several community and youth organizations. Mrs. Lester is survived by a daughter, two sons, two grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

**Jeanne Hadd Reher**, 94, of St. Paul, died Sept. 10, 2018. She taught piano for many years and was an accompanist for her husband, Roy, a tenor singer. Mrs. Reher is survived by four daughters, nine grandchildren, and 12 great-grandchildren.

## 1946

**Mary Grieser deWerff**, 93, of Minneapolis, died Sept. 5, 2018. She was an active volunteer. Mrs. deWerff is survived by two daughters, six grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, and a sister.

**Shirley Holm Walsh**, 94, of Atwater, Minn., died Oct. 9, 2018. She taught kindergarten and first grade in Atwater for many years. Mrs. Walsh is survived by two children, five grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

## 1947

**Paul A. Siegler**, 95, died Oct. 10, 2018. He served in the U.S. Army in Europe and the Philippines from 1943 to 1946. He worked for United Power Association for 37 years, retiring in 1987 as chief financial officer and manager of administration. He also served three terms on the board of the Elk River, Minn., Independent School District. Mr. Siegler is survived by two daughters (including **Dena Siegler McPhetres '82**), two grandchildren, and "beloved life partner" Ruth Booman.

## 1948

**E. Lou Morse**, 94, of Anoka, Minn., died Oct. 1, 2018. He served during World War II as a communications officer aboard a submarine chaser in the Pacific Theater. He later started an insurance agency and developed and managed commercial and residential properties. Mr. Morse is survived by three daughters (including **Mary Morse Marti '82**), a son, six grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

**Gerald W. Webking**, 93, of Eugene, Ore., died Sept. 27, 2018. He taught English in Germany on a Fulbright scholarship in 1959. After four years as a teacher in Aitken, Minn., Mr. Webking moved to Eugene, where he taught high school German for many years. He was named Oregon Foreign Language Teacher of the Year in 1984.

## 1950

**Robert E. "Dan" Danielson**, 92, died Nov. 30, 2018. He turned down an offer to play professional baseball with the Chicago White Sox to serve in the Naval Air Force, but pitched for the Washington Senators in 1952. He later sang with various ensembles, played piano, and managed Schmitt Music stores in St. Cloud, Burnsville, and St. Paul, Minn. He had more than 80 credits in television commercials, voiceovers, and industrial films, and appeared in the 1997 science-fiction film *Robin Cook's Invasion*. Mr. Danielson also served as a speech coach and appeared as Santa Claus at Dayton's department store and at golf tournaments in Scottsdale, Ariz. He is survived by his wife, Barbara Ann, three daughters, two sons, and 10 grandchildren.

**Beverly Hauk Killeen**, 90, of St. Cloud, Minn., died Nov. 23, 2018. She is survived by a daughter, a son, three grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

**Llewellyn Levi**, 91, of Austin, Texas, died Sept. 26, 2018. He served in the U.S. Navy during World War II and later worked as a chemical engineer and environmental consultant. Mr. Levi is survived by two daughters, a son, and seven grandchildren.

## 1951

**Lois Anderson Amundgaard**, 90, of Thief River Falls, Minn., died Nov. 26, 2018. She worked briefly at Warren Hospital. Mrs. Amundgaard is survived by her husband, Jerry, three daughters, a son, five grandchildren, five great-grandchildren, and two brothers.

**Louis A. Domian**, 89, of Austin, Texas, died Sept. 3, 2018. He did accounting and computer systems work at Prudential Life Insurance for 35 years and retired in 1989. Mr. Domian is survived by his wife, a daughter, and a son.

**Richard M. Harper**, 88, died Oct. 10, 2018, in Brookings, S.D. After graduating from Evangelical Theological Seminary, Mr. Harper served churches in Le Sueur, Rochester, Plymouth, and Mounds View, Minn. He is survived by two daughters (including **Emily Harper Levine '77**), son **Paul Harper '80**, grandchildren, and a great-grandchild.

**Ruth V. Harper**, 89, died Oct. 23, 2018. She worked in the Lutheran Church.

## 1952

Macalester professor **Roger K. Mosvick**, 87, of St. Paul, died Nov. 22, 2018. After teaching history and founding the speech, debate, and drama programs at Sibley High School, Mr. Mosvick returned to Macalester in 1956 and taught communications there for 47 years. He chaired two related communications studies departments for 20 years and coached Macalester's debate team, which was the largest in the United States during the

## IN MEMORIAM

1960s. The team won its first national championship in 1969. A committed advocate of the diversification of Macalester's student body and faculty, Mr. Mosvick received the school's highest honor, the Thomas Jefferson Award, in 1995. During the 1970s, he launched the management consulting firm Mosvick and Associates and served as president of the Applied Communications Division of the International Communication Association. He was the author of *We've Got to Start Meeting Like This!*, a book on small-group decision-making. Mr. Mosvick retired from Macalester in 2004. He is survived by his wife, Nona, sons **Mark Mosvick '81** and **Matthew Mosvick '81**, four grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

**Maybelle Huie Yee**, 88, of Burnsville, Minn., died Nov. 16, 2018. She was active in the Chinese Heritage Foundation. She is survived by two sons (including **Andy Yee '80**), as well as siblings in China and Canada.

### 1953

**Damiano Caponi**, 92, of Hudson, Wis., died Oct. 1, 2018. He served in the U.S. Army in Europe during World War II and worked as a manager with Firestone Tire and Rubber Company in Minnesota, Nebraska, and Iowa. Mr. Caponi is survived by his wife, Patricia, three daughters, two sons, 12 grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

**Betty Ann McRae Tetzke**, 87, died Oct. 13, 2018, in Livermore, Calif. During a career in education spanning more than 50 years, Mrs. Tetzke taught high school English, social studies, and U.S. government. She was also a guidance counselor, a resource teacher for gifted students, director of programs at schools of creative and performing arts in California, and a charter school co-developer and assistant director of instruction. She was first headmaster at Miras International School in

Kazakhstan, a board member of SIAS International University in China, and a faculty member for student teachers at National University in San Diego. Mrs. Tetzke is survived by a daughter, two grandchildren, and brother **Kermit McRae '58**.

### 1955

**Rae Funk Rowe**, 84, died Nov. 18, 2018, in Solvang, Calif. She taught at schools in Wisconsin and Minnesota and was a learning disability teacher at Weaver Elementary School since its founding. Mrs. Rowe is survived by her husband, Leonard, a daughter, son **Ken Rowe '87**, three grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

**Margaret Mathers VanHorn**, 85, died Aug. 27, 2018. She worked for Colorado College in the admissions and development departments and subsequently as registrar, retiring in 1995. Mrs. VanHorn is survived by her husband, Donald, a daughter, two sons, four grandchildren, and a sister.

### 1956

**Richard A. Eidem**, 85, of Conroe, Texas, died Nov. 26, 2018. He served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War and was a captain in the National Guard. He later worked in Texas as a contractor. Mr. Eidem is survived by his wife, Sarah, several children, 26 grandchildren, and 46 great-grandchildren.

**Elizabeth A. Spangler**, 84, of Dresbach, Minn., died Nov. 1, 2018. She was a kindergarten teacher at several schools in Minnesota and Wisconsin. A Macalester Golden Scots Society member, Ms. Spangler was also named Winona County's Conservation Farmer of the Year in 1976 and Volunteer of the Year by Gundersen Health System. She is survived by two daughters, a son, a granddaughter, and her siblings.

### 1957

**Dixie Lee Douglas Schamens**, 82, of Lynnwood, Wash., died July 16, 2018. She was a teacher and homemaker. Mrs. Schamens is survived by four children, four grandchildren, four great-grandchildren, and a sister.

### 1958

**Larrie D. Lafoy**, 82, of Iowa City, Iowa, and Oak Lawn, Ill., died Oct. 16, 2018. He worked as an educator and coach in the Oak Lawn area. Mr. Lafoy is survived by his wife, Linda, two daughters, a son, and four grandchildren.

**E. George Thomas** of Boothbay Harbor, Maine, and Naples, Fla., died Oct. 18, 2018. He worked for Ford Motor Company as a plant manager. After retiring from Ford, Mr. Thomas operated the Newcastle Inn, acquired the commercial real estate firm MAINCO, Inc., and bought the Harbour Towne Inn in Boothbay Harbor. Mr. Thomas is survived by two daughters, three grandchildren, a sister, and two brothers.

### 1959

**Vernon Maxa**, 85, of Brainerd, Minn., died Oct. 17, 2018. After serving Presbyterian churches in northwest Minnesota, Mr. Maxa began a 30-year career in clinical pastoral education and hospital ministry in 1967. He was a chaplain supervisor and assistant professor in the medical school at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, and he founded a continuing professional education training center for pastors and Catholic lay ministers in Billings, Mont., in 1991. After his retirement, Mr. Maxa served as a part-time and volunteer chaplain and interim pastor. Mr. Maxa is survived by his wife, Marilyn, a daughter, three sons, 10 grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, and two sisters.

**Joan Jarvis Stivers**, 80, died Oct. 22, 2018, in Lincoln, Neb. She taught elementary and secondary school. Mrs. Stivers is survived by her husband, **F. Edward Stivers '61**, a daughter, a son, five grandchildren, and a brother.

### 1960

**Carol Beardshear Deleo**, 80, died Aug. 26, 2018. She taught in Babbitt, Minn., where she also chaired the school board. Mrs. Deleo later worked in special education in South Dakota. She is survived by a son and two granddaughters.

**Samuel Simmons** died Nov. 11, 2018. He served in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War, worked with the Internal Revenue Service, and worked in finance at the Pillsbury Company, where he was also director of fleet administration. Additionally, he served as a board member and treasurer of the St. Paul Urban League. Mr. Simmons is survived by two daughters, two sons, nine grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren, a sister, and two brothers.

### 1961

**Katherine Ouhl Curtis**, 79, of St. Paul, died Nov. 2, 2018. She was a volunteer, a dedicated Anglophile, and a St. Paul history buff. Mrs. Curtis is survived by a daughter, a son, and three grandchildren.

### 1962

**Beatrice Weschcke Asfeld**, 95, died Oct. 18, 2018. She served as a foster parent and volunteered for many years at a veterans' hospital in St. Paul. Mrs. Asfeld is survived by seven children, 20 grandchildren, 21 great-grandchildren, two great-great-grandchildren, and a sister.

## 1963

**Carol Sorensen Bergstrom**, 77, died Sept. 16, 2018, in St. Paul. She taught in the Bemidji, Minn., public school district from 1972 to 2006, specializing in early childhood education for children with special needs. Mrs. Bergstrom is survived by a daughter, two sons (including **Peter Bergstrom '89**), seven grandchildren, a sister, and a brother.

**Barbara Lange Goldenstein**, 77, died Nov. 12, 2018, in Fergus Falls, Minn. She taught business at a vocational school in Willmar, Minn., and business and Spanish at a high school in Clara City, Minn. Mrs. Goldenstein is survived by her husband, Robert, a daughter, and a brother.

**Joyce Scoville Stockton**, 77, died Sept. 26, 2018. She was a school psychologist, therapist, and co-founder of the Well Family Clinic. Mrs. Stockton is survived by her husband, **Will Stockton '62**, daughter **Heather Stockton '90**, a son, five grandchildren, and a sister.

## 1964

**Marc A. Brown**, 76, died Oct. 17, 2018, in Edina, Minn. He worked for Green Giant Co. and Pillsbury Co. for 30 years. After his retirement, he worked for a timber frame home builder and rehabilitated homes. Mr. Brown is survived by his wife, **Catherine Lindsey Brown '64**, a daughter, a son, two granddaughters, a sister, and a brother.

## 1965

**Helen Graham Edie**, 101, of Roseville, Calif., died Oct. 18, 2018. She taught European history and French at Northrop School from 1966 to 1972. Mrs. Edie is survived by a daughter, four sons, 13 grandchildren, and 24 great-grandchildren.

**Allan W. Evans**, 77, of Mannheim, Germany, died Nov. 7, 2018. A world-renowned classical bass baritone opera

singer, Mr. Evans studied at the Juilliard School and in Germany, and debuted professionally with the Vienna Chamber Opera in 1968. He was one of the first African Americans to sing in opera houses in Germany and was awarded the title of Kammersanger by the German government in 1996. During his career, Mr. Evans was an ensemble member of the Basel Theater, National Theater Mannheim, and Staatstheater Kassel. One of his signature roles was Hans Sachs in Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. Mr. Evans is survived by a sister and five brothers.

## 1965

**Shirley E. Hintz**, 75, of Overland Park, Kan., died Oct. 23, 2018. She worked as a librarian for the Kansas City, Mo., Public Library and in secondary schools in Kansas. Ms. Hintz is survived by a sister.

## 1967

**Priscilla Powers Bue**, 71, of St. Louis Park, Minn., died May 28, 2017. She was a horticulturalist, arborist, and photographer. Mrs. Bue is survived by a daughter, a son, four grandchildren, and three siblings.

**Wesley C. Schultz**, 73, died Oct. 9, 2018. He taught humanities at St. Paul Academy.

## 1968

**G. Maxwell Swanson**, 69, of Minneapolis, died March 30, 2018.

## 1971

**Kirsten J. Tyson**, 69, of Honolulu, died Sept. 14, 2018. She earned a doctorate in marriage and family therapy at Kansas State University. Mrs. Tyson is survived by her husband, **Mark Anderson '71**.

## 1972

**Thomas C. Carter**, 68, of Churchville, Md., died Oct. 25, 2018. He worked for the federal government for 33 years and received the Office of the Secretary of Defense Medal for Exceptional Civilian Service for his work as a supply systems analyst for logistics for the Department of Defense. Mr. Carter retired in 2007. He is survived by his wife, **Christine Heyrman Carter '71**, a sister, and three brothers.

## 1973

**Julia Osborne Christensen**, 68, died Nov. 9, 2018. After teaching high school in Roseville, Minn., Mrs. Christensen was called to the ministry, serving Presbyterian churches in Wisconsin, Indiana, and Wyoming. She is survived by her husband, Carl, a granddaughter, and sisters **Anita Osborne Cummings '64** and **Kathleen Osborne Vellenga '59 P'85**.

## 1974

**Deborah Spangler Koelling**, 66, died Nov. 4, 2018. She taught English for many years at Northwest College, where she also served as chief academic officer. In addition, Mrs. Koelling was a consultant and evaluator for the North Central Association of Schools and Colleges and served on the Wyoming State Board of Education. She is survived by her husband, Robert, a daughter, a son, her mother, and three brothers.

## 1983

**Steven P. Schultz**, 58, died Sept. 27, 2018. He was a certified public accountant. Mr. Schultz is survived by his mother and a sister.

## // OTHER LOSSES

**Louis D. Frenzel**, 98, of Falcon Heights, Minn., died Oct. 19, 2018. He taught biology at Macalester from 1957 to 1969 and was a professor of wildlife biology at the University of Minnesota from 1969 to 1984. Mr. Frenzel is survived by a daughter, two sons, and five grandchildren.

# BREAKING NEWS



Since 1914, *The Mac Weekly* has been a campus fixture for news, entertainment, and commentary. The newspaper's 1950–51 staff, pictured here, kicked off spring semester in 1951 with an editorial inviting a lively campus conversation via letters to the editor. “We’d like to take time out to rededicate ourselves to the public service of Macalester College,” the staff wrote. “The Weekly, as has long been the custom, serves as the chief voice for the College. Its reputation as a worthy example of Macalester is well-established; it therefore is our goal to retain the status quo or, if possible, to better it.”

Tell us your Mac Weekly memories: [mactoday@macalester.edu](mailto:mactoday@macalester.edu).

# MACALESTER MOMENT

“I TREASURED MY TIME AT MACALESTER.  
IT’S GOT THE KIND OF PEOPLE THAT YOU  
LOOK UP TO. THE KIDS I’VE MET HERE  
HAVE BIGGER DREAMS.”

—Dave Brown '68



Left: Coach Bolstorff  
Right: Dave Brown

Dave Brown '68 only played basketball for Coach Doug Bolstorff for two years at Macalester before a chronic hip injury forced Dave to quit. But the coach's impact on him has lasted a lifetime.

As Dave approached his 50th Reunion, he decided he wanted to make a gift that honored his experience. "I thought about who meant the most to me during my time there, and I came up with three names: Coach Bolstorff, political science professor Theodore Mitau, and chemistry professor Emil Slowinski," he says. "They all believed in me, and I aspired to meet their expectations." His Douglas Bolstorff Endowed Scholarship, created through a provision in his estate plan and activated with an outright gift, will be awarded to a junior or senior in political science or chemistry, thus honoring all three of Dave's mentors.

On his path to becoming a renowned physician, ophthalmologist, and inventor in treating—and trying to cure—glaucoma, Dave remembers his coach for being a gentleman, Mitau for his tremendous lectures, and Slowinski for helping him get into medical school. Dave and Doug remain friends today. "I treasured my time at Macalester," says Dave. "It's got the kind of people that you look up to. The kids I've met here have bigger dreams."

For more information on supporting The Macalester Moment campaign through a planned gift, contact Theresa Gienapp at 651-696-6087 or visit [macalester.edu/leaveittomac](http://macalester.edu/leaveittomac).



MACALESTER



# MACALESTER COLLEGE

1600 Grand Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN 55105-1899



Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 1339  
Madison, WI

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



PHOTO: DAVID J. TURNER

An ensemble performs at *Breath Bound*, the fall dance concert.