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A Voice for Global Justice
Law Professor Erika George fights to end practices that erode human dignity.

Partners to Prevent Cancer
Dr. Joshua Schiffman studies elephants’ genes to find out what makes them so resistant to the disease.

Next Gen Healers
A unique internship guides Native American undergrads from around the country toward science and medicine.

Good Trouble
A civil rights icon inspires students to engage in social change.

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(Cover photo by Austen Diamond)
DIFFICULT CHOICES

I've been haunted by the riveting title of “Why Should it Be So Hard to Die?” (Spring 2016) since reading it. The rasping irony of Peggy Battin’s story—both fictional and real—brought to light the complex, difficult choices that cluster at the end of our lives. Last month I was present at the bedside death of my father-in-law, the third of my parents to die peacefully at home. Achieving that quiet end required difficult conversations, lots of planning, and, often, swimming against the tide. Work like Battin's, and this article in Continuum, will encourage us to ponder end-of-life choices earlier rather than later.

Lisa Smallley
Orem, Utah

HOUSING THE HOMELESS

Amazed at the success of this program (“Providing a Home,” Spring 2016). It gives me hope, especially to see young people involved and passionate about a program they see truly helping people.

Barbara Nord
Orem, Utah
OVER ONE HUNDRED STORES AND RESTAURANTS.
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The Huntsman Cancer Institute (HCI) hosted Vice President Joe Biden in February, taking him on a facilities tour and giving him a chance to discuss eradicating cancer with other local leaders.

During his visit, the vice president got an inside look at the Utah Population Database and participated in a round-table discussion with Huntsman Cancer Foundation board chairman Jon Huntsman, Jr.; CEO and director of HCI Dr. Mary Beckerle; Senator Orrin Hatch; and local cancer survivors and physicians.

HCI manages the largest genetics database in the world, with more than 22 million records linked to genealogies, health records, and vital statistics. Biden expressed a desire to figure out how this and other models of excellence created here could be reproduced. “If this could be a model that would be replicated throughout the country and the world, I honest to God believe that we would make exponential progress,” he said.

The vice president’s visit was part of a national “listening tour” of the nation’s top cancer institutes. Biden heads up the White House’s “Moonshot” initiative to double the rate of progress toward curing cancer. In April, Beckerle was invited to participate in the Moonshot initiative as a member of a new Blue Ribbon Panel tasked with advising the National Cancer Advisory Board.

The fight against cancer is both a public and personal quest for Biden, who lost his son Beau to brain cancer last year.
The decision last year to put off the NBA draft to play another season paid off for both Jakob Poeltl and the Runnin’ Utes basketball team. In March, Poeltl was named Pac-12 Player of the Year. Teammate Brandon Taylor also received recognition as Pac-12 Scholar-Athlete of the Year. Both players helped lead Utah to a 24–7 overall record and 13–5 league mark that earned the Utes second place in the Pac-12 standings for the second straight season.

Poeltl, a sophomore from Austria, averaged 17.5 points and 9.1 rebounds, and shot 66 percent from the field during the regular season. Standing seven feet tall, Poeltl is the ninth Ute to win a conference player of the year award in men’s basketball, and the first in the Pac-12 era. He ended the regular season as the league’s No. 2 scorer, No. 3 rebounder, and No. 5 shot-blocker.

Poeltl is also the recipient of the Kareem Abdul-Jabbar Award for being the best center in men’s college basketball. He was selected as the Pete Newell Big Man of the Year, and named as an All-American by the AP, CBS Sports, ESPN, The Sporting News, Sports Illustrated, NBC Sports, and USA Today.

In April, Poeltl announced that he’s entering the NBA draft. “Staying a second year made me a better player,” he says. “But I know now that declaring for the draft is the best thing for my career at this point.” In a gesture to say both goodbye and thank you, the U framed his jersey (No. 42) as a keepsake and presented it to Poeltl at the press conference where he made the announcement.

The University of Utah welcomes Wyatt Rory Hume as the new dean of the School of Dentistry. Hume has led dental schools and served in top posts at universities in Australia, the Middle East, and the University of California school system for more than 30 years.

“Dr. Hume brings a depth and breadth of international experience as a leader that is both rare and impressive,” says Vivian S. Lee, Utah’s senior vice president for health sciences and CEO of University Health Care. “I look forward to seeing him lead us to become a top-10 program in the next decade.”

Hume received his dental and doctoral degrees from the University of Adelaide in South Australia and then went to the University of California, Los Angeles, School of Medicine as a postdoctoral fellow in pharmacology. “This is a unique and very appealing opportunity to continue the process of building a great school of dentistry within the vibrant and successful academic and health care environment that exists at the University of Utah,” says Hume.

The School of Dentistry welcomed its first class in August 2013 and moved into its new facility, the Ray and Tye Noorda Oral Health Sciences Building, in April 2015. The school’s first class graduates in 2017.
Two University of Utah professors received 2016 fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. Nadja Durbach, professor of history, received an award for European and Latin American history, and Melanie Rae Thon, professor of English, was recognized in the field of fiction writing.

Created in 1925, the Guggenheim Fellowships are awarded to those who have made impressive accomplishments in their respective fields and exhibit exceptional promise for the future. For 2016, the foundation received nearly 3,000 applications. “The Guggenheim Fellowship is among the most prestigious forms of recognition available to scholars,” says Dianne Harris, dean of the College of Humanities.

Durbach is a historian of modern Britain who specializes in the history of the body. Educated at the University of British Columbia and Johns Hopkins University, she joined the U in 2000. During her Guggenheim Fellowship, Durbach will be working on a monograph titled “Many Mouths: State-Feeding in Britain from the Workhouse to the Welfare State.”

As a teacher and writer, Thon is devoted to the celebration of diversity from a multitude of perspectives by interrogating the repercussions of exile, slavery, habitat loss, genocide, and extirpation. Her most recent books are *Silence & Song* and *The 7th Man*. She is also the author of the novels *The Voice of the River*, *Sweet Hearts*, *Meteors in August*, and *Iona Moon*.

Kudos to Dean Bob Adler for completing a 100-mile race in April to raise scholarship funds and awareness for the College of Law’s 100/100 initiative. The initiative sets an ambitious goal of attaining 100 percent bar passage for first-time takers and 100 percent full-time professional employment for new graduates. Adler blogged about his training for months, challenging the community to get involved in the initiative. Several students accompanied Adler during the last eight miles of the race, which took place just outside of Zion National Park.

In March, the Maverik Center in West Valley City was turned into a giant robotics battlefield with blockades, catapults, and cardboard castles. The U’s College of Engineering sponsored the 2016 Utah Regional FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics Competition, which attracted more than 40 high school teams from 12 states and Canada. The teams had two months to design and create robots to specific standards and then two days to battle it out. The event, which saw more than 5,000 people in attendance this year, is designed to get kids interested in engineering, programming, and science.
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Cervical cancer is almost eradicated in the developed world, where detection is made quickly and treatments are readily available. But in the developing world, where doctors and equipment are scarce, many more women die of the disease—as many as 90 percent of the 250,000 women who die of it annually worldwide. A cross-disciplinary team of University of Utah students hopes to solve this problem with a new handheld treatment device, Cinluma. The team just became the World Health Organization lead for cervical cancer and received a new $2.4 million grant from the National Cancer Institute.

“Cervical cancer stays precancerous for 10–20 years, but once it becomes cancer, it becomes very aggressive and few survive,” says Tim Pickett MS’15 (bioengineering), one of the students on the team. “Because of the ‘grace period,’ it’s basically curable in the developed world.”

Cinluma, which looks much like an ordinary battery-powered drill with a heating element on the end, applies heat to the cervix and, in just 45 seconds, eliminates lesions before they can become cancer. Unlike other treatments on the market, the device is inexpensive, reusable, and battery-powered, so doctors don’t need a stable source of electricity.

“The University of Utah is a global leader in medical innovation, and we are proud to carry on this tradition,” says team mentor John Langell, a surgeon, assistant professor in the U School of Medicine, and director of the Center for Endovascular Surgery.

After three years and four prototypes, student start-up SenseTech and its creator Jacob Harris won $5,000 and first place in the 2016 University of Utah Opportunity Quest (OQ) business-plan competition in February. SenseTech records soil, air, temperature, and moisture data through six solar-powered sensors, then sends the information to a user’s smartphone or computer to help guide optimal watering. By providing information on exactly when, where, and how much to water, the start-up has the potential to vastly improve water usage at golf courses, city parks, farms, and even by agencies such as the U.S. Geological Service.

“The broad plan with this money is to grow SenseTech and make a bigger difference in the world,” says Harris, who grew up in a farming community in rural northern Utah. “I will use this money to further develop our backend analytics database, as well as expand our beta-testing program.” Harris is currently pursuing both an MBA and a master’s in mechanical engineering at the U.

As the grand prize winner at OQ, Harris garnered a $5,000 grant from Zions Bank, $2,000 of in-kind prizes, and connections and pitch consulting opportunities with industry professionals who judged the competition. SenseTech competed against other student companies such as Aura Optics, the second-place start-up (which creates customizable high-performance snow goggles with interchangeable lenses and straps), and Peke-Buo, the third-place company that created a unique, clutch-style kit to streamline changing diapers.
University of Utah engineers have discovered a new kind of 2D semiconducting material for electronics that opens the door for much speedier computers and smartphones that also consume a lot less power.

The semiconductor, made of the elements tin and oxygen, is a layer of 2D material only one atom thick, allowing electrical charges to move through it much faster than conventional 3D materials such as silicon. Transistors made with this material could lead to computers, processors, and smartphones that are more than 100 times faster than regular devices.

The material was discovered by a team led by Ashutosh Tiwari, a U materials science and engineering associate professor. A paper describing the research was the cover story in February in the journal *Advanced Electronic Materials*. The paper was co-authored by U materials science and engineering doctoral students K. J. Saji and Kun Tian, and Michael Snure BS’04 PhD’09, a former doctoral student of Tiwari now with the Wright-Patterson Air Force Research Lab near Dayton, Ohio. Tiwari’s team has recently started a collaborative research program with the lab.

While researchers in this field have recently discovered other new types of 2D material, these materials allow only the movement of N-type, or negative, electrons. To create an electronic device, the material must allow the movement of both negative electrons and positive charges known as “holes.” The tin monoxide material discovered by Tiwari and his team is the first stable P-type 2D semiconductor material ever in existence.
CAMPUS SCENE

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Campus Quidditch

U students now field not one but two teams for quidditch, the part rugby, part basketball, all magical sport inspired by the Harry Potter books. Though they are “muggles” (nonmagical folk, in the Pottersphere), the full-contact sport’s co-ed teams play while straddling makeshift “brooms” (typically, decorated PVC pipes) just as its fictional flying players do. And despite the sport’s origins, the players often take the real-world game quite seriously. The U’s Crimson Elite and Crimson Fliers usually practice at Reservoir Park, just west of campus, and any U student is welcome to come try the game before committing to joining the team. Look for “Utah Quidditch” on Facebook to learn more.
PARTNERS to PREVENT CANCER

DR. JOSHUA SCHIFFMAN STUDIES ELEPHANTS’ GENES TO FIND OUT WHAT MAKES THEM SO RESISTANT TO THE DISEASE.

By Ann Floor

Photo by August Miller
CONTINUUM: Why are you and your research team turning your focus toward cancer risk prevention, and what do elephants have to do with it?

SCHIFFMAN: Cancer researchers have done a great job providing cures for cancer, but it’s still the leading cause of disease-related death in children. Childhood leukemia used to be a death sentence. Now, the cure rate is over 90 percent—which is fantastic! But there is much more we need to do.

Medications are toxic, care is extremely expensive, and there seems to be an increase in the incidence of leukemia and brain tumors, and we aren’t quite sure why. Of the 350,000 childhood cancer survivors in the U.S. today, most of them have chronic disease—heart problems, pulmonary problems, hearing problems—all related to the treatment we give them.

While medical research shows that up to one in three childhood cancers may be caused by genetic risk, there has been little action by medical research in cancer prevention. By the time symptoms appear, it’s often too late. If we can find the cancer before symptoms are present, we have a much better shot at a good outcome—100 percent versus 20 percent survival in some situations. Cancer prevention is most important, and we are discovering that the p53 gene in elephants may play a pivotal role in it.

CONTINUUM: What is the p53 gene, and how does it help prevent cancer?

SCHIFFMAN: P53, also known as TP53, regulates the cell cycle and cell death, so it functions as a tumor suppressor. P53 is one of the most important genes to protect people from cancer. It’s called the Guardian of the Genome in the peer-reviewed literature and behaves much like a superhero. If there is DNA damage to a cell, p53 shows up on the scene to stop the cell from dividing and to help coordinate repair, or sometimes even to kill the cell. If p53 doesn’t work because it is missing or mutated, then the cell accumulates massive amounts of DNA mutations, keeps dividing, never dies, and that’s cancer. That’s why p53 is so important.

Most people have two copies of p53—one from mom, one from dad. However, it turns out that people with Li-Fraumeni syndrome, or LFS, have a hereditary genetic condition with just one working p53 gene in all the cells in their body. They also have more than a 90 percent lifetime risk of cancer—along with their affected family members. Over half the time, LFS cancers occur at a very young age, including childhood. The lack of a working p53 gene in patients with LFS is responsible for their extremely high rate of cancer.

But p53 is also very important in people without LFS. In fact, the p53 gene is broken in at least half of all human tumors, leading to initial tumor development. There is also evidence that p53 stops working as we age, an observation that correlates with increased cancer risk in the aging population. Without our p53 superhero, it is difficult to prevent the development of cancer.

Q&A

JOSHUA SCHIFFMAN IS A LOVER OF ALL THINGS ELEPHANT. As a pediatric oncologist and a professor in the University of Utah’s Department of Pediatrics, he and his exceptional team from Primary Children’s Hospital, Huntsman Cancer Institute, and the University of Utah are working to expand the focus of childhood cancer research to include prevention—and elephants have become important partners in that work. Curious, we sat down with Dr. Schiffman to find out more.

From time to time in the course of medicine, there are points of punctuated equilibrium. Now, with childhood cancer, we’re moving beyond just treatment toward the path of prevention. Often, we recognize these only in retrospect, but with the work Josh Schiffman and his team are doing, we are watching it unfold before our very eyes.”

Edward B. Clark, M.D.
Department Chair of Pediatrics,
University of Utah
CONTINUUM: Was there an “aha” moment when you first realized the potential of elephant genes for the future of cancer research?

SCHIFFMAN: Yes. A few years ago, I attended a medical conference to learn why we develop cancer. Carlo Maley, a biologist and associate professor at the Biodesign Institute in the School of Life Sciences at Arizona State University, gave a presentation, and it changed my life forever. He talked about something called Peto’s Paradox, the observation that cancer occurrence does not correlate with the number of cells or lifespan of an organism.

For instance, the rate of cancer in elephants is much lower than cancer in humans despite the fact that an elephant has 100 times more cells than a human, and elephant cells continue to divide over and over again throughout the 60- to 70-year lifespan of an elephant. Half of all men and a third of all women will develop cancer in their lifetime, but less than 5 percent of elephants appear to develop cancer. And that’s the paradox. With elephants having so many dividing cells for so long, but so little cancer, it’s clear that they must have developed a genetic mechanism for cancer resistance.

CONTINUUM: How did you connect the dots between elephant and human cancer resistance and the number of copies of p53?

SCHIFFMAN: At the conference, Dr. Maley reported that when he looked at the genome of African elephants, his team discovered that elephants have 40 copies of p53. I nearly fell out of my seat when I heard that. Dr. Maley said they couldn’t find any other animals with that many copies of p53, and although he didn’t know for certain, this might be the reason why elephants are so resistant to cancer.

After his presentation, I introduced myself to Dr. Maley and told him about my lab at Huntsman Cancer Institute at the University of Utah and about Primary Children’s Hospital, where we’re taking care of children with LFS, collecting their cells, trying to understand why their cells are more susceptible to cancer. “You just said that elephants have 40 copies of p53 and almost never get cancer. Our patients only have one copy of p53 and always get cancer,” I said.

“What if somehow we could get elephant blood and test it next to the blood from our patients with Li-Fraumeni syndrome to try to determine for sure why elephants don’t get cancer?” Dr. Maley was very excited by this idea and asked me how I was ever going to get elephant blood, and I said, “I have no idea.” He said, “Well, give me a call if you find out.”

CONTINUUM: How did you get the elephant blood, and how do you go about studying it?

SCHIFFMAN: A few weeks later, my kids and I were visiting Utah’s Hogle Zoo. We arrived just as the daily elephant show was starting and sat down on the steps to watch. Out stepped Eric Peterson, the elephant keeper. “These are our African elephants,” Eric explained. “You can tell they are African elephants because of their big ears. They have big veins on the back of their ears to circulate the blood. That’s how they stay cool.” And then, and I swear it’s true, he said, “Did you know that once a week here at the Hogle Zoo we draw blood from the elephants to make sure they’re healthy?” That was it! A light bulb went off.
CONTINUUM: We understand you’ve now partnered with Ringling Bros. to study other species of elephants as well. Could you tell us about that?

SCHIFFMAN: In addition to the African elephants at Utah’s Hogle Zoo, we have been working with the Asian elephants from Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus. It turns out that Ringling Bros. has a Center for Elephant Conservation and owns the largest herd of elephants in the Western Hemisphere. Similar to what we do with the zoo, we study blood that is already being collected for regular care of the elephants.

We have learned that Asian elephants also have multiple copies of the p53 gene that help to promote a very robust cell death when DNA damage is present. This entire project has been an absolutely amazing partnership between Ringling Bros. Center for Elephant Conservation, Utah’s Hogle Zoo, Primary Children’s Hospital, and our lab at Huntsman Cancer Institute.

CONTINUUM: What are your studies showing? Any surprises? And what’s next?

SCHIFFMAN: Science is great because it takes you places you don’t expect to go. Our hypothesis was that elephant cells would repair the DNA-damaged cells extremely quickly. But the elephant cells were not repairing faster; they were repairing at the same rate as human cells. Then we looked closer and found that in the elephant blood, there was much more cell death—more than twice as many elephant cells were dying than in humans.

So although the p53 in elephants wasn’t repairing cells quickly, it was killing the cell quickly so it could no longer divide—much more efficient. We thought to ourselves, evolution has done it again! Taking a step back, this makes perfect sense. If you want to prevent cancer, this is the way to do it, kill the cell before it can ever go on to become cancer. We are now working to insert p53 from elephants into human cancer cells to see if there is any effect and to find out if there is a way we can translate these laboratory findings into clinical medicine.

With enough research, support, and effort, we hope that the first clinical trials could begin within the next three to five years.

The results of the research by Schiffman and his team were published in the October 2015 issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) and were met with phenomenal interest. The article was ranked as the No.2 most popular story in JAMA for 2015 and was named one of the top 100 science articles around the world for 2015. It also made the cover of Newsweek and has generated more than 20,000 individual news stories to date. 📰
In the town where Steven Just is from, college wasn’t something that he and his classmates thought much about. A Native American from the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Sioux Tribe, Steven grew up on the edge of the Lake Traverse Indian Reservation in Sisseton, South Dakota. And although he doesn’t like to talk about it much, he’ll tersely explain that he hated his high school experience and was discouraged with his education at a young age.

“For me, the K-12 system I knew felt like it was getting people ready to work in a factory or go to prison,” he says bluntly.

Steven, 27, looks back on that time in his life with a sober understanding that if it hadn’t been for counselors, family, and tribal members who pushed him to go to college, that vision of high school—as a pipeline to drudgery or worse—might have caught him.
"Back then, I was the night manager of the local grocery store, and where I grew up, that was a big achievement," he says. "I never could have imagined the person I am now—a mentor to fellow Native American students, a college graduate. I'm about to start pharmacy school."

Steven credits a unique University of Utah program for helping solidify his passion for science and medicine. The Native American Research Internship (NARI) is a 10-week program that specializes in guiding Native American students toward careers in those fields. It is designed specifically for Native American undergraduate students with aptitude and interest in science. The paid summer internship (open to any college undergrad) gives students like Steven both lab and clinical experience that is guided by a strong focus on cultural understanding.

"[Native Americans] are the least represented group in the study of science and medicine in the nation," says NARI program founder Carrie Byington. "They have had historical hardships that have created barriers for them to enter into the scientific disciplines and other professions."

Steven's experience in his early education is an unfortunately familiar narrative for many Native American students. High dropout rates, incarceration rates, substance abuse, and poverty create a stacked deck for standouts like Steven. Among underrepresented populations in higher education, Native Americans are at the bottom of the list, with total college enrollment across the country annually hovering at or below one percent. And, in the sciences and medicine, those numbers essentially fall off the chart. Native Americans comprise only 0.6 percent of scientists (according to a 2010 National Science Foundation report) and 0.5 percent of physicians (per an Association of American Medical Colleges report that same year, the most recent for which numbers are available).

"NARI helped focus my career choices," says Steven, who spent two summers in the NARI program and is currently the program's student coordinator until he leaves for pharmacy school in Minnesota this fall. "I was struggling a bit in college at first, but my first summer with NARI reinvigorated me. When I returned [to the University of Minnesota, Morris] in the fall, I felt like I had a lot more support and people who believed in me."

But it is interesting to note that creating a successful and groundbreaking, culturally specific mentoring program to improve those numbers grew out of Byington’s attempt to understand what appeared to be an entirely different problem: low participation among Native Americans in research studies.

‘THE LONG WAY’

Byington is an M.D. and a pediatrics researcher, but she also studies concepts of community and how building
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community-based experiences into education can improve student and faculty success. In 2009, she and her colleagues were looking for inroads into the various tribal communities in the intermountain region and trying to understand the cultural barriers that made studying medical maladies within the Native American population difficult. So, they gathered tribal leaders from the area together that year to ask them what they thought were the reasons behind the low participation in potentially beneficial studies.

“They were interested in the research and the benefits,” Byington said. “They were interested in what we were doing at the university, but...”

The “but” was a complicated question of trust. The long history of conflict and strife between the United States government and the Native American peoples has left a lot of scars and a distinct lack of trust among American Indians for white institutions, especially in the realm of health care, which is often administered by the underfunded federal Indian Health Service. The solution, the elders suggested, was to train the young Native Americans and encourage them to return to their tribes and hometowns as researchers and health care professionals.

“Basically, they wanted us to reach out to their young people and teach them,” Byington says. “The elders wanted a mentoring program that reflected the native culture, a place where native students could feel proud of their culture and feel that the things they were bringing from their native culture would be welcome.”

And although this request from the elders wasn’t the answer they had thought they were seeking, she and her colleagues were undeterred.

“Certainly, it was the long way to achieve our goal, but we in the academic community are often surprised by the answers we find. It just demonstrates that we have to be out in the community, actively engaging and talking with people to learn what they want and how we can work together.”

NARI has trained 60 students in five years. Of the 45 who have finished college so far, 95% have received a science degree, and 35% have continued on to medical or graduate school.

“Having cultural mentors with the same background as me really helped my career path. And staying close to my research mentor helped me get to where I am today.”

— CYNTHIA WILSON
Navajo

The world of white lab coats and competitive and rigorous course work alongside culturally advantaged students is a long way from the life that many NARI students grew up in. Many Native Americans come from a tribal

TALKING CIRCLES
way of life that emphasizes the good of the tribe over individual success. Native American students can struggle with the individualism and competitiveness that permeates the biomedical disciplines. “These students often haven’t been in a population where the other students are go-getters,” says NARI Program Director Maija Holsti. “We help them by giving them lots of ‘yes, you can do this.’ There are so many things like public speaking or making a poster for a presentation that are petrifying for them. They just haven’t been exposed to these things, but we walk them through these little hurdles.”

Each NARI student is assigned a research mentor and a cultural mentor. The research mentor guides them through the essentials of lab work and research protocols, while their cultural mentor is a Native American professional working in a science or medical field. The program has a suite of research projects, funded by National Institutes of Health grants, that students are placed into. Holsti says they try to get students onto projects that match their interests. Some are clinical and involve interacting with patients, while others are pure lab work, basic science, and data collection.

On the cultural side, students attend weekly “talking circles” that are the hallmark of the program’s high-touch approach. At the meetings, students practice presentations, share their experiences and challenges, and generally compare notes and talk through issues with peers who come from similar backgrounds. The program takes on a close-knit family feel, and the students usually keep in close touch even after the program ends. “They become a family,” Holsti says. “Two of our students even got married, and we see lasting friendships develop.”

Students also participate in community outreach with the Native American population here in Salt Lake City, making health presentations to different groups, often at the Urban Indian Center. “We planned activities for elementary students that focused on the importance of physical activity and healthy eating.”

“Coming from a small town and a small school, I didn’t know that research was a career option for me. NARI opened that door.” —KALI DALE
White Earth Ojibwe

Represented in the NARI cohorts:

- 26 tribal nations
- 34 colleges/universities
- 21 states
says NARI alum and former NARI program coordinator Sam Hawkins. “So we got these kids and had them do jumping jacks, and then had them repeat it breathing through a small straw to demonstrate how smoking affects their bodies,” explains Sam, who received his bachelor’s degree from Utah State University and is now a first-year medical school student at the U. “This one little boy, 8 or 9 years old, was like ‘Wow, that was hard, I’ll never smoke.’ It really struck me how much of a difference we can make even on a small scale.”

This concept of giving back and sharing runs through the program. Many of the students are planning for careers where they can return to their tribes and hometowns and work in the Native American community. For example, NARI alum Kali Dale (who graduated with her bachelor’s degree from UM Morris) is now in a doctoral biochemistry program at the U and wants to focus her work on diabetes, which disproportionately affects Native Americans. “I want to help my people by researching the diseases that we are more likely to have,” she says. And Cynthia Wilson, another past NARI student who received her bachelor’s degree from Southern Utah University, is now in grad school at the U studying nutrition. Her master’s project is creating nutrition education curriculum that comes from her own perspective as a Navajo.

“I grew up on the Navajo reservation,” Cynthia says. “I came from a big family, and there is a lot of diabetes. We were never exposed to any kind of nutritional education. I didn’t even know what supplements were. We need better health care back home, and NARI really helped me figure out how to build a career in health.”

Sam is planning to be a primary care physician so he can work with underserved Native American communities. “We’re all shooting for the same thing,” he says, “a career in the biomedical sciences so we can go back into our communities and help.”

In many ways, the program is especially suited for the University of Utah. “I feel like we as a university have an obligation to these students,” Byington says. “We live in a western state with a large Native American population, and we use the name of the Utes as part of our identity. We really need to be serving Native American students, and the NARI program lets us do that.”

—Jeremy Pugh is a former editor of Salt Lake magazine and a freelance writer living in Salt Lake City.

“There’s a special bond among us NARI students. Not many Indians go into this type of career, and so I know I’m going to know them for the rest of my life. It’s like a family.”

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A CIVIL RIGHTS ICON INSPIRES STUDENTS TO ENGAGE IN SOCIAL CHANGE.

By Susan Vogel
On September 26, 1963, Salt Lake City’s population was only 189,000. Yet more than 100,000 people gathered along North Temple to welcome President John F. Kennedy to Utah.

In his speech at the Salt Lake Tabernacle, Kennedy used the words “black and white,” but he was not referring to the 200,000 strong March on Washington a month earlier or to the killing of four African American girls attending Sunday school 10 days earlier. Black and white referred to positions on foreign policy. Communism was the threat.

With the Salt Lake metro area only 1.4 percent non-white (Latinos were counted as white), it was easy for many residents to ignore the tumult occurring across the nation. Not so on college campuses. The Daily Utah Chronicle reported regularly on student civil rights activism around the country. One article stated that U student Stephen Holbrook, “active in the Republican Party and the NAACP,” had participated in the Freedom March on Washington.

Two months after Kennedy’s visit to Utah, he was assassinated. For many, it was the end of innocence.

University of Utah Professor Mark Matheson MA’85, who grew up in Salt Lake City, remembers “watching the aftermath of sorrow on black and white TV. By elementary school, we were writing essays on integration, which sparked a developing interest in the civil rights movement.”

Since Matheson began teaching, after receiving his master’s degree in English from the U and his doctorate from the University of Oxford, he has included Dr. King’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail” in his curriculum.

MUSE

Matheson now heads up the U’s MUSE Project (My U Signature Experience), which aims to provide undergraduate students with transformative educational opportunities. Each year, the MUSE staff chooses a theme for campuswide discussion, with the centerpiece being a text by a distinguished national guest. MUSE then organizes events including lunchtime lectures, book groups, and student dinners with professors and community leaders.

The 2014-15 theme was justice; its book was My Beloved World, by U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor. Her visit to campus drew more than 7,000 people from the campus and well beyond.

How do you follow that? Matheson learned that an icon in the civil rights movement, U.S. Congressman John Lewis from Georgia, had written a book—a graphic novel inspired by a 1956 comic book telling Martin Luther King, Jr’s story. Congressman Lewis created
“IT PUT A SPOTLIGHT ON SOME TOPICS THAT I WAS UNAWARE OF.”

Finance major Jessica Ramirez, who had learned little about civil rights in school, said the book was very informative, yet not intimidating. “It was the perfect way to tell a story of the civil rights movement,” she says. “This book is a good way to get people’s interest, and now those who have read the graphic novel can go and read more about the movement.”

Tyrell Pack, who studies chemical engineering, already had a deep knowledge of the civil rights movement. Still, he found March “very powerful.” Its graphic format “helped make stories and situations relatable and easy to visualize,” he says. Pack had written an essay on John Lewis in elementary school. He was excited for this “once in a lifetime” opportunity to hear him speak in person.

MARCH

Eight U professors incorporated March into their classes for 2015-16, and more than 1,000 students received copies of March: Book One (and in some cases, Book Two) donated by the O.C. Tanner Company. (Book Three comes out this August.)

March provided Matheson the opportunity to teach the role of texts in the civil rights movement. “Dr. King invoked Western cultural traditions—including the Bible, the Declaration of Independence, and the U.S. Constitution—in the service of a profound message of justice for African Americans,” he says.

Matheson’s prediction that students would connect with March was correct. “There are some books that just touch you right in the heart.... For me this was that book,” says Said Abdirahman Samatar, a chemical engineering/pre-law major. “It put a spotlight on some topics that I was unaware of.”

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GOOD TROUBLE

On November 11, 2015, to a capacity crowd of more than 800 at the U, Lewis shared his story of growing up one of 10 children of sharecroppers in highly segregated rural Alabama. As a child, he saw “whites only” signs and asked why. When he had to sit in the balcony of movie theaters, he asked why. Lewis was told, “That’s the way it is. Don’t get in the way, don’t get in trouble.”
At age 15, he heard a radio show about Rosa Parks, who refused to sit in the "colored" section of a bus, and about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. “The actions of Rosa Parks and the words of [Dr.] King inspired me to find a way to get in the way, to get in trouble,” he told the crowd. “And that’s what I did, I got in trouble. Good trouble, necessary trouble.”

Lewis’s first act of civil disobedience, at age 16, was to request a library card.

Inspired by Dr. King, Lewis began “studying the way of peace, the way of love, the way of nonviolence.” Lewis joined students and adults of all ages who bravely challenged the segregation laws of the South.

Sitting at “whites only” lunch counters in Nashville, they suffered attacks. People “spit on us. Put a lit cigarette out in our hair or down our backs,” he said. As soon as one group of students was knocked unconscious or thrown in jail, another group arrived to request to be served. Then came the Freedom Rides, in which blacks and whites rode together on segregated buses. In town after town, they suffered assaults, firebombs, and beatings.

Lewis was one of six people who organized the August 28, 1963, march on Washington. He spoke just prior to Dr. King’s “I Have a Dream” speech. It was one of the actions that spurred the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The following year, Lewis led a march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, to demand voting rights. The bloody attack on the marchers, broadcast nationwide, hastened the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

In 1986, after more than 40 arrests, Lewis entered political life. “If you would have told me that some day I would be a U.S. Congressman and that an African American would be the president of the United States...,” Lewis said to an impassioned round of applause near the end of his speech.

Lewis urged students to become involved in the political process. “There are forces in America today that are trying to take us back to the time when it was impossible or difficult for students, young people, people of color, and seniors to participate in the democratic process,” he said. “In the final analysis, it doesn’t matter if we are black or white or Latino or Asian American. We’re one family. We live in the same house.”

INSPRIATION

Pack was impressed by Lewis’s message that “if there is a problem within our society, the best way to fix it is to organize a method of altering the obstruction.” As citizens, he says, “we have the ability to elect officials who can implement change on a government level.”

However, Pack is skeptical that activists today will tolerate the violent attacks that characterized the civil rights era. He sees protests, fueled by social media, as a more viable way of drawing attention to the need for social change. “Social media can introduce younger generations to ideas about injustices around the world, which is powerful enough to lead to change if enough people follow the movement,” he says.

A finance major and MUSE intern, Ramirez already knew the power of MUSE speakers. She had first learned about the MUSE program when she heard that Sonia Sotomayor was coming to campus in 2014. She immediately wanted to invite Latino students from her high school, Cyprus High, in Magna. “I thought it would be a great opportunity for them to be inspired by a successful Latina woman,” she says. The program gave her the green light and her school purchased copies of Sotomayor’s books (Ramirez led a book discussion). She anticipated 30–40 students attending the speech, but more than 100 came.

Ramirez found the timing of Lewis’s talk propitious. “His speech was inspiring,” she says, “especially with everything going on in the country today. It definitely made Students Said Samatar and Jessica Ramirez discuss the powerful impact of Lewis’s story.
“RACE RELATIONS WILL REMAIN STAGNANT IF NO ACTION IS TAKEN AND PEOPLE DO NOT SPEAK ABOUT INJUSTICES.”

me think more about how to approach things with peace, not violence or hate. I already believed we still have a long way to go regarding civil rights and equality, and meeting the congressman only made me want to be more involved and informed.”

Samatar's first experience with MUSE and the U was when he was “lucky enough to miss school for a day,” at West High School, to hear 2013 MUSE keynote speaker Wes Moore, a black combat veteran and author. While on campus, Samatar learned more about MUSE. And later when he was trying to decide which university he wanted to attend, he came back to campus to help run the MUSE table at Red, White, and U day. “That night, I applied to be a MUSE Scholar and was accepted,” he says. “The MUSE program is one of the reasons I am at the University of Utah.”

Prior to Lewis’s speech, Samatar had been deeply concerned about racial injustices happening on campuses such as the University of Missouri. “A student went on a hunger strike and was willing to risk his life for justice,” Samatar explains. “This really made me question if I am doing enough to educate myself.” He says he learned from MUSE keynote speakers Wes Moore and Congressman John Lewis that he has to take responsibility to educate himself. “You can’t do something if you know nothing,” he adds.

BROADENING PERSPECTIVES

Ramirez, Samatar, and Pack share a common experience with MUSE. They all grew up in Utah. None has lived anywhere else except as small children. For them, the MUSE experience, especially the speakers, has opened their eyes and minds to the broader world and encouraged them to explore new possibilities.

In Utah, says Samatar, it’s frightening to see “how comfortable” you can become. “You know there are injustices, but they don’t always affect you as much as they should.” Through his experience with MUSE, the Black Student Union, and Diversity Scholars, he is becoming more aware.

Pack agrees that “race relations will remain stagnant if no action is taken and people do not speak about injustices.” He says, “Both March and Lewis’s presentation helped me realize that I can get involved with programs focused on topics I am passionate about.”

Ramirez notes that in Utah, young people may not learn about all of the educational opportunities available to them, or may be discouraged from pursuing them. “At my high school,” she says “a speaker came to our class and told us ‘college isn’t for everyone.’” It was an AP class.

She sees the MUSE program as “helping students meet people in positions of power and see that these positions and the ability they offer to make change in the world are accessible to them.” Hearing the speakers, she says, “helps you realize they are very similar to you in a lot of ways and that you have the same opportunities.” Personally, she learned from Sotomayor and Lewis that “If I want something, I can fight for it. I can make a difference.”

Following Lewis’s lead, Ramirez is looking for a way to “get into good trouble.” She will apply to law school this fall.

—Susan Vogel is a freelance writer, publisher, and attorney based in Salt Lake City.
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A VOICE FOR GLOBAL JUSTICE

Law Professor Erika George fights to end practices that erode human dignity.

STORY BY ELAINE JARVIK | PHOTOS BY AUSTEN DIAMOND
One day in 2003, when Erika George was working at an international law firm in New York City, she got an unexpected phone call.

She had put her name in the pool of applicants looking for teaching positions at U.S. law schools, specifying that she preferred schools in Chicago or New York. And now here on the phone was a professor named Mitchel Lasser, telling her she was exactly the kind of candidate his law school was looking for. She and Lasser talked for half an hour—about European trade law and a professor they had both had at Harvard—before he said the school would like to fly her to Salt Lake City for an interview.

“Why would you want to do that?” George asked, puzzled about the destination. And that’s when she learned that Lasser was calling not from Chicago or New York but from the University of Utah, where he was head of the S.J. Quinney College of Law’s hiring committee. She wonders, even now, if he conveniently forgot to mention the school’s name when she first picked up the phone.

Perhaps he knew that Utah might not be the first name that came to mind for a black woman interested in global justice.

“We were very keen to have her at the law school, desperate even,” remembers Tony Anghie, a professor of international law who was on the hiring committee that year. “She had done work in South African human rights, and had also worked with a major Wall Street law firm. Everyone was so impressed and engaged with her.”

George, in turn, was impressed with the U but had reservations about taking the job, so she talked it over with a mentor from her Harvard Law School days, who advised her: “If you have at least one person who is an intellectual soul mate there, that’s probably where you need to be.” George had already met two—Lasser and Anghie.

She’s been at the U for 13 years now. From her office, with its peaceful view of the foothills and her Goldendoodle, Mojo, sleeping contentedly in the
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corner, she has become a worldwide expert on human rights law and the abuses it tries to eliminate, a long list of miseries that includes child slavery and sex trafficking.

George is especially concerned about transnational corporations and the abuses that occur along their “supply chain”: how the candy bars and cell phones we buy might come to us at the expense of another human’s safety and freedom.

She hopes that her new book, Incorporating Rights, which will be published by Oxford University Press next fall, will provide a comprehensive look at these abuses, as well as the positive steps that some businesses have taken to correct them. Her premise is that business culture can change, lawyers can make a difference, and consumers can urge corporations—through boycott and “buy-cott”—to end practices that erode human dignity.

Her hero growing up was U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, who as a chief counsel for the NAACP won the 1954 landmark Brown v. Board of Education desegregation case 16 years before she was born.

George and her sister, who is also a lawyer, were raised in South Chicago in the 1970s and ’80s. Their mother was an elementary school teacher who had grown up in segregated Louisiana; she met their father at the all-black Southern University in Baton Rouge, and both were civil rights activists. “Mom got arrested so many times, the story is that they couldn’t afford to bail her out one more time so they migrated north.”

There were two things George learned early on from her parents: education was crucial, and social justice was worth fighting for. And there was also a third strand to her childhood and adolescence, she says: “I had a tremendous case of wanderlust.”

“My very first trip was to the park by myself.” She guesses she was about 4. “I found a person to help me cross the street, and I talked to all the people in the park, mostly elderly people, and then someone helped me back across the street.” It’s easy to imagine what she was like: a little girl with a giant smile and an ability to put everyone at ease. By the time she wandered back home, her mother was hysterical with worry. “But I had the best day ever,” she remembers.

By the time she got to the University of Chicago in 1988, she had developed an interest in global politics. Her bachelor’s degree was followed by a master’s, also from the University of Chicago, in international relations. She wrote her thesis, a year before the Rwandan genocide, on the emergence of ethnic conflict in post-colonial societies. In 1994 she entered Harvard Law School, where she first discovered her passion for international human rights law—the perfect marriage, she says, of her other two passions: civil rights and the world.

“I did well in law school,” she says, “but I have shockingly high standards for myself.” Partway through her first year she got a B+ in one of her favorite classes; distraught and near tears, she went to the associate director of the school’s Human Rights Program, Kenyan-born Makau Mutua, to tell him she was going to drop out.

“He started laughing at me: ‘You think this is a challenge? Ha!’ It was sort of like, ‘I walked up Kilimanjaro backwards in the snow, and you’re upset about a grade?’ ” When he asked her where she would go if she left law school, and she couldn’t come up with an alternative, she went back to class. The next day she also wandered into her first yoga class, which began a lifelong interest in trying to find balance in her life. (She currently teaches a gentle restorative form of hatha yoga for the Body, Mind, Spirit Department at Snowbird’s Cliff Spa on Saturday mornings—except in the summers, when she retreats to Chicago to mentor law students and spend time with family and friends. And, too, she says, “the pool of potential life partners is more promising” there.)

“I did not enjoy law school,” she freely admits now, hoping that her candor will help current and future students who have lost confidence or are disillusioned by what she calls “the reduction of worth to a letter grade.” George attributes some of her own resilience to her law school mentor, Prof. Martha Minow, who...
is now dean of the Harvard Law School. George was her research assistant, and Minow remembers her as imaginative and mature. “And very clear about her concerns about the world.”

Minow, says George, helped her see that “the kinds of things that law school counts may not be the kinds of things that are most valuable.”

George fashioned a course of study at Harvard that included several research trips abroad, including a month in South Africa, and an internship with Human Rights Watch. There were also summer jobs and later full-time jobs at big international law firms in Chicago and New York.

“You know,” said her mother on a visit to one of those firms, “in a different generation you wouldn’t even have been able to clean the floors here.”

“And I knew she was right,” says George. “There’s kind of this sense of having privilege and opportunity that so many others didn’t, that so many people worked so hard for others to have. And that it’s important to do something with that.”

But she knew she didn’t want to work in corporate law for the rest of her life. She joined Human Rights Watch full time as a fellow in 1999, and researched and wrote a book called Scared at School: Sexual Violence Against Girls in South African Schools.

“In each of the three provinces visited,” wrote George, “we documented cases of rape, assault, and sexual harassment of girls, committed by both teachers and male students. Girls who encountered sexual violence at school were raped in school toilets, in empty classrooms and hallways, and in hostels and dormitories.” What she saw in South Africa, George says now, is that the girls “were learning how to be unequal.”

The book got the immediate attention of government leaders and the media in South Africa. George was invited to testify before a session of Parliament, and the country has since adopted laws and policies to address the problem.

But that doesn’t mean the problem disappeared. A 2014 follow-up study by the law schools of Cornell University and the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa found that “sexual violence persists in South African schools with disquieting regularity,” and that abusive teachers “do not face meaningful consequences.”

Clearly, human rights advocacy is not for the impatient.

George now teaches international human rights law, constitutional law, and international environmental law, often encouraging her students to tackle real-world problems. Last spring, she assigned her International Human Rights Law class to research and compile recommendations they then submitted to the World Bank, which is in the midst of revising its social and environmental policies.

She serves as co-chair of the law school’s Global Justice Committee, where she directs the Migrant Women Project. Earlier this year, she released a new research report on the project, “Prevention and Protection Partnerships: Empowerment through Rights Education,” co-authored with students. The study examines the plight of refugee and immigrant women in Utah who are victims of domestic violence.

Nubia Peña, a third-year student who worked on the study with Libby Park and Sheena Christman, calls George “an exceptional professor” who reinforced her desire to be “emotionally invested in the plights and rights of women and children, while using law on my side to justify policy reform.”

The report encourages local government agencies in Utah to better understand and employ the national U visa, which provides legal protection for battered women who may be in the country illegally.

George is eager for the report to have an impact rather than, as she says, “just sit on a shelf collecting dust.”

The human rights movement—the idea that all humans should have the right to live a life free of torture and forced labor, a life where they have freedom of religion, expression, movement, a fair trial—took hold after the Holocaust. In 1948, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It held countries accountable—but it said nothing about the actions of industries or individuals.
Nearly seven decades later, by some estimates at least 21 million people in the world are essentially slaves, and one-third of these are children. Some of these children have been kidnapped and forced to work in harsh conditions.

The cocoa industry is just one example of abuse and the uneven remedies that have tried to halt it—progress that is full of good intentions, weak follow-through, and layers of policy rhetoric. In 2010, representatives from Cote d’Ivoire and Ghana, as well as the international chocolate and cocoa industry, signed a declaration to support an international protocol that would be a framework for accountability. But a 2014 Tulane University report found that while some hazardous activities performed by children in cocoa agriculture have decreased, others have actually increased, particularly the exposure to agrochemicals.

Despite the fact that some corporations have budgets larger than those of the states in which they operate, says George, their actions often occur “in a regulatory void.” A binding treaty that would hold them accountable has failed to gain traction, and it’s not clear whether such a treaty could be successfully monitored and enforced anyway. Instead, the U.N. has approved “Guiding Principles.”

George applauds recent British and California laws that require companies to report what they’re doing to combat human trafficking in their supply chains, and President Barack Obama’s executive order to do the same thing for items procured by the federal government. She applauds the work of groups like the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (“a radical rock star” group that includes investor nuns).

She hopes her new book will energize consumers and investors—the people who buy chocolates and laptops, T-shirts and stocks—to reward the businesses that are trying to improve their human rights records, and to punish those that aren’t. “I’m interested,” she says, “in how we leverage the power of many.”

Her academic papers tend to be dispassionate and footnote-heavy, using terms like norm-generating activities and operationalize. She is not out to shock with graphic examples, but to reach governmental policy makers, as well as corporate general counsels who might be able to change policy from within. She is after an “evolution in corporate consciousness,” she says.

George is both an advocate working for change, and a professor who has the luxury to step back and analyze. It’s a balance of urgency and distance that she hopes can make a difference.

There are hundreds of human rights organizations in the world, all of them trying to undo the awful things human beings do to each other, most of them having limited success. Add to that the fact that international human rights can be a hard sell in America at a time of increasing global fears about terrorism and more focus at home on job growth and a shrinking middle class.

But George is a human rights lawyer. She’s used to the worst. And hopes for the best.

“I’m interested in how we leverage the power of many.”

—Elaine Jarvik is a Salt Lake City-based journalist and playwright and a frequent contributor to Continuum.
EXPECT MORE EVERY DAY
Eccles Family Gifts $4 Million for Alumni House Renovation

Thanks to a generous gift from the Spencer F. and Cleone P. Eccles family, the University of Utah Alumni Association is well on its way to realizing a much-anticipated transformation of its 36-year-old Alumni House into a more spacious, multi-functional facility. The renovation will nearly double the size of the building and triple its current capacity to serve the University community and its alumni.

The redesigned facility will be named to honor the life and memory of Cleone Peterson Eccles B.S.’57, who was an active U alumna, benefactor, and volunteer leader. Cleone, who lost her battle with cancer in 2013, was a former vice president of the Alumni Association and a 10-year member of the University’s Board of Trustees. She also served her alma mater for many years through her service on the boards of KUED, the College of Nursing, and Red Butte Garden.

“Beginning with our U student days, when Cleone and I first met, our family’s affection for our alma mater and our interest in its progress and success has never wavered,” says Spencer F. Eccles B.S.’56. “The Alumni Association has been at the heart of our involvement in many ways.” Today, the Eccles family tradition of active service at the U is carried on by their four children, all alumni, including C. Hope Eccles JD’86 (B.A., Stanford University), Lisa Eccles BA’86, Katie Eccles Burnett ex’86 (B.A. and J.D., Stanford), and Spencer Peterson Eccles BA’96 (MBA, Brigham Young University).

With an additional 17,000 square feet, the transformed alumni headquarters—already a popular gathering place in the heart of campus—will showcase enhanced programs and activities for alumni, students, faculty, The MUSS, other campus organizations, and the wider community.

“Our family is enthusiastic about the opportunities this offers the association’s staff and volunteers to engage today’s students and alumni worldwide in innovative new ways,” says Katie Eccles Burnett, former Young Alumni Board president. “The lifelong love and loyalty to the University among our alumni, continually strengthened by the Alumni Association, keeps the heartbeat of our alma mater strong and vibrant for the future.”

To date, the Alumni Association has raised more than $8.1 million toward the fundraising goal of $10 million, which includes the lead gift of $4 million from the Eccles family. Now in the midst of the public phase of the campaign, the association extends its sincere thanks to the Eccles family and additional generous donors who have committed early gifts to the project, including the O.C. Tanner Charitable Trust, Kem and Carolyn Gardner, the Zeke and Kay Dumke family, the Sorenson Legacy Foundation, and Jeff and Helen Cardon, among others.

“We are deeply grateful to the Eccles family for this generous commitment to the University, its students, and alumni,” says Michele Mattsson, chair of the U’s Board of Trustees and the Alumni House Transformation Committee. “We are so pleased to pay tribute to Cleone’s legacy of service and generosity in this way. Spencer and Cleone’s leadership helped make the original Alumni House a reality. Now, three decades later, their family is once again leading the way.”

Construction begins this summer, and the building will reopen in time for fall 2017 Homecoming activities. For more information about the Alumni House Transformation or to make a contribution, visit alumni.utah.edu/transformation.
Meet Kevin. He is an active community volunteer, business major, psychology minor, first-generation college student, and a visionary. He hopes to one day own a business that will help make a positive local impact. Graduating with a degree from the U will allow his dreams to become reality. Support more student success at giving.utah.edu
1950s

Lyle Ralph Jackson

BS’50, a 90-year-old World War II veteran, has received France’s highest honor—induction into the French Legion of Honor. He accepted the award at a ceremony in February. An order of distinction established by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802, induction is reserved for individuals who exhibit extreme valor in civil or military service. It is technically for French nationals but is occasionally given to foreign nationals for serving France or its ideals. Jackson served with the 376th Infantry Regiment of the 94th Combat Infantry, which marched through difficult conditions in France, warding off Germans in hedgerows and house-to-house combat and liberating various towns as they went along. Jackson says he still counts it a blessing to have survived the war when so many others didn’t. He holds a bachelor’s degree in art from the U’s College of Fine Arts.

1960s

John Schulian BA’67

received the 2016 PEN ESPN Lifetime Achievement Award for Literary Sports Writing. PEN (originally poets, essayists, and novelists) is an international literary association of writers founded in London in 1921. The award is given to one living American or U.S.-based writer each year to celebrate his or her body of work. Award judges commented that “for more than 35 years, Schulian’s sports writing has stamped sentences on his readers’ minds with the same verve and force of typewriter keys denting pages. In columns for the Chicago Sun Times and Philadelphia Daily News, as well as longer, more elegiac collectibles for Sports Illustrated and GQ, he has married craftsmanship to a dead-on emotional honesty for his subjects, and an eye for the telling, meaningful detail.” Schulian received a bachelor’s degree in communication from the U’s College of Humanities and lives in Southern California.

MUCH ADO ABOUT Something

By J. Melody Murdock

An unexpected career turn lands a Shakespeare professor in Silicon Valley.

Ask Emily Sloan-Pace BA’01 to name a favorite Shakespeare quote, and she’ll probably recite the entire scene or poem by heart. Ask her about technological advances, and she’ll jump into innovations from the 16th century. The Renaissance is second nature to her—the history, culture, and most of all, the great literary works.

But alas, Emily lives in the 21st century, and she doesn’t live just anywhere. Her home is in the epicenter of global technological advancements—Silicon Valley. And that’s not the only irony in this story. Emily, the Shakespeare expert (her Twitter handle is @ShakespeareProf), gets up every day and goes to work at a booming private software solutions company, Zoho Corporation. So it makes sense that she would open a recent speech to her Zoho colleagues with this question: “How many of you now do something completely different from what you ever thought you would be doing with your life?”

For Emily, it was a phone call from India that changed her trajectory. Up until that moment nearly two years ago, she had a different plan. Inspired by University of Utah professors such as Dean May, David Kranes, Brooke Hopkins, and Mark Matheson MA’85, Emily made up her mind 15 years ago to spend her life studying and teaching literature. After receiving her bachelor’s degree in history from the U (with a minor in classical civilization), she went on to obtain a master’s in humanities from Stanford and a doctorate in literature from the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC).
“I wanted to spend my time talking about Shakespeare with college students,” she recalls. “Meter, metaphor, alliteration—all the things your high school English teachers drill into you—thrilled me.” After 10 years in graduate school, thinking and writing about Shakespeare, she began the job search, and that’s when reality kicked in that “Shakespeare is not a growth industry,” as she puts it.

Even with her impressive collection of degrees, tenured academic jobs were very hard to come by. So Emily volunteered, coached Shakespearean actors, wrote freelance articles, helped inmates at San Quentin put on Shakespeare plays, and spent a lot of time applying for academic jobs. She eventually landed some adjunct faculty positions teaching Shakespeare, writing, and a plethora of other related topics. “Mostly, I taught people how to better organize their thoughts, write them in a compelling form, and present them to groups,” she says. “I taught the art of rhetoric.”

What Emily may not have realized at the time is how valuable those very skills are in the corporate world—especially in the tech industry. While she was job searching, another search was going on. The CEO of Zoho, Sridhar Vembu, was seeking ways to improve his employees’ communication skills and expose them to the great insights humanities has to offer. The company’s president, Raj Sabhlok, a UCSC grad, reached out to one of Emily’s former mentors to get a recommendation for a candidate with the right skill set to help achieve Vembu’s vision. The result was the life-changing call Emily received from India.

She admits that at the time, she had no idea what SaaS meant (it stands for “software as a service,” which means software is licensed as a subscription rather than bought outright), but her life as an adjunct faculty member wasn’t exactly stable or financially advantageous, so she pursued the opportunity. Serendipitously, that path led her to the very title she always wanted—Professor in Residence. Only her campus isn’t a university, it’s a corporation. “My job is to think about the culture of our company,” she explains. “To think about the voice of Zoho. We have a lot of smart people here with a lot of big opinions. And part of my role is to help communicate those.”

As far as the transition from her scholarly world to the tech scene goes, Emily says she was terrified (and used Google a lot). “What was someone with a PhD in Shakespeare doing at a cloud SaaS company?” she asked herself. “I was more used to being lost in the clouds, not thinking about how to manage clouds.”

But Emily charged forward, and within her first few months was already developing continuing education curriculum. She says she often draws from theories and ideas she read for the first time in the honors program at the U. Last summer, as part of a two-week writing and rhetoric seminar she taught in India, she assigned her students to read the same book Mark Matheson assigned her to read 15 years ago, A Room of One’s Own, by Virginia Woolf. “The book was eye-opening for me when I was 20,” she says. “It was thrilling to see the same was true for the readers in India, especially the women in the class.”

So, this 16th-century dreamer is now embracing the 21st century. “I’ve gotten over most of my trepidation,” she says. “At first I worried that they hired the wrong person for this job. Now, I’ve realized what should have been my bigger worry is that they hired the right person.”

1970s

Milton L. Lee

BS’71 is one of two winners of the 9th Annual LCGC Lifetime Achievement and Emerging Leader in Chromatography Award. The award recognizes the achievements and aspirations of a talented young scientist who has made strides early in his or her career toward the advancement of chromatographic techniques and applications. He was honored at a symposium in March at Pittcon 2016, the world’s largest annual conference and exposition on laboratory science. Lee received a bachelor’s degree in chemistry from the U and a doctorate in analytical chemistry from Indiana University. He spent one year as a postdoctoral researcher at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology before accepting a faculty position in the Chemistry Department at Brigham Young University, where he is the H. Tracy Hall Professor of Chemistry.

1980s

Michael Anderson

BA’87 has been named director of the Office of Investigations at the United States International Trade Commission, an agency of the U.S. government that provides trade expertise to both the legislative and executive branches, other federal agencies, and the public. Anderson now directs the planning and conduct of the commission’s import injury investigations. Most recently acting director of the commission’s Office of Industries since March 2015, Anderson previously served 10 years as chief of the Advanced Technology and Machinery Division in the Office of Industries. He has held a variety of positions with the commission since 1991. Anderson has a bachelor’s degree in economics from the U and a master’s degree in international business from George Washington University.
1990s

Todd Gordon Mather BS’94 MArch’96 has been recognized with a Best of Houzz 2016 award for client satisfaction/customer service. Houzz is a website designed to showcase home remodeling and design. The annual service award recognizes the top 3 percent of professionals with the most five-star Houzz reviews for projects completed in the past year. Mather has 14 five-star reviews on houzz.com. As the principal at TGM Architect, located in Tahoe City, Calif., Mather is known for his collaborations to create projects that fit seamlessly and logically with their surroundings. His work ranges from projects that blend with the natural surroundings to designs described as interpretively daring. Mather’s projects have been featured in Utah Homes & Garden, Park City Magazine, and Utah Style & Design.

2000s

Ehab Abdel-Rahman PhD’00 has been appointed vice provost at the American University in Cairo, the region’s leading English-language university. Abdel-Rahman joined the university in 2006 as an assistant professor of physics. Since then, he has served as a department chair, associate dean, research center director, and associate provost for research. Abdel-Rahman’s area of specialty is thermoacoustics and concentrated solar power. He has published more than 70 technical papers and reports, holds five U.S. patents, and is the founder of technology transfer offices in four Egyptian universities. Prior to joining the AUC, Abdel-Rahman was an assistant professor of physics at Helwan University, Egypt. Earlier he served as a research assistant professor and a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Utah, where he was a student of Orest Symko and received his doctorate in physics.

SPRING AWARDS HONOR PLAYOFF PAC FOUNDER AND GLOBAL HEALTH ADVOCATE

The Alumni Association presented more than $500,000 in student scholarships and recognized both an outstanding young alumnus and an exceptional student adviser at its Spring Awards on April 6. The Young Alumni Board presented its Par Excellence Award to Matthew Sanderson BA’05 in recognition of his outstanding professional achievements and service to the community and the University of Utah. The Perlman Award was presented to Stephen Alder PhD’02 for exemplifying excellence in student counseling.

Sanderson is perhaps best known among college football fans as the lawyer who co-founded the Playoff PAC, a political action committee formed to lobby on behalf of a college football playoff. Playoff PAC was nominated in 2011 for Sports Illustrated’s Sportsman of the Year award for its work to bring down college football’s unpopular former postseason system, the Bowl Championship Series. Sanderson, along with the rest of The Colbert Report team, also received the Peabody Award in 2012 for efforts related to television personality Stephen Colbert’s Super PAC.

After graduating from the U, Sanderson obtained his law degree from Vanderbilt University in 2008. He works as a member in the Political Law Practice Group of Washington, D.C., law firm Caplin & Drysdale. He advises major corporations, political committees, and advocacy groups on campaign finance, ethics, and lobbying rules. He has served as general or legal counsel on campaigns for Rand Paul, Rick Perry, Mitt Romney, and John McCain. Sanderson is also a lecturer at the University of Virginia School of Law and a trustee of the American Council of Young Political Leaders.

Alder is a professor of Family and Preventive Medicine and chief of the Division of Public Health at the U. Since joining the university in 1995 as a founding member of the Health Research Center, he has been active in various forms of clinical and population-based research. As the faculty advisor for Global Health Scholars in the Honors College since 2009, Alder has mentored, taught, and counseled thousands of students in majors impacting global health issues.

He has also been instrumental in initiating the University’s Global Public Learning Abroad programs wherein students from a variety of disciplines participate in community-engaged scholarship around the world. Alder is also working to develop a Junior Global Health Scholars program for high school students.

Alder has had a vast and positive influence on countless students and communities. He is president of the Association of Accredited Public Health Programs, chief science officer for the developing Institute for Health Care Transformation, and a member of the Framing the Future: The Second 100 Years of Education for Public Health Task Force.
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION NEWS

NEW EDITOR AT THE HELM OF CONTINUUM

The Alumni Association welcomes a new alumni relations director and editor of Continuum magazine, J. Melody Murdock. A Utah native, Murdock brings with her 16 years of editorial, marketing, and public relations experience, including more than a decade working and teaching in higher education. “I began my career in alumni relations, and I’m thrilled to have come full circle,” she says.

A self-proclaimed “wordie,” Murdock says this job combines the two elements she is most passionate about professionally—higher education, and clear and compelling writing. “Effective communication usually boils down to good storytelling,” she says. “And the U has a bounty of great stories to tell!”

What you can’t learn about Murdock from her LinkedIn profile is that she also loves a good Red Butte Garden concert, breakfast at Eva’s Bakery in Salt Lake City, or a weekend reprieve in Utah’s San Rafael Swell. She welcomes feedback, ideas, and engagement from alumni, and thanks the U community for the warm welcome.

MUSS FOUNDER RECEIVES OUTSTANDING ADVISER AWARD

John Fackler BS’89 BS’94 MprA’95, director of the Student Alumni Board (SAB) and founder and adviser of The MUSS student athletics fan club, has won the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) award for Outstanding Adviser in District VII. “I nominated John because he is the epitome of great leadership, great dedication, and great passion when it comes to the SAB and the MUSS Board,” says Mary Neville, former SAB president. “He is always there if a student is in need. He is a mentor, a leader, a role model, and a friend.”

Fackler won the district award in 2012—and likely would have won several more times if not for CASE instituting the “Fackler rule,” which limits winners from winning in consecutive years. He won the national award in 2004 and 2007.

Nominated by the students he works with, the award shows his achievement in not only running the organizations (there are now more than 6,000 students in The MUSS) but also creating lasting relationships with the students. “I’ve bamboozled the students into nominating me,” Fackler says.

In April, he was also honored with the 2015-16 Olpin University Union Outstanding Service Award, for supporting the Union and offering his services to help make it the hub of campus.

HOMECOMING 2016

October 1-8

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www.alumni.utah.edu/homecoming

2000s

Annie Burbidge Ream BA’08, assistant curator of education and public school programs at the Utah Museum of Fine Arts, has won two major awards. In February, Burbidge Ream was named 2016 Utah Museum Educator of the Year by the Utah Art Education Association. In March, she was awarded the 2016 Pacific Region Museum Education Art Educator Award from the National Art Education Association, the leading professional membership organization exclusively for visual arts educators. Burbidge Ream joined the museum in 2008. In her current role, she oversees outreach programs that bring arts education annually to nearly 150 schools and more than 21,000 students in every corner of the state. She received her bachelor’s degree in art history from the U.

2010s

Judy Zhu HBS’15 has the distinction of having her undergraduate honors thesis in chemistry featured as the January 15, 2016, cover article of the Journal of Organic Chemistry. Zhu graduated last May and is an alumna of the U’s College of Science ACCESS program for women in science and math. She entered the ACCESS program in 2011 while a student at Olympus High School in Salt Lake City. She and a cohort of 42 women came to the U during the summer after high school graduation to experience the offerings of the departments within the College of Science. She began working in a chemistry research lab during her freshman year and graduated with honors, while working every weekend in her parents’ Chinese restaurant. The featured article, of which Zhu is the first author, describes how chemical conditions can impact the consequences of DNA damage. Zhu is currently spending a gap year working in the lab of Distinguished Professor Cynthia Burrows before going on to graduate studies.
A GOOD SUMMER READ

As you sit by the pool or under a shade tree this summer, why not pick up a book written by one of our own? These University of Utah grads and profs have written about everything from their personal experience with dating to the history of tequila.

DREAM HOUSE ON GOLAN DRIVE
by David G. Pace MA'94
At age 11, Riley Hartley finds himself reexamining his relationship to his family, his Mormon faith, and his community. His quirky new friend Lucy claims she is divinely inspired and acts as a guide on his journey of self-discovery. The story flips the Mormon cultural expectations upside down with both heartache and humor. (★★★★★ on Amazon)

SPEAKERS OF THE DEAD: A WALT WHITMAN MYSTERY
by J. Aaron Sanders BA'98 MFA01
This mystery novel stars a reimagined Walt Whitman during his reporter days, determined to get justice for a woman who was wrongly hanged for the murder of her husband. The book also features 1840s medical scientists, and the dangerous underworld of body snatchers who provide them with their cadavers. (★★★★★ on Amazon)

HOW TO RAISE A WILD CHILD: THE ART AND SCIENCE OF FALLING IN LOVE WITH NATURE
by Scott D. Sampson, former U professor and curator at the Natural History Museum of Utah
Sampson, host of PBS Kids' Dinosaur Train, details studies about how nature can relieve stress, depression, and attention deficits, while helping emotional development. (★★★★☆ on Amazon)

TEQUILA! DISTILLING THE SPIRIT OF MEXICO
by Marie Sarita Gaytán, U assistant professor of sociology and gender studies
Tequila is Mexico’s signature drink—the one that represents its culture. In this historical and anthropological analysis of its use in Mexican society, Gaytán features colorful historical characters like Pancho Villa and Jose Cuervo to illustrate the importance of tequila. (★★★★☆ on Amazon)

THE LATE MATTHEW BROWN
by Paul Ketzle PhD'04, associate professor in the Honors College
In this satire of race, bureaucracy, and the struggle to build meaningful relationships, Matthew Brown is a rising star in the "New South" political machine, the newly discovered father to a smart-aleck 12-year-old daughter, and a complete fraud. (★★★★☆ on Amazon)

MY UNSENTIMENTAL EDUCATION
by Debra Monroe PhD'90
A memoir about a woman who wants to be a housewife but finds that circumstances and a string of bad dating choices send her down a different path. At times ridiculous, but always self-aware, Monroe’s story is funny and brutally honest. (★★★★☆ on Amazon)
Being wattsmart® saves Crown Burgers $4,000 in energy costs each year. Energy efficiency made to order.

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Class of 2016

8,291 TOTAL GRADUATES

AGES RECEIVING BACHELOR’S

17 26 71 AVG.

TOP 5 UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES

1. COMMUNICATION
2. PSYCHOLOGY
3. ECONOMICS
4. BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
5. BIOLOGY

44% FEMALE 56% MALE

GRADUATES REPRESENT 92 COUNTRIES
AND ALL 50 U.S. STATES

Per data available prior to graduation.
WE’RE AS RED AS U

Styles may change, but our standards won’t!

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Loyalty for 60 YEARS
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University
A test tube of clues to help your doctor diagnose you!

A What's blood got to do with it?
ARUP Blood Services provides 25 percent of all blood transfused in Utah and is the sole blood provider for the University of Utah, Huntsman Cancer and Primary Children’s hospitals, and Shriners Hospital for Children.

B Where is Utah’s smallest stone quarry?
For the past 25 years, ARUP’s Calculi and Manual Chemistry labs have collected the most unusual of kidney bladder, and gallbladder stones sent for analysis. Our quarry houses stones that defy logic—some glitter, some weigh a pound, and some entomb jewels.

C What zips along at two meters per second?
A test tube—at least one that is on ARUP’s customized track, which expedites delivery to one of our 60 specialized labs. We provide a speedy environment for specimens, because we know patients are waiting for their results.

D We love kids. Want proof?
ARUP provides testing to more than half of all children’s hospitals in the United States.

E How can ARUP help you fit into your genes?
Our genetic experts are really good at identifying what genes are in you—not on you—and explaining what that means for your health. ARUP’s new Genomics Lab offers more than 75 tests.

F What is ARUP’s connection to the University of Utah?
ARUP is a nonprofit enterprise of the University of Utah. Our 90 medical directors are all faculty at the School of Medicine, and most hold positions within the Department of Pathology.

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