This year is much more than a milestone in the continuum of our community. 2013 is Pitzer College’s best year ever.

Fifty years ago Pitzer College was founded with dreams, a two million dollar endowment, two buildings—one residential and one academic—11 faculty, three staff, a board of trustees and president, and 153 students from five countries. We have grown since those early days and strengthened—but we haven’t lost our edge, our desire to find meaning in our work and to make our work meaningful to others.

To kick off our 50th Anniversary celebration, this summer I summited Mt. Whitney (proving miracles do exist) after hiking more than 185 miles on the John Muir Trail with my son Sparkey, Professor Brian Keeley, alumnae Lisa Geller ’76 and Alyssa Sola ’13, students Carter Grant ’15, Sasha Heinen ’15 and Lisa Hirata ’16, and Pitzer parent Eric Radack P’14 to raise more than $58,000 for first-generation student aid. We all came together to make the impossible happen. Like Pitzer, it was an experience of a lifetime. Jack Kerouac described why people do things like this in Dharma Bums: “Because in the end, you won’t remember the time you spent working in the office or mowing your lawn. Climb that damn mountain.”

Upon reflection, it was a strange choice, to climb a mountain as a way of celebrating Pitzer. There were several times on the trail that I wondered why I couldn’t have just hosted a cocktail party or maybe a nice brunch. But there were other times when it seemed profoundly right, and not just for me and for my son, but as an expression of what makes Pitzer so remarkable. On the trail, I thought of how the contrast and collaboration between extraordinary effort, implausible resources and breathtaking vision mirrors the Pitzer story.

The celebration of our half-century mark has continued since the hike with our second endurance endeavor—a 50-mile bike ride from the campus to the coast—in October. Over the course of the fall semester and throughout the year, we continue the celebration with gallery shows, lectures, public art, scholarly panels and the culmination of our 50 Forward Campaign and our Golden anniversary on May 3 with the best party you’ve ever worn orange and white to—a true Pitzer extravaganza with a parade, music, dancing, great food, sustainable décor and lots of surprises.

So I will end with Kerouac, whose work we read every night on the trail before falling into an exhausted sleep: “The secret of this kind of climbing, is like Zen. Don’t think. Just dance along. It’s the easiest thing in the world, actually easier than walking on flat ground, which is monotonous. The cute little problems present themselves at each step and yet you don’t hesitate and you find yourself on some other boulder you picked out for no special reason at all, just like Zen.”

Dance on into your next half century Pitzer College, dance joyously on.

Provida futuri!

Laura Skandera Trombley
Pitzer College President
The Participant
Fall 2013

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ON THE COVER: Lisa Hirata ’16, Alyssa Solis ’13 and Sasha Heinen ’15 on the Mt. Whitney summit. They hiked the John Muir Trail with alumni, a Pitzer parent, Professor Brian Keeley and President Laura Skandera Trombley.

The diverse opinions expressed in The Participant are those of the individual profilees and do not necessarily represent the views of the editors or the College administration.

On the Cover:


After majoring in history at Pitzer College, Brooks wrote his way onto the creative team at NBC’s Saturday Night Live. Today, he is a New York Times best-selling author, writer, screenwriter and actor who also regularly lends his voice to some of television’s most colorful animated characters.

Brooks took the path less traveled and single-handedly resurrected Zombie culture.

Follow your passion.

Pitzer College
A Member of the Claremont Colleges

Pitzer Alumni take the path less traveled…
and make a world of difference.

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Alumni Reunion

Our Golden Anniversary

Celebrate with us!

Save the Date
May 2-4, 2014

Join us for our big birthday bash and the Orange and White Ball on May 3!

www.pitzer.edu/alumireunion

This year, Pitzer welcomed 257 first-year students, 16 transfer students and 11 New Resources students.

Out-of-State: 58%  
In-State: 42%  
International: 11%  
Admission Rate for the Class of 2017: 14.5%  
Male: 44%  
Female: 56%  
Ethnic Diversity: 40%

This class includes the largest group of international students in Pitzer’s history.

These globetrotters come from:
China, Denmark, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, the Netherlands, Peru, the Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Spain, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand and the United Kingdom.

The Class of 2017 truly embodies Pitzer’s spirit and values. These students’ accomplishments include:

- Earning top ranking as a teenage skier in China
- Raising $200,000 for Syrian refugees
- Becoming the youngest Bikram Yoga instructor in the world
- Driving 3,000 miles from New York to visit his dream school—Pitzer College
- Serving as a combat medic in Afghanistan
- Tutoring Burmese refugees
- Founding the first gay-straight alliance at his high school

www.pitzer.edu/alumireunion
Picture a young Japanese woman in the early 1960s, studying abroad for the first time in Boston. “At that time, exposure to Western culture was very limited in Japan,” recalls Fusako Ishibashi ’66.

“This was my first culture shock, but I expected it to be different, and that was exactly what I wanted to learn and absorb.”

While visiting junior colleges in the area, the head of admission of newly minted Pitzer College offered Ishibashi a transfer scholarship to study behavioral sciences in Claremont. “It’s funny to say that I experienced another culture shock coming to the West Coast from the East Coast,” Ishibashi says. “In Boston, I was a conservative Japanese girl, treated as a guest from a faraway country. But it was completely different at Pitzer. I was not the foreign student requiring special care from others anymore, I was viewed as an independent woman, as just one of the students.”

Studying sociology, anthropology and psychology at Pitzer helped Ishibashi better develop her intercultural understanding. “Through these studies, I was able to see that human beings are essentially the same all over the world regardless of the differences in country of origin, culture, history, race or environment,” she recalls. “All people smile and laugh when they are happy; when it is painful, people cry.”

After graduating from Pitzer, she leveraged what she learned into a position working in the US Embassy in Tokyo, hosting first ladies such as Rosalynn Carter, Nancy Reagan, Barbara Bush and Hillary Clinton. Currently, Ishibashi is collaborating with a prominent female social critic, Keiko Higuchi, to launch a national intergenerational shared housing project.

“Using everything in my background, including the study of behavioral sciences at Pitzer, intercultural studies and my Embassy experiences, I’m now challenged to introduce the intergenerational homeshare concept to fit the Japanese culture and people,” she notes. “Sharing and supporting each other regardless of the differences, either cultural or generational, is what we all seek.”
Philipppe Cohen ’75 and his wife, Cynthia Stead ’77, are a poster couple for environmental sustainability. Well before “green” and “sustainability” were buzz words, Cohen and Stead were committed to Pitzer’s environmental activities.

Today, Cohen is the executive director of Stanford University’s Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve and responsible for the continuing ecological health of the Preserve and support of its research and educational mission. Additionally, he works with surrounding communities on environmental issues.

“A lot about sustainability practices means collaborating with people who have different skills and backgrounds,” Cohen says. “That interdisciplinary knowledge is at the heart of the Pitzer experience.”

Stead co-managed the University of California Sweeney Granite Mountains Desert Research Center for seven years with Cohen. She then raised funds for the University of California Natural Reserve System in Oakland, CA. While Stead now works with children at Oak Knoll School in Menlo Park, CA, she also remains involved with the Organization of Biological Field Stations.

Greatly influenced by John R. Rodman, who founded Pitzer’s environmental studies program, and Paul Shepard, past professor of natural philosophy and human ecology, Cohen and Stead joined forces with a team of faculty, staff and students to prevent the development of a proposed golf course that included lands that eventually became the John R. Rodman Arboretum. While sustainability was not officially part of the environmental studies lexicon at that time, Rodman and Shepard helped lay that groundwork through their commitment to multidisciplinary approaches that are at the heart of today’s green initiatives.

The Rodman Arboretum is now inextricably entwined in the unified, beautiful and welcoming environment that is the Pitzer campus. The drought-tolerant and native landscaping produces an environmentally responsible setting for a college located in the San Gabriel alluvial scrub country of Southern California.

“The Rodman Arboretum is now inextricably entwined in the unified, beautiful and welcoming environment that is the Pitzer campus. The drought-tolerant and native landscaping produces an environmentally responsible setting for a college located in the San Gabriel alluvial scrub country of Southern California.”

In day-to-day life, so many different systems are impacted by our choices,” notes Stead. “It’s important to see what we can change in our lifestyle or environmental footprint to improve sustainability.”

**Partners in Sustainability**

**May 4, 1970**
Four students killed by National Guardsmen at Kent State University

**May 26, 1970**
Robert Atwell appointed second president of Pitzer College

**September 1970**
Pitzer College goes co-ed, admitting male students for the first time

**Fall 1971**
Communications (media studies) added as a concentration

**1972**
External Studies introduces Environmental Studies in Santa Fe Fieldwork and a program in France

**June 17, 1972**
Five burglars arrested at DNC offices in Watergate complex; ensuing scandal leads to President Richard Nixon’s resignation

**Fall 1972**
Asian Studies added as a concentration

**Jan 11, 1974**
First Kohoutek Comet Festival

**September 1974**
New Resources Program created

**July 1977**
The Grove House moves to campus

**July 1, 1979**
Frank Ellsworth becomes Pitzer’s third president
Before attending Pitzer, Steven C. González ’85 didn’t know much about the College—including exactly where it was located. Growing up in Claremont, he had heard about The Claremont Colleges. However, being the first in his family to attend college, he didn’t fully understand the differences among the schools. He went to apply to the first campus he walked on to—Scripps—only to find that, as a man, he didn’t qualify for admission. It was a fortuitous mistake.

Undaunted, he headed next door to Pitzer and eventually found his calling creating a lifetime commitment to social justice. “The ability to have self-directed studies at Pitzer is not for everyone,” he says. “But it was perfect for me. The smaller class sizes—there were only three students in my Modern Chinese History class—encouraged an intensive, personal exchange between students and professors that would be difficult to replicate anywhere else.”

Although most students study abroad as juniors and seniors, González studied in Japan in his sophomore year. Today he speaks four languages: English, Spanish, Chinese and Japanese.

The first Mexican-American Supreme Court judge for the State of Washington and only the second person of color ever to serve on the court, González has always harbored a passion for social justice. He began his post-graduation legal career due to a Pitzer connection.

Then-Pitzer College President Frank Ellsworth introduced González to a friend at a law firm, where González became a paralegal before going to law school at University of California, Berkeley. Fast forward several decades to an impressive legal career. As a former judge of the King County Superior Court and assistant United States attorney, he’s a recipient of the US Department of Justice’s Superior Performance Award and the Attorney General’s Award for Distinguished Service.

Among his many achievements, González helped develop Washington State’s hate crime unit and was instrumental in prosecuting domestic violence and elder abuse cases.

“Just as I was mentored,” he notes, “I continue to mentor others in the community.”
Alan Jackson ’90 has a simple philosophy: Life is a smorgasbord if you live it right! The veteran Los Angeles chef and owner of 18 Lemonade restaurants (and a thriving catering company) credits his interdisciplinary learning experience at Pitzer as the start of his ever-growing business ventures.

“Pitzer took a risk on me… and gave me the runway to succeed,” he says. “Pitzer taught me to think freely, but without action, it’s just a fleeting tickling brain wave.”

From the beginning, what Jackson found most surprising—and comfortable—about Pitzer was the sense of community on campus. “It started right at admissions, where you were able to brush shoulders with teachers who engaged you,” he notes. “It helped me to become ‘me as an adult.’ It’s a school where a poetry teacher was able to awaken me to learning, and a historian was able to expand my mind about why things happen.”

Jackson points to Professor Emeritus of Political Studies Dana Ward as a valuable influence on both his academic and professional careers. “He believed that Reaganomics and Manuel Noriega were the end of the world. What he was saying really was get passionate, take a position and get behind a purpose.”

As Jackson plans to expand his privately owned chain of Lemonade restaurants to Dubai, the visionary entrepreneur reflects on the value of interdisciplinary learning.

“Pitzer is a great quilt, and I believe that the people who come out of Pitzer are the sort of colorful, well-rounded people that the world cherishes.”
Citizen of the World

Every school day, Amber Carrow ’03 engages her seventh grade world history students at Chemawa Middle School in Riverside, CA, by relating her experiences traveling the globe—and particularly her stint as an Earthwatch Foundation field researcher in Nova Scotia—to the different cultures, customs and events that have helped shape the world. This personal touch is one of the many reasons why Carrow was named California State Teacher of the Year in 2010.

She attributes her teaching achievements in part to the hands-on work she did at Pitzer mentoring fellow students and serving as a resident assistant, as well as to the opportunity she had to study abroad through the Pitzer in Nepal program. “As a third-world country, Nepal was completely different from Claremont. There was no electricity, no running water. Living there gave me a deeper understanding of other cultures and sparked my desire to visit every country that I teach about.”

As the only history teacher to participate on Earthwatch’s science-focused volunteers research team, Carrow was able to take what she learned at Pitzer about being a responsible citizen of the world and translate that into valuable instruction for her students. By regularly Skyping with her classroom and posting video updates, she demonstrated what it’s like to conduct in-the-field studies on climate change.

“It really changes the flavor of the classroom to be able to bring real-life insight to our studies,” Carrow says.

She hopes to return to Nepal soon, as well as continue her work to bring more engagement into Chemawa Middle School. “Student engagement is such a unique aspect of Pitzer, and I look forward to helping create a deeper sense of involvement here at my school.”

Alumni Profile

2000+

2000+

SEPT 11, 2001
Al Qaeda executes multiple attacks against the US

OCT 7, 2001
US and allies launch strikes against Al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan

OCT 23, 2001
Apple presents the iPod, offering “1,000 songs in your pocket”

JULY 1, 2002
Laura Skanderia Trombley takes office as Pitzer’s fifth president

FEB 4, 2004
Facebook is launched

DEC 26, 2004
Massive earthquake hits Indonesia, triggering devastating tsunami

2005
First students study at Pitzer’s Firestone Center for Restoration Ecology in Costa Rica

JULY 2006
Twitter’s public launch

2008
McConnell Dining Hall goes trayless

NOV 4, 2008
Barack Obama, first African-American president, elected

SEPT 17, 2011
First protest of the Occupy Wall Street movement

AUG 2012
Phase II of the Residential Life Project opens

NOV 19, 2012
Pitzer launches the Robert Redford Conservancy for Southern California Sustainability
An inspirational teacher, she encourages students to find joy in their art.

Her two passions—art and science—coalesced in 1993 when she spotted the job description to teach environmental studies and art at Pitzer. Miller earned her BSc in biology from George Washington University, an MA in biology from Sonoma State University, and an MFA from University of California, Santa Barbara.

“Pitzer was the first college open enough to combine disciplines. It was a perfect fit,” she says. “This work comes organically to her. Her art is a natural expression of her own intellect and creativity.”

Miller produced environmental art with an activist edge, expanding what art can look like. She and her students created guerilla installations, sometimes bypassing the normal approval process. Once, Faulstich was surprised to see dozens of birdhouses around campus that students had made out of recycled materials.

“The installation said to me, ‘This campus is home to more than just students.’ It got you to question your sense of privileged place in the world.”

Another Miller campus exhibit involved a gelatin mold of a house with embedded seeds inside. As the seeds sprouted, the mold became a living, organic sculpture. Like the birdhouses, the project prodded viewers to rethink the evolving nature of living spaces and their own relationships with their dwellings.

Miller’s playfulness is expressed in her seed bombs, which she made in her early years at Pitzer. Formed from clay and filled with wildflower seeds, they are egg-shaped objects that fit in the palm of the hand. When tossed, they break apart, scattering seeds that eventually blossom and provide natural beauty. This is one bomb that makes life, not destroys it.

Miller’s latest installation is signage for the Outback Preserve, three acres of native habitat on the northeast corner of campus. The project is tied to the College’s 50th anniversary. Miller is one of several on-campus artists President Laura Skandera Trombley invited to create works as part of the celebration.

Miller’s sign marks the entrance to a natural preserve. Made of metal with animal footprints on one side and human symbols on the other, the sign is whimsical and welcoming. It allows boundaries to flow naturally between the more formalized campus landscape and the wilder area.

Miller considers the Outback her favorite place on campus. Even with its packrat nests and natural scattering of debris, she finds it relaxing and inspirational. “Go there and listen to the birds,” she says. “You may even spot a bobcat.”

While Miller’s projects and installations sealed her legacy at Pitzer, it is her teaching that may last longer in the hearts and minds of her students.

“Thanks to her, I’m still making art because I love it,” he says. Robert Ramlow-Sachs ’10, who majored in environmental analysis, says Miller helped students produce meaningful art. He recalls one class project where she asked students to design emergency pop-up shelters for climate change: “She made us think deeply. Rather than create a place just for survival, we might create a nice place, even a happy place.” Now a third-year architecture student at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Ramlow-Sachs applies Miller’s lessons in careful design to his current work.

Miller continues to teach and inspire. Working with a neurologist in Santa Barbara, she plans to give art classes for people with early dementia. “Art makes them happy,” she says. “They reconnect and become engaged.”

Miller’s enthusiasm for breaking down boundaries has helped countless students feel the joy about to explode in their art. Her artful liberation persists.
Fall 2013 · 19

Associate Professor of Biology Jennifer Armstrong received a $38,142 National Science Foundation grant supplement for her research into the structure of the chromosome.

Professor of Political Studies Nigel Boyle, Director of Intercultural Education and Pitzer Programs Michael Donahue and CISEP Director Michelle Dymerski received a $66,000 Fulbright-Hays group grant to take Pitzer students, alumni and local school teachers to Nepal and develop related curriculum for US classrooms.

Professor of Environmental Analysis Paul Funkstich ’79 presented a paper about ecological restoration as an art form at the Savannah College of Art and Design.

Assistant Professor of Sociology Roberta Espinoza’s second book, Working-Class Minority Students’ Routes to Higher Education, was published by Routledge.

Professor of Environmental Analysis Paul Funkstich ‘79 presented a paper about ecological restoration as an art form at the Savannah College of Art and Design.

Professor of Media Studies Alexandra Juhasz launched a new model for online learning with Feminist Dialogues on Technology, a collaborative course that encourages participation both online and in the classroom.

Professor Emeritus of Sociology Peter Nardi released the third edition of his textbook Doing Survey Research: A Guide to Quantitative Methods, based on lecture notes for Sociology 101: Quantitative Research Methods, which he taught at Pitzer for more than 30 years.

Assistant Professor of Biology Lars Schmitz and a team of researchers uncovered evidence of the first giant marine predator to stalk the seas in prehistoric times.

Professor of Anthropology Claudia Strauss plumbed the depths of public opinion in Making Sense of Public Opinion: American Discourses about Immigration and Social Programs, published by Cambridge University Press.

Assistant Professor of Psychology Timothy Justus received a GRAMMY Foundation grant to support his research on the impact of brain damage on language comprehension and music perception.

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Professor of English and Creative Studies Albert Wachtel edited Critical Insights: James Joyce, a collection of in-depth essays about the Irish literary giant.

Professor of Sociology Phil Zuckerman shared his opinions and expertise with many media outlets, including the Los Angeles Times, The Washington Post and Boston Magazine.

This is a small sampling of the Pitzer faculty’s recent work. For a full account, please see the Faculty Report of Excellence 2012–13 at www.pitzer.edu/facultyexcellence.
Meet Pitzer’s New Faculty

New professors bring their expertise to campus

Tarrah Krajnak
Assistant Professor of Art
Specialization: Photography emphasizing conceptual approaches and interdisciplinary research
BFA, Ohio Wesleyan University
MFA, University of Notre Dame

“I’m excited about my plans to take students abroad to Latin America as part of my research and teaching over the next few years—in fact, I’m laying the groundwork for a trip to Panama this coming spring break.”

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Andrea Scott
Assistant Professor, Academic Writing
Writing Center Director
Specialization: Rhetoric and Composition; Writing Program Leadership
BA, Mills College
PhD, University of Chicago

“I want my students to look at and make images with a sense of cultural awareness, social responsibility and criticality—these values are at the heart of a Pitzer education.”

William Barndt
Assistant Professor of Political Studies
Specialization: Politics of Latin America and the US; Corporations and Political Parties; Agrarianism
BA, Colby College
PhD, Princeton University

“If the questions we deal with—Who am I? What is reality? Do I have free will—are ones students will deal with all their lives. You provide them with a set of arguments that motivate their thinking. Having these arguments makes students conceptually rich and provide them with a better understanding,” he says. “To me that’s the point of teaching philosophy.”

Ahmed Alwishah is a passionate and articulate assistant professor of philosophy who likes to frustrate his students. After a lively class debate in which he has prodded students to defend their positions on the problem of personal identity, some trail him out the door to engage him further. “We haven’t solved the problem,” they say. But Alwishah often leaves students to pursue their own thoughts on their own.

“My goal is to complicate the level of discussion,” he says. “Not always having definite answers leads to deeper thinking.”

Ahmed Alwishah is a specialist in Islamic philosophy who is working primarily on philosophy of mind and language in Islamic tradition. He will continue his research at Cambridge University’s Clare Hall College this spring as a visiting fellow. He plans to complete a manuscript, Dialectical Disputation in the Quran, that explores how dialectical disputation—a form of philosophical debate—plays a critical role in interpreting and understanding the Quran. While some have emphasized the value of linguistic and historical approaches to studying the Quran, Alwishah attempts to show that logical analysis is equally important for our understanding of the text.

Provoking Thought

“If we understand the logical structure of the dialect, that gives us a good understanding of the content,” he says. The Iraqi native, now a US citizen, received his bachelor’s degree in philosophy from Baghdad University. After the Gulf War and having participated in the 1991 uprising against Saddam Hussein’s regime, he fled Iraq to live in a refugee camp in the desert of Saudi Arabia for a year and a half. He came to the US under political asylum. He pursued a master’s in philosophy from California State University, Los Angeles, and a PhD in philosophy from University of California, Los Angeles. He did post-doctoral work at UCLA and at Stanford University. He came to Pitzer in 2009.

He finds joy making the work of great thinkers relevant to today’s students.

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During the past year, Pitzer participants held events all over campus, the country and the world.

Kebnotshwene Mosielele (right), the chief of a village in Botswana that hosts Pitzer students studying abroad, and his son, Loago Mosielele, are welcomed by Claremont Mayor Opanyi Nasiali.

President Laura Skandera Trombley, Lisa Geller ’76, Spunky Trombley, Suhas Heinri ’10, Eric Padack ’14, Alyssa Solis ’13, Lisa Hirata ’16, Carter Grant ’15 & Professor Brian Keeley kick off Pitzer’s 50th Anniversary on the John Muir Trail.

Artist Paul Santoleri & Pitzer students complete the new Bridges of Change mural on the south wall of McConnell Center.

Vice President and Dean of Admission & Financial Aid Angel Perez braves 93-degree heat to compete in the New York City Triathlon in July.

The exhibition Glyphs: Acts of Inscription opens at the Pitzer Art Galleries.

Emeritus Trustee Russell M. Pitzer, grandson of the College’s founder, rededicates the newly renovated Scott Hall.

In the Outback Preserve, students in the Restoring Nature class plant a Coastal Live Oak that was presented to President Trombley during the rededication of Scott Hall.

Pitzer alumni share their transformative Fulbright experiences with a national audience via US State Department webcast.

Evan Ryan, US assistant secretary of educational and cultural affairs, and the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board visit Pitzer and Southern California for the first time.
In June, approximately 300 people filled Pitzer College’s George C.S. Benson Auditorium to remember Michael Woodcock, the artist and professor emeritus of creative studies who passed away in March. Students, colleagues, friends and family described how he shaped their imaginations and changed their lives, calling him a witty, compassionate, outspoken, cranky, loving man who was an ally, inspiration, collaborator, co-conspirator, father and husband. And a true teacher.

“He taught me to see, really see,” said poet and novelist Deborah Bogen ‘90.

In a drawing course Bogen took at Pitzer, Woodcock asked students to choose an object from the Grove House garden to sketch. The assignment seemed simple enough until he told them the drawing should take at least 20 hours.

Woodcock brought an uncommon touch to an unconventional campus when he joined the Pitzer faculty in 1989. He drove with students from Santa Monica to Chicago in vintage cars to study the culture of historic Route 66. He also hit the road with Professor of Art and Environmental Design Carl Hertel and a group of undergrads to visit artist James Turrell’s monumental Roden Crater project in Arizona. Woodcock retired from Pitzer in 2005.

“When I think of the art I admire, I am reminded that pictures can provide the artist and a few viewers with a moment of fleeting, precious clarity; a sense of community with the creator; and a brief trip home.” —Michael Woodcock, 1951-2013
Students gave me a lesson in being cool, Pitzer-style,“ said Brian Carlisle. The new vice president for student affairs immersed himself in the whirlwind of student Orientation Adventures prior to the opening of fall semester: biking, swimming and playing games. But when it came to a game that required dancing, he said no, not wanting to make a fool of himself.

“Fred Astaire, I’m not,” he said. A student good-naturedly kidded him: “Is it time to take away your cool card? You should know that whoever you are, wherever you come from, however you identify, you’re loved here— you cool. That’s the Pitzer ethos.” He’s been learning from students ever since. “It’s what I love about this job. I never know who is going to walk in the door, what experience I am going to have and what students are going to teach me. They are amazing.”

Carlisle is a buoyant presence and enthusiastic student advocate on campus. He brings to Pitzer an extensive background in student affairs, with increasing levels of responsibilities, at Saint Louis University, University of California, Los Angeles, San Francisco Art Institute and, most recently, the University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire, where he served as dean of students for three years.

Among his many accomplishments, he secured funds for the Center for the Awareness of Sexual Assaults at Eau Claire and instituted gender-free housing options. With the Pitzer community, he shares a commitment to social justice and environmental sustainability. Carlisle discovered his aptitude and zeal for student affairs after years of hard work to prove himself.

He grew up in a trailer at the end of a dirt road in a small town in Alabama, the middle child of three brothers. He wanted more than the trailer park had to offer, so he turned to academics. His goal was to earn a PhD and teach mathematics at the college level.

His focus and commitment led him to community college, then to the University of Alabama, where he held three part-time jobs. There, an assistant director of financial aid changed his life.

Because she saw his dedication to work, she gave him jobs that made the most of his leadership skills and character. A turning point came when she told him about a degree in higher education administration focusing on student development.

“You should consider going into student affairs,” she said. “That’s a real job?” he said, with delight.

After meeting with the chair of the master’s program, he decided: “This is what I want to do. I want to give back to students what I got from people who cared about me, who inspired me.” He received two degrees from Alabama, including a master’s in higher education administration, and eventually a JD from Southwestern School of Law. A visit to Carlisle’s office in Scott Hall during the start of fall semester revealed his intense desire to inspire and help students.

His office is a calm oasis on a bustling campus. Lighting is subdued, wall colors are in tones of blue and gray, and chairs are comfortable. Being in his office immediately reduces stress and encourages conversation. It doesn’t hurt that the vice president has a wide grin, disarming Southern accent and playful nature. He also looks a good 10 years younger than he is.

He regards his close connection with students as essential. “My job is to be the bridge between the administration and the students. I help students identify their wants and then be able to turn those wants into reality. My goal is to find the right balance between current and future needs for students and help the College build from there.”

While Carlisle is a warm, welcoming presence for students, he does more than just listen to what students say. It’s what they don’t say that’s often the most important, he believes. “I was fortunate enough to be born with a keen ability to sense stress or distress in other people. I usually can help them.”

His ability to help students is aided, according to Carlisle, because of the quality of the students, who are open to discussion and change. “I think people underestimate how thoughtful, how caring our students are. It would be a big mistake to underestimate a Pitzer student.”

The man who wanted more than a trailer park could offer is now in a place where listening is an art form, where each individual is valued and where there are few limits on what he or she can become. “It’s a great fit.”

Brian Carlisle
1960s

1970s

1980s

1990s

2000s

2010s

Ryan C. Anamika Cruse became a father in 2012 to a happy, healthy son.

Loren Baggett welcomed the arrival of her daughter, Elden Jane Baggett, on December 26, 2012. Lauren Hardy ‘84 was named godmother to Elden, who loves her Pitzer onesie.

Lena Budnick is directing a documentary in Palestine with the Manhattan Shakespeare Project, an all-female Shakespeare company that sent members to the Drama Academy in Ramallah to work with Palestinian drama students.

2009s

2010s

2011s

2012s

2013s

2014s

2015s

2016s

2017s

2018s

2019s

2020s

2021s

2022s

2023s

2024s

2025s

2026s

2027s

2028s

2029s

2030s
Pitzer Babes

The progeny of Pitzer College alumni are destined for greatness.

Angela S. DiLaura is completing a combined bachelor’s and master’s degree program at Columbia University in order to become a women’s health nurse practitioner. She also became engaged in 2011 and plans to get married in 2014.

Casey Sciozka eloped with her boyfriend and collaborator, Steven Weinberg, and then enjoyed a three-week honeymoon on the Greek islands.

Garet Staley, a licensed clinical social worker, works as program manager for a substance abuse treatment program in the San Gabriel Valley. She also teaches part time at Mt. San Antonio College and California State University, San Bernardino.

Kimberly Endo’s documentary Justice for my Sister has won multiple awards, including Best Documentary at the Los Angeles Latino International Film Festival, Best Foreign Film at the Veracruz International Film Festival and Best Long Form Central American Documentary at Icaro Film Festival in Guatemala.

HeLEN BRENNER Murphy married longtime boyfriend, Jon Murphy, on November 10, 2012, overlooking the Delaware River. She also teaches part time at Mt. San Antonio College and California State University, San Bernardino.

Michael Johnson-Bell worked with Pitzer alumna David Strauss ’80 to organize a flagship TEDxYouth@Barbados event. She also launched “Jennifer Johnson Voucier” to provide personal voice-over services to the entertainment industry. Johnson-Bell plans to take the Foreign Service Officer test for the U.S. State Department.

Armour Zimmer graduated from the University of Oxford in 2013 with an MSc in neuroscience. She is now working in her PhD in clinical psychology specializing in neuropsychology at Washington State University.

Nick Humphrey completed a master’s degree in visual design at the University of Edinburgh.

Steven Losco graduated from the University of California, Davis, School of Law in May 2012 and subsequently passed the California Bar Exam and the Guam Bar Exam. He recently left a position with the Supreme Court of Guam to begin working as an associate attorney at a private law firm.

Dayna K. Downing is completing her MBA, after which she will begin working on an MS in healthcare administration.

Matthew S. Kain graduated from the University of California, Davis, School of Law in May 2012 and subsequently passed the California Bar Exam and the Guam Bar Exam. He recently left a position with the Supreme Court of Guam to begin working as an associate attorney at a private law firm.

Sonia Parent has been living in Medellín, Colombia, for the past two years while planning graduate studies in international relations/political studies on a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship.

2010s

‘09 Noreen J. Panozo passed the California Bar Exam on her first try.

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2010s

‘10 Ariana Friedman Davidson finished her Master’s in Social Work at the University of Southern California and married Harvey Mold/College alumni Marc Davidson. They live in the San Francisco Bay Area, where Friedman Davidson works as a counselor and pursues her license in clinical social work.

Students from six Claremont Colleges attended their wedding, including Pitzer alumni Brittni Stenmo ’10 and Kate Porter ’10.

Jennifer Johnson-Bell worked with Pitzer alumna David Strauss ’80 to organize a flagship TEDxYouth@Barbados event. She also launched “Jennifer Johnson Voucier” to provide personal voice-over services to the entertainment industry. Johnson-Bell plans to take the Foreign Service Officer test for the U.S. State Department.

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Diane “Dee” Mosbacher ’72 is a psychiatrist and visionary filmmaker whose documentaries show how education can overcome prejudice and transform lives. Her film Straight from the Heart, nominated for an Academy Award in 1995, deals with religious parents coming to terms with their children’s homosexuality. Training Rules, released in 2009, addresses anti-gay bigotry in women’s sports, particularly on the Penn State Lady Lions basketball team. Mosbacher has directed and produced nine documentaries through Woman Vision, a nonprofit she founded in 1993 to promote tolerance and equal treatment of all people through educational media. “The people in my films are change agents that show others how to create a better world,” she said.

In 2011, Mosbacher’s belief in the power of media to spark social change led her to donate $1.5 million to establish the Mosbacher Fund for Media Studies and the Mosbacher/Gartrell Center for Media Experimentation and Activism at Pitzer College. The center is named in honor of Mosbacher and her partner of more than 30 years, Nanette Gartrell, a renowned psychiatrist and researcher. The gift includes an endowed fund to support guest speakers, workshops, faculty/student research projects and other programs. “One of the best things to happen since I was a student at Pitzer majoring in psychology is the addition of the media studies program,” said Mosbacher, who earned a doctorate in social psychology from Union Graduate School and received a medical degree from Baylor College of Medicine. “I’m happy to contribute to a department that encourages social justice activists to consider the use of media to reach a larger audience, while encouraging media makers to use their art to further social justice.”
in Nation for 4th straight year with 22 Fulbright Fellowships