PARTICIPANT

FULL CIRCLE

Strom C. Thacker Returns to Claremont as Pitzer’s Seventh President p. 12

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An Innovative Search Process Produces an Innovative Leader

Dear Pitzer Community,

Since its founding, Pitzer College has been committed to producing engaged, socially responsible citizens of the world. Its emphases on social justice, intercultural understanding, and environmental sustainability are needed now more than ever. We are fortunate to have found in Strom C. Thacker a president who embraces Pitzer’s approach to teaching and learning and who is committed to elevating the College’s visibility and impact.

Strom comes to us from Union College in Schenectady, New York, where he was dean of the faculty and vice president for academic affairs. Previously, he served on the faculty and held leadership positions at Boston University. A political scientist by training, Strom’s research and teaching focus on issues related to democracy, economic development, and healthcare in Mexico and Latin America.

It was important for Pitzer that our presidential search process be open and inclusive (see p. 10 for a story about our approach that appeared in Inside Higher Ed). Strom quickly emerged as a frontrunner in this process because of the profound impact that a liberal arts education has had on his life and his personal experiences at The Claremont Colleges. Strom graduated from Pomona College in 1988 and spent time on Pitzer’s campus. In fact, he credits a Pitzer course on international political economy—taught by Professor Tom Ilgen—as being one of the most impactful on his thinking and future career. You’ll learn more about how his time in Claremont and other experiences have shaped his life in academia in our Participant interview on p. 12.

It should become clear to you—as it did to our search committee—that Strom “gets” Pitzer and has a deep understanding of and affection for The Claremont Colleges that distinguished him from other candidates. Last October we invited him and two other finalists to visit campus and meet with faculty, staff, students, board members, and alumni. All the finalists were impressive, but Strom’s obvious embrace of Pitzer’s core values, his thoughtful answers to our questions, and his ability to relate well with all members of the Pitzer community were central to his selection.

I hope you enjoy learning more about Strom, his family, and what he thinks about Pitzer’s future in this new issue of Participant magazine.

Sincerely,

Tom Brock '83
Chair, Presidential Search Committee
Pitzer College Trustee
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New and recent books from Pitzer alumni and faculty offer timely considerations of secularism, racism, climate change, and dystopian worlds.
Sixty years ago, Pitzer College was nothing more than a dirt field, a pile of rocks, and a dream. The founding members inspired generations of students to take ownership of their education and build a transformative community. On Feb. 21, Pitzer hosted an inaugural Founders Day event to celebrate its 60th anniversary and the people who made that possible.

Dubbed the “Women of the Sixties,” some of the early graduates returned to campus to share their groundbreaking history with students, faculty, and other alumni. After watching a “Pitzer Then and Now” slideshow from the 1960s to the present, community members gathered with the alums for interactive conversations. Afterward, people perused the yearbooks and course catalogs from the College’s early days and left mementos to be placed in the Founders Day Memory Chest.

Later in the afternoon, the special group of alumni led a walking tour across campus. They gave insight into a multitude of black-and-white photos in McConnell Center and Scott Hall, including the town hall meetings (the beginnings of shared governance) and the founding faculty portraits. By the end of the tour, they were exchanging contact information with students and promising to see them again at Alumni Weekend.

Members of Pitzer’s Trailblazers classes (Class of 1973 and earlier) talked about how they charted their educational course with eagerness and innovation—a tradition that students continue to this day. Beyond the festivities, Founders Day became an opportunity for bridging generations and honoring the past and present.

Trustee Louise Thornton ’68 put it best when she said: “When I first looked at the campus, it was blank. Dirt, rocks, and sagebrush. I came here because it was a blank page, and it just drew me. It changed my life.”

May Pitzer continue to change lives for the next 60 years and beyond.

See more photos from this year’s Founders Day at www.pitzer.edu/participant
Participate at 51
1972 was a milestone year for Pitzer’s magazine, its former editor explains why

When Pat Nixon appeared on the cover of Life in 1972 and Lauren Butten on the cover of Vogue, the cover of Pitzer’s Participant magazine also featured a female subject—the painting “The Emerging Woman.”

That painting was linked to a lengthy cover piece by sociologist David Riesman, a guest speaker, on the unique challenges facing educated young people, especially women.

But the cover also signaled something else: a dramatic transformation.

With the appearance of that issue in the fall of 1972, Participant expanded to a full magazine format of 30 pages. That was a significant change considering that, for five years, Participant had been smaller and simpler—an eight-page pamphlet-style publication that replaced an earlier publication, the four-page newsletter Sound Off!

For Lee Jackman, who served as the College’s vice president of development and communications at the time, the eight-page Participant had outlived its purpose.

“The magazine really needed an upgrade,” said Jackman, who also served as the magazine’s editor and led the redesign. “It was too small, too basic, and we wanted something more sophisticated for Pitzer. The College was growing and we wanted a better way to present it. We had no shortage of material.”

The magazine’s expansion to 30 pages resulted in more room for Pitzer’s faculty to stretch their scholarly wings and showcase the intellectual breadth of the College.

As Participant returns to print with the current issue after a hiatus starting in early 2020, Jackman—who lives in nearby Mt. San Antonio Gardens—said she’s proud of the changes that she and her team executed more than 50 years ago. Every issue of Participant is like a time capsule, she said; it contributes something important to Pitzer’s history.

Not only does the magazine capture a snapshot of life at Pitzer during a particular moment in time, Jackman explained, for future students and for the person who someday writes the College’s history the magazine also provides “a road map that shows you where we’ve been and how far we’ve come.”

For Lee Jackman, each Participant issue is a time capsule of Pitzer history.

Curating the Truth
Anthropology and Spanish major Diego Borgosdof Fuenzalida ’24 and abolitionist educator and Africana Studies major (with an art minor) Jaspa Ureta ’22 both received The Claremont Colleges Mays Undergraduate Fellowship (MMUF) program. With support from The Claremont Colleges MMUF program, Fuenzalida is working with Scripps College Professor Wendy Cheng on a research project titled “Soccer is Life: The role of youth soccer in disciplining citizens and uplifting the U.S. empire.”

Fuenzalida plans to pursue a doctoral degree in American studies when she graduates.

Student Award Highlights
The Future Belongs to the Youth
And if this year’s crop of Pitzer award winners is any indication, that future is in good hands.

Early 20th century British labor leader Tom Mann gave the words in the headline above, and what he said could not be more timely or true than it is today. As the world faces numerous challenges involving human rights, the environment, mental health and well-being, politics, and much more, Pitzer students pursue award-winning research and related projects during the 2022–23 academic year that just might make a difference in the future.

For more award-winners, visit www.pitzer.edu/communications.

[SOCCEr IS LIFE]
Analishe Pugh ’25 is an American studies major who was chosen for the 2023 Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship (MMUF) program. With support from The Claremont Colleges MMUF program, Pugh is working with Scripps College Professor Wendy Cheng on a research project titled “Soccer is Life: The role of youth soccer in disciplining citizens and uplifting the U.S. empire.” Pugh plans to pursue a doctoral degree in American studies when she graduates.

Political Party Myopia
Alden Henrikson ’23 has received The Claremont Colleges Library’s 10th Annual Library Undergraduate Research Award for the paper “Warren County Democrats: The Urban and Rural Divide,” which examines the internal party dynamics of the Warren Democratic Party in Upstate New York. Henrikson shows how this party’s overemphasis on national and state politics and on overrepresentation of certain populations has resulted in alienating rural communities and eroding its support.

An Ecobrick Vision
Exhibitions and Fulcrum Arts.

AN ECOBRICK VISION
A PITZER FIRST
Michelle Muturi’s ’23 exciting school improvement project that uses ecobricks.

CURATING THE TRUTH
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SORE’S UP
Ryan Lillestrand ’23 was among this year’s recipients of student creativity grants from The Nick and Susan Sontag Center for Collaborative Creativity (known as the Hive), which support creative collaborations between Pitzer and other Claremont Colleges community members. Lillestrand used his grant to examine surfing and environmentalism with the project “Shaping Aloha: Beauty and Simplicity in the Waves.”

Dominic Arradon ’23 became the first Pitzer student to ever receive a Marshall Scholarship, a highly competitive award that funds up to three years of graduate study in any discipline at any British university.

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A Class Act

Celebrating the achievements of the Class of 2023

A capacity crowd of families, friends, faculty, and students gathered under the tents on May 13 to applaud this year’s graduating seniors and listen to 2018 Nobel Peace Prize recipient Nadia Murad, who delivered the Commencement keynote address. Interim President Jill Klein ’15 framed the graduates’ achievements in the context of the College’s history: “Class of 2023, six decades after the founding of our College, your accomplishments and character demonstrate the best of Pitzer.”

Murad described her brutal journey from being enslaved by ISIS to becoming a global voice for human rights. “There are two tools that you need as you work for justice and peace: community and determination,” said Murad.

Senior Class Speaker Nejat Ali ’23 expressed appreciation to first-generation students, family, and the Pitzer community. Ali was followed by Senior Class President Annemarie Gerlach ’23, who announced that the senior class gift would go to the First Gen student fund, and by Alumni Board President Diana Rob ’02, who encouraged participation in the College’s alumni network.

Once the ceremony ended, the graduates took a final walk of fame and enjoyed quality time with their loved ones to commemorate their brilliant achievement.

Watch the full 59th Commencement ceremony and view a gallery of photos at www.pitzer.edu/participant

“‘We Need More Than Just One Story to Understand the World’”

Three questions for Nadia Murad

Q. You had a chance to meet some of our students and other community members during a book-signing as well as during Commencement. How was your experience with our community? Was there anything memorable about your visit?

A. Spending time with the Pitzer community was a wonderful experience. Meeting so many young people at the book-signing and during Commencement with great big intentions for the future fills me with hope. I come from a big family, so for me the most memorable moment was having opportunities for chatting with the graduates’ parents and hearing how proud they were of them, particularly those who were the first in their family to go to college.

Q. You never planned to become an activist until after ISIS attacked your village. Pitzer College has a long tradition of teaching students to become activists. Do you think there are advantages to showing students how to develop their voices as advocates?

A. Yes, I became an activist through atrocity. Although it gave me a passion for justice and advocacy, it is a route that I would not wish on anybody, which is something I shared during my keynote address.

I think that having a school like Pitzer that is dedicated to advocacy, where faculty help students to shape their craft and develop their voices, can only be a good thing for the world.

Q. You delivered a very moving message to the Class of 2023 about creating community, encouraging students to reach out beyond their familiar lives and “find your tribe.” Why is that important? How does this effort make one’s education stronger and better?

A. I think that when someone moves out beyond their own immediate world, it gives them a chance to experience huge enrichment. As Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie has said, we need more than just one story to understand the world. When you do that and experience more stories, you can find connections, solidarity, and friendship with people who share your passion, if not your life’s experience. When you get to that point there is so much you can learn from each other.

Watch Nadia Murad’s full Commencement address at www.pitzer.edu/participant

(CAM)PUS

News & Updates
The SCOTUS Affirmative Action Ruling: Jackson Cites Oliver and Other Pitzer Reactions

In her dissent to the Supreme Court’s June decision against affirmative action in college admissions, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson cited research by Pitzer President Emeritus Melvin L. Oliver regarding racial wealth disparity in America.

Jackson pulled several of her points from Black Wealth/White Wealth: A New Perspective on Racial Inequality, which Oliver co-authored with Brandeis University Professor Thomas M. Shapiro. First published in 1995, their book analyzes how wealth has perpetuated racial inequality in the U.S. despite (and because of) public policies.

In her first citation, in which she directly quotes Oliver’s book, Jackson wrote: “Given the lengthy history of state-sponsored race-based preferences in America, to say that anyone is now victimized if a college considers whether that legacy of discrimination has uniquely advantaged its applicants fails to acknowledge the well-documented ‘intergenerational transmission of inequality’ that still plagues our citizenry.”


While he was Pitzer’s president, Oliver established the Racial Justice Initiative, renamed the Melvin L. Oliver Racial Justice Initiative in his honor upon retirement, to embed racial justice throughout the College’s educational experience. Oliver has called the initiative “a culmination of my life’s work and an essential component of Pitzer’s social justice mission.”

Other Pitzer Responses

The Pitzer community opposed to the high court’s striking down of affirmative action in college admissions was visible in other media outlets and venues. An email message to the College community from President Storm C. Thacker, Interim-President Jill Klein P’19, and Admission and Financial Aid Vice President Yvonne Berumen ’97 expressed disappointment but also reaffirmed Pitzer’s commitment to diversity within the changing legal landscape.

In addition, Pitzer alums Michele Siqueiros ’95, who serves as president of the nonprofit Campaign for College Opportunity, talked to NBC News about the ruling’s impact.

Welcome, Coach Q

Former Pomona-Pitzer women’s basketball star and 2022 SCIAC Player of the Year Madison Quan ’23 joined Head Coach Alaina Woo for the 2023-24 season. Quan was a standout student-athlete for the Sagehens from 2018 to 2023, graduating with marks all over the women’s basketball record book.

Quan is a first-generation college student who double majored in organizational studies and environmental analysis at Pitzer College before going on to receive her MBA from Claremont Graduate University’s Drucker School of Management.

Still Going Strong 25 Years Later

This summer marked a milestone for one of Pitzer’s leading study abroad offerings, the Costa Rica Summer Health Program. In the 1990s, Professor of Sociology, Ann Stromberg (pictured above, far right) was working with pre-med students who felt that they couldn’t spend a semester abroad. Stromberg thought that a summer program based on health would appeal to them while engaging them in intercultural education and Spanish learning—a asset in this part of the world. After trying Guadalupe for a year, Pitzer moved the program in 1998 to the Institute for Central American Development Studies (ICADS), a partner in Costa Rica that had already been hosting individual students. Whether students want to fulfill Pitzer’s Social Responsibility Praxis requirement, improve their Spanish, or work in education or health care, they’re able to expand their academic horizons in Costa Rica. “It’s been one of the greatest pleasures of my career for Pitzer to allow me create this,” said Stromberg. “A strong combination makes this program special: the home stay, intensive Spanish, hands-on internships, and raising questions of social justice and environmental health. It’s all part of Pitzer’s mission and ICADS mission.”

Up Close and Presidential

Inside Higher Ed took a close look at the search process resulting in the selection of Storm C. Thacker as president of Pitzer College in its February report, “An Expanded Faculty Role in the Presidential Search.” The article showcased interviews with faculty, staff, administration, students, and alumni involved in the process. Unlike the secret process characterizing most searches, the College “in what faculty leaders and board members there agree was a historic triumph for shared governance” thus day—the entire full-time faculty and representative groups of staff members and students the opportunity to meet with three finalists and weigh in on the final choice. More than half of the College’s roughly 100 eligible faculty members chose to participate in the process” that resulted in Thacker’s selection.

Cecil in Demand

Did you know that crochet is a social media sensation? It is for Lucy Cenner ’21, a major in science, technology, and society whose creation of a crochet version of Cecil the Sagehen became a top-performing post on Pitzer’s Instagram channel. Cenner created a series of Cecils (and received several offers from interested customers) for the Offices of Admission and for Advancement & Communications. “I like how Pitzer has embraced this niche hobby of mine and taken an interest in my creative side,” she said in an interview.

A Pitzer in Nepal Founder Retires

After more than 55 years of service to Pitzer College, Mike Donahue has retired as the dean of Pitzer programs and intercultural education. Donahue helped establish Pitzer in Nepal, the College’s longest running study abroad program. He came to Nepal with a Pitzer cohort in 1975 as a Pomona College student and stayed for months afterward to experience village life among the Sherpas. Since then, Donahue has supported intercultural learning in Claremont, Nepal, and beyond, and we wish him well on his next journey.
TWO EPIPHANIES. That’s what marks two important moments in Strom C. Thacker’s higher education career.

The first came when he was a sophomore at Pomona College. One afternoon he was rushing home to wash off the clay dust covering him from head to foot (he worked in the ceramics studio in the Art Department) and get ready for a night out, and that’s when it happened. His life suddenly made sense to him. “After experiencing all the challenges my family faced when I was growing up, I felt a clarity I hadn’t sensed before. It was a big aha moment. I don’t gamble, but it felt like three cherries on a slot machine lining up,” he recalled. “I felt what I was doing there and what I wanted to be starting to fall into place across the board. I felt like I was where I belonged. I had no idea where my path was leading, but I knew I was finally on it.”

Cut to 30 years later, as the world entered quarantine during the Covid-19 pandemic, and that’s when the second epiphany took place. A respected scholar and educator in Latin American political economy, Thacker was then serving as dean of the faculty and vice president for academic affairs at Union College in Schenectady, New York, when Covid struck. The pandemic laid bare the financial struggles of so many students, and that made him see—as someone raised in mostly single-parent homes where money was always tight—that having a greater impact on student lives would require rising to the presidential level. “I wanted to do more,” he said, “and I realized the only way to do that was to seek a larger role.”

With his selection as the seventh president of Pitzer College, and the start of his tenure this summer, Thacker, 57, sees his life coming full circle. His career in higher education started in Claremont and has taken him to Latin America, up and down the East Coast, and back again to Claremont, a city that has played such a formative role in his identity that it feels like a second home. He returns with a renewed sense of mission and a drive to help students. His arrival at Pitzer also coincides with the reality that the office of the college presidency is becoming increasingly difficult. In 2021, according to The Chronicle of Higher Education, 107 presidents announced their resignations—a 33% increase from 2020. There are still many candidates in the college presidential job market, but many are asking, is the job of being president worth it?

For Thacker, there isn’t a one-size-fits-all answer to that question. It all depends on the school, he says.
When I was ten, they divorced, away because she was raising me. We moved around, too; my family didn’t know where the next paycheck would be coming from. I could see how difficult it was for them. I could see what a challenge it would be to afford to go to a top private college.

Despite the challenges of my family’s situation, you applied to Pomona College. Why?

P: Pomona emerged as my top choice early on, but I was not sure if I could swing it, even if I got in. What really convinced me was a Pomona admissions officer explaining their policy to meet full demonstrated financial need. I assured me that if I were admitted, they’d make sure I could attend. From that moment on, I had my heart and sights set on Claremont.

ST: Did you ever visit the Pitzer campus when you were at Pomona?

P: Yes, I actually took a class here. I took only one course outside of Pomona during my whole undergraduate career, and it was at Pitzer. It was called International Political Economy, taught by Professor Thomas Ilgen. As a faculty member at Boston University and Union College (and twice as a visiting faculty member at Harvard), I’ve taught a similar version of Tom’s class. In fact, I’ve taught that class more than any other over the course of my career. So, my exposure to Pomona was limited to only one course, but it has really stuck with me.

ST: That’s a great question. Being a professor is one of the best jobs in the world. I loved it, and still do. Going into leadership really wasn’t something that I planned. I was invited to apply for an associate dean of faculty position here at Boston University, and the dean who nominated me wanted me to take the nomination seriously. I think she saw something in me that I had not yet recognized in myself.

P: I’d been studying Spanish since high school, but teaching international relations in Spanish in Mexico certainly helped a lot. I was reasonably comfortable with the language when I got to Pomona, where I continued studying it. But it was spending a year in Madrid that really cemented things for me. I lived with a Spanish family, took all of my classes in Spanish and traveled around the country quite a bit, with both on program excursions and on my own. I realized the language was really clicking for me when I started dreaming in Spanish after a few months in Madrid.

P: Besides ITAM, you have held several prestigious appointments that seem like dream roles for anyone with an academic career. What made you decide to shift from a life of scholarship with great chances to see other parts of the U.S. and the world into a life of leadership?

ST: That’s a good question. Being a professor is one of the best jobs in the world. I loved it, and still do. Going into leadership really wasn’t something that I planned. I was invited to apply for an associate dean of faculty position here at Boston University, and the dean who nominated me wanted me to take the nomination seriously. I think she saw something in me that I had not yet recognized in myself.
I’ve always loved my teaching and research... But in my leadership role my impact was exponentially expanded through all the faculty I was working with.

—Strum C. Thacker

A February campus visit enabled Thacker to meet faculty including Associate Professor of Classics Michelle Barenfeld.

work. But in my leadership role my impact was exponentially expanded through all the faculty I was working with.

A colleague at BU referred to this kind of work as philanthropic leadership—when your good work enables those of others. I think that phrase is just right. That’s the kind of approach I’ve applied to my leadership roles ever since. In my last year at Alumnae Weekend 2020, I introduced you to members of Pitzer’s alumni community. How was that experience?

ST: It was wonderful to be on campus and to meet so many alumni at our first in person celebration since 2019. I enjoyed being able to speak directly to people, both in groups and individually, rather than through email, phone, or video. It was so rewarding, almost immediately. They wanted to know about my past professional experience and what has led and drawn me to Pitzer. They seemed pleased to know that I’m a Pomona alum. I think it was reassuring for them to know that I understand my own college.

The Claremont Colleges from the student perspective. Many of them also shared with me that they want to make sure that access to a Pitzer education is available for everyone who qualifies for admission. They’re right.

That’s really struck me is how much they want to make sure that the world needs to hear their voices and to have their help to solve the unprecedented problems it faces today.

ST: Why?

ST: Because it’s a part of their education and self-discovery process; it’s an important part of figuring out who they are, what they believe, and how they will work to make the world a better place. They’re acquiring and developing the tools and the training here at Pitzer to help them detect and perceive injustices in any organization. It’s understandable that one of the first they see is the school they’re attending. I love the fact that Pitzer is proud of its activist heritage, and I’ve found an activist spirit is alive and well at other schools where I’ve worked as well.

One key to maximizing this element of our core educational mission is making sure that we all free our community values to their fullest ideals by engaging in respectful, constructive dialogue and conversation, rather than

Support for the vulnerable

Advocating for others through the law has evolved over the years for Thacker. After graduating from the University of North Carolina Law School, she worked as a staff attorney at Georgia Legal Services Program and focused on domestic violence, housing, and public benefits. She took time off to raise their three children before returning to the workforce with the Greater Boston Legal Services and Latinas Home Know Your Rights Program. This was the first time Thacker practiced immigration law.

Thacker has also practiced law at an anti-poverty agency, a domestic violence program, and a refugee agency.

At her core, Thacker said she enjoys “helping people who are facing barriers so that we can work through their problems together and improve their situations.”

According to its website, The Legal Project “has a special commitment to people who have traditionally had difficulty in obtaining legal assistance, including the working poor, women, immigrants, and the LGBTQ community.”

Thacker was deeply involved in the immigration program, which specializes in domestic violence, tenant’s rights, public benefits, and other re-unionization cases. The program also helped groups of displaced people such as Afghans, Ukrainians, and other refugees.

New opportunities at Pitzer

Thacker has not yet done work on the U.S.- Mexico border, but she sees Pitzer’s proximity to it as a potential opportunity to explore that. In the meantime, she is excited to join the Pitzer community that shares its values in social justice and community engagement. As she puts to know people, she hopes to learn from them about ongoing projects and see where she can be most useful.

“I’m fairly nimble. If you work in a nonprofit for any number of years, you have to be able to do a lot of things,” Thacker said. “I’ll try up on my sleeves and do what needs to be done.”

That means, she will not be doing so alone. Isabelle and Strom Thacker have been partners since meeting on a study abroad program in Madrid during their junior years in college. Thacker represents another leg in their journey together that has taken them to San Francisco, North Carolina, Georgia, Mexico City, Boston, Palo Alto, and Upstate New York. You may even find them around campus or the Claremont Village with another member of their family—Opal, a 3-year-old retired sled dog that they adopted during the pandemic.

“I want to see how my experience can help Pitzer’s mission. I’m excited about the community and I share values in social justice. It’s nice when people are working toward a common goal.”

—Isabelle Thacker

When she was a child, Isabelle Thacker knew what she wanted to be when she grew up. While other kids were drawing pictures of animals or race cars, Thacker was drawing pictures of herself as a stick-figure lawyer. She also wrote down that she was going to help people one day—and she’s stuck to that childhood promise.

Prior to moving to Claremont, she was the supervising attorney in the Immigration Unit at The Legal Project in Albany, New York. The Immigration Unit focuses on providing humanistic relief to immigrants. Thacker is looking forward to finding exciting ways to combine her professional experiences with Pitzer’s focus on social justice as her husband Strom set for himself as the College’s seventh president.

“I want to partner with Strom to help Pitzer move forward and get the word out about all the great things happening at the College,” she said.

A shared commitment to social justice: Strom and Isabelle Thacker.
simply yelling past each other. Naturally, we may not always agree. But we can always seek to better understand the issues at hand, and, importantly, each other and ourselves.

Your question remind me of a story from my Boston University days. One day when I was working in my administrative office, I heard a protest march coming down the street and wondered if our— who was then a student at BU and involved in a number of social justice initiatives—might be in that group. I looked out the window to see him helping lead a peaceful march down Commonwealth Avenue at that precise moment. It was a proud moment for me, both as a parent and as an administrator.

P: A recent Chronicle of Higher Education Report notes that many critics are asking if it’s even worth it to take on the job of college president. How would you answer them?

ST: It really depends on the school, the person, and the fit. It’s a much harder job than it used to be, without a doubt. Every year the average tenure of college presidents falls (to fewer than 6 years now). I asked one of my mentors who’s been a college president how his outlook on the job has changed. Specifically, I asked if he’d do it all over again now (as opposed to when he first got into the role). There was a long pause before he answered, “I think so.” He really had to think about it given the landscape of higher ed today. That was an instructive moment for me.

There are a lot of schools where I wouldn’t want this job and just a few where I would. Pitzer is one of the few in that special category for me. Pitzer is unique, a word I don’t use lightly. In so many ways, Pitzer is a model in how it lives its values and its mission, and the way the faculty and staff help all students to achieve and succeed inspires me. I still get a thrill out of the practice of building something bigger than any of us, of contributing to the development of an institution that serves such an important purpose in higher education and the world.

Even though the presidential role may be harder than it used to be, I still find it rewarding and fulfilling. What do you think is Pitzer’s greatest strength?

ST: It’s interesting to look at it from a longer-term perspective. While in one sense I’m new to Pitzer, I’ve observed and admired this school for a long time. I first arrived in Claremont in 1984, and I think Pitzer has stayed true to itself ever since. What is compelling is how the world has come around to Pitzer’s values now. The College has always emphasized the values of interdisciplinarity, sustainability, social engagement, social justice, applied learning, and community engagement, and now you see the rest of the world of higher education finally embracing these ideas.

President Thacker joined the Pitzer community for a special brunch during Alumni Weekend earlier this year.

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—Strom C. Thacker

Meet the Thackers (from left): Matthew, Isabelle, William, CJ, and Strom. (PHOTO CREDIT: on siliconreads.com)

INCREASED BUY-IN AND SUPPORT

For Jim Marchant, who serves as vice president and chief of staff, that messiness can lead to better results.

“When more parties are involved, the chances are higher that you’re going to have more buy-in and support for decisions, and it’s important to have that, especially for the big issues,” he explained. “Shared governance requires investing the time so that everyone gets to know each other’s perspective. It’s based on building relationships and, ideally, trust. Many leaders and institutions don’t have the patience for that.”

For 60 years Pitzer has demonstrated that patience, and Barndt, Marchant, and VanSickle-Ward, and others look forward to what Thacker adds to the College’s tradition of shared governance from his experience and scholarship.

For Pitzer Founding President John W. Atherton’s views on shared governance see Participating on p. 48.

Cover: Pitzer’s Seventh President

When Will Barndt considers Strom C. Thacker’s qualifications for the presidency, he’s encouraged by his scholarship. Thacker’s 2008 book, A Centripetal Theory of Democracy; Governance suggests to Barndt, an associate professor of political studies, that Thacker is a serious student of leadership. “He’s spent much of his career in theory and in practice thinking about how to bring people together around common goals. In his scholarship he’s focused on bringing different forces together; and that’s applicable to our governance structure,” he said Barndt, who served on the presidential search committee that selected Thacker.

A PLACE AT THE TABLE

What Barndt is referring to is the College’s shared governance model, which was developed at Pitzer decades ago. Under this model, all stakeholder groups have a say in how the College is run. You can see this in action during regular meetings of Pitzer’s faculty, student senate, staff council, and college council.

For Professor of Political Studies Rachel VanSickle-Ward, who serves as a member of the Faculty Executive Committee, student engagement is one of its most important and unique aspects. “Students serve on committees that make critical decisions about the College, including the hiring and review of faculty,” she said. “Their voices are vital, and their leadership interrogates our governance structure.”

Collective decision-making appeals to many institutions (not just in higher education) but few implement it. Why not? Two reasons: time and conflict. By increasing the number of groups involved in a decision, that decision takes longer and the likelihood of disagreement and conflict increases. The process can be very messy.

For Jim Marchant, who serves as vice president and chief of staff, that messiness can lead to better results.

“... When more parties are involved, the chances are higher that you’re going to have more buy-in and support for decisions, and it’s important to have that, especially for the big issues,” he explained. “Shared governance requires investing the time so that everyone gets to know each other’s perspective. It’s based on building relationships and, ideally, trust. Many leaders and institutions don’t have the patience for that.”

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Pitzer College

Cover
This year’s Fulbright cohort is spending a year of study, teaching, and research around the globe. Nine members of the Class of 2023 were offered 2023-24 Fulbright U.S. Student Program grants. For 55 consecutive years, Pitzer has been among the top baccalaureate producers of Fulbright recipients according to a recent report in The Chronicle of Higher Education.

| 1 | Alyssa Dunn ’23 is an organizational biology major who is conducting research in Poland on blood-borne infections, parasites, and coinfection dynamics in rodents. “Greater research on coinfection is critical for understanding how parasites are transmitted and treated,” Dunn explained. |
| 2 | Jack Friedman ’23 is teaching English in Uruguay as he immerses himself in the country’s rural and urban environments. A writing and rhetoric major, he plans to draw on his teaching and tutoring experiences as a Writing Center Fellow. |
| 3 | Amya Goulas ’23 is teaching English in Mexico as she expands her interest in the diversity of Indigenous and Afro-Mexican cultures, pre-colonial history, and ecosystems. An organizational studies major, Gustave has taught while participating in Pitzer in Ecuador. |
| 4 | Ariel Kivola ’23 is teaching English in Taiwan and looks forward to sharing her personal and unique approach to learning: English that has been inspired by her own struggles with dyslexia. In her application she explained that she hopes “to provide empathy and patience to students learning English while also creating an environment for them to learn.” |
| 5 | Omphila Le ’23 is teaching English in Taiwan as she seeks to build bridges between communities of learners and create compassionate spaces: A sociocultural anthropology and environmental analysis double major, Le plans to pursue a career as a public health professional. |
| 6 | Sergio Quechol ’23 is conducting research in Spain on the political dynamics affecting affordable housing. Her research aims at the question: Should affordable housing be framed as a partisan or ideological issue? A double major in political science and psychology, Quechol plans to analyze the housing justice movement. |
| 7 | Elliot Ruskin ’23 is teaching English in Tajikistan as he explores mutual learning, empathy, and intercultural understanding. A political studies major, Ruskin participated in Pitzer’s study abroad program in Vietnam. |
| 8 | Jocelyn Yaga-Rubledo ’23, a sociology and Chicano-Latino Studies double major, is teaching English in Portugal. As a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow, she researched the parental involvement experiences of Latinx farmworkers and how they contribute to their children’s educational trajectories. |

ACING HER FELLOWSHIP
Associate Professor of Economics Menna Bizuneh has been selected as a 2023 Fellow of the American Council on Education (ACE). She is the first Pitzer faculty member ever chosen for this highly prestigious program. ACE Fellows study another culture’s best practices before returning to their own school and putting these lessons into action. Bizuneh joins 35 other Fellows who were selected after being nominated by the senior administration of their institutions and undergoing a rigorous application process.

ANNOUNCEMENTS
Earlier this year a coalition of more than 60 Southland environmental and social justice groups and organizations sent a report and letter to California Gov. Gavin Newsom asking for a halt on the construction of new warehouses until the health and environmental impact can be better understood. Spearheading that effort was the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice, the Sierra Club (San Gorgonio Chapter), and Environmental Justice, the Sierra Club (San Gorgonio Chapter), and the Robert Redford Conservancy for Southern California. Sustainability at Pitzer College, led by Director Susan Phillips, and the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation, took students from her course to serve as a Fellow with the Claremont Infant Study Center. He is director of the Claremont Infant Study Center.

MIDWIFERY MATTERS
Professor of Sociology Alicia Bonaparte co-organized this spring’s Midwifery is Public Health two-day conference (featured in The Claremont Courier) and appeared on the “Uncared For” podcast. She discussed the historical role of midwives in laying the prenatal care groundwork for midwifery as it’s known today.

THEORISTS VERSUS LIARS
A report in Reason magazine this spring on the second International Conspiracy Theory Symposium cited Professor of Philosophy Brian L. Keeley’s work, in particular his argument that it’s important to distinguish conspiracy theorists from conspiracy liars: “The former, he explained, are sincere. The latter are propagandists and snake-oil salesmen who promote stories they don’t genuinely believe.”

A FAILED FAIDENED
President Xi’s mishandling of the abrupt ending of these restrictions has left citizens struggling to figure out how to survive on their own.
A Lasting Legacy of Achievement

Ethel Jorge
Professor of Spanish

Since her arrival at Pitzer in 1999, Ethel Jorge has shared her expertise in community-based language learning, Latin American cultural studies, popular culture, and more in her extensive scholarship and teaching. Jorge’s innovative courses include Spanish in the Community: Children of Immigration; Latin American Cultural Diasporas; and Los Angeles, the City, and Its People. Before joining Pitzer’s Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures Field Group, Jorge earned a PhD in Latin American Cultural Studies from Union Institute in Ohio and a bachelor’s and master’s in Latin American History from the Universidad de la Habana in Cuba. At Pitzer, Jorge created the Community-Based Spanish Practicum and developed a more comprehensive integrative Spanish program that links foreign language teaching to student engagement with multilingual and multicultural communities. She increased connections with other academic disciplines and in the College’s study abroad programs in Spanish-speaking countries. Jorge’s research includes community-engaged language pedagogy, interdisciplinary transnational language and culture connections, and popular culture in the Spanish-speaking world. Jorge has served as an associate editor of Hispania and a contributing editor of Latin American and Caribbean Thought. She also received the National Endowment for the Humanities “Travel to Collection Fellowship” to visit Haitian art in U.S. museums.

Daniel A. Segal
Professor of Anthropology and Professor of History

Daniel A. Segal brought his extensive knowledge of the Caribbean, post-Columbian world history, and the social construction of race to Pitzer in 1996. Among his courses were a two-semester world history sequence and a seminar on Donald Trump’s America. In 2017, Segal was awarded a Fulbright U.S. Scholar research fellowship to examine the entry of the Brazilian state into the northern Amazon. Within the context of a larger theoretical study of “the state” across historical contexts, Segal explored the impact of the increased presence of the federal state in the former Brazilian territory of Roraima from the late 1980s to the present. Segal’s academic publications include “Witnessing Chimpanzee-Human Closeness: Jane Goodall at Gombe and Sinaie” in anthological Quarterly and “Some Reflections on Editing with Contrarian Sensibilities” in Cultural Anthropology. Segal also received the National Endowment for the Humanities “Travel to Collection Fellowship” to visit Haitian art in U.S. museums.

Muriel Poston
Professor of Environmental Analysis

Muriel Poston served as dean of the faculty/vice president for academic affairs at Pitzer from 2012 to 2015. Poston was also named the vice president of strategic initiatives at Claremont McKenna College in 2021. Poston has sought to broaden the involvement of underrepresented students and faculty in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Her education research includes undergraduate education, and her scientific research includes plant systematics, especially the evolutionary relationships of the neotropical family Lecaniiaceae.

Albert Wachtel
Professor of Creative Studies

Albert Wachtel has introduced students to the wonders of literature, Shakespeare, epic and scripture, the ancient world, theory of literature, and non-fiction and fiction writing. A sample of Wachtel’s classes include: The Bible and Shakespeare; Epic in Translation, Yields and Magic, and Creative Writing and Creative Thought. His academic honors include three years as a National Defense Education Act Fellow, the Creative Arts Institute Fellowship, two National Endowment for the Humanities grants, and an appointment as a Danforth Associate. Wachtel’s publications include “The Basement” in Broadside Review, “Goddess” in The Gettysburg Review, and “Modernists” in Critical Survey of Poetry. He is the editor for Critical Insights: A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (2011) and Critical Insights: James Joyce (2011) with Salem Press. He has also been a member of the Writer’s Guild, a distinction granted to writers whose work has been performed in film or on television.

A closer look at four retiring professors who have shaped the College’s history
Pomona-Pitzer student-athletes have always distinguished themselves through their robust passion for sports and academics in NCAA Division III. This spring that passion was on clear display with a string of team and individual achievements.

**SPORTS RECAP**

**SPRING 2023 HIGHLIGHTS**

**A WAVE OF WINS: WOMEN’S WATER POLO TEAM TAKES ALL**

An unstoppable force in the water, the Pomona-Pitzer women’s water polo team claimed their second straight SCIAC Tournament Championship title. The team has now won four of the past five SCIAC Tournaments and looks forward to taking their game to the next level next year.

**SYDNEY LANDAUER ‘25 NAMED OFFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR IN LACROSSE**

The Pomona-Pitzer women’s lacrosse team clinched the SCIAC Regular Season Title and earned their third consecutive season in program history.

**WOMEN’S LACROSSE TEAM EARNS SECOND STRAIGHT SCIAC TOURNAMENT CHAMPIONSHIP**

After winning the SCIAC Regular Season Championship, the Pomona-Pitzer women’s lacrosse team claimed their second straight SCIAC Tournament Championship title. The team finished the season with a 9-2 record, securing their second straight SCIAC Regular Season Title.

**MADISON QUAN ’22 MAKES HISTORY IN WOMEN’S BASKETBALL**

Madison Quan ’22 was recognized as the SCIAC Offensive Player of the Year. A Pomona alum and recent Claremont Graduate University graduate, Quan played the 2022-23 season as a sophomore, leading the team in assists with 74 on 42 goals and 32 assists. Quan ended her career sixth in all-time points, first in three-pointers, fifth in career assists, and third in career steals. She also broke the single-game points record and set the single-game steals record. Quan was also named to the D3Hoops.com First Team All-West Region team.

**POMONA-PITZER MEN’S BASKETBALL TEAM CLINCHES SCIAC REGULAR SEASON TITLE**

The Pomona-Pitzer men’s basketball team claimed their fifth 20-win season in program history. The Sagehens triumphed with their fourth-straight SCIAC Regular Season Title and earned their third consecutive season in program history.

**SEASON TITLE**

Team clinches SCIAC Regular Season Title and earned their third consecutive season in program history.

**TEAM EARNS SECOND SCIAC CHAMPIONSHIP**

The Pomona-Pitzer men’s football team earned its first SCIAC Championship in program history after their 28-14 win over CMS in the Sixth Street Brandy. The Sagehens and Stags became Co-Champs in the SCIAC with both ending the season with one SCIAC loss, while the Sagehens represented the SCIAC in the NCAA Tournament.

**RECORDS IN MEN’S SWIM AND DIVE**

Ben Willett ’23 set a new program record in the 6-dive competition with 385.15 points to take first place. Willett also shone in the 3m dive, setting another program record with 385.85 points to take first. These triumphs earned Willett a SCIAC Athlete of the Week.

**POMONA-PITZER WOMEN’S GOLF TEAM EARNS SECOND SCIAC CHAMPIONSHIP**

The Pomona-Pitzer women’s golf team came back from 10 strokes down in the final day of the SCIAC Championships to claim their second title in as many years. The Sagehens defended their SCIAC title against Redlands with a come-from-behind win to earn the trophy by a stroke.

**PITZER COLLEGE**

For more information, visit www.pitzer.edu/alumni-families/rivalry-weekend.

**Sagehens Win First SCIAC Football Title**

Last November, the Pomona-Pitzer football team earned its first SCIAC Championship in program history after their 28-14 win over CMS in the Sixth Street Brandy. The Sagehens and Stags became Co-Champs in the SCIAC with both ending the season with one SCIAC loss, while the Sagehens represented the SCIAC in the NCAA Tournament.

This fall, Pomona-Pitzer and CMS will face off for their next Sixth Street Brandy. Are you ready to cheer on the Sagehens? Do you have the school spirit to make Cecil the Sagehen proud? Join us September 30 for this year’s matchup. For more information, visit www.pitzer.edu/alumni-families/rivalry-weekend.

**RECORDS IN MEN’S SWIM AND DIVE**

Ben Willett ’23 sets program records in men’s swim and dive.

**WOMEN’S BASKETBALL**

Madison Quan ’22 makes history in women’s basketball.

**LACROSSE**

Sydney Landauer ’25 named offensive player of the year in lacrosse.

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**Ben Willett ’23 sets program records in men’s swim and dive.**
Michael Dowd '90 presents an unexpected coming-of-age story in her acclaimed new memoir *Forager: Field Notes for Surviving a Family Cult*.

By Tom Johnson

The opening sentence of a book can be unforgettable. Anyone familiar with Melville's *Moby Dick* knows it famously starts with "Call me Ishmael," while Ray Bradbury begins *Fahrenheit 451* with a simple confession: "It was a pleasure to burn."

The same is true of the opening sentence of *Forager: Field Notes on Surviving a Family Cult*, a memoir by Michelle Dowd '90: "I grew up on a mountain, preparing for the Apocalypse."

That sentence is unforgettable, and it's hardly an exaggeration. Published earlier this year by Algonquin Press and favorably reviewed by The Los Angeles Times, Kirkus Reviews, Publishers Weekly and other outlets, *Forager* recounts the author's childhood growing up in a cult called the Field and on the opposite side of the world, at the Angeles National Forest (on the San Andreas Fault no less). The book is a survivor's testament: a memoir harrowing at times but ultimately hopeful. From that first sentence, Dowd's voice is thoroughly engaging.

Dowd explains that though she foraged daily for edible plants on the Mountain, her real home wasn't a place but an idea—one that her maternal grandfather turned into the Field. Of this community Dowd writes:

Both Field and Mountain were governed by Grandpa, the ruler of our world, Grandpa and he was God's prophet and would live to be five hundred years the ruler of our world. Grandpa said he was God's prophet and would live to be five hundred years. Grandpa's followers believed every word he said, because at the Field, he was the only one with authority. His proclamations were the soundtrack of our childhood, and his sermons told God that his vengeance would be unleashed upon the world unless a small group of God's chosen people stayed his hand terrified me.

"My grandfather decided the truth, and he lied if he had to," Dowd explained during a recent Participant interview. "Everyone in the Field called him 'Grandpa, so I didn't even know as a kid that he was my biological grandfather. It was confusing, and I never really trusted myself. If I ever asked my mom questions, she would just shut right down."

"It's not surprising that one of the last things of growing up in a cult is trauma, something that she confronted years later in therapy. "There are a lot of us out there, and we think we're fine until we're not," Dowd said. One of the biggest issues she had to reckon with was the realization that her parents didn't love her or her siblings. "They couldn't express love in any way that any of us could feel. They gave us up at birth to the collective. They didn't nurture us, didn't bag us or say 'I love you.' I felt that lack from a very early age.""

AN UNEXPECTED EXPERIENCE OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD

A seminal event in Dowd's early life occurred at the age of 10 when she entered Children's Hospital Los Angeles for symptoms that might have been chickenpox. At the time, Dowd was the first child of a leader to ever leave the confines of the cult.

Ironically, or perhaps inevitably, it took Dowd's hospital stay to begin to give her a sense that there were different places in the world. The chickenpox diagnosis soon led to an extended stay in isolation when it was discovered she had idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura, a condition in which the immune system mistakenly attacks platelets and requires bone marrow transplants. Through the many months of treatments, Dowd's mother was her only visitor, and her visits were infrequent. "I felt like I was abandoned and alone," Dowd said. "But when I got back to the community, there was a part of me that had shifted." Once back at the Field, Dowd found that her grandfather had scuppered her with accusations that she had gotten sick because there was evil in the community and, worse still, that Dowd might have been the Antichrist or the wicked Israel of the Old Testament.

"But I didn't think it was crazy," Dowd said. "I thought I might have been Jesus. For sure there was shame about me being sick. My mother was so embarrassed that she never told people. To most of the Field, I had just disappeared.""

PITZER AND BEYOND

When she was 17, Dowd made her escape from the cult, enrolling at Pitzer in 1986. "At Pitzer, people would ask me where I came from and where I went to high school," she said. "I didn't go to high school, of course. It was uncomfortable, and I'd say I was home schooled. Just couldn't talk about it. I didn't know any contemporary music, television, movies. I didn't have a way to relate." According to Dowd, she didn't choose Pitzer, Pitzer chose her. "I didn't even apply to the College," she said. "Somebody sent my application, which I had written with a pencil, to Pitzer, and they sent me a note saying they received my application from another school and that they would like to offer me funding to come into Pitzer." Dowd thought becoming a lawyer was a noble (and lucrative) pursuit, and she decided to major in English as part of her pre-law preparation. But that changed when she encountered English Professor Jill Benton. Benton became her academic advisor, mentor, and later her friend. Dowd took four courses with her and realized that literary inquiry was an area that was joyful and worthy to stand on its own merits. She decided that she wanted to share that joy with others.

After Pitzer, Dowd earned a master's degree at the University of Colorado at Boulder and is currently a journalism professor at Chaffey College in Rancho Cucamonga.

RESILIENCE AND A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Dowd's mother never apologized to her for the neglect she experienced during her childhood, but Dowd believes her parents were both brainwashed. Regardless, she credits her mother, who was a skilled naturalist, with giving her survival skills, the most important one being resilience. "I've been told my whole life that I'm resilient," she said. "I think the skills my mom taught me in nature—how to look around and make do with what you have—are important, and you're never helpless. She taught me the opposite of helplessness."

Another qualified "positive" that Dowd sees in living in a cult is that members have a rich sense of community. "I learned very young that family didn't need to be blood and that you could really have each other's backs," she said. "In the Field we used the word 'unity' a lot. It was almost like we were cheerleaders for the concept. We moved as one and everyone had a role to play."

LISTENING TO HERSELF

Dowd wrote *Forager* in four months during the pandemic. Despite the book's many startling incidents, she says she didn't want to pull the reader with "drama porn."

"I came from a family that didn't own a camera," she said. In her book, Dowd compensates for that by painting word pictures that are as crystalline as any photograph. Dowd said she had been unable to discuss her past for most of her life, but that changed with the writing of this book. She worked in near darkness, writing the book by hand in a room illuminated by a single candle. "I just channeled the young girl inside of me," she said. "No one had ever listened to her. I just sat and 'listened,' and her story just flowed out of my hand."

Dowd said that when you write a memoir it really is about what you leave out. "You can always go deeper down the rabbit hole," she said. The little girl from the Field and the Mountain may be long gone, but the woman who has taken her place has reemerged from that rabbit hole and in doing so has testified to a time, place, and experience unfathomable to most of us.

Visit www.pitzer.edu/participant to watch the Alumni Weekend 2023 conversation between Michelle Dowd '90 and Professor of Sociology Phil Zuckerman.
Independent studies can personalize your studies if you find a professor who can support you in a topic that they know well,” said Wong-VanHaren. “It’s also more intimate,” said Shenoi. “We get to work one-on-one with our adviser and partners.”

In many ways, this independent study continued the project Shenoi launched in summer 2023 as a Haver fellow when he utilized human-centered design to help Claremont students connect to their environment and local plants. “In our time of climate change and natural habitat loss, preserving these spaces is vital to protecting our keystone species, improving the health of our communities, and connecting to our local ecosystems,” he said.

For Wong-VanHaren, their work in the Outback had strong ties to Pitzer’s core values, especially interdisciplinary learning.

“We were learning a range of subjects, from the importance of certain plants to Tongva people to the scientific names for the different parts of seeds,” said Wong-VanHaren. Shenoi and Wong-VanHaren appreciated the opportunity to chart their independent academic course with Phillips’ support.

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**INTERDISCIPLINARY ROOTS**

For their seed preservation project, Shenoi and Wong-VanHaren also partnered with the Outback Club and Professor Monica Mahoney, an adjoint faculty member who took over the Restoring Nature class to ensure the Outback’s continued care. Shenoi wanted his GIS work to continue supporting this effort.

“As data and drone photography continue to be collected, my database will be used by the Restoring Nature class and Outback Club to analyze trends of plant diversity and plant health and inform long-term restoration plans,” said Shenoi.

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The Center for Athletics, Recreation, and Wellness opens to fanfare

By BRIDGETTE RAMIREZ

Basketball thumps on the court like a heartbeat. Wheels whir on a Peloton bike. Orange dumbbells rise and fall. Feet brush against vibrant green turf. Zumba instructors move in sync with upbeat music. California sunlight pours from tall windows, shining on rich blue walls, pale oak wood, and state-of-the-art equipment in almost every size and shape.

Such are the sights and sounds of the 100,000-square-foot Center for Athletics, Recreation, and Wellness (CARW)—the new nest of Sagehen Athletics’ 21 varsity teams and the Pitzer-Pomona community. According to Director of Athletics Miriam Merrill, this facility “ushers in a new definition of wellness and what it can look like.”

This is a place where students and athletes can unite on and off the court—and they do. “There are certain spaces geared toward student-athletes, but that too is a space for everyone,” said Merrill. “The basketball team is full of academic studs,” said Mullarkey. “The guys and professors inspired me, and now I love competing in the classroom.”

According to Mullarkey, the team is full of premed students, and usually at least one person arrives late to practice because of a lab. Coaches support students in prioritizing school, but that doesn’t mean the team takes the sport any less seriously. In February, the team clinched their fourth-straight SCIAC regular season title over CMS.

“We have a really great athletic capacity that may be.”

Our coaches push us to be the best version of ourselves not just in our sport, but in life. We also have our athletic trainers and they help us with aiding and preventing injuries.”

A SPACE FOR EVERYONE

Merrill affirms that the CARW is “tailored for the community”—whether you are a faculty member signing up for a spinning class, a friend group putting together a volleyball match, or an athlete looking for an Olympic-level workout.

“There are certain spaces geared toward student-athletes, but that too is a space for everyone,” said Merrill. For Mullarkey, CARW enhances not only his experience in wellness, but also the community.”

“T he bridges that connect The Nucleus, a new state-of-the-art science building that creates a bridge that connects science education to a whole new level. For Keck Science Dean Ulysses J. Sofia and his faculty, this project has been eagerly anticipated.

“We’ve been planning this for a long time,” Sofia said. “There’s a lot of excitement—and relief—that construction is underway.”

INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS

Rising just west of the Keck Science building, the approximately 70,000-square-foot building will feature teaching laboratories, collaborative learning spaces, community courtyards and plazas, an art installation, and a rooftop greenhouse for scientific use. When it opens in fall 2024, The Nucleus will create unprecedented new opportunities for students in the sciences as a result of an important partnership between Pitzer and Scripps Colleges to take science education to a new level.

Visit www.pitzer.edu/the-nucleus for more about the Pitzer-Scripps partnership behind the creation of The Nucleus.

Make a gift in support of The Nucleus: A Pitzer and Scripps Colleges Partnership at www.pitzer.edu/the-nucleus

Merrill and the CARW team are expanding educational wellness programming about topics such as nutrition, sleep, emotional health, and how to get started with workouts.

FIRST-CLASS FEATURES

The $7-million building and renovation project has equipped CARW with features such as:

• N & N Practice Gymnasium, boasting a sweeping view of the San Gabriel Mountains
• Dragon Public Fitness Area, a 8,971-square-foot recreational area with cardio and weight equipment
• Athletic Performance Center: a 4,876-square foot strength and conditioning space
• Studios for fitness classes
• A thoroughly refreshed Voelkel Gym for basketball and volleyball
• Classrooms fitted for academic seminars, club meetings, and more
• A LEED Platinum certification

BLENDING ATHLETICS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

CARW’s multifaceted resources reflect how Sagehen Athletics takes a well-rounded approach to fitness for its varsity teams. The Pomona-Pitzer Sagehens program combines the best of academics and sports to create a collegiate experience that tests both the minds and bodies of its scholar-athletes.

Petron Mullarkey ’25, a management engineering major at Pitzer, had always been a good student, but he didn’t have a love for learning until he met his basketball teammates.

“The basketball team is full of academic studs,” said Mullarkey. “The guys and professors inspired me, and now I love competing in the classroom.”

According to Mullarkey, the team is full of premed students, and usually at least one person arrives late to practice because of a lab. Coaches support students in prioritizing school, but that doesn’t mean the team takes the sport any less seriously. In February, the team clinched their fourth-straight SCIAC regular season title over CMS.

Charlize Andaya ’23, a mathematics major and data science minor, shared a similar experience in women’s basketball.

“T he bridges that connect The Nucleus, a new state-of-the-art science building that creates a subtle symbolic reminder about the nature of science. Science is a cumulative process. Like the bridges between the two buildings, current achievements are connected to past discoveries.

“When it opens in fall 2024, The Nucleus will create unprecedented new opportunities for students in the sciences as a result of an important partnership between Pitzer and Scripps Colleges to take science education to a whole new level. For Keck Science Dean Ulysses J. Sofia and his faculty, this project has been eagerly anticipated.

“We’ve been planning this for a long time,” Sofia said. “There’s a lot of excitement—and relief—that construction is underway.”
Timely and Influential

The following selection of excerpted commentaries illustrates how Pitzer alumni and faculty are shaping tastes and influencing opinions in some of today’s leading publications and media outlets. For more information on reading the full pieces excerpted here, visit www.pitzer.edu/participant.

**EXCERPTED FROM POETRY MAGAZINE**

**On Bert Meyers**

By DANA LEVIN ’87

As an undergraduate at Pitzer College in 1994, I set up camp in the Bert Meyers Poetry Room. It was upstairs in the rear bedroom of the Grove House, a Craftsman-style bungalow that had been moved to campus with great fanfare some years before, to serve as a student union of sorts. For three years, I read and wrote under the gate of a portrait of Bert, which had for a knock for falling off the wall whenever I was especially brooding about life. At those moments I always thought Bert was trying to get my attention: “Snap out of it! Get back to work!” And so I would. I hung out in the Poetry Room so much I moved in by acclimation, eventually spending each night on the outside sleeping porch just off a side window for most of a semester, until the custodial staff found me out. Although Bert was five years dead when I started college, his presence was very alive in that room and in the classrooms of poems, journals, letters, notes, and photos alive: this book—of poems, journals, letters, notes, and photos alive: this book—

Which brings us to now. Nearly forty years after I first walked into the Bert Meyers Poetry Room, I’ve had the luck to edit a volume of his work for the Unsung Masters Series at Pleiades Press, a volume which published in March. My coeditor, Adele Elise Williams, and Bert’s son, Daniel Meyers, have been integral to this endeavor. I extend special gratitude to Daniel, who has kept his father’s archive of poems, journals, letters, notes, and photos alive: this book—and this folio—would not exist without Daniel’s stewardship of Bert’s memory.

Readers will notice I keep referring to Bert as “Bert,” and not “Meyers,” which would be the convention for an introductory essay on a literary figure—I can’t help it. As a student at Pitzer College, no one met who had known Bert referred to him as anything else. There was often a sense of familial love, reverence, and bemusement in the way his many former students and colleagues talked about him. Even though I never met Bert, I began to feel part of this family, part of the protective and loving circle that seemed to surround his memory and his work. A deep bow to Bert’s work for the Unsung Masters Series, as well as to the editorial board of the Unsung Masters Series, as well as to the editorial team at Poetry: you make space for the recovery and reclamation of significant literary voices nearly lost to time.

**EXCERPTED FROM LA NUEVA VOZ**

**Building Multi-Racial Unity Through Economic Models Targeting Historical Inequities**

By JOSÉ Z. CALDERÓN

Emeritus Professor

IN THE LAST FOUR DECADES—Although the U.S. economy has doubled in growth—the bottom half of households have seen no income gains. In these same years, the top 1 percent had their annual income go up from an average of $420,000 to $3.3 million. The result of this is that workers have had to work longer hours, take on more debt, and see more numbers in the family forced to work. The reality is that one of every seven persons in this country lives below the poverty line. . . .

At the local level, we need a social movement that is about building models of democratizing wealth based on the collective not just the interests of the individual. This takes us into the realm of cooperative models of economic development with racial justice in the forefront. The rise of this new economy includes worker-owned cooperatives such as the “Filene’s” cooperative (a Brooklyn house cleaning enterprise owned primarily by Latinas) and union cooperatives such as the Communications Workers of America Local 7777 in Denver (Green Taxi) where the leadership and board are made up entirely of immigrant drivers from East Africa and Morocco.

This follows with the thinking that a whole new economy is emerging that includes models of economic development with racial justice in the forefront. The rise of this new economy includes worker-owned cooperatives such as the “Filene’s” cooperative (a Brooklyn house cleaning enterprise owned primarily by Latinas) and union cooperatives such as the Communications Workers of America Local 7777 in Denver (Green Taxi) where the leadership and board are made up entirely of immigrant drivers from East Africa and Morocco.

Rather than a culture of greed and selfishness in the forefront, there is the capacity for a new kind of planning with a culture of collective in the forefront—to use the earth’s resources and local partnerships between schools, cities, businesses, and community-based organizations to build multi-racial unity in advocating concrete models that get at the systemic sources of unjust and historical inequities.

Calderón is emeritus professor of English and Chicano/a and Latina/o studies. This commentary appeared earlier this year in the Stop-the-Hate special feature series published by Pomegranate-based La Nueva Voz. This excerpt is reprinted with permission of Jeff Schenkel (publisher) and Danee Barbie (vice president of marketing and operations) of La Nueva Voz.
It is not really about the ethics decision to restrict already limited There has also been considerable 2022 to be the best World Cup ever. been unequivocal in deeming Qatar sporting, while the Arabic press has the Global South has been strictly critiques into their coverage. media have integrated these Russia in 2018, the mainstream contrast to the free pass it gave United States, Britain, Germany was manifest in the global corporation of the scale of InBev without missing a beat. Brazilians, the Qataris were able this clout was. Stark was so sure of expression, Qataris responded by showing posters of Mesut Özil, the German footballer whose outspokenness seemingly led to his being silenced by the German media and football authorities. Environmentalists have pointed out the madness of staging a carbon-intensive event in a place so threatened by climate change, and rightly so. But given that the German government sealed a 15-year deal with Qatar for liquid gas during the tournament and that the next World Cup, to be held in North America and Mexico, may carry a larger carbon footprint, such charges were easy to dismiss. With Argentina’s win, this was the most closely scrutinized and culturally contested World Cup ever, and that is a good thing.

Unlike the South Africans or the Brazilians, the Qataris were able to impose their will on FIFA and a global corporation of the scale of InBev without missing a beat. This clout was manifest in the official response to European teams’ plans to wear rainbow armbands and spectators to sport rainbow insignia. Sides were threatened by FIFA with yellow cards, and supporters endured bruise treatment from security and the confiscation of flags and clothing. Nasser al-Khater, the chief executive of the cap’s organizing committee, felt confident enough to dismiss the death of a migrant worker on a site close to Saudi Arabia’s camp, saying, “Death is a natural part of life, whether it is at work, whether it is in your sleep.” (A second migrant worker, who worked as a security guard at one of the stadiums, has since died.) European hypocrisy has contributed to this confidence. After the German team protested the supposed denial of its freedom of expression, Qatar responded by showing posters of Mesut Özil, the German footballer whose outspokenness seemingly led to his being silenced by the German media and football authorities. Environmentalists have pointed out the madness of staging a carbon-intensive event in a place so threatened by climate change, and rightly so. But given that the German government sealed a 15-year deal with Qatar for liquid gas during the tournament and that the next World Cup, to be held in North America and Mexico, may carry a larger carbon footprint, such charges were easy to dismiss. With Argentina’s win, this was the most closely scrutinized and culturally contested World Cup ever, and that is a good thing.

The consequences of religion’s weakening are unclear. But while its meaning for America remains an open question, whether secularization is happening is not.

Zuckerman is professor of sociology and secular studies. This excerpt from a recent commentary piece is reprinted with permission of The Conversation. For more on his new book Beyond Belief, see p. 38.
I implore us to reimagine what it means to be “safe.”

My students and I tutored participants of the adult literacy program at the public library not too far from the site of the mass shooting in Monterey Park, Calif. in January for over ten months. When I saw the grainy photo of the shooter, Hau Can Tran, I felt like he could be an uncle in my family—or perhaps someone I’d met for tutoring at the local library. My mind raced as I began to think of those in my community. I struggled to practice returning to my breath and the present moment.

I’d met for tutoring at the local library not too far from the site of the mass shooting in Monterey Park, Calif. in January for over ten months. Since the mass shooting, I’ve noticed how war, gendered violence and militarization hurt. I yearn for us to ask, reflect, and act upon deeper questions. I implore us to reimagine what it means to be “safe”—a place to dance in community, to breathe and heal from war and trauma, to have our basic needs for food and mental healthcare met. “Safety” can be honoring and respecting fundamental human dignity, gender, and cultural identities, with mindfulness and breath—just like Julian and the Lees.

I am still trying to process this as I write, but it is clear that Ukraine’s heroic struggle against Russian aggression as well as the clear and present danger of the Kremlin’s neo-imperial ambitions toward Kazakhstan have rejuvenated my own sense of Kazakh identity.
COMMUNITY BOOKSHELF

1. COUNTDOWN: A LIFE IN 20 SONGS (BOOKBABY)

When cultural historians want to analyze a decade or other time period, one of the best ways is to look at that era's songs. Tom Waldman '78 applies a similar method to his life in the memoir Countdown: A Life in 20 Songs. From the Beatles to Beethoven, Waldman range far and wide as he devotes each chapter to a specific song and its connections to him and the world around him. The iconic "War," for instance, offers a chance to reflect on the impact of Vietnam on his life (and society in general) though he was too young to be drafted for that war. A Claremont Courier piece Waldman's book explains that he isn't practicing nostalgia here but instead gives readers a highly personalized approach to history and some of the significant events that have influenced his life.

2. BEYOND DOUBT: THE SECULARIZATION OF SOCIETY (NEW YORK UNIVERSITY PRESS)

Is our society really becoming more secular? In Beyond Doubt, Professor of Sociology Phil Zuckerman and his co-authors Isabella Kasselstrand and Ryan T. Cragun suggest that the theory underscoring secularization—which many opponents have influenced his life. and society in general) though he was too young to be drafted for that war. A Claremont Courier piece Waldman's book explains that he isn't practicing nostalgia here but instead gives readers a highly personalized approach to history and some of the significant events that have influenced his life.

3. LANGUAGE AND GENDER IN CHILDREN'S ANIMATED FILMS (CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS)

According to Pitzer Professor of Linguistics Carmen Fought, Disney is renowned for presenting itself as a purveyor of sweet and innocent family fare but the "mesaing" of the studio’s films can sometimes be downright dangerous. That’s the big reveal in Fought’s new book co-authored with Renen Eisenhauer ‘07. Disney and Pixar might be beloved by audiences of children and adults, but the authors challenge the kind of messaging that is found in the characters and stories created by these media giants. They apply in-depth qualitative analysis to examine the portrayal of male characters, female characters, and queerness in their films, and demonstrate how different linguistic tools and techniques can be used to better understand popular children’s media.

4. MASTERS OF HEALTH: RACIAL SCIENCE AND SLAVERY IN U.S. MEDICAL SCHOOLS (UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA PRESS)

Hailed by Harvard historian Vincent Brown as “a meticulous autopsy of a ghastly intellectual scandal,” Professor Chris Willoughby’s book examines the deeply problematic area of how racial theories distorted medical education in 19th-century America. A visiting assistant professor of medicine and health at Pitzer, Willoughby shows the medical establishment’s significant hypocrisy when it came to experimentation. Despite a belief in the biological differences between races, medical practitioners didn’t hesitate to dissect the cadavers of Black people to help them understand bodily functions. In the process he reveals how ideas about anatomical differences became accepted in medical schools not by some extremist fringe group, but by some of the leading mainstream figures of the day.

5. POSTCOLONIAL FICTION AND COLONIAL TIME: WAITING FOR NOW (EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY PRESS)

The theme of "waiting" in Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness provides an entry point that allows Amanda Lagi, assistant professor of English and world literature at Pitzer, to explore the work of more contemporary African writers including Nadine Gordimer, J.M. Coetzee, Zakes Mda, and others. Lagi argues in Postcolonial Fiction and Colonial Time: Waiting for Now that waiting is a fundamental element in understanding time and power in postcolonial fiction. Critics have praised Lagi for her innovative perspective, including the University of Adelaide’s Andrew van der Vlies, who writes that Lagi “presses reset on our tendency to read waiting as stasis, instead recasting apparent impasse as productively disruptive to hegemonic temporality. A timely and important work.”

6. ORGANIZING LESSONS: IMMIGRANT ATTACKS AND RESISTANCE! (COMMUNITY INNOVATORS LAB)

Jose Z. Calderon, professor emeritus of sociology and Chicanx/Latina/o studies at Pitzer, and Victor Narro, UCLA Labor Center project director, have released a collection of essays from labor activists and activist scholars working for immigrant and workers’ rights. The book’s essays articulate how immigration policy relates to larger questions of nation-building, racialization, political participation, and more. Calderon notes how the essays gathered here “draw out lessons on the importance of building multiracial and intersectional solidarity in our immigrant rights, labor, and community-based movements.”

7. NATURAL CONSEQUENCES: INTIMATE ESSAYS FOR A PLANET IN PERIL (CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS)

Char Miller ’75, W.M. Keck Professor of Environmental Analysis and History at Pomona College, presents vignettes and historical interpretations that clearly map out the threats environmental essays that explore the threats of climate change. Miller’s collection features 75 environmental essays that explore the threats of fire, drought, development, and fracking. For acclaimed naturalist writer John N. Maclean, Miller “brings to the task a scholar’s wealth of knowledge about how bad things really are, but he also sounds a note of solace: we can find healthy ways to connect to the planet’s creatures, plants and phenomena like wildland fire, but it comes through coexistence, not domination.”

8. BECAUSE I LOVED YOU (THE WRITE PRESS)

In her debut novel, Donnaldson Brown ’31 presents a moving portrait of star-crossed lovers in East Texas, brought together by their love of horses and torn apart by tragedy and closely guarded secrets. After a span of years has passed, lovers Leni and Caleb meet again, and their old passion reignites. But can their love for one another overcome choices made in the past? Award-winning novelist Mary Morris credits Brown’s book with possessing “an enduring power … that traverses decades and takes many forms” even as the characters’ lives take them in different directions.

9. NOW DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOU ARE (ALGONQUIN PRESS)

Pomona College Professor of Environmental Analysis and History at Pomona College, presents vignettes and historical interpretations that clearly map out the threats environmental essays that explore the threats of climate change. Miller’s collection features 75 environmental essays that explore the threats of fire, drought, development, and fracking. For acclaimed naturalist writer John N. Maclean, Miller “brings to the task a scholar’s wealth of knowledge about how bad things really are, but he also sounds a note of solace: we can find healthy ways to connect to the planet’s creatures, plants and phenomena like wildland fire, but it comes through coexistence, not domination.”

10. FORAGER: FIELD NOTES ON SURVIVING A FAMILY CULT (ALGONQUIN PRESS)

In Forager: Field Notes on Surviving a Family Cult, Michelle Dowell ’30 describes her childhood growing up in a cult called the Field and later on a 16-acre plot she calls the Mountain in the Angeles National Forest. Dowell’s recasting apparent impasse as productively disruptive to hegemonic temporality. A timely and important work.”
Zander Sprague ’93 suffered an irreparable loss when his sister Lucy was murdered, and he didn’t want to further burden his parents with his pain as they dealt with their own grief. In Why Don’t They Cry? Sprague uses his own personal experiences and passion toward sibling survivors to provide insights for parents who wish to seek reconnection with their surviving children. He sheds light on the sufferings of many sibling survivors, whose grief is often eclipsed by the grief of their parents.

12. Seaweed Rising (Sandstone Press)
Move over, H.G. Wells. In Bob Magnusson Smith’s ’93 novel Seaweed Rising, the human race faces another alien threat long hidden on earth and waiting for the right time to strike. Unlike Wells’ Martians, these sentinels beings hide beneath the sea, and only an amateur seaweed collector seems to recognize the signs of their ominous presence. A senior lecturer in creative writing at the University of Exeter, Smith’s previous novels include the lyrical The Graveyard and the darkly comic Scorper. His publisher describes Seaweed Rising as a genre-bending existential addition to Smith’s body of work, taking readers “from a Cornish fishing village to the Spanish coast up to the blinding glacial landscapes of the Arctic” in a tale in which “human society falls under the microscope.”

13. Speak How This Charm (Jacobian Press)
In her fourth poetry collection, Deborah Bogen ’72 creates what her publisher calls “a mosaic from states of mind we all experience, but are trained to ignore, or forget, or devalue. She records what is visible and what...” Speak How This Charm presents an exploration of grief, trauma, and vulnerability with a series of concise and moving poems that share a common length of one to three paragraphs, none longer than a page. Each poem stacks on the others in a pattern suggestive of building blocks, resulting in a tapestry of meditations on the many ways that mortality impacts us all.

14. We Are a Haunting: A Novel (Astra House)
Described by NPR as “an absolute triumph,” Tyrick White’s ’13 debut novel We Are a Haunting introduces us to Colly, a high school student who can communicate with the dead—especially his mother Key, whose sudden death leaves him drifting in a perpetual state of confusion and grief. The media director of Lamplight Lit, a literary foundation which seeks to provide mutual aid and various resources to Black writers, White tells a story that switches between Colly and Key’s viewpoints as the son struggles to bring the creature back from extinction. The Christian Science Monitor calls Ausubel’s novel “a wild and woolly global escapade about unbound scientific experimentation. Yet what comes into sharp focus under her authorial microscope are mother-daughter and sister relationships.”

15. The Elissas: Three Girls, One Fate and the Secret Loyalities of Suburbia (Legacy Lit)
The “Troubled Teen Industry” is the target of this poignant book that combines sociology and memoir by author-editors at-large Samantha Leach ’15. That industry preys on young people eager to emulate celebrities like Paris Hilton and Kim Kardashian in order to win popularity with their peers despite the dangers and suffering involved. One example is Leach’s childhood friend Elissa, a wealthy suburban teen who cultivated a rebellious, promiscuous self-image and eventually spent time in several therapeutic boarding schools before her death at 18. Leach captures the societal pressures facing these girls and the insidious conditions in which the institutions supposedly trying to save them.

16. Building Culturally Responsive Partnerships Among Schools, Families, and Communities (Teachers College Press)
Schools alone can’t help our children navigate an increasingly complicated world, networks and collaborations among many groups provide a better chance for what students will need in the years ahead. That’s an argument showcased in this new book co-edited by Susan Warren ’78. Alternative to the practice of ‘bake sale’ fundraising that is harming Vietnam’s bear population. In October 2012, the group hosted a launch party to celebrate printing 1,200 copies of Herbal Recipes for Health Improvement with alternative treatments to animal medicine.

17. The Last Animal: A Novel (Overhead Books)
Famed British chemist Rosalind Franklin isn’t the only female scientist ever to get a raw deal and have her contributions overlooked. In Ramona Ausubel’s ’11 novel, we meet Jane, a single mom, widow, and scientist who is irritated at being “twice as capable and half as appreciated” as the other members of UC Berkeley’s paleontology lab. The novel opens during a summer expedition in Siberia, where Jane and her group are searching for woolly mammoth bones and hoping to extract DNA that might be used to one day bring the creature back from extinction. The Christian Science Monitor calls Ausubel’s novel “a wild and woolly global escapade about unbound scientific experimentation. Yet what comes into sharp focus under her authorial microscope are mother-daughter and sister relationships.”

18. We Are a Haunting: A Novel
In his latest tale for readers grades five and older, Zach Weinersmith ’03 pays obvious homage to the TV show/saga with this graphic novel about a quirky struggle between a band of child warriors and a menacing adult who lays siege to their treeshouse fortress. “Listen to the lives of the long-ago kids, the world fighters, the parent-unminding kids, the improper, the politelessness,” Weinersmith writes. The protagonist is an allusion to a mock-heroic style to this story set somewhere in American suburbia. This group of wild children celebrates the joys of life, the silly things, and their revoltingly joyless Mr. Grindle, whose withering touch can instantly turn children into grown-ups. With illustrations by French artist Boulet, Weinersmith has created a book that offers “a gensely comic, rapid-fire epic that honors the original’s intricate linguistic constructions.”

PROTECTING THE BEARS OF VIETNAM

Pitzer alumni research has resulted in an herbal recipe book with a special purpose

FRESHLY DRIED SAND GINGER SLICES. A CRYSTALLINE BOTTLE OF NICE LIQUOR. PUT THEM TOGETHER 12 DAYS, AND YOU HAVE AN AROMATIC GINGER ESSENTIAL OIL THAT CAN MELT THE SORE STIFFNESS IN YOUR ARTHRITIC JOINTS. THIS MASSAGE ALCOHOL—A POTENT EXAMPLE OF HERBS’ HEALING PROPERTIES—HAS THE POTENTIAL TO RESCUE THE ASIATIC BLACK BEARS OF VIETNAM.

In collaboration with Pitzer and Claremont Colleges alumni, Animals Asia, the Traditional Acupuncture Society of Vietnam, and the Vietnam Association of Lawyers, and The Rick and Susan Songtong Center for Collaborative Creativity (The Hive) published a book of local women’s herbal remedies such as the aromatic ginger massage oil: this book presents an alternative to the practice of bear bile farming that is harming Vietnam’s bear population. In October 2012, the group hosted a launch party to celebrate printing 1,200 copies of Herbal Recipes for Health Improvement with alternative treatments to animal medicine.

The Phu Quoc region is one of the last hotspots of bear farmers in Vietnam. Bear farmers extract bile from Asiatic black bears’ gallbladders to treat inflammatory, liver, and degenerative ailments. The nonprofit Animals Asia partnered with the Hive—a hub for creative innovation at The Claremont Colleges—to use human-centered design to empower and collaborate with Phung Thuong residents to explore herbal alternatives in ways that resonated with the community.

“Using human-centered design with Animals Asia turned out to be one of the most transformative experiences of my life,” said Pitzer alum Lena Tran ’14, who was on the Hive’s 2012 cohort for this project.

“From co-designing with community members to prototyping ideas for collective care, I learned how to advocate for community voices, facilitate creative problem solving, and ultimately leverage design for social change,” said Tran. Students such as Tran worked on various projects and eventually prototyped herbal remedies book highlighting recipes from older village women. The Hive’s three research teams in Vietnam included four Pitzer alumni—Tran, Kimberly Ha ’18, Mai Nguyen ’19, and Olivia Hewitt ’22—as well as other Claremont Colleges alumni.

Learn more about the project on vietherb.org.
GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS
New Scholarship Targets the Unexpected Financial Challenges Affecting Many Students

The adage that the “best-laid plans often go awry” applies not just to college students’ academic plans, but to their financial ones, too. A group of alumnae from the Sixties have announced the launch of a new scholarship to address the unexpected crises that often threaten to upend a student’s undergraduate career. The new Provost Pateri Endowed Scholarship fund will provide additional support for students who have experienced a sudden unexpected challenge to their family’s circumstances—for example, a loss of employment or the death of a family member—that can drastically affect their ability to continue at Pitzer.

“Not every student’s undergraduate years are smooth and unaffected,” said Pitzer Trustee Louise Thornton ’68, “and my classmates and I recognized this and wanted to do something tangible to address it.” Pitzer sophomores through seniors will be eligible for the new scholarship, which will become available once the endowment is complete. Support is being sought in the form of gifts of cash, stock, donor-advised funds, and other planned giving vehicles involving bequests. Fundraising is already off to a solid start with a significant planned gift for the endowment.

Specific levels of funding for student applicants will be determined on an individual basis and all applicants will be reviewed annually. An important feature of the Provost Pateri Scholarship is that it won’t affect a student’s previously determined financial aid package. In other words, the Scholarship is that it won’t affect a student’s undergraduate career.

The new scholarship will provide extra help for students who have had a sudden unexpected change in their family’s financial circumstances.

The new scholarship will provide extra help for students who have had a sudden unexpected change in their family’s financial circumstances.

A Changing of the Guard

Changing the world doesn’t mean leaving behind one’s alma mater. Many alumni go back to Pitzer in many ways—with their time, talent, or treasure—and earlier this summer the alumni board announced members and leadership. These two-year posts give members a chance to represent alumni interests on the Pitzer College Board of Trustees and has successfully overseen all pillars and committees of the board. Cunningham has overseen all pillars and committees of the board. Cunningham has been a board member since 2020 and serves as a senior partner in the New Orleans office of Jones Walker LLP, where he co-leads the firm’s Corporate Compliance and White Collar Defense Team.

Cunningham is joined by Derric Johnson ’95, race and justice chair, a newly created role to support alumni engagement by identifying and activating alumni in support of the College’s social justice programs and efforts. Jacee Pasillas ’17, reunion chair, who is also a newly created role to help advance reunion giving efforts and increase alumni engagement through volunteerism and alumni weekend participation, and Alumni Board Secretary Elijah Pantoja, who has taken over this role from Pasillas.

Words with Power

“You are what you say, so don’t say what you do, until you do what you say.”

These words are from a poem by Grammy-nominated spoken word poet Sekou Andrews ’94, winner of the 2023 Distinguished Alumni Award. Andrews returned to campus along with Young Alumni Award recipient Keila Budech ’14, a community builder who is an equity practitioner) for this year’s awards dinner held during Alumni Weekend 2023. Andrews didn’t just thank the audience for his award; he gave them an electrifying performance that showed why he’s an acclaimed voice in the world of spoken word poetry. It was a thrill to honor him and Budech for their impactful work at our first in-person Alumni Weekend since 2019.

Lines like the one above from Andrew’s poetry are true of the entire Pitzer alumni community. Many generations of alumni started out as students with dreams of social change and went on, as Andrews says, to do what they are as changemakers and social justice warriors.

Aldo Phillips ’04

Elijah Pantoja ’18

Mark Cunningham ’89 P’25

Diana Bob ’92

Derric Johnson ’95

Jacee Pasillas ’17

New officers are Mark Cunningham ’89 P’25, who takes over the reins as board president from Diana Bob ’92. Bob has represented alumni interests on the Pitzer College Board of Trustees and has successfully overseen all pillars and committees of the board. Cunningham has been a board member since 2020 and serves as a senior partner in the New Orleans office of Jones Walker LLP, where he co-leads the firm’s Corporate Compliance and White Collar Defense Team.

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Changing the world doesn’t mean leaving behind one’s alma mater. Many alumni go back to Pitzer in many ways—with their time, talent, or treasure—and earlier this summer the alumni board announced members and leadership. These two-year posts give members a chance to represent alumni voices on campus as well as with the alumni community at large in meaningful ways.

New members are Jai Phillips ’02, a senior program officer of youth development at the California Community Foundation, and Elijah Pantoja ’18, former director of digital communications and analytics at Pomona College who previously supported Pitzer’s Annual Giving office.

Words with Power

“You are what you say, so don’t say what you do, until you do what you say.”

These words are from a poem by Grammy-nominated spoken word poet Sekou Andrews ’94, winner of the 2023 Distinguished Alumni Award. Andrews returned to campus along with Young Alumni Award recipient Keila Budech ’14, a community builder who is an equity practitioner) for this year’s awards dinner held during Alumni Weekend 2023. Andrews didn’t just thank the audience for his award; he gave them an electrifying performance that showed why he’s an acclaimed voice in the world of spoken word poetry. It was a thrill to honor him and Budech for their impactful work at our first in-person Alumni Weekend since 2019.

Lines like the one above from Andrew’s poetry are true of the entire Pitzer alumni community. Many generations of alumni started out as students with dreams of social change and went on, as Andrews says, to do what they are as changemakers and social justice warriors.

Aldo Phillips ’04

Elijah Pantoja ’18

Mark Cunningham ’89 P’25

Diana Bob ’92

Derric Johnson ’95

Jacee Pasillas ’17

New officers are Mark Cunningham ’89 P’25, who takes over the reins as board president from Diana Bob ’92. Bob has represented alumni interests on the Pitzer College Board of Trustees and has successfully overseen all pillars and committees of the board. Cunningham has been a board member since 2020 and serves as a senior partner in the New Orleans office of Jones Walker LLP, where he co-leads the firm’s Corporate Compliance and White Collar Defense Team.

Cunningham is joined by Derric Johnson ’95, race and justice chair, a newly created role to support alumni engagement by identifying and activating alumni in support of the College’s social justice programs and efforts. Jacee Pasillas ’17, reunion chair, who is also a newly created role to help advance reunion giving efforts and increase alumni engagement through volunteerism and alumni weekend participation, and Alumni Board Secretary Elijah Pantoja, who has taken over this role from Pasillas.

The new scholarship will provide extra help for students who have had a sudden unexpected change in their family’s financial circumstances.

A Changing of the Guard

Changing the world doesn’t mean leaving behind one’s alma mater. Many alumni go back to Pitzer in many ways—with their time, talent, or treasure—and earlier this summer the alumni board announced members and leadership. These two-year posts give members a chance to represent alumni voices on campus as well as with the alumni community at large in meaningful ways.

New members are Jai Phillips ’02, a senior program officer of youth development at the California Community Foundation, and Elijah Pantoja ’18, former director of digital communications and analytics at Pomona College who previously supported Pitzer’s Annual Giving office.

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You’re Invited
Alumni are invited back to campus Oct. 20 to celebrate the installation ceremony for Strom C. Thacker, seventh president of Pitzer College. Many Pitzer alumni had a chance to meet President Thacker during a special mimosa brunch this spring, a casual occasion that gave everyone a chance to learn more about his vision for the College. We will formally welcome President Thacker as a member of the Pitzer community with a special ceremony. Alumni are invited to attend: more updates and information will be coming soon.

Stay Connected with Pitzer
There are many ways to keep up with your alma mater. One simple way is to visit www.pitzer.edu/alumni for information on alumni news and upcoming events. Another is to watch out for Connections, our regular monthly newsletter for Pitzer’s alumni community. You can also reach out for help at engagement@pitzer.edu or contact Shannon Spaccarelli (pictured), senior director for Alumni & Family Engagement and Annual Giving, and the entire alumni engagement team.

CLASS NOTES ARE AVAILABLE ONLY VIA THE PRINT ISSUE OF PARTICIPANT.
IN MEMORIAM

Peggy Shepherd Hedrick ’72
Sociology and German

A longtime lawyer and advocate for women’s rights, Peggy Hedrick passed away in January after a long battle with Alzheimer’s Disease. She was 77.

Born in Lake City, Iowa, Hedrick was the daughter of a U.S. Army major and a self-described Army brat. She attended 13 schools before graduating high school. She met and married her husband of 67 years, Charles, while he was on active duty in Munich, Germany. Hedrick studied sociology and German at Pitzer before going on to obtain two law degrees from the University of La Verne and the Benjamin Cardozo School of Law, Yeshiva University. In 1981, she was admitted to the Missouri Bar.

Hedrick was an advocate for underrepresented groups. She was the first woman to run for circuit judge in Missouri's Greene County and served as a member of the League of Women Voters and chair of the Board of Directors of the Springfield Council of Churches. According to a tribute posted on the website of The United States Army Chaplain Corps Regimental Association, Hedrick was a defender of the LGBTQ community “before LGBTQ was a term” and created “a method for same gender couples to establish and protect their families.”

Hedrick is survived by her husband, Charles; sister Betty Bouris and brother Everett Shepherd; her children Charles, Janet, and Lois; and by an extended family including her grandchildren, great-grandchildren, many cousins, nieces, and nephews.

Jeffry Smith ’79
History

A member of the clergy in the Episcopal Church whose ministry eventually took him to England, Jeffry Smith passed away last November after a fight against renal cancer. He was 66.

Born in Inglesud, Calif., the son of schoolteachers, Smith attended Claremont High School before attending Pitzer College and the Church Divinity School of the Pacific. Smith was ordained as an Episcopal deacon in 1986 and as a priest in 1987 whose ministry began at St. Paul’s in Vivalia and would take him and his family to several church postings in England, Bermuda, and Scotland.

His daughter Melissa wrote in a tribute in The Guardian that Smith “looked beyond the parish; meeting and connecting with people from different backgrounds and traveling the world. He visited and served at St. Mary the Virgin, Belgrade, Serbia. Invited by a friend from Malawi, he traveled there for a month of teaching and preaching. He raised funds to build a school in Kenya. He often walked long-distance routes, including the Pilgrim’s Way from Winchester to Canterbury, the Camino from Porto, Portugal, to Santiago de Campostela, Spain, and the route to the Black Madonna icon of Częstochowa, Poland.”

Smith is survived by his wife Barbara, daughters Laura and Melissa, and grandchildren Thomas, Naomi, Anna-María, Lydia and Ezra.

James A. Joseph
Former Chaplain, The Claremont Colleges

A former Claremont Colleges chaplain, an adviser to four presidents, an ambassador to South Africa, and a lifelong fighter for equality and social justice, James A. Joseph passed away in February. He was 88.

After finishing Yale Divinity school, in 1963, Joseph moved to Tuscaloosa, Ala., to be on the faculty and dean of students at Stillman College, a member of the nation’s network of historically black colleges and universities. Joseph became a leader in the civil rights movement and after a year with violent demonstrations and bomb threats around Tuscaloosa, Joseph sought a safer place for his young family.

In 1964, Joseph moved to Claremont and became the chaplain for Pitzer and the other Claremont Colleges. Joseph forged a strong bond with students from Pitzer College and co-founded a local group leading protests and sit-ins during the height of the civil rights movement in the Claremont-Pomona area.

Joseph taught classes at Pitzer and connected with students including Sara Wood Smith ’66, who wanted to learn more about civil rights issues for Black people in the U.S. Smith said that Joseph was instrumental in helping arrange a visiting student program so that she could spend a life-changing semester at Stillman College in the spring of 1965. Joseph left Claremont and began a decades-long commitment to developing philanthropy that addressed the needs of people underrepresented in having access to generational wealth.

Victoria Weber ’69
Art History

A longtime law librarian with a particular interest in environmental affairs and issues, Victoria Weber passed away last December in her Bethel, Vt., home. She was 75.

Born in 1947, Weber attended Abbott Academy in Massachusetts before receiving a bachelor’s degree in art history at Pitzer College and a master’s degree in library science from Simmons College in Massachusetts. For 27 years Weber served as a law librarian at the Vermont Law School in South Royalton. During her tenure there she held several positions, including environmental reference librarian, which enabled her to create a special collection and train people in accessing environmental information in various formats.

As an undergraduate at Pitzer College Weber met longtime partner and future husband, Davis Dimock; they settled on his family’s Vermont property and later married in 2020. In retirement Weber was a committed member of the Hardy Plant Club of Northern Vermont and a devoted enthusiast of gardening and herbal medicines.

Weber is survived by her husband Davis and sister Jun Porter Weber.
Editor’s note: In a 1993 interview, the College’s founding president John W. Atherton reflected on his experiences as president during the creation of Pitzer’s governance structure. These remarks have been adapted from interview notes and cast in an essay format.

The mandate for the establishment of Pitzer within The Claremont Colleges was to create a new women’s college with an emphasis on the social and behavioral sciences. It was the ’60s, the time of the Berkeley riots; students were beginning to demand greater involvement in their own education. I loved Claremont Men’s (McKenna) College; I loved working there, and George Benson was a wonderful person to work with. But the structure of the college—as with the others in Claremont—was hierarchical. There was not much interaction among students, faculty, and the administration and the board. I wanted to have all members of the community—trustees, faculty, staff, and students—involved in making real decisions. As dean of the faculty at CMC, I tried to use as much faculty input as possible. Problems were much easier to resolve than when a decree is issued to a department from the dean.

In terms of its participatory approach to governance, Pitzer is most distinctive. At the time we began, the members of the American Association of Colleges were exploring ways of increasing the meaningful input of students. They never got very far; the colleges were too conservative, and the faculties weren’t too interested in sharing power with students.

A new president has the greatest leeway in shaping the new college through the selection of the first faculty. The original faculty was receptive, young, and open for participation. I hired instructors and assistant professors in the social sciences; they were ready for experiment, ready to try something new. The first faculty were young, feisty, excited; anxious to be part of a new college where they could come in and create their own courses and curriculum. In their turn they tended to recruit teachers like themselves.

I like activism. I like the prospect of people rocking the boat. There was always something going on on campus. For example, on the question of going co-ed, the faculty and students thought it was crazy for a college in the social sciences to admit women only. There was much excited discussion among all of us—faculty, students, trustees. We set up a special committee with everyone represented to consider the question. When we became co-ed in 1970, we were all in agreement. There was no trouble with the board. It took seven years and plenty of debate, but it worked. In general, the participatory process demands a tremendous amount of time from everyone involved. Pitzer could never have survived if it hadn’t been part of The Claremont Colleges. The other colleges were coming closer to the same model, but they didn’t change their structures; they didn’t really try to incorporate students, faculty, administration, and trustees into active committees. The reputation and conventional structure of the other colleges in Claremont enabled Pitzer to take the risk of being “experimental.”

Pitzer’s Provida Futuri Society honors those who are making planned gifts to ensure that the College continues to thrive.

Provida Futuri or “mindful of the future” is Pitzer’s motto. It describes the thoughtful approach of many who have made a financial gift in support of Pitzer’s students and mission. Planned gifts are a highly effective way to create future income for yourself while also designating a future beneficiary of your estate plans.

Q: Who can join the Provida Futuri Society?
A: Anyone who includes Pitzer in their estate plans is eligible.

Q: How will these gifts be used by the College?
A: Planned gifts continue to fund many important areas, including:
• student scholarships
• academic programs
• laboratories
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• professorships

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For more on the impact of John and Virginia Atherton at Pitzer, read the special Participant issue from 2012 dedicated to their contributions at www.pitzer.edu/participant
SAVE THE DATE

The Inauguration of the Seventh President of Pitzer College

STROM C. THACKER

Friday, October 20, 2023