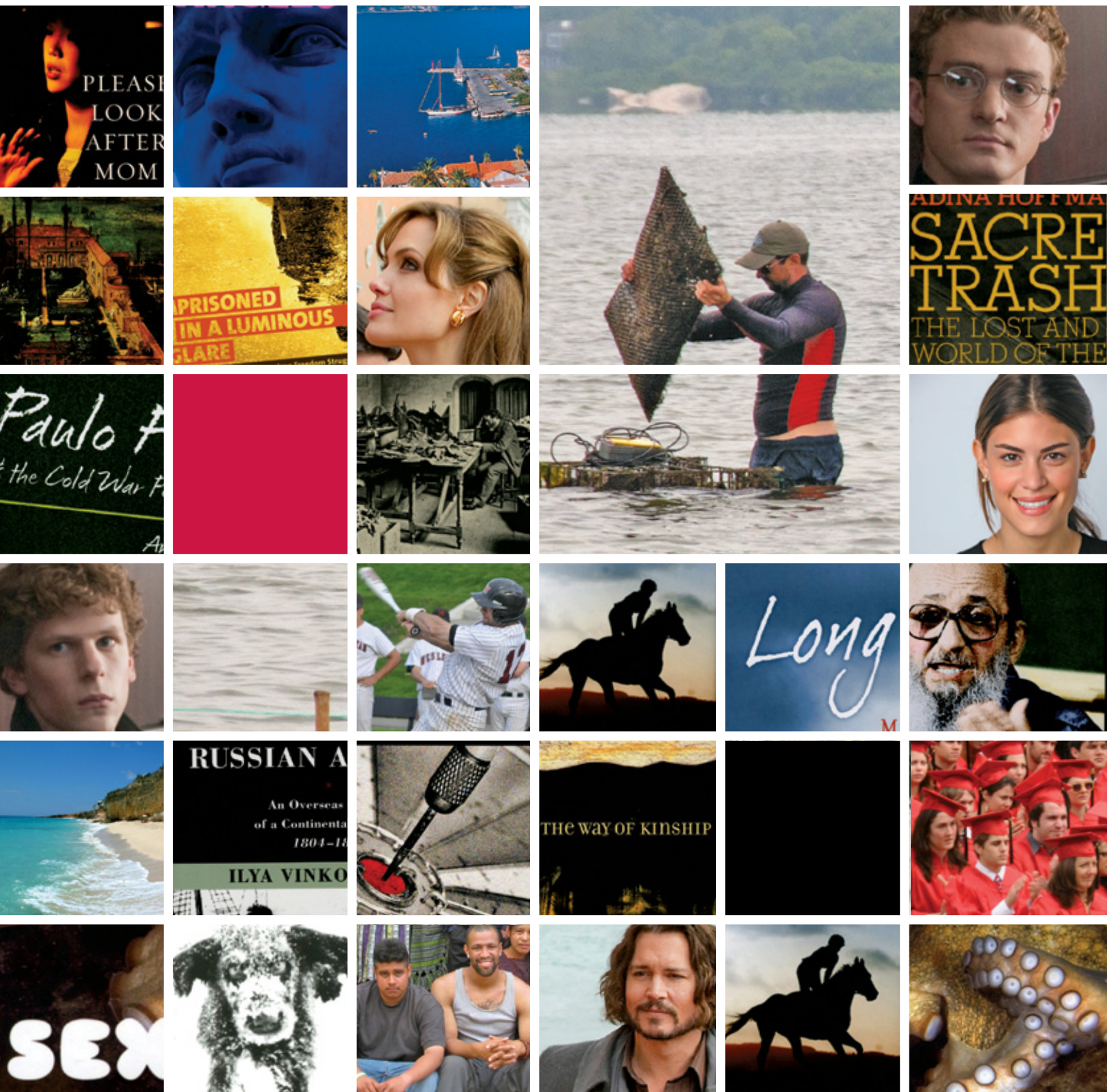


UPFRONT



PRESIDENT'S LETTER BY MICHAEL S. ROTH '78

I am spending a good part of the summer off campus, doing research for a book on why liberal education matters. Recently I've been reading Thomas Jefferson and also some of his contemporaries. The political importance of education has rarely found as powerful a proponent as Jefferson, one of whose proudest achievements was founding the University of Virginia on a model of liberal learning that is ultimately practical. His friend and political rival John Adams was also a stalwart proponent of the importance of an educated citizenry. At the dawn of the Republic Adams, too, knew that only through education could citizens ensure that their government would remain responsive to their needs. As he wrote to Jefferson: "Wherever a general knowledge and sensibility have prevailed among the people...arbitrary government and every kind of oppression have lessened and disappeared in proportion."

Jefferson was a man of the Enlightenment, and for him this meant faith that the accumulation of knowledge would improve public and private life. His conception of "useful knowledge" was capacious—extending from an array of languages to mathematics, sciences and history. He wrote: "Education generates habits of application, of order, and the love of virtue; and controls, by the force of habit, any innate obliquities in our moral organization." The experience of undergraduates at Wesleyan, as we all know, doesn't at all points stimulate the habits of moral organization that the author of the Declaration of Independence had in mind. But don't we still hope that our students acquire a love of virtue, even as they discover through hard work and sociability just what "love" and "virtue" might mean?

Of course, we have grown accustomed to criticizing problematic aspects of the Enlightenment worldview of our nation's founders. Jefferson's hypocrisy is legendary; his insight into structures of oppression didn't disturb his own personal tyrannies. If our third president understood that education was inexorably linked to the possibility

At Wesleyan, we aggressively look for "worth and genius" in all areas of the country so as to create a diverse cohort of students who will stimulate learning for and from one another.

of freedom, his racism and sexism led him to think that women, Africans, or native peoples should not enjoy that possibility.

But this summer, as I listen to the partisan haggling over the debt ceiling in Washington while the epidemic of unemployment rages on, and as I hear about school districts and university systems across the country slashing budgets and cutting back on educational programs, I read Jefferson with renewed energy and engagement. As Representatives in 2011 labor to preserve the tax advantages of multi-millionaires, I read how Jefferson recognized that a sure way to preserve the privileges of wealth is to curtail educational opportunity for those without them. In his proposal for public education in Virginia, he advocated a system for discovering youngsters with talent who would benefit from

scholarships so that they could pursue their studies and serve the public at the highest level. He proposed that "worth and genius would thus have been sought out from every condition of life, and completely prepared by education for defeating the competition of wealth and birth for public trusts." In our own time, with school districts shortening their academic calendars to save money and universities struggling to replace financial aid support once provided by government, we are undermining the hope for change and improvement that is so essential to both learning and democracy. What will become of this nation if it turns its back on the promise of education as a vehicle for social and economic mobility?

At Wesleyan, we aggressively look for "worth and genius" in all areas of the country so as to create a diverse cohort of students who will stimulate learning for and from one another. Through programs like Questbridge and with many community-based organizations as partners, we find young men and women who can thrive in and contribute to our campus community. We do this so that every student at Wesleyan benefits, not just those who come to us through these programs. Many of our graduates, disproportionate to our numbers as Wesleyan President Victor Butterfield used to say, go on to contribute to the public good—using their education to engage with the world in positive, meaningful ways. I believe we do this, to paraphrase Jefferson, because education became the keystone of the arch of our lives.

These words from a letter of Jefferson to Adams seem just right for Wesleyan. May we be worthy of them!

We shall have our follies without doubt. Some one or more of them will always be afloat. But ours will be the follies of enthusiasm, not of bigotry. . . . Bigotry is the disease of ignorance, of morbid minds; enthusiasm of the free and buoyant. Education and free discussion are the antidotes of both. We are destined to be a barrier against the returns of ignorance and barbarism. UPFRONT

COMMENCEMENT 2011: CELEBRATING SERVICE AND LIBERAL ARTS



Farmer was one of five people who received honorary doctorates: Broadway singer Barbara Nell Cook; Alberto Ibargüen '66 P'97, CEO of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation; and community service leaders and friends of the university Jean Adams Shaw P'79 and Ralph "Biff" H. Shaw II '51, P'79.

Robert Patricelli '61 P'88 P'90 and Margaret Sweetland Patricelli were awarded the Raymond E. Baldwin Medal. Named for the late Judge Raymond E. Baldwin '16, the medal is the highest honor Wesleyan's alumni body presents for extraordinary service to Wesleyan or for careers and other activities which have contributed significantly to the public good.

Also on Denison Terrace, 719 students received Bachelor of Arts degrees; 45 were awarded a Master of Arts in Liberal Studies; 35 were granted a Master of Arts; and 14 received Doctor of Philosophy degrees.

In his address to the Class of 2011, President Michael S. Roth '78 saluted the graduates and the honorary degree recipients, and spoke of the advantages of a Wesleyan education and a liberal arts degree.

"At Wesleyan we understand the sciences to be a vital part of the liberal arts and not just pre-professional training. The key to our success in the future will be an integrative education that doesn't isolate the sciences

from other parts of the curriculum, and that doesn't shield the so-called creative and interpretive fields from a vigorous understanding of the problems addressed by scientists. Interdisciplinary science programs are among our fastest growing majors, and initiatives linking the sciences, arts, and humanities have been areas of intense creative work. Students and professors aren't crossing departmental boundaries in order to be fashionably interdisciplinary. They join forces to address specific problems or in pursuit of particular opportunities."

Roth also said that those calling for an increased focus on math or science at the expense of the liberal arts, all in the name of national competitiveness, are ultimately making a grave error.

"Around the country, the retreat from liberal learning in the name of a more efficient, practical college education is likely to lead to the opposite: men and women who are trained for yesterday's problems and yesterday's jobs, men and women who have not reflected on their own lives in ways that allow them to tap into their capacities for innovation and for making meaning out of their experience. Under the guise of 'practicality' we are really hearing calls for conformity, calls for conventional thinking that will impoverish our economic, cultural and personal lives."

For more information and photos, please see <http://newsletter.blogs.wesleyan> and search for 179th Commencement. **UPFRONT**

"When you are discouraged, stop and think about Rwanda's recovery ... or some other evidence of the value of persistence and knowledge and solidarity and connection; think about the friendships you've made here and draw on them," Dr. Paul Farmer told the Wesleyan Class of 2011, their families, faculty, and guests at the 179th Commencement Ceremonies on Wesleyan's Andrus Field on Sunday, May 22, 2011. "I know the world can be a troubled place, but I look out over this crowd and know that the future is in good hands."

Throughout his address, Farmer pointed to the importance of service and dealing with adversity, and the spirit always to move forward in such pursuits.

Farmer, a physician-anthropologist and author, founded Partners in Health, an international nonprofit organization that provides direct health care services to the sick living in poverty. Farmer is also the Kolokotronis University Professor and Chair of the Department of Global Health and Social Medicine at Harvard Medical School; Chief of the Division of Global Health Equity at Brigham and Women's Hospital; and was the United Nations Deputy Special Envoy for Haiti under former U.S. President Bill Clinton.



Margot Boyer-Dry '11 delivered the Senior Commencement Address, talking about a phrase she heard during her first year on campus: "Keep Wesleyan Weird." What she found over her four years wasn't a culture that was odd but, rather, singular: "So in the end it turns out that, what some have taken for Wesleyan students' weirdness is actually our capacity to follow our bliss ... and our aptitudes, and our principles. The space that Wesleyan makes for us to develop that capacity is, in part, what makes this environment singular. Throughout these past years, I have reflected on how lucky I am—how lucky we all are—to be able to watch those around us do what they feel they need to do. It is a gift to watch all of you dance, speak, write, play, and simply be; it has been a gift for us all to be together."

COMMENCEMENT PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN VAN VLECK



Also noted in the ceremony was the retirement of **Henry Abelow**, the Willbur Fisk Osborne Professor of English; **Judith C. Brown**, professor of history; **Ann DuCille**, professor of English; **Charles Lemert**, the John C. Andrus Professor of Social Theory; **Alvin Lucier**, the John Spencer Camp Professor of Music; and **Russell Davis Murphy**, professor of government.

The Binswanger Prize for Excellence in Teaching was awarded to **Wai Kiu Chan**, associate professor of mathematics (second from right); **Scott Higgins**, associate professor of film studies (absent from photo); and **Scott L. Plous**, professor of psychology (second from left). Chair of the Alumni Association **Michael Klingher '78** presented the awards from the Alumni Association and President Roth (right) offered his congratulations.

PATTON NAMED ALAN M. DACHS PROFESSOR OF SCIENCE

OLIVIA DRAKE



Peter Patton, professor of Earth and Environmental Sciences, has been appointed the first Alan M. Dachs Professor of Science, currently housed in the College of the Environment.

The endowed chair was created with the generous support of Alan Dachs '70, P'98, chair emeritus of the Board of Trustees.

"I am delighted that Peter Patton will be the first to hold the Alan M. Dachs Chair in the Natural Sciences," says Dachs. "It is only fitting that a scientist and teacher of his caliber should be recognized in this way. Wesleyan, and science at Wesleyan, have always come first in Peter's professional life. He epitomizes the very best Wesleyan has to offer."

Patton has taught at Wesleyan since 1976, making substantial contributions as chair of Earth and Environmental Sciences, as interim director of Information Technology Services, through twice serving as Interim Dean of the College, and by serving as vice president and secretary of the university for 10 years through 2008. He has served on numerous university committees including the 1994–1995 and 2007–2008 presidential search committees, and he led Wesleyan's reaccreditation processes in 2002 and 2007.

He is lead or co-author of more than 40 publications, co-editor of *Flood Geomorphology* (Wiley, 1988), and author with J.M. Kent of *A Moveable Shore: The Fate of the Connecticut Coast* (Duke University

Press, 1992). He has served on editorial boards for the Geological Society of America, has served as referee for numerous journals and granting agencies, won 17 grants and awards for his research, co-convened three geology symposia, and is regularly invited to serve on NSF panels, external review committees for geology departments, and on accreditation site visits.

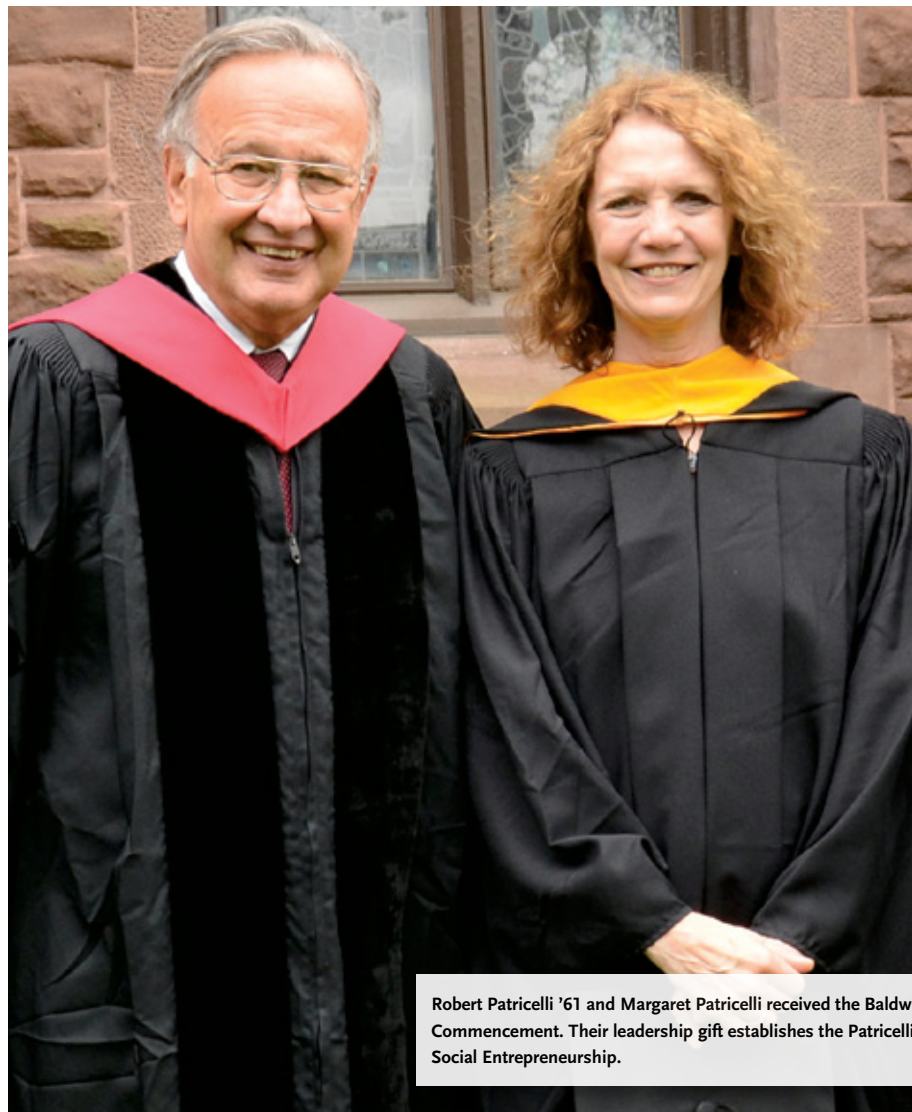
He is an active member of the local community, having served on more than 10 state and local environmental agencies, commissions, chapters, boards, and non-profit organizations, including serving as head of the Middlesex United Way capital campaign in 2001.

He earned his B.A. at Franklin and Marshall College, his M.S. at Colorado State University, and his Ph.D. at the University of

Texas, Austin.

Dachs is president and chief executive officer of the Fremont Group, a private investment company. He is a member of the Board of Directors of Bechtel Group, Inc., and the S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, and a trustee of The Brookings Institution. He is a Fellow at the American Academy of Arts & Sciences, and serves on the corporation visiting committee for the engineering systems division of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the advisory board of the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies at Stanford University.

In 2007, he received an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Wesleyan. He chaired the Development Committee and is currently tri-chair in the quiet phase of the next Wesleyan campaign. **UPFRONT**



JOHN VAN VLECK

Robert Patricelli '61 and Margaret Patricelli received the Baldwin Medal at Commencement. Their leadership gift establishes the Patricelli Center for Social Entrepreneurship.

GIFT ESTABLISHES THE PATRICELLI CENTER FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Wesleyan is establishing the Patricelli Center for Social Entrepreneurship, which will support students who want to create programs and organizations serving the public good—anywhere in the world.

The Patricelli Center and its programs are supported by a generous \$2 million leadership gift from the Robert and Margaret Patricelli Family Foundation. Robert E. Patricelli '61 is chairman and chief executive officer of Evolution Benefits and of Women's Health USA and an emeritus trustee of Wesleyan. Margaret Patricelli is president and CEO of the Robert and Margaret Patricelli Family Foundation.

The Center will provide workshops, speakers, and networking opportunities to help students become successful social entrepreneurs, and will award small grants to undergraduates engaged in specific projects. It is intended to serve as an incubator of ideas and initiatives.

"For generations Wesleyan students have been venturing into the world as social entrepreneurs, applying what they learned on campus to help others," says President Michael S. Roth. "The Patricelli Center will build on this tradition and will prepare students to make an even greater difference in the world. I'm so grateful to Bob and Margaret for their vision and generosity."

The Patricelli Center will draw on Wesleyan's extensive community of alumni and parents who have experience in developing innovative social ventures. Wesleyan's tradition of service includes 225 graduates who have served in the Peace Corps since 1961. Students have also created entrepreneurial ventures, such as Shining Hope for Communities, founded by Wesleyan students to ameliorate conditions in the Kibera slum outside Nairobi.

The Patricellis are donors to Shining Hope for Communities, as well as members of its board, and they credit this experience with boosting their confidence in the power of social entrepreneurship. Robert Patricelli also serves on the board of Newman's Own Foundation, which he described as a well-spring of interesting ideas regarding social entrepreneurship.

"As a business entrepreneur, I've wanted to apply the same instincts for social causes and nonprofits," he says. "Social entrepreneurship fits so naturally with Wesleyan. It's in our DNA."

At Commencement on May 22, the Patricellis received Wesleyan's Raymond E. Baldwin Medal, the highest award of the university's alumni association, given in recognition of service to Wesleyan and careers that have contributed significantly to the public good. **UPFRONT**

NEW TRUSTEES JOIN BOARD



Elizabeth "Beezer" Clarkson '94
(Burlingame, Calif.)

Clarkson is a director at Draper Fisher Jurvetson, a global venture capital firm. She manages the growth and expansion of the DFJ Global Network and serves on the board of ShareThis and the investment committees of DFJ VinaCapital (Vietnam-focused fund) and DFJ JAIC (cross-border US-Japan fund). She previously worked as a business manager at Hewlett-Packard, a management consultant at Towers Perrin, and an investment banker at Morgan Stanley.



Irma V. Gonzalez '78, P'09 (Amherst, Mass.)
Gonzalez has been principal of Zoen Resources since 1995, specializing in change and transition management for foundation and nonprofit clients and focusing on human rights issues including racial justice, gender equity, juvenile justice, LGBT rights, migrants and refugees, and post-9/11 civil liberties.



Hirut M'cleod '00 (White Plains, N.Y.)

M'cleod is an implementation and leadership-coaching consultant at the World Bank Institute (WBI), helping it build and grow its leadership and implementation programs for Asia and Africa. Previously, she worked as a management consultant for Schaffer Consulting and Rapid Results Institute where she provided support to African governments and communities struggling with challenging projects and programs. She received her M.Sc. in development studies from the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies.



David Rosenblum '75 (Los Angeles, Calif.)

Rosenblum is a principal in Deloitte Consulting LLP, where he currently serves as national managing director of consulting corporate development. His professional practice is focused on advising complex organizations with respect to strategy development and execution.



Jeffrey L. Shames '77
(Newton Center, Mass.)

Shames is currently an executive in residence at the MIT Sloan School of Management, where he teaches classes in finance and leadership. He is also a senior adviser to Morgan Stanley, advising on investment management, merchant banking, and global research businesses. He is the retired CEO and chairman of MFS Investment Management. **UPFRONT**

FIVE QUESTIONS WITH

DICK MILLER, the Woodhouse/Sysco Professor of Economics, Emeritus

Q: In the fall, you'll emerge from retirement to teach ECON 127, "Introduction to Financial Accounting," a type of course that's rarely been offered at Wesleyan. Why this course, why now and why you?

A: Our students are at a disadvantage in job interviews and in the first weeks on the job if they do not have some basics. Some of our seniors cannot distinguish a balance sheet from an income statement, and that is a long way from discounted cash flow analysis or cost of capital estimation. I taught a half course in accounting some years ago, and several months ago the department chairman, Gil Skillman, asked me if I would be interested in teaching such a course. I think that this is an opportunity for me to contribute further to the Wesleyan educational enterprise. The Career Advisory



Council, a group of 24 alumni mostly in business and put together by Mike Sciola, Director of the Career Center, has been very encouraging and supportive in our mounting this version of accounting.

Q: More than 70 students have pre-registered for the course. What do you think is driving interest in the subject?

A: Almost certainly the interest comes from students' realization that accounting would be a valuable addition to their resume. And likely they think that the material will be useful not only in careers but in understanding topics in personal finance and in issues reported in the news. And they might expect that accounting is inherently interesting. There might be some parental pressure, also.

Q: How will the way you conduct the course differ from that of a professor at a business school?

A: I will attempt to teach accounting in the liberal arts tradition. I aim to assist students in becoming thoughtful, concerned, informed, responsible, and useful citizens, some of whom will become business executives. I am not trying to turn them into accountants on their way to becoming CPAs. Thus, I feel some freedom in setting the course coverage. For example, I plan not to use one of the large, encyclopedic accounting textbooks. And I plan to include some topics which rely on some knowledge of accounting: for example, the algebra of house mortgages (and the roles of subprime borrowers, mortgage originators, investment banks, Fanny and Freddy, Congress, and government regulators in the recent financial crisis); how to cook the books (Enron); Ponzi schemes (Madoff); present value calculations (DCF) for business investment; and insider trading (Galleon Group). Students should be aware that accounting can be used not only to reflect a firm's finances with reasonable accuracy but also to conceal and mislead.

Q: In retirement you have taken an interest in the recent housing crisis in the United States. This was not a focus of your research as a full-time scholar. What aspect of it fascinates you most and what have you learned?

I have been fascinated by and have learned several aspects of finance from the recent housing crisis.

A: I have been fascinated by and have learned several aspects of finance from the recent housing crisis. Algebra can be a very useful tool in understanding the crisis. My daughter, who teaches secondary school math, and I recently published an article with that goal in mind. Many people, including many economists, did not foresee the coming crisis in the first half of the last decade. Some people (hedge fund investors John Paulson and Michael Burry, among others) did predict the bust and made lots of money. Government regulators and Congress were asleep or uninformed or in an ideological straightjacket. Some Nobel Prize-winning economists did not understand that their mathematical models were the wrong ones. I have come to realize that repair of the system is politically not an easy task. There are too many vested interests, well-paid lobbyists, and Congressmen wanting to be reelected.

Q: You retired from the active faculty in 2006, after teaching at Wesleyan for more than 40 years. What are the perks of emeritus status?

A: The perks include more leisure time to pursue new interests, particularly the financial crisis of the past four years, and to learn a bit about how macroeconomics has not served us well. There are aspects of being in a classroom which I miss; hence I am looking forward to meeting those students in the fall. **UPFRONT**



SCHOLAR

ATHLETE

JULIAN SONNENFELD '11

Julian Sonnenfeld '11 ended his four years on the Wesleyan baseball team with a .377 batting average, 122 RBI, and a .625 slugging percentage, supported by his 17 career homers. He received his third straight nod to the all-NESCAC squad and second year in a row on the first team as the Cardinals' career record-holder for both runs scored (148) and doubles (59) in 2011.

Three times a first-team CoSIDA District I academic All-American, he was also a third-team national academic All-American in 2010, when he hit .418 and led Division III in doubles.

Sonnenfeld graduated Phi Beta Kappa with a double major in biology and Science in Society. He worked in Prof. Gloster Aaron's neuroscience lab, studying epilepsy in mice, and was a teaching assistant in physics and biology for the past two years. He plays jazz and classical piano, enjoys bass and fly fishing, and served as vice president for the Wesleyan chapter of the American Medical Student Association. He will be attending Tufts University School of Medicine this fall.

UPFRONT

BRIAN KATTEN '79

CONVERSATIONS

MICHAEL LYNTON by David Low '76



MATTHEW ROLSTON

Michael Lynton, chairman and chief executive officer of Sony Pictures Entertainment, visited Wesleyan in the spring to talk to students interested in working in the film and television industry at a luncheon arranged by the Wesleyan Career Center. Lynton, who is married to Jamie Alter '81, manages Sony Pictures' overall global operations and spoke to *Wesleyan* magazine about some current trends in the film business.

David Low: What do you think is the most disruptive or interesting change taking place in the film industry now?

Michael Lynton: Two things: On the distribution side, streaming movies is an enormous factor going forward. I don't think it will fundamentally change the business. It may be less or more profitable than the DVD or pay television window. And it will certainly not replace the theater, which is the primary way people initially see movies. But it will definitely be a major factor.

From an artistic standpoint, I think that 3D is probably going to be a hugely defining technology for movies, and from what we've seen to date, there are some movies that have obviously done it with great artistry and great effect. There are others that have been tack-ons done to increase the box office. We're basically at the infancy of what 3D will be in movies.

Martin Scorsese is making his first movie in 3D. Steven Spielberg is making a movie now in 3D. You're going to see directors who embrace it and those who don't. I'm not suggesting that everything will be 3D, but it will definitely change the kinds of movies that are being made and how people see them.

DL: How quickly do you think this is going to happen?

ML: I think it will sneak up on us. Clearly, movies like *Avatar* have defined a certain standard for 3D. I haven't seen Scorsese's movie yet, and I'm intrigued because he is doing live action and that will be entirely different.

DL: Not only is Scorsese doing it, but now *The Great Gatsby* is going to be filmed in 3D by Baz Luhrmann. This is really a shift in direction in terms of dramatic films.

ML: I believe that the aspiration of these directors is to heighten the emotional elements of drama through 3D. We have to see is whether that is the case or not because up until now, the best 3D has been where you immerse yourself in an environment. But it hasn't necessarily added to the dramatic effect of two characters having a conversation or having an emotional relationship with one another, and I think that's another step along the way.

DL: *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, which you developed, may lead to two more movies based on the books. Sony also is involved with the recent James Bond movies. How do you know when you have a project that will work as a franchise?

ML: James Bond is unique in the world of franchises. But franchises have become increasingly important to the studios. Primarily because of the way the economics of the business is set up today, you really need movies that work not just in a big way here in the United States, but also in a big way all over the world. What we have lost in DVD revenue over the last few years, we have to make up in international box office. Fortunately, certain

markets have grown enormously, including Russia and Korea and now China.

It's typically these big franchise movies that do exactly that. Particularly outside the United States, brands are incredibly important—whether those brands are the titles of the movies or the big movie stars. When you have one of them, you never know that it's going to be successful, but at least you have a better shot at it being big.

How do you know whether it's going to be a franchise? I would argue you don't until all of a sudden you have one on your hands. You don't know that something is going to become very big or even midsize until the audience shows up, and you realize that you can make a sequel. We have a couple of midsize franchises, like *Resident Evil* or *Underworld*. *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* is obviously a different case because you've got three hugely popular books sitting there. Presumably, readers are curious to know how those characters are going to be portrayed in the movie.

DL: Would you talk about how Sony got involved with *The Social Network*?

ML: We all fell in love with the script, my partner [co-chairman] Amy Pascal, in particular. It was a difficult one to get our arms around for a lot of reasons. There's no clear sympathetic character. It deals with moral ambiguity clearly. There are multiple truths in the movie, multiple points of view. So you're never sure who is right and who is wrong. You're also working with people who are very much alive today and a phenomenon that's sort of taken over the world.

I think everybody successfully navigated those waters to create a really fine movie with great performances. And the audience found the movie. We marketed the movie, but the movie spoke for itself. The most surprising thing to me was not just the fact that the audience found the movie here domestically, but that they found it in an even bigger way internationally because it's a very talky movie. Right out of the gate, it's nothing but dialogue. And typically any movie that's dialogue heavy and action free is not going to attract an audience outside the United States.

DL: Do you think a film's success today has less to do with big stars than in the past?

ML: Outside the United States—and we had this experience with *The Tourist*—movie stars, the big movie stars who are



genuinely worldwide box office stars, still have enormous appeal and resonance. In this case, Angelina Jolie and Johnny Depp will probably do twice the business outside the United States compared to what we did inside the United States.

I think the universe of people who are genuinely movie stars is quite small. It's probably at most 10 people, or less than that. There was a period when there may have been more or we in Hollywood may have kidded ourselves into believing that there were more.

I think also there are roles that movie stars are great in and that people want to come and see them in. If stars at times decide that they for whatever artistic reason want to try something else, which is not what their audience wants them to do, that audience won't necessarily show up even for an enormous movie star.

DL: What do you think about the role of film studies in liberal arts education?

ML: I would have thought that with the advent of DVDs and the ability for everybody to see anything they want at any time, film literacy would have gone up in the last 10 or 15 years, and quite the opposite is the case. What we find is that young people who are coming to visit us for jobs at the studio are remarkably ignorant about some of the great filmmakers—Hitchcock or Cukor, the list goes on and on and on.

Given the film illiteracy that I'm witnessing among this generation, it's incumbent on liberal arts colleges to teach it. Because what happens now is young people show up in our office or in the office of other studios or various other places around Los Angeles, and the first thing is they're given 100 to 150 movies on DVD and they're told to watch them. People are going to reference these movies when you're developing a script or when you're making a movie and the fact that you don't know these movies, that's just not proper preparation.

I would argue that the liberal arts education is so important because it really does come down to storytelling—to having a narrative. The more stories you've read, whether or not you're a literature major, or the more you know about history, or the more you understand about science, which introduces itself into movies all the time, the better perspective you're going to bring to the process of making movies, or TV shows for that matter. The person who shows up with a really good liberal arts education who can speak intelligently about a lot of different things has enormous assets to bring. **UPFRONT**



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR MICHAEL KLINGHER '78

It might seem like Wesleyan students are happiest in groups—talking, thinking, planning, creating, and going-out-and-doing. The Wesleyan Student Assembly lists more than 300 different clubs and activities, based on service, activism, athletic, artistic and cultural interests. With approximately 2,700 full-time undergraduates on campus, that would give each club an average of nine students in its membership—assuming people were only captivated by one passion and, thus, only belonged to its one club.

Do you remember the first time you met a fellow Wesleyan student who shared your unbridled enthusiasm for experimental music, the availability of unpasteurized milk, examining the U.S. policy of aid to Haiti, or [fill in the blank with the favorite from your memory]? Often, one of the pivotal moments of freshman year is discovering that an interest you have that had seemed arcane—or just plain weird to others—has far wider appeal on campus than you ever could have imagined. Or, if your new Wesleyan classmates didn't know about it, they were eager to learn about it—from you.

And do you remember the challenging level of discourse you found among fellow Wesleyanites? Intellectual curiosity and eagerness to learn are hallmarks of Wesleyan students.

You haven't left these groups behind you at graduation. Those who have attended WESeminars can attest to that.

Now, though, these affinity and discussion groups are as near as your computer, waiting for you on Wesconnect.

To link into these virtual clubs, log into Wesconnect, the new alumni site, and find your peers.

Along with the class year groups, regions, groups, and alumni-of-color networks, you'll find the Shared Interest Groups. At the end of June, alumni had formed 30 or so groups: The College of Social Studies, Friends of Wesleyan Football, Medieval House, Digital Media, A Cappella, and Wesleyan Alumni in Philanthropy and Public Service, among others.

We all know our interests are wider than that, and we're waiting for you to start the

next "hot" group. Haven't you wanted to discuss recycling with a Wesleyan perspective—or learn about letting your lawn go "back to nature"? How about creating art quilts with a punk ethos? Post photos of your creations and get some informed critique. Want to talk about the latest films with a fellow College of Letters alumna? Do you know how to fertilize vanilla plants?

From even a cursory glance at Class Notes, it's clear that we have a number of intriguing passions to share with each other—and I look forward to hearing that our Wesleyan conversations are humming.

To log onto Wesconnect: Go to <http://wesconnect.wesleyan.edu>. You'll be asked your last name at graduation and your six-digit Wes ID (hint: it's on the address label on the back of this magazine) and then you can choose a login name and password.

I look forward to seeing you online.

Michael Klingher '78, P'12, P'15
Chair, Wesleyan Alumni Association
alumni@wesleyan.edu

A GIFT FOR WHEN EXPERIENCE PAYS BUT INTERNSHIPS DON'T

Rebecca Friendly '11 knows that she's one of the fortunate 2011 graduates: She has a full-time position in the California office of the Washington, D.C.-based Center for American Progress (CAP), a policy institute and think tank.

A government major with a concentration in comparative politics, Friendly wrote an honors thesis, "Women's Empowerment Beyond Elections: The Relevance of Legal Gender Quotas in Latin America." Awarded

the Davenport Prize for excellence in government and politics, she was also elected to Phi Beta Kappa.

"The Center for American Progress is going to be a wonderful opportunity for me," she says. "The California office has an important role in advancing and supporting CAP's national policy agenda and reaching out to West Coast leaders, thinkers, and citizens."

Friendly is quick to point out that she did not just happen into this position; she had worked as a CAP intern the previous summer. This followed unpaid summer internships in the district offices of Congressman Henry Waxman and Congresswoman Karen Bass

(then Speaker of the California Assembly).

Friendly appreciated the opportunity to participate in these unpaid internships and described her work as crucial to her development. She was disappointed to learn, however, that several peers had to pass up interesting unpaid internships for financial reasons, and realized the critical importance of grants for allowing students to pursue these opportunities. For this reason, Rebecca and her family have created an endowment to fund an internship for a Wesleyan student each year.

The Rebecca Friendly '11 Internship Endowment will provide a stipend to a student receiving need-based financial aid who



Rebecca Friendly '11, an honors government graduate with a comparative politics concentration, has a special interest in environmental studies and is committed to the value of internships. Here, she enjoys an encounter with a baby llama in the town of Purmamarca, Jujuy, Argentina.

is interested in pursuing an internship in environmental studies. Students who intend to major in government with an environmental studies linked major or an environmental studies certificate program will be given special attention.

Friendly has a deep commitment to the environment and points to an introductory course in environmental science with Professor Barry Chernoff as a factor that influenced the family to provide support to students interested in pursuing environmental studies internships.

Friendly was also influenced by her grandmother, who wrote children's books about symbiosis and ecology in the 1960s. She was inspired by her grandfather, a scientist and

the first Minister of Science and Technology in Costa Rica, a country well known for protecting its biodiversity by setting aside 26 percent of its land for conservation.

Friendly expects her interest in the environment will extend to her work at CAP since "Energy and Environment" is one of CAP's five core issues. Its stated goal is to "pioneer progressive, 21st-century policy proposals to transform our nation and our economy in ways that protect the global environment, boost global prosperity, and create sustainable sources of clean energy..."

Prof. Chernoff says, "The Rebecca Friendly Internship will help meet a critical need in the College of the Environment. It is so important that environmental studies students

get hands-on research experience in order to develop their understanding of the critical environmental issues facing the world today. This internship will help further the career development of students who major in government and environmental studies and I am very, very thankful to Rebecca and her family."

Friendly believes that internships provide an important counterpoint to the academics. "We are fortunate to have summers off to apply what we have learned at Wesleyan, which can help us take a step closer to our goals."

Director of the Wesleyan Career Center Michael Sciola agrees: "There's no single better way to match intellectual curiosity with practical experience for an undergraduate than through an internship. "Rebecca's

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Please contact Adriana Rojas '07, assistant director of alumni and parent programs, at 860/685-3979 or arojas@wesleyan.edu for more information about these travel opportunities.
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gift recognizes the power and influence of internship experience in her own life and exemplifies the Wesleyan spirit in her generosity by ensuring that students who come after her will have the benefit of support for their own career discovery."

Although it bears her name, Friendly stresses that the endowment was "a collective family effort; really, it was through my parents' support that I was able to give this gift. They understood my enthusiasm for and commitment to Wesleyan."

Vice President for University Relations Barbara-Jan Wilson says, "I am grateful to Rebecca Friendly and her family for creating this internship endowment. We hope this will inspire other families to support our students as they build on Wesleyan's rich, liberal arts education by engaging in meaningful summer internships."

Friendly adds, "My years at Wesleyan were transformative and I plan to stay involved in the Wesleyan community for years to come."



SHASHA SEMINAR ADDENDUM

In the previous issue of *Wesleyan*, we inadvertently omitted Diego von Vacano '93 from the alumni contributors to this year's Shasha Seminar for Human Concerns. He discussed the importance of Bartolomé de las Casas's writings on race to Latin American political thought. He also addressed the changing ethnic composition of America, noting that "the black-white divide is making way to a more variegated and diverse composition, in which Latinos/Hispanics play a very significant role." This theme is also the subject of his new book, *The Color of Citizenship: Race, Modernity and Latin American/Hispanic Political Thought* (Oxford University Press, October 2011). We apologize for the omission. [The editors]

FROM THE VAULT: HIGHLIGHT FROM THE DAVISON ART CENTER COLLECTION CLARE ROGAN, CURATOR

In the beginning was the mark. Contemporary artist Julie Mehretu began her career making small marks on paper, exploring how marks convey information, drawing short strokes that combined to evoke abstract communities or social systems. Today she creates monumental works out of narrow lines, short repeated marks, and subtle veils of color. The Davison Art Center recently acquired Mehretu's intaglio print *The Residual*, 2007, in which the smallest of lines are repeated, and repeated, building up to a dramatic and chaotic, yet controlled, energetic swirl. The resulting print demonstrates the contemporary vitality of the purest element of art—the simple mark.

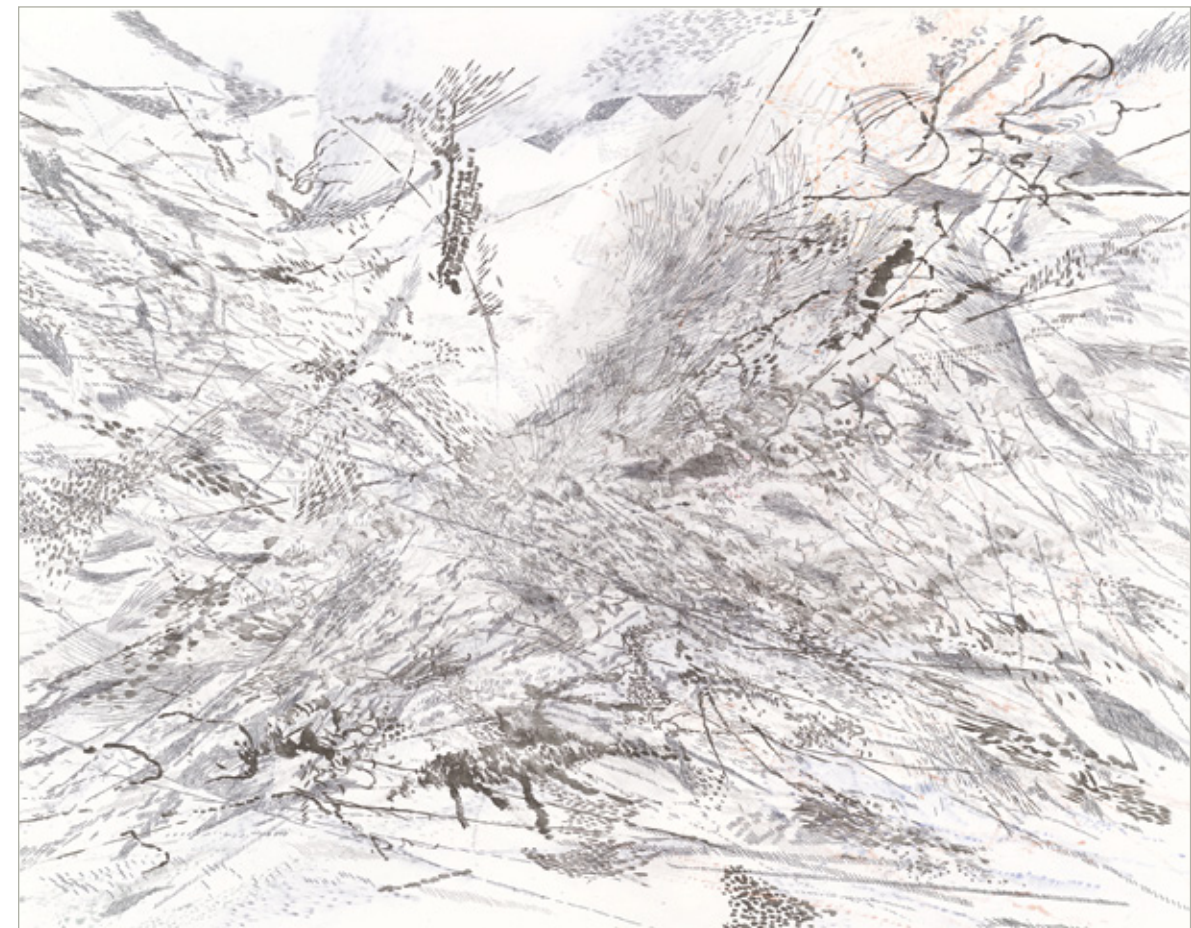
Mehretu's own life suggests the swirl and migration of peoples. She was born in

Ethiopia and moved to the United States with her family at the age of seven. Raised in Michigan, she attended Kalamazoo College, and then the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence. She received a MacArthur "Genius" fellowship in 2005, and in 2007 she was a resident at the American Academy in Berlin.

The Residual is one of two prints Mehretu created during a visit to Crown Point Press in San Francisco in 2007. In a recent conversation, Ianne Kjorlie, one of the three printers who worked with the artist, described the process. Five copper plates were used to print the image, layer by layer. First Mehretu created two plates with repeated etched and drypoint lines. These were printed first, one in a gray ink and the next in a black ink. Next came a layer of atmospheric color: light daubs of yellow, orange, red, magenta, and green printed from spit-bite aquatint marks on the plate. To create a spit-bite mark, the copper plate is first prepared with a rosin aquatint. Then the artist brushes a solution of nitric acid, water, and gum arabic directly

on the plate. A fourth plate, also with daubs of spit-bite, was printed in a purple-blue and gray. Finally came a plate with broadly brushed strokes of sugar-lift and spit-bite aquatint printed in black, evoking the energetic strokes of Chinese calligraphy. The layers overlap with the grays and blacks predominating, as the subtle layers in color shimmer, suggesting the possibility of sun after a storm. Standing in front of the print, the mind tries to corral the marks, to see groups of lines evoking flocks of birds or the pattern of feathers, pouring rain, twisting storm clouds, floods, a mountainside, or the whirls of a weather map. Perhaps there is even a falling Icarus, feathers trailing behind him as he tumbles from the sky. In the end, these are just imaginings. The mark is the content, whether drawn or brushed.

The Residual will be shown in *Excavations: The Prints of Julie Mehretu*, an exhibition organized by Highpoint Editions, Minneapolis. The exhibition will be on display in the Davison Art Center from September 16 through December 11, 2011. **UPFRONT**



Julie Mehretu, *The Residual*, 2007, color sugar-lift and spit-bite aquatint with hard-ground etching, drypoint, and burnishing. 40-3/4 x 50-1/4 inches, edition 25. Published by Crown Point Press. Magdalena Wagner Fund, 2010.17.1 © Julie Mehretu.

THE DARKLY FUNNY WORLD OF BRUCE KAPLAN '86

CARTOONS AS A DIARY OF ANGST
BY LAUREN WEBER '94

You won't find many unicorns or sunflowers in Bruce Eric Kaplan's cartoons. If you did, the unicorn might be saying wistfully that he wished more little girls loved him, and the sunflower might be complaining about the heat.

What you will find regularly in Kaplan's single-panel cartoons is a world populated with anxious children, indifferent pets, and cruel or disappointed adults.

A teacher tells a child holding a paper marked with an F, "Look, I'm sorry—I just didn't respond to the material." A dog casually declares to its master, "Actually, I never loved you." A mother gazes at her son's sand castle and says, "It's incredible!"

while the child thinks, "Then why do I feel like such a hack?"

"The cartoons are my version of a diary," says Kaplan '86, known to many as BEK, the signature found in the bottom right corner of the cartoons he publishes in *The New Yorker*. "And when you get down to diary form, isn't it always about your struggles?" Even, he says, when that day's struggle is simply, "Why is it so hard to make good coffee?"

Los Angeles, where he's lived since 1986, gives him plenty of material to mine for his cartoons and his work on TV shows with darkly funny inclinations. Kaplan has written or produced for some of the iconic television series of our era, including *Seinfeld* and *Six Feet Under*. He's currently a writer and producer on *Girls*, an HBO comedy created by Lena Dunham (the precocious director of the 2010 film *Tiny Furniture*) and produced by Judd Apatow. The show is set to debut in 2012.

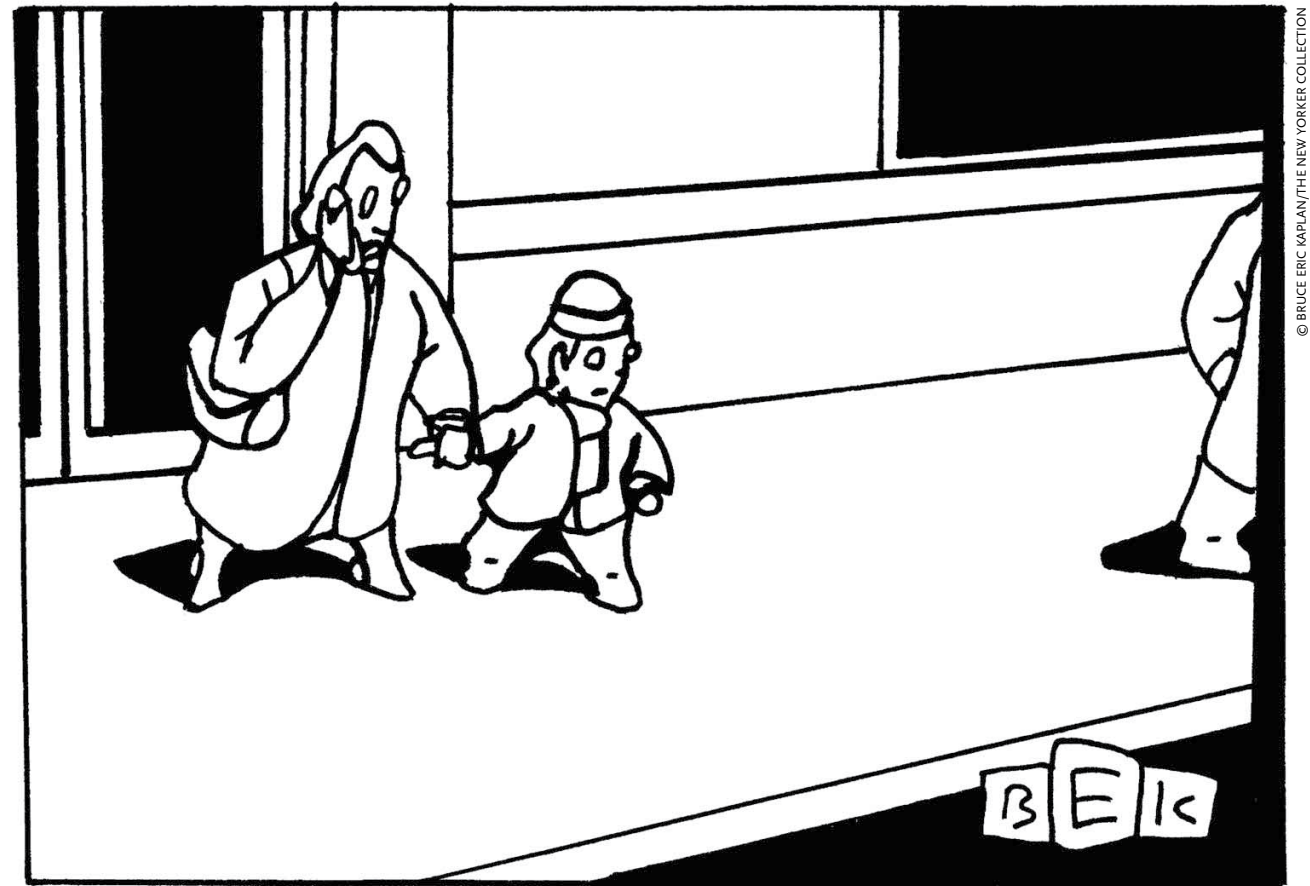
Today Kaplan calls himself "quote-unquote successful," and it would be just as true without the punctuation. He's an accomplished television writer and producer with a thriving second (or perhaps primary) identity as a *New Yorker* cartoonist, arguably the premier American magazine for journalism and humor.

But when he was starting out, he had "millions of day jobs stumbling around the fringes of the entertainment business." He worked for the talent agent of his freshman roommate (actor Willie Garson '85), helped actress Carol Matthau write her memoirs, and was an assistant to an over-the-hill Hollywood writer who mainly sent Kaplan out to buy liters of Diet Sprite. At the same time, he was writing novels, short

He's an accomplished television writer and producer with a thriving second (or perhaps primary) identity as a *New Yorker* cartoonist, arguably the premier American magazine for journalism and humor.

stories, screenplays and spec scripts for shows like *Golden Girls* and *Blossom*. Many projects went unfinished, banished to a drawer. "I was preoccupied with [the problem of]: 'I know I want to say something but I don't know how to say it.'"

Meanwhile, Kaplan was doing a lot of what he calls "doodling." At the Beverly



"I have to take him to his class for things kids used to learn on their own."

Hills library, he had checked out the book *Cartooning: The Art and the Business* by Mort Gerberg. One day he brought about 20 of his drawings over to the house of Wesleyan friends Jennifer Flackett '86 and David Kohan '86, and he and Jennifer picked out his 10 best efforts. Kaplan sent them off to *The New Yorker* and confidently waited for a check to arrive.

But *The New Yorker* didn't immediately appreciate Kaplan's deadpan, philosophical, and often bittersweet humor. His self-addressed stamped envelope appeared in the mailbox one day carrying not a check but a form-letter rejection.

He was, he says, "dumbfounded." Undeterred, he sent out another batch. And another. He sent ten cartoons to *The New Yorker* every week for at least two years. "I was compulsive. I never missed a meeting," he says, referring to the magazine's weekly gatherings of art editors.

One day in 1991, Kaplan returned home

from a writing job to find a note from Lee Lorenz, then cartoon editor at the *New Yorker*. It said, "I know you think we haven't been looking at your drawings but we have." He had selected three for publication from the previous week's submissions.

Seven hundred or so published drawings later, BEK is a staple of the magazine's weekly roster. "I think his cartoons are deeply insightful as well as wonderfully well-crafted as jokes," says Bob Mankoff, *The New Yorker's* current cartoon editor. Like little grenades of skepticism, angst and disillusionment, they're "a necessary counterweight to the hyped optimism of our culture." Yet Kaplan balances his pessimism with affection for his characters' foibles and tribulations, leading to a style that Mankoff describes as "cheerful nihilism, almost like a Samuel Beckett thing: 'I can't go on. I will go on.'"

In person, Kaplan is not the misanthrope his cartoons sometimes suggest.

He's modest, generous, friendly, a little shy. And he continues to ask himself the questions that preoccupied him 20 years ago. Questions like, "What should I be doing with my life? How should I express myself? Does anyone want to hear what I have to say?"

Such questions led to *Everything Is Going to Be Okay* (Simon & Schuster), published in the spring of 2011. The illustrated book, about an unremarkable man named Edmund who is invited to give the graduation speech at a small college, was an opportunity to tackle Kaplan's favorite dilemmas of purpose and meaning (Edmund's speech takes a surprising turn).

So is the new Apatow-Dunham show. *Girls* is about three young women, recent college graduates, all living in Brooklyn and lurching toward adulthood. "It's like a female [version of] *The Graduate*," Kaplan says. "And I really feel like I can access that part of myself even though I'm a middle-aged, bald, Jewish guy." **PROFILES**



On the set of *Girls*, Bruce Kaplan '86 is working on cartoon ideas.

THE REAL VALUE OF LAND: OWNERSHIP, NOT AUCTION

ATTORNEY JOHN POLLOCK '94 UPDATES HEIRS' RIGHTS
BY JIM H. SMITH, MALS '02

Ervin and James Jones and their seven siblings inherited 38 acres of land in the hill country of eastern Alabama. The two brothers—elderly, poor and disabled—loved the land. Ervin envisioned passing his share on to his grandchildren. James harvested timber as the only source of heat for his small home. And they had a vegetable garden.

But the other seven, who did not share Ervin's and James' connection with the property, began pressuring them to sell. The brothers dug in their heels and two years ago the matter ended up in court. That's where Ervin and James Jones got a tough lesson about how co-owners of land can be forced to sell their ancestral property against their will. Adhering to the law as currently written, the court ordered that the entire 38 acres be sold at auction and the proceeds split evenly among the nine.

Ervin and James lost the land that meant everything to them. They are by no means alone. A 1984 study by the Emergency Land Fund found that these so-called partition sales are "unquestionably the judicial method by which most heir property is lost." The problem is especially acute in low-income communities, where owners lack the money to bid on the property at auction or hire lawyers to fight the sale. Throughout the 20th century, court-ordered settlements contributed greatly to a huge decline in land ownership by African Americans. It's estimated that in 1910 African Americans owned 19 million acres of land in America. By 2000 the figure had fallen to fewer than two million acres.

Sometimes the owner clamoring for sale isn't even in the family. Developers and land speculators may buy a tiny interest in the property in order to become a co-owner

who can push for a sale, buy the whole property at auction, and kick the family members off the land.

John Pollock '94, whose passionate interest in the rights of disadvantaged people took root during his time in Middletown, is trying to help people like Ervin and James Jones stay on their land. It means changing the law one state at a time—a long, hard slog.

When Pollock arrived at Wesleyan in the autumn of 1990 he seemed an unlikely candidate for the career he has pursued. His father was a prominent corporate lawyer and his parents raised him and his older sister in the insular comfort of New York's Westchester County. "I never realized how privileged I was until I got to Middletown," Pollock says. "Wesleyan helped me peel back the layers of advantage. It changed my whole life."

In one of his freshman classes, students were asked to evaluate their lives in the context of "advantage," using an inventory list to assess the many ways in which they were privileged. "It was a real eye-opener," he recalls. "There were some things I knew I had, like a family that was financially better off than many. But there were so many other things I just took for granted—my health, the safety of my neighborhood, the quality of my high school, and the fact that my parents were still together. I was mortified by how many items I checked."

So, Pollock, whose parents had imbued him with a sense of civic responsibility, decided to become an activist, and he applied himself rigorously to the task.

"John came to me with a thesis idea that showed he had a passion for social justice," recalls Professor of English Sean McCann, Pollock's thesis adviser. "He was extremely ambitious. He wanted to write about everything, and he was a perfectionist, a remarkably hard worker."

At Northeastern University School of Law he clerked or interned with the Conservation

"The statutes are very old and, historically, court decisions have been predicated on the notion that land has only one value, namely money," says Pollock. "There's little protection for owners who don't want to sell."

Law Foundation, the Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, and the Northeastern University Poverty Law Clinic.

"When I graduated from law school in 2005, I was itching to get out of Boston," he says. "When a position opened with the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) in Montgomery, in January '06 I jumped at it."

One day that spring, the Center's founder, Morris Dees, asked Pollock to look into heirs' property issues in Alabama. What he

Late this spring Nevada became the first state to adopt the model legislation championed by John Pollock '94, which protects the rights of property owners who want to keep inherited land.

found was that African-Americans were not the only population hurt by antiquated laws. Disadvantaged people of every race, in every state, had lost properties that were their legacies, and sometimes their only asset.

"The statutes are very old and, historically, court decisions have been predicated on the notion that land has only one value, namely money," says Pollock. "There's little protection for owners who don't want to sell. If you have a situation with many heirs in conflict, the easiest thing for a judge to say is, 'Sell the damned property.'"

That summer Pollock founded the Heirs' Property Retention Coalition (HPRC), a voluntary advocacy group whose purpose was to coordinate efforts on land loss for indigent communities. He secured a \$135,000 grant from the American Bar Association (ABA) and recruited 20 organizations to

help him. With their help, he began writing the first draft of what eventually became the Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act.

"John is a terrific facilitator," says Craig H. Baab, senior fellow/policy and development at Montgomery-based Alabama Appleseed, an HPRC partner that researches the root causes of injustice and inequality and develops solutions to improve the lives of all Alabama residents. "He's a fount of information and he really knows how to mobilize people."

Pollock devoted nearly all of his personal time over the next four years to mobilizing the Coalition and shepherding the new law. Meanwhile, he became an ABA Civil Gideon Right to Counsel Fellow for the Baltimore-based Public Justice Center.

Last summer his hard work finally paid off. The Uniform Law Commission

approved a final draft. "Once enacted, new state laws will not only protect family land, but help families with heir property qualify for credit and otherwise access the land's value," said Betsy Cavendish, executive director of Appleseed.

For that to happen, though, state legislatures must now adopt the act. And Pollock's Coalition is not simply hoping that will happen. Early this year the ABA signed off on the Act. And now, under the leadership of the man who was once "mortified" to discover how privileged he was, the Coalition is working with legislatures nationwide to ensure that property owners are not victimized by the courts in the future. A bill to adopt has been introduced in the Oregon legislature and several other states are expected to follow Oregon's lead shortly. **PROFILES**

NOT ABOUT THE PEARLS

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN JULES OPTON-HIMMEL '02 AND SEAN PATCH '02 RARELY SPOKE OF OYSTERS. THEN THEY STARTED GROWING THEM.

BY ERIC GERSHON '98

It's an overcast June morning on Ninigret Pond, a coastal lagoon in Charlestown, R.I., and Jules Opton-Himmel '02 is heaving floppy PVC frames into the water from a broad-bottomed lumberyard skiff.

"Those should sink," he calls out to a hand in a wetsuit who's been working in the lagoon's warm, shallow waters since just after sunrise. "Sometimes you've just got to step on 'em and fill 'em up."

Soon the frames will carry bags of growing oysters, stock in trade of Walrus and Carpenter Oysters, the aquaculture business Opton-Himmel founded in 2009 with friend and fellow former Outhouse resident Sean Patch '02.

The duo harvested their first crop last fall and began selling to friends and family in New York City just before Thanksgiving, distributing their fresh fish from an apartment building rooftop and later from a TriBeCa art studio. Along with the oysters, they provided champagne and shucking lessons. Says Patch, "We tried to make it somewhat of an event."

Around the time of the first oyster distribution party, Opton-Himmel and Patch went uptown on an errand. Months earlier, they'd e-mailed the sculptors of an ambitious bamboo installation on the roof of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Big Bambú*, to inquire about their plans for the wood after the project came down. The farmers were thinking they could substitute natural bamboo frames for the submerged PVC pipes supporting their oysters. At last there'd been a response from the artists: Come and get it.

So, one Sunday afternoon last November, Patch and Opton-Himmel drove their pickup

trucks down a long ramp into the bowels of the Met. From there they went to the roof, where workers were dismantling the sprawling artwork, and carried away a massive haul—roughly 10 cords of bamboo, or more than 1200 cubic feet. Afterward, they did what seemed natural: "We ended up shucking oysters for everybody and seeing the sun set from the roof of the Met," Patch says, still awestruck. Then they drove off with a load that offered environmental and financial benefits both: "We got it for free," says Jules.

As luck would have it, the bamboo coup begat a publicity coup: Word of the friendly exchange between the artists and the oyster farmers reached the offices of *The New Yorker*, and Walrus and Carpenter Oysters became a feature in the magazine's "Talk of the Town" column.

"It didn't really turn into a lot of sales immediately, because we didn't have much product," Jules said later with a mix of rue and gratitude. "But certainly friends and family all read it. It got our name out there."

There was a time when Opton-Himmel and Patch rarely spoke of oysters. That changed in 2007, when Opton-Himmel raised the idea of an oyster enterprise at a New Year's Eve party in Vermont hosted by mutual friend Sam Kelman '03, proprietor of Poorfarm Farm. At first Patch, who grew up in Maine, the son of a merchant mariner, didn't take his friend seriously: "Then he was talking about it again the next year."

About a year prior, while living on a sailboat in the Hudson River off Weehawken, N.J., Patch had developed his own interest in oysters. He was teaching high school in New York after a short career as a foreign equities trader, and commuting to work in Manhattan by kayak. He was using sailing as a way of teaching real-world math and figured he could do the same with shellfish: "I was always looking for ways to get kids interested in math," he said. "'Here's another thing I like: Let's calculate mortality rates and growth rates for these oysters.'"

Opton-Himmel, who grew up in New York City, had always kept alert for an enterprise that

"I was always interested in how a business could make a profit and benefit the environment at the same time," he said. "It's something I desired that Wall Street wasn't giving me."

would offer him a life in the country. "I always wanted to have my own forest land or farm," he says. While studying at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, he discovered it was possible to lease submerged land. He found a job researching Long Island Sound for the Nature Conservancy, and through this work met some oyster growers. He admired their lifestyle in the outdoors and their ability to earn a living "doing something good for the environment." Oyster farming fit the bill. Inherently green, it adds nothing to the ecosystem, and oysters help filter the water by consuming excess nitrogen.

"I was just enamored of that whole industry," he says.

After training briefly with an oyster farmer in Massachusetts, Opton-Himmel decided to start his own operation. Before long, Patch



Jules Opton-Himmel '02 and Sean Patch '02, former Outhouse residents, at Ninigret Pond in Charlestown, R.I.

BILL BURKHART

was on board, indulging his own interest and reciprocating Opton-Himmel's characteristic "appetite for adventure."

"If I ever had an idea and was looking for a partner to try it with," Patch said, "Jules was up for it."

Patch, who studied economics and environmental science at Wesleyan, also shared Opton-Himmel's interest in green-business. "I was always interested in how a business could make a profit and benefit the environment at the same time," he said. "It's something I desired that Wall Street wasn't giving me." (Patch founded his first business as an undergraduate. A+ Storage provided summer storage for Wesleyan students.)

A Walrus and Carpenter oyster is plump and briny with a deep, round cup. It's typically small, 2.5 to 3 inches, a size Patch prefers personally and one that Jules calls "not as intimidating." "That's the time in an

oyster's life when it has the perfect balance of briny-ness and umami"—a savory, earthy flavor sometimes called "the fifth taste," says Patch (after sweet, salty, sour, and bitter.)

Walrus and Carpenter Oysters is still a fledgling business. The farmer-friends hope to sell roughly 150,000 oysters in the next 12 months and grow from there. "Everything we're doing now is kind of experimental," says Jules, who recently left his job with the Nature Conservancy to work on the farm more or less full-time. (Patch still teaches math, now in Concord, Mass.) The farmers cultivate separate plots within their three-acre leasehold, then pool the oysters for sale under the same name. Says Jules, "That way we can do our own thing and remain friends."

Initially focused on selling directly to the consumer, Walrus and Carpenter recently decided to offer their fish wholesale through the Ocean State Shellfish Growers Co-Op. Still, Patch and Opton-Himmel like selling

direct to the people who will eat them, because it offers social satisfactions and greater profit potential. "I don't think we would enjoy the business as much if we didn't have that interaction with the consumer," Patch says.

As with any business, operating an oyster farm isn't just about oysters. Opton-Himmel and Patch have lots to do: repairing finicky outboard motors, navigating regulatory agencies, inspecting their crops for pests—and improvising designs for bamboo oyster suspension frames.

The latter task has proved harder than expected, because the bamboo's natural buoyancy makes it hard to anchor. Patch isn't too worried: "I'm sure there are uses we haven't even come up with yet, there's so much bamboo."

One thing oyster farming hasn't provided—and won't, he says—is pearls: "They don't grow in this type of oyster."

PROFILES