When RIT grads pursue their passions, the results are amazing. On the following pages, you’ll meet eight alumni who are following their hearts to extraordinary careers.
After graduating from RIT in 1974, Patricia A. Moore (industrial design) went to work in the New York City office of Raymond Loewy, one of the most prominent designers of the 20th century.

It was a wonderful opportunity, but she admits to being something of a malcontent. She repeatedly questioned why products were being designed without consideration for people of different abilities. Could someone with arthritis operate that switch? Could someone in a wheelchair reach that handle? Could an older person open that door?

“Very quickly, I became known as the one who was looking after the disenfranchised,” says Moore, now an internationally renowned authority on inclusive design.

Moore’s sensitivity to the needs of people of all ages and abilities led to an extraordinary experiment. At age 26, she transformed herself into a range of women over the age of 80. The disguises involved more than makeup and clothing: She altered her body with prosthetics that blurred her vision, reduced her ability to hear and limited her motion. She relied on canes, walkers and a wheelchair. Her portrayals included the homeless and wealthy matrons, elders who were quite fit and those who struggled with illness and the effects of time.

From 1979 to 1982, she was in the roles about every third day for as much as 20 hours at a time. The experiment took her to 116 cities in 14 states and two Canadian provinces. She says that as time went on, the project took on a life of its own. She sometimes had difficulty getting back to her “real” life.

“It was very rigorous,” Moore says. The makeup damaged her skin, and a severe mugging at the hands of a gang of youths left her with serious, permanent injuries.

Ultimately, the undertaking set the stage for her life’s work. “My whole life is about applying that experience.”

It’s important work. Moore notes that more than 13 percent of Americans are over age 65 and that percentage continues to grow. In addition, one in three Americans has a cognitive or physical condition that requires compensatory means to accomplish daily activities.

“As a force for creation and change, designers need to step back, analyze our mission, and reframe our role as responsible providers for the quality of life of consumers,” says Moore. “The need for ‘humanism’ in design has never been more critical.”

Moore notes that ageism persists, along with other forms of prejudice against people with differing needs (she rejects the label “disabled”).

“The compartmentalization of people — that really gets my Irish up,” she says.

Moore expanded her education with advanced studies in biomechanics at New York University’s Medical School & Rusk Institute and earned graduate degrees in psychology and counseling and in human development (social gerontology) from Columbia University.

Now president of MooreDesign Associates in Phoenix, Moore has worked in the areas of communication design, product development, environmental design, package design, transportation design, market analysis and product positioning. Her long list of clients includes AT&T, Boeing, Corning Glass, General Electric, Herman Miller, Johnson & Johnson, Kimberly Clark, NASA, Marriott, Procter & Gamble, Seoul (Korea) Design City Project, 3M and many others.

“We’re currently designing the light rail vehicles for Cincinnati, Phoenix and Honolulu,” she says. “We’re also helping to create physical rehabilitation environments for the soldiers returning from war with injuries that require that they relearn the skills for everyday living with special technologies and prosthetics.”

She is an adjunct professor of industrial design at Arizona State University and has lectured at universities worldwide. She was named by ID Magazine as one of The 40 Most Socially Conscious Designers in the world and ABC World News featured Moore as one of 50 Americans Defining the New Millennium.

The work keeps her on the go. “I fly 200 days of the year,” she says. “I’ve been doing that since 1980. It’s a lifestyle, not a choice. I need to go where the action is.”

She’s traveled many miles from her home in Buffalo, but she’s never lost touch with her roots. Moore attributes her interest in the
Jeffrey Culver: Providing security in an uncertain world

Steve Yucknut: Global responsibility at KraftFoods

You've scooped from the Breyers Ice Cream package, the familiar box with rounded corners and tight-fitting cover.

Steve Yucknut ’89 (packaging science) designed that package, which replaced the folded paper cartons that once were the standard package for bricks of ice cream. He also helped design the equipment that makes it.

Now he has a bigger challenge. Much bigger. As vice president for sustainability at KraftFoods Inc. since 2007, Yucknut is responsible for building sustainability into the business strategy of the world’s second largest food company.

“We’re looking to make a lasting difference,” says Yucknut. “We’re incorporating sustainability into our business decisions, to help guide our thinking and our actions. We’re making it part of our recipe for success.”

In truth, says Yucknut, who has worked for the company since 1987, “Kraft has been doing a good job with sustainability for a long time.” But under the leadership of CEO Irene Rosenfeld, who took the helm in 2006, the company began looking at doing more to incorporate sustainability into all business decisions.

“The idea right from the get-go was this is all about meaningful change,” says Yucknut. The stakes are high: to ensure the long-term health of the company and the planet.

It turns out that sustainability is good business.

“Customers want to do business with partners who support sustainability,” says Yucknut. “Consumers want to buy products... continued on the next page
continued from the previous page
from companies that ‘get it.’ And employees want to work for companies that respect and preserve the world around them. Everyone is realizing we can minimize the impact on the environment, help society and increase revenue and profit.”

KraftFoods – and Yucknut – are focusing efforts in six areas: agricultural commodities; packaging; energy; water; waste; and transportation/distribution. Starting with 2005 as a base, the company has established some aggressive goals to be achieved by 2011:

• Reduce plant energy usage by 25 percent
• Reduce plant energy-related carbon dioxide emissions by 25 percent
• Reduce plant water consumption by 15 percent
• Reduce plant waste by 15 percent
• Eliminate 150 million pounds of packaging material

“We’re doing real well in all areas,” says Yucknut. “It’s really heartening to see the positive support. Sustainability has become everybody’s job.”

Here’s one of the efforts he’s involved in:
In February, 2009, KraftFoods and other industry, government and non-governmental organizations joined with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to pledge a total of $90 million over five years to boost the incomes of cocoa and cashew farmers in Africa. The projects aim to strengthen the long-term viability of the West African cocoa and cashew industries.

With the potential of improving the livelihoods of 200,000 cashew farmers and 250,000 in cocoa production, “It’s win-win. We’re helping people help themselves,” says Yucknut. Plus, there’s an opportunity to improve the supply chain, which benefits KraftFoods.

Yucknut says his background in operations was key in his being chosen as the company’s first VP for sustainability. Prior to taking on that job, he was senior director of manufacturing business development and engineering.

His 23-year career with KraftFoods has included work as an engineer/scientist across a variety of divisions and product lines. He holds five patents. He also earned an MBA in operations management from DePaul University.

He started at KraftFoods with a co-op job in research and development for Post Cereals.

“The RIT co-op program made all the difference in the world,” says Yucknut, who has a deep appreciation for RIT’s balance of classroom teaching and hands-on experience. “The education I got was second to none.”

Rick Kittles: Finding his roots in DNA research

*Rick Kittles ’89 (biology) has devoted his career to the study of genetics.*

For many African Americans, information about where their ancestors came from has been lost. There’s a richness in knowing that.

Rick Kittles ’89

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Rick Kittles ’89

scor of microbiology at Howard University. He also served as director of the African American Hereditary Prostate Cancer Study Network at the university’s National Human Genome Center and co-directed the molecular genetics unit of Howard University’s National Human Genome Center.

In 2003, while continuing his work at Howard, Kittles co-founded African Ancestry Inc. (www.AfricanAncestry.com), a genetic testing service available to individuals interested in tracing their roots.

“That really came out of my interest in finding my own African connections,” says Kittles. By comparing his own DNA to samples in a database, he learned that his ancestors came from Nigeria, Senegal and Germany. He found that many others were interested in this.

“I hope it has been helpful to people,” he says. “For many African Americans, information about where their ancestors came from has been lost. There’s a richness in knowing that. It’s one piece of who we are.”

Kittles’ work in this area has received significant media attention. Notably, he was featured in BBC films Motherland: A Genetic Journey (2003) and Motherland – Moving On (2004). He has also appeared in the PBS series African American Lives and African American Lives 2 and CBS’ 60 Minutes.

His interest in African American issues was evident at RIT, where he served as president of the Black Awareness Coordinating Committee. Kittles was instrumental in bringing...
"I wouldn't have changed anything. RIT was a great experience, and I'm not just saying that for this interview. I was challenged. I was nurtured."

He tries to do the same with his own students. "I try to inspire my students that their life's work should be for more than financial gain," he says. Pursuing work that you love is much more satisfying, Kittles has learned from experience.

"When you get to do exactly what you want to do, I think that's a blessing. Not many people can do that."

Kathy Lindsley

For more information about Kittles' work, visit http://genemed.bsd.uchicago.edu/~kittleslab/

Ginny Clark: Shining bright at Constellation

"It was Marvin Sands who gave me my start," Clark says. In 1998, she went to Richard Sands with a proposal to operate a travel department within the company. "My goal was to save $250,000 in the first year," Clark says. Sands connected her with a top company financial officer, and "We saved a half million dollars in the first nine months."

The rapidly growing company changed its name to Constellation Brands in 2000. Clark went from the travel department into public and government relations and then into her current job. She now also works with Richard and Robert Sands on philanthropic activities on behalf of the Sands family as well as the company.

"I love doing that. You can see the immediate results in the community," says Clark. Often, she helps find and work with partners to further leverage the impact of each project. "It's bringing the public and private sectors together for the betterment of our community that allows everyone to succeed."

A case in point is the New York Wine and Culinary Center. In 2004, after acquiring Robert Mondavi Corp., Constellation

For all of this and more, Clark was honored by the Canandaigua Chamber of Commerce and the Business and Professional Women's Club as 2009 Athena Award recipient. The prestigious award is given annually to a woman who demonstrates excellence, creativity and initiative in their profession; contributes to the community; and assists women in realizing leadership potential.

Clark's career began in the 1970s, when she returned to Canandaigua after graduating from Herkimer County (N.Y.) Community College and opened a travel agency. What was then Canandaigua Wine Company became her first major client – although company founder Marvin Sands told her only four people in the company traveled frequently.

"The final prong was hospitality education," says Clark, and RIT became the fourth founding partner.

That's when Clark met Francis Domoy, executive director for CMAC and a board member for NYWCC. Often, she helps find and work with partners to further leverage the impact of each project.

"I used a lot of my professional experience in school."

Virginia Clark Ridder '06, '08

Virginia ’Ginny’ Clark ’06, ’08

"Both broke ground in the same week, and both opened on time and on budget nine months later, in June 2006," says Clark, who now serves as executive director for CMAC and a board member for NYWCC.

In 2007, Constellation president and CEO Robert Sands asked Clark to spearhead building of the company's new global headquarters in Victor, N.Y. At the same time, she worked with Constellation Board Chairman Richard Sands on a $7 million campaign to expand the Canandaigua YMCA. She's also been involved in fundraising for Finger Lakes Community Foundation, the Greater Canandaigua Family YMCA and Mercy Flight Central.
Elan Lee: Alternate reality superhero

**You’re watching a TV show.**

The lead character picks up the phone and punches in a number.

And your cell phone rings. She’s calling you and now you’re part of the story – not just a viewer.

This will happen in the very near future – and Elan Lee ’98 (computer science) is in the forefront of this coming “convergence of entertainment.”

“Imagine the best movie, the best book, the best TV show you’ve ever seen,” says Lee. “They’re all a series of scenes. The question is, how do you use your life as part of a storytelling mechanism? We use computers, cell phones, e-mail, social media, Web sites – the things we all use every day – to tell the story.”

Developing entertainment experiences has been Lee’s passion since his days at RIT. “I got an amazing internship with Industrial Lights & Magic,” he says. During his stint with the Academy Award-winning special effects production company, Lee worked on the 1999 George Lucas film Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace.

He discovered that he “loved making beautiful images” much more than writing computer code. “When I graduated, I knew I wanted to go big and bold.”

ILM offered him a full-time job, but then he met “a very clever recruiter from Microsoft” who suggested that Lee might want to try something new. And at Microsoft, “They had this crazy new thing called Xbox.”

Lee became lead game designer for the 2001 Xbox launch, which featured six games.

“Then one day Stephen Spielberg walked into my office, because Microsoft is a cool place where that kind of thing happens.”

Lee had been working with Jordan Weisman, creative director for Xbox. They were assigned to make a video game based on A.I., Artificial Intelligence, Spielberg’s 2001 sci-fi tale.

“But the movie didn’t seem to lend itself to a game,” says Lee. So they came up with another idea – create a “game” where the action takes place in the real world. Thus was born The Beast, considered the world’s first alternate reality game.

It’s complicated, but here’s the gist: In the fine print on A.I. movie posters, they listed “Jeanine Salla, sentient machine therapist.” People who happened to notice this intriguing bit of information could find her Web site. There they discovered a murder victim, Jeanine’s friend who had died under mysterious circumstances.

“And on and on it went,” says Lee. People who followed the clues could eventually unravel the mystery, told through thousands of Web pages. The Beast ultimately attracted 2 million followers over six months.

“It was a huge amount of work, but really fun,” says Lee.

And the game proved to be a marvelous promotional vehicle. Lee left Microsoft in 2003 to co-found 42 Entertainment. The company gained acclaim for I Love Bees, an alternate reality game that served as a highly successful viral marketing campaign for the 2004 release of the video game Halo 2.

In 2006, Lee co-founded EDOC Laundry, which produced alternate reality games in which consumers could follow clues hidden within clothing. He is currently chief designer for Fourth Wall Studios, an entertainment production company he co-founded in 2007.

Once again, he’s looking to create something truly original. Among the current projects are two TV shows that hopefully will be on the air in fall 2010. While they can be enjoyed by viewers in the traditional manner, “they have the capability of reaching out and allowing people to connect in a variety of ways,” says Lee.

He admits a certain amazement that there is money to be made in this – “I am having way too much fun.” The key, he believes, is to keep moving beyond what’s cool at the moment to imagine what’s coming next. He has a theory as to why he’s good at this.

“What I like to do is to make people feel like superheroes. For the next 10 seconds, you’re unbelievable,” he says. “It’s so easy for me to infuse my games with this feeling, because my whole life, that’s what I’ve wanted. I’ve wanted to be a superhero.”

Kathy Lindsley

To learn more, visit www.fourthwallstudios.com.
IN ONE MEMORABLE SEGMENT OF America’s Next Top Model, each contestant smears her face with a color – blue, yellow, orange, purple, green.

Keith Major ’84 (photo illustration) makes them look fabulous. No wonder Tyra Banks, star of the Bravo TV series, asked him to do the shoot and be a guest judge.

“Tyra is somebody I shot early on,” says Major. “She’s been great to me.” The photographer and the supermodel have worked together on a number of projects, including an Ebony magazine cover in 2008.

Major has photographed celebrities in the entertainment and fashion industries: Sean P Diddy Combs, Patti Labelle, Wynton Marsalis, Beyoncé, Spike Lee and Kim Catrall, to name a few. He’s done work for publications such as Seventeen, Essence, Allure, USA Weekend and many others.

It sounds glamorous. In reality, being a successful commercial photographer is a lot of hard work, perhaps never more so than now. These are difficult times for the industry, says Major. Print media is undergoing major changes. Once-plentiful work for CD packaging has all but dried up.

Still, he says, “I love what I do, as difficult as some days may be. Having the opportunity to create beautiful images is a thrill.”

Major, a native of New York City, became interested in photography in grade school. “I had always been interested in the visual arts, starting from very early on,” he says. That led to art classes available through the city school system at Brooklyn Museum and Pratt Institute. “One year, all of the art classes were full, so I got into a photography class. I was about 12. By fourth or fifth grade, I knew I wanted to be a photographer.”

And when it came time for college, he knew where he wanted to go. “RIT was the place to be if you wanted to be a photographer,” says Major. “RIT gave me a great technical foundation.”

Returning to New York after graduation, he became an assistant to Anthony Barboza, a prominent photographer in the African American market. He also worked for Gamma One, a pioneering fine-art photography studio, where Major worked with several other RIT grads.

At the same time, he began shooting for himself on the side. Today, he operates his own studio in Manhattan. “I’m living my dream come true,” he says.

He’s also beginning to learn about video to expand his skill set – and he recommends that young photographers do the same. “It’s useful to be able to shoot for TV, movies, new media and all things Web,” he says. “You need to be versatile.”

Even more important is the need for photographers starting their careers to develop a clear idea of how to distinguish themselves, he says. “It’s easy to fall into the trap of copying the photographers you admire, and doing the kind of work that you’ve seen and like. But the most exciting young photographers I’ve seen are doing things that haven’t been seen before.”

Kathy Lindsley

To learn more about Keith Major, visit http://keithmajor.com/
David Kidder: Taking risks pays off

Big, bright ideas come to David S. Kidder in a seemingly endless torrent. A self-described "serial entrepreneur," Kidder ’95 (industrial design) is co-founder and CEO of Clickable, an online software service that simplifies advertising on Google, Yahoo! and Microsoft. Founded in 2007, Clickable has grown to more than 120 employees.

He’s also creator and co-author of the two-time New York Times best-selling book series, The Intellectual Devotional. Printed in more than 12 languages, each of the books comprises 365 one-page topics.

Kidder’s latest project expands on his interest in “philanthro-capitalism.” GoodAdds.org, launched in December 2009, is a “cause marketing platform” aimed at helping to end extreme poverty by providing free online advertising for philanthropic organizations. The idea is to get companies to donate their unsold online advertising space and make it available to nonprofits to place ads for causes such as sponsorship of water wells, buying malaria nets and inoculating children. He’s attracted launch partners including GE, NBC, Google and Soros Foundation-funded Millennium Promise.

“It’s a matter of scale,” explains Kidder. “Only a small percentage of people who see the ads will click on them, and a smaller percentage will actually take action. But there are over 2.7 trillion online ads placed every year – and growing 10 percent each year – with over 50 percent going unsold. Utilizing just 1 percent of this inventory each year could change a continent.”

Kidder’s interest in “cause marketing” extends from his experience with TED, a non-profit organization that brings together people from technology, entertainment and design. Through the annual TED conferences, he’s become connected with many gifted entrepreneurs and executives from many fields, all working to do good. “There’s an amazing network of people supporting this,” he says.

A native of Guilderland, N.Y., near Albany, Kidder came to RIT partly to play lacrosse. RIT’s hands-on culture and practical approach to education suited him perfectly. “I could study design very close to technology,” he says. “The skills transferred well and immediately to the real world. What I learned at RIT has been part of everything I’ve ever done since.”

After leaving RIT in 1995, he lived in Mexico City, where he taught industrial design at a university. Back in Rochester, he founded Net-X, (a Web authoring and Internet advertising services startup later acquired by Target Vision). He moved to New York City and lived through the dot-com boom.

Then he “got lost” traveling in Africa, India, China, Nepal, Tibet and elsewhere, ultimately visiting more than 20 countries.

Upon returning, Kidder married, had two sons, now ages 4 and 2 – and started another business. It’s been full speed ahead ever since. Prior to Clickable, Kidder co-founded Smart-Ray Network, a mobile advertising delivery pioneer acquired by LifeMinders.

“What guides me is, number one, the responsibility to take risks,” says Kidder. “I think that in general, students from America have a very myopic view of their place in the world. We have won humanity’s lottery.”

Even in tough times, things are better in America than almost anywhere else in the world. Opportunities exist here that are simply not accessible by a wider group of people. Because of this, Kidder postulates, “We have a responsibility to take personal risks.

“Number two, the markets will only reward those who invent. You have to create unique and proprietary value. As a student, you need to decide what kind of inspired, vibrating light you will be in the world.”

David Kidder ’95

Ray Network, a mobile advertising delivery pioneer acquired by LifeMinders.

“Number two, the markets will only reward those who invent. You have to create unique and proprietary value. As a student, you need to decide what kind of inspired, vibrating light you will be in the world. You need to be highly vibrating, with powerful ideas that will reward you and those that join you in creation.”

As for what kinds of ideas will be successful, Kidder has very clear ideas.

“You must build painkillers and not vitamins.” He explains that people take painkillers because they need them; vitamins are elective. “Innovations are more likely to succeed if they solve real market problems; success is far more assured if you solve a painful market problem affecting thousands of people economically, but also as it relates to time and complexity.

“Build companies and ideas that solve massive problems,” advises Kidder. “You need to be in huge marketplaces with big pain.”

His efforts haven’t gone unnoticed. Kidder received ID Magazine’s International Design Award and Ernst and Young’s Entrepreneur of the Year Award in 2008. He is frequently asked to speak at universities and organizations including the graduate business schools at Stanford, Columbia and NYU.

He’s packed plenty into his 36 years. The question is, how does he do it all?

“I don’t sleep more than five hours a night,” he quips. “That helps.”

Kathy Lindsley

To learn more about Kidder’s work, visit www.clickable.com; www.GoodAdds.org; and www.theintellectualdevotional.com.