

# RIT

University Magazine

Fall 2021

## The Performing Academic

### Also inside:

Growing faculty  
diversity

Educating tomorrow's  
experts in virtual  
production



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## FROM THE PRESIDENT



RIT President David Munson and his wife, Nancy, talk with students during the National Technical Institute for the Deaf's Applefest.

## Extraordinary times at RIT

**T**he vibrancy on campus has returned! We have proven to be one of the safest campuses in the nation throughout the pandemic. This allows us to have our eye on the future.

Let's begin with our growing enrollment. The university welcomed a record number of first-year undergraduate students. Overall enrollment is more than 19,700 students when you factor in our campuses in China, Croatia, Dubai, and Kosovo.

Construction is underway on RIT's makerspace and educational complex at the center of campus. The SHED—the Student Hall for Exploration and Development—will include huge makerspaces, classrooms, a black-box theater, dance studio, and music rehearsal rooms, and is on track to open in fall 2023.

RIT is in the process of designing a performing arts center that will feature a 750-seat theater and eventually a 1,500-seat orchestra hall for larger audiences. The new facilities are an essential part of RIT's plan to develop the leading performing arts program in the nation for non-majors. Construction on the first phase is scheduled to commence in spring of 2022 with a completion date of fall 2023.

Saunders College of Business is poised for major expansion and renovation that will almost double the size of the college.

The renovation of RIT's College of Art and Design is moving at a brisk pace with a key focus inside Gannett Hall.

A multi-phase plan to upgrade athletic facilities also began. The first phase of the department's multimillion-dollar stadium project is the relocation of the outdoor

track across the road from its current location. New baseball and softball fields are also under construction with upgrades to all-weather artificial turf fields, which will be ready for play in spring 2022.

Overseas, construction of the first phase of RIT Dubai's new \$136 million campus is complete. The new campus will be able to accommodate up to 4,000 students.

None of this would be possible without Transforming RIT, our "Campaign for Greatness."

Our campaign seeks support from a variety of investors, including alumni and friends, government and corporate partners, and research foundations and agencies. The finish line is nearing, yet there's more to accomplish.

We're continuing to raise money for student scholarships, we're elevating our research to even greater heights, and we are focused on attracting and retaining the best and brightest faculty.

The \$1 billion campaign now stands at \$832 million. Everyone is invited to help us transform the future by joining the Campaign for Greatness in this final stretch.

This is an extraordinary time for RIT, and with our amazing community of creators and innovators we are definitely on to something amazing!

Proudly yours,

David C. Munson Jr., President  
[munson@rit.edu](mailto:munson@rit.edu)  
Twitter: @RITPresident

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## Growing diversity

RIT has modernized its approach to recruiting faculty members to improve representation.

Elizabeth Lamark

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### The performing academic

Meet students who are thriving by combining their creative passions with their academic ambitions.

### Cover photo

Robyn Pope, an applied statistics and actuarial science major, is taking advantage of performing arts opportunities.

Cover photo by Clay Patrick McBride

On Campus





# Wallace on Ice:

**books,  
bleachers—  
but no  
Zamboni**

**R**IT Libraries has the home-ice advantage for the 2021-2023 seasons.

In a surreal moment in RIT's history, the library has moved to the Frank E. Ritter Ice Arena to remain accessible to patrons during the largest construction project on campus in 50 years.

An extensive library renovation is a major part of the new Student Hall for Exploration and Development (the SHED), made possible through a \$50 million gift from alumnus Austin McChord. The multi-use facility will transform the academic side of the Quarter Mile with a new makerspace and performing arts center that flows into the library.

The ice arena houses all of the library's journals and circulating books, as well as the circulation desk, instruction lab, and inter-library loan department. The remaining space is furnished with student seating and more than 20 computer stations. The library will stay in its temporary home until completion of the SHED in 2023.

Read more about the SHED at [rit.edu/performingarts/the-shed](http://rit.edu/performingarts/the-shed).

**Susan Gawlowicz '95**

## Nicholson leads Tiger athletics

As the first female person of color to lead RIT Intercollegiate Athletics, Jacqueline Nicholson has big plans to take the university's program to the next level.

By building a new strategic plan for the department, focusing on gender equity and Title IX matters, improving student-athlete welfare and accessibility, and working toward formally certifying all university coaches in cultural humility, Nicholson is willing to push people out of their comfort zones.

Her goal is to create an atmosphere where students, faculty, staff, and alumni develop an unmistakable affinity for Tiger athletics.

"I look forward to the opportunity to positively impact students at a university that values academic excellence," she

said. "It's also important that all of us who connect with our students prepare them for life after athletics."

Nicholson spent the last four years as associate athletics director for Academics, Compliance, and Student-Athlete Development at Albany State (Ga.), including a six-month stint as interim director of Athletics in 2019 with the NCAA Division II Rams.

Prior to her time at Albany State, Nicholson spent a year and a half as assistant athletics director for academics at the University of Texas-San Antonio, providing oversight of the academic support services for the 17-team NCAA Division I department, while serving as academic advisor for the men's basketball and track and field programs.

She spent the previous seven years at

Norfolk State (Va.), including five as assistant athletics director for Student-Athlete Academic Services.

"I am eager to work collaboratively with the department's talented team of coaches and administrators to provide a system of support that ensures an exceptional, well-rounded intercollegiate experience for the student-athletes," Nicholson said.

Nicholson grew up in Clayton, N.J., where she was a high school state champion hurdler in track and field and also played field hockey. She went on to a standout running career at Virginia Tech.

Nicholson succeeded Lou Spiotti Jr., the nation's longest-tenured athletics director, who ran the athletics department for 41 of his 47 years at RIT.

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Tim Volkmann





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**Jacqueline Nicholson** started in July. She is the fifth athletics director at RIT.

## What's new

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### Peace Corps Prep

RIT has received the "Peace Corps Prep" designation, enabling its students to take certain classes to better prepare them for service in the Peace Corps upon graduation.

RIT is the first university in Western New York to receive the designation, and fifth in the state.

Students will have the opportunity to design and choose classes that meet the requirements for a certificate from the Peace Corps. In addition, 50 hours of volunteer service will round out their education.

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### CAREER Awards

Three RIT researchers received National Science Foundation Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) Awards this year.

Christopher Kanan, an associate professor in the Chester F. Carlson Center for Imaging Science, received the award to help him expand the capabilities of artificial intelligence systems using new brain-inspired methods.

Rui Li, an assistant professor in the Ph.D. program in computing and information sciences, will develop machine intelligence that can actually grow when given new information.

And Pratik Dholabhai, an assistant professor in the School of Physics and Astronomy, will use the award to conduct fundamental physics research on complex materials in solid oxide fuel cells.

The prestigious awards are designed to help early-career faculty build a firm foundation for a lifetime of leadership in integrating education and research.

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### Two degrees

RIT this fall welcomed its first university cohort of the Combined Accelerated Pathways program. The program offers highly focused, goal-oriented incoming students an opportunity to work toward a bachelor's and master's degree, starting from the first day of classes.

Although RIT has offered dual-degree programs for years, this is one of a handful of such programs nationwide that specifically targets incoming first-year students. Dozens of accelerated degree pathways are available.

# New dean aims to grow College of Liberal Arts

**Anna Westerstahl Stenport** was named dean of the College of Liberal Arts.

Elizabeth Lamark



**A**nna Westerstahl Stenport started as dean of the College of Liberal Arts on Sept. 1.

Before coming to RIT, Stenport was a professor of global studies and chair of the School of Modern Languages at Georgia Institute of Technology's Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts. She was selected as the RIT dean following a nationwide search.

Stenport is an expert in transnational cinema and media, modern literature and drama, and visual and cultural studies, with a focus on the Arctic and Nordic regions.

Her current research, funded by a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, investigates "Visualizing Climate Change

through Arctic Moving Images."

"Liberal arts colleges play a unique and important role within technology-focused universities," Stenport said. "Coming from Georgia Tech, I understand this dynamic, and I look forward to working with the RIT community to further promote growth within the College of Liberal Arts."

Stenport, who holds a Ph.D. in comparative literature from the University of California at Berkeley, succeeds James Winebrake.

Winebrake left RIT in 2020 to become provost and vice chancellor of Academic Affairs at the University of North Carolina Wilmington.

**Shelly Meyer**

# Tigers Connect pairs alumni with students

**W**hile LinkedIn has become a way to develop connections within industry, a new platform designed specifically for the RIT community is creating a professional development bridge between students and alumni.

Tigers Connect, a flash-mentoring platform that officially launched Sept. 27, serves as a one-stop shop where users can create profiles, set preferences, and customize any information that they want shared.

For example, alumni users can self-identify by employer, industry, graduation year, and affinity with campus clubs,

organizations, and athletic teams, among many other identifiers.

Student users can input their majors and areas of interest; post questions to alumni experts through email, direct messaging, and chat functions; search for volunteer opportunities; and request help from alumni with résumé writing, interview tips, and mentoring.

Both user groups can identify themselves as deaf, hard of hearing, or hearing.

The closed platform can also set up students and alumni to connect with one another using discussion boards, video conferences or phone calls,

and link to calendars for easy scheduling.

According to Ron Goldberg, senior director of volunteer and digital programs in RIT's University Advancement division, Tigers Connect is all-encompassing and a tremendous resource for students and alumni looking for opportunities to explore.

"This is another way for the RIT family to find others who have things in common or can help provide a service," he said.

Students' interest in building professional development opportunities was a strong catalyst toward making the system

a reality for the RIT community.

"This internal network will transform the way students find employment and serve as a way in to many of the companies where our alumni work," said Student Government President Lucas Randrianarivelo.

Down the road, according to Goldberg, faculty and staff will be incorporated into the system to create additional mentorship opportunities and connect with alumni in the field.

Learn more at [tigersconnect.rit.edu](http://tigersconnect.rit.edu).

**Vienna McGrain '12 MS**



Dr. Russell Bessette announced a donation of two patents and the creation of the Dr. Russell and Melissa Bessette Award for Doctoral Student Excellence, a \$3.05 million bequest aimed at enriching graduate education.

Photos by A. Sue Weisler

## \$3 million donation benefits doctoral students

During his six-year tenure as executive director of the New York State Office of Science, Technology and Academic Research (NYSTAR), Dr. Russell W. Bessette recalled traveling to virtually every one of the 300 colleges across the state—oftentimes accompanied by his wife, Melissa.



Bessette and his wife, Melissa, recognized the passion and research acumen of RIT students years ago during their early visits to campus.

RIT left a lasting impact on them.

On Sept. 14, the couple came to the university to announce a donation of two patents and the creation of the Dr. Russell and Melissa Bessette Award for Doctoral Student Excellence—a \$3.05 million bequest from which funding will be awarded to doctoral students at RIT.

Bessette spent decades working in government, academia, and medicine. In 2012, he established Know Your Colors LLC, a company that designed a patented system of software tools to help people with chronic illnesses understand their medical test results. The system converts and organizes results from routine blood tests, allowing patients to see an intuitive, composite picture of their health status.

“We are humbled and thankful for the generous gift from the Bessettes that will provide a long-term benefit to our expanding doctoral programs at the university,” said RIT President David Munson.

RIT is also interested in pursuing a pilot

program with a federal or state health agency to deploy a prototype platform based on Know Your Colors. This will form the basis to help develop a system that can be used for broad dissemination.

Bessette said he and his wife recognized the passion and research acumen of RIT students years ago during the couple’s early visits to campus.

“It was striking to both of us how they were doing such vital work and making a real difference in the world,” Bessette said. “We always discussed that everything we had we wanted to go to RIT.”

The award will be given annually to a Ph.D. student for use with research, equipment, living expenses, or other specific purposes.

The Bessettes’ gift is part of Transforming RIT: The Campaign for Greatness, a \$1 billion blended fundraising effort, the largest in university history.

**Rich Kiley**

# About Students





# We're Number 1

## **Men's lacrosse won its first national championship**

in a stunning double overtime classic in May. The 15-14 victory over Salisbury University capped off an undefeated season for the Division III team.

These 2021 Tigers join an exclusive group of RIT national championship teams. The men's hockey team won a Division II national championship in 1983 and a Division III crown in 1985. The women's hockey team won a Division III national championship in 2012.



A. Sue Weisler

RIT welcomed more than 3,350 first-year undergraduate students this year. Total enrollment across all RIT campuses also reached a record high.

## Record-breaking class

For the second consecutive year, RIT welcomed a record number of first-year undergraduate students. More than 3,350 students kicked off their academic careers this fall, up from 3,129 last year.

Ian Mortimer, vice president for Enrollment Management and associate provost for adult and online education, said he believes these numbers are a credit to RIT's distinctive strengths and capacities as a university strongly connected with the needs of the world.

"We are in, and will continue to be in, an era of disruption where employment markets are changing and connectedness to innovation is becoming a requirement in all areas of employment and scholarship," Mortimer said. "RIT's future-focused programs create amazing opportunities for our students to emerge as leaders in technical, creative, research, and services industries. The world's needs and RIT's capacities are nearly perfectly aligned."

Marian Nicoletti, assistant vice

president and dean of admissions, said that the class is the most academically accomplished in the university's history. Last year, RIT joined a growing movement to make standardized tests optional for admission, and while test scores expectedly rose, Nicoletti said the incoming class is more distinguished through metrics such as high school GPA, high school rank, and rigor of curriculum.

"RIT also continues to make strides diversifying its student body with more women and under-represented students," said Nicoletti. "Geographically, 53 percent of the freshman class came from outside New York, with students from 49 states and 38 countries represented."

Total enrollment across all RIT campuses reached a record-high 19,718 students, up 1,050 from last year. On the main campus alone, enrollment jumped to 16,874 students, up 666 from last year.

**Luke Auburn '09, '15 MS**

A close-up photograph of a student working on a ceramic vessel. The student is using a tool to trim a foot into the vessel. The vessel is light-colored and has a finial and two handles. The background shows other ceramic vessels on a workbench.

**Marian Draper**, a fourth-year ceramics major from Rome, N.Y., focuses on making utilitarian vessels out of high-fire, stoneware clays. Recently, she has been creating soup tureens. After throwing and drying, she trims a foot into the vessel and attaches a finial and two handles. She then proceeds to surface decoration, which can include a variety of shapes, textures, and designs. After completely drying her pieces, she bisque fires them before applying glaze and finishing them.



# Rocket flight explores extra-galactic background light

RIT scientists are working to find a definitive answer to how many stars exist in the universe

By sending a Black Brant IX rocket on a 15-minute flight to space and back, researchers from RIT; California Institute of Technology; University of California, Irvine; Kwansei Gakuin University; and Korea Astronomy and Space Science Institute glimpsed traces of light from the earliest stages of the universe.

The Cosmic Infrared Background Experiment-2 (CIBER-2) completed a successful first launch in June at the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico, the first of four planned over the next several years.

Led by principal investigator Michael Zemcov, an assistant professor in RIT's School of Physics

and Astronomy and Center for Detectors, the experiment aims to better understand extragalactic background light, which traces the history of galaxies back to the formation of the first stars in the universe.

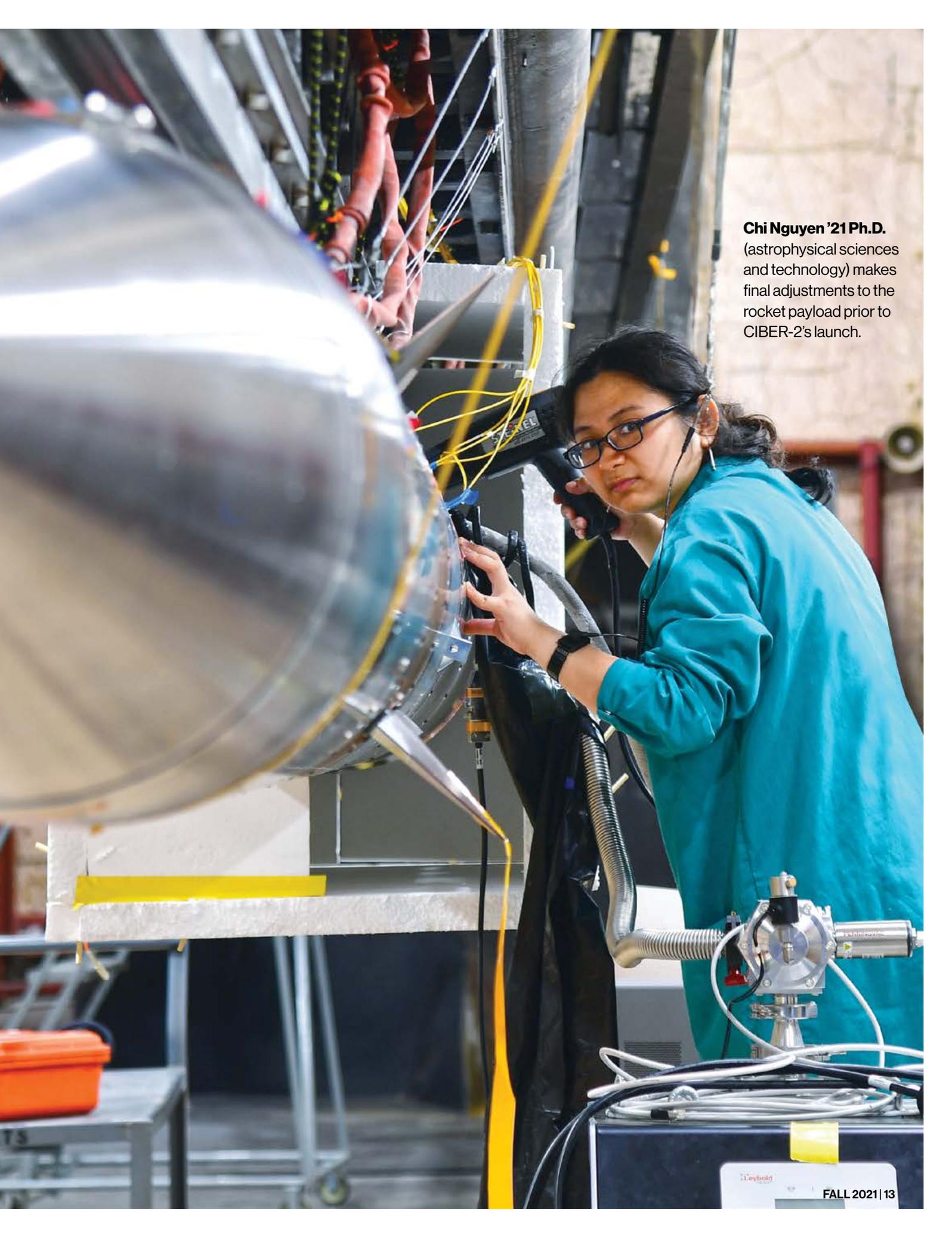
Zemcov said data collected by the study could help resolve discrepancies about how many stars exist in the universe.

"Scientists do this measurement different ways and we're having a really hard time making the results of those different ways agree," said Zemcov. "So there's a mystery going on. Why aren't all these measurements agreeing? I think that CIBER-2 will start to unravel some of that."

The experiment leverages an observational technique called intensity mapping used to study the structure of the universe. The rocket spends 6-7 minutes in space each flight, taking measurements in six infrared wavelengths to help the researchers analyze the diffuse infrared glow in our skies.

Chi Nguyen '21 Ph.D. (astrophysical sciences and technology), whose thesis and much of her graduate career were focused on the project, called building and launching the experiment an incredible learning experience.

"Building our own experiment allowed us to develop a much deeper understanding of what the data



**Chi Nguyen '21 Ph.D.**  
(astrophysical sciences  
and technology) makes  
final adjustments to the  
rocket payload prior to  
CIBER-2's launch.



Dr. Buzz Aldrin  
@TheRealBuzz

I've always believed that the stars in the night sky are snapshots of the past because starlight travels millions of light years to reach us. This mission proves that we're all unknowing time travelers!

NASA @NASA

How many stars are in our universe? A June 6 sounding rocket launch from White Sands, New Mexico, will send an instrument on a mission to detect extragalactic background light, helping to find stars missed in previous counts: [go.nasa.gov/3w1R0y0](https://go.nasa.gov/3w1R0y0)



4:13 PM · Jun 4, 2021

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### On Twitter

Former astronaut Buzz Aldrin praised the CIBER-2 program for its fascinating scientific implications.

### Four RIT researchers

spent time at the White Sands Missile Range preparing CIBER-2 for launch. From left to right: Assistant Professor Michael Zemcov; Mike Ortiz, master's student; Chi Nguyen '21 Ph.D.; and Serena Tramm, Ph.D. student.



Photos by NSROC III/NASA

The morning after the launch, the CIBER-2 team recovered the payload, removed the device, extracted the data for analysis, and shipped the device back to Rochester to make modifications in preparation for the next launch.

means,” said Nguyen. “We built our optics, spent a lot of time characterizing the device, and it all helped me understand how we treat noise from the electronics and photons. This goes way beyond the theoretical physics you learn in class.”

Nguyen is now a postdoctoral researcher at Caltech under Professor Jamie Bock, co-principal investigator of CIBER-2 and Zemcov’s former mentor.

Four RIT researchers spent several months in New Mexico helping to prepare the rocket for launch—Zemcov, Nguyen, astrophysical sciences and technology master’s student Michael Ortiz, and Serena Tramm, an astrophysical sciences and technology Ph.D.

student. The experiment was nearly ready for launch in February 2020 when the pandemic brought the project to a halt. After sitting idle for 15 months, the device just needed a few adjustments during testing and the launch went off without incident.

After launch, the researchers collected the payload, recovered the data from the on-board hard disk, and shipped the CIBER-2 device back to Rochester. The team is analyzing the data and making modifications in preparation for the next launch, expected in summer 2022.

The project is part of NASA’s Sounding Rockets Program, which uses rockets such as the Black Brant IX to carry scientific

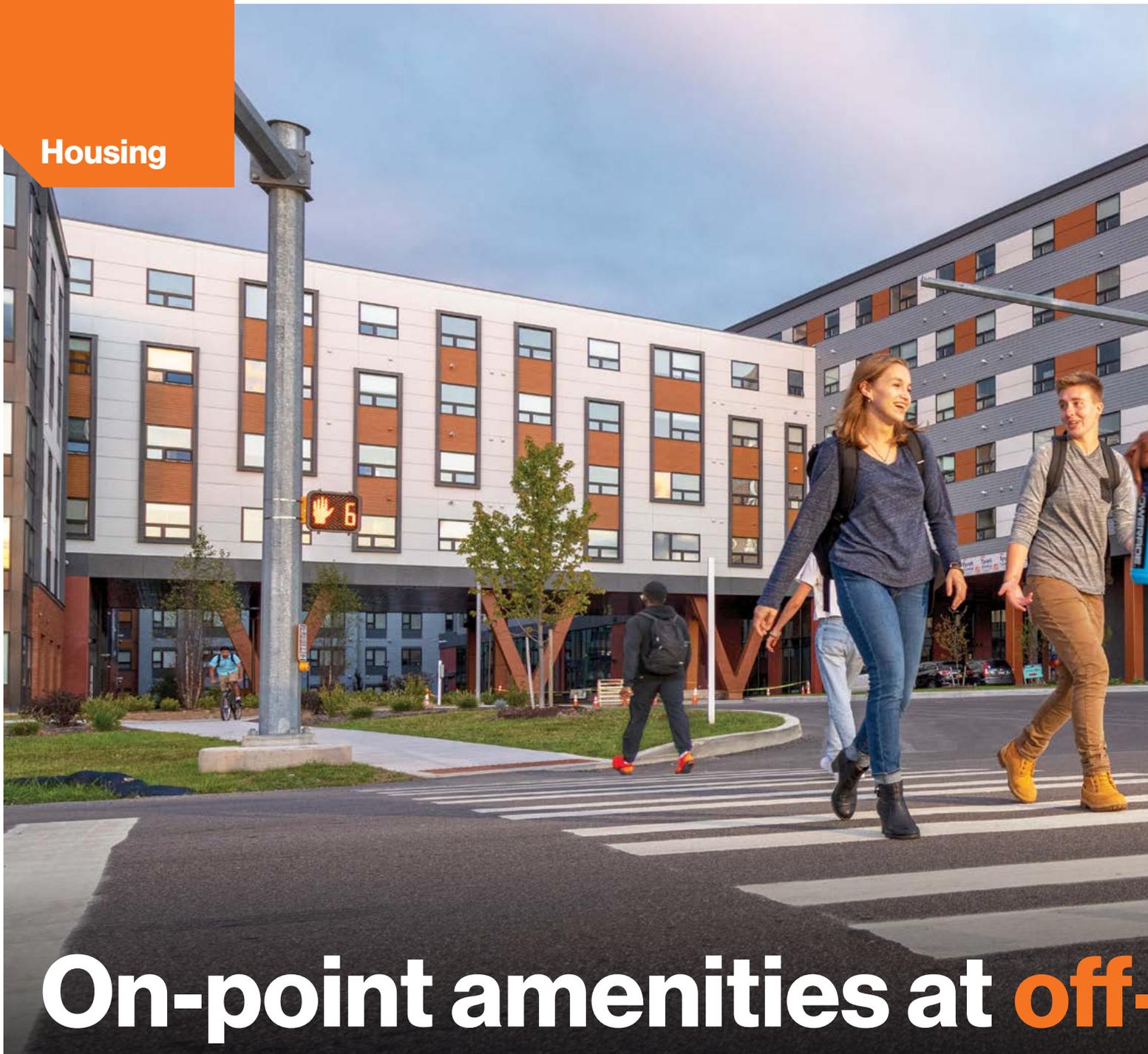
instruments for short sub-orbital flights at low vehicle speeds to carry out experiments. Zemcov called the program an ideal experiential learning opportunity for students.

“I think part of the mission of the sounding rocket program is to be a place where we can train the next generation of space scientists in a relatively low-risk environment,” said Zemcov. “The students get hands-on experience in the details of the engineering and the science and then get to think about how they would transfer those skills to bigger missions. That’s part of why the program exists, and we should remember that.”

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**Luke Auburn '09, '15 MS**

## Housing



# On-point amenities at off-

HOT TUB, ESPORTS ARENA, PRIVATE BATHROOM,

**A**fter living in the RIT residence halls his freshman year, Kenzie Moore was looking for a change of scenery.

The second-year electrical engineering and economics double major wanted a place with no roommates so he could quietly relax after a hard day of classes. He also wanted a full kitchen, where he could prepare his own meals.

Moore found just what he was looking

for—plus a few extra amenities—at the APEX apartment community that opened this fall adjacent to RIT's campus.

"They have an outdoor hot tub open year-round, which will be really nice in the winter," said Moore, who is from San Jose, Calif. "It also has a dedicated esports arena, equipped with 12 top-of-the-line rigs, for anyone looking to play video games at a competitive level."

This 1,200-bed apartment complex—and four others like it—are part of a changing housing landscape near RIT. In fact, more than 4,000 RIT students now live in large off-campus housing communities that have recently popped up close to the university.

While these communities on the edge of campus are not owned and operated by RIT, they are part of a university plan more than 15 years in the making. With a growing



**Five large housing** communities close to campus have become popular options for RIT students.

**APEX** is the newest off-campus complex. It opened in 2021 on the site that used to be Colony Manor.

# -campus housing

IN-UNIT LAUNDRY, FIRE PIT, FITNESS CENTER, PETS

student population, RIT leaders began partnering with local and nationally recognized university housing developers to help meet the increasing demand and provide exciting new options that students want.

“With capital allocation, there is a limit to how much debt a university can take on to fund its many competing needs in academics, co-curricular life for students, research, athletics, and housing,” said

James Watters, senior vice president for RIT Finance and Administration. “By allowing outside organizations to build and run these off-campus housing projects, we can better utilize our debt capacity to make strategic investments that improve life on campus.”

Currently, RIT is upgrading athletics facilities, designing a performing arts theater complex, and constructing the

Student Hall for Exploration and Development (the SHED) at the center of campus, among other projects.

The university has also made investments in its on-campus housing, adding new buildings to the Global Village suites and renovating part of Riverknoll. About 6,800 students currently live in RIT-owned and operated housing, which is guaranteed for first-year students.

# Housing



An esports arena for competitive video gaming is one of Kenzie Moore's favorite amenities at APEX apartments.

A. Sue Weisler

## By the numbers

**6,800** students living in RIT-owned housing.

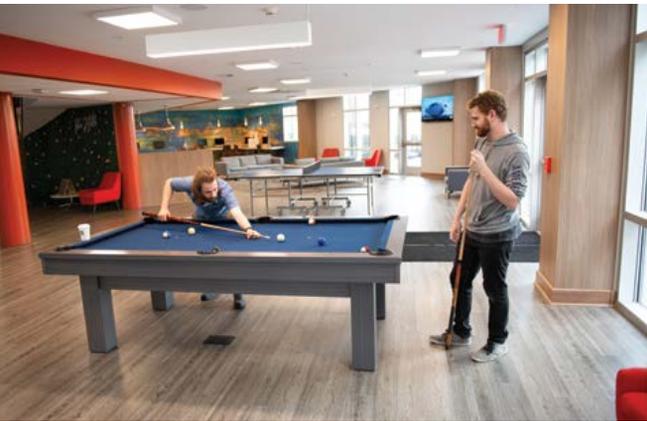
**+8,000** students who live off-campus.

**35 percent** increase in full-time enrollment at RIT's main campus since 2000.

**5** large apartment communities built near RIT in the past 15 years.

**\$960** per month average cost of a two-bedroom off-campus apartment near RIT.

**\$165 million** economic impact RIT students and visitors make in New York state each year, according to a 2019 study from the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities in New York.



Boris Sapozhnikov

Clubhouses and game rooms can be a great place for students to socialize after classes. Hayden Orr, left, and Samuel Bowerman play pool at The Hill.

A favorite amenity for students are pools and hot tubs, like this one at The Hill.



Boris Sapozhnikov



Many of the off-campus apartment communities are pet friendly and some even have a dog park. Megan Helf and her dog, Gerald, enjoy a study room at The Hill.

However, for many, living off-campus has benefits that RIT housing is just not able to provide. Off campus, students can find housing that has competitive rates, private bathrooms for each tenant, in-unit laundry, pools, different furnishings, fitness centers, and allows pets.

For Moore, the prospect of having an esports arena on-site was a game changer.

"The owners saw how big the esports community is at RIT

and decided this was an amenity they could make happen," said Moore, who actually helped organize the esports arena and works as an assistant community manager for the RIT Esports club. "It's going to be a good gathering place and fun space for holding tournaments."

Some of the more recent changes in housing began around 2008, when Park Point opened a 900-bed complex on the northeast corner of campus. RIT retains long-term control of

this land, which sits within the main "superblock" of campus.

"We have an interest in maintaining high standards for any of these developments immediately close to RIT," said Watters. "Students residing in these facilities need to be safe, treated well, and have the tools to be successful. Transportation is also a key part of the discussion, with several of these facilities participating in the university bus system and reimbursing their share of the cost."



Elizabeth Ferrari has loved cooking ever since she was a child, so having her own **full kitchen** to prepare meals was a must. She also has a **private back patio** at The Lodge and lives right next to the **outdoor basketball court**.



Boris Sapozhnikov

In 2009, a developer opened The Province apartment complex on private property across the street from Park Point. That same year, RIT chose to sell its Racquet Club apartment buildings, located about a mile south of campus.



Boris Sapozhnikov

**RIT campus (A)** sits about a mile north of **The Hill (C)**—which was formerly RIT-owned and known as Racquet Club—and **The Lodge (D)**. **Park Point, The Province, and APEX (B)** are on the east side of campus.

The buildings were renovated, expanded, and renamed The Hill at Rochester. On property next door, a developer built a community of townhouse-style apartments called The Lodge.

Most recently, RIT sold its Colony Manor apartments to developers that leveled the property and opened the seven-story APEX apartments in 2021.

Henrietta Town Supervisor Stephen Schultz '89 (computer science) said he sees these changes as a win for the town that's home to RIT. Some of the housing communities are not exclusive to students and can provide a good residence for people working in the area, while others in close proximity to campus focus on student

living with additional benefits to the town.

"The off-campus apartment projects in the immediate vicinity of the campus have been great, as they almost all offer a shuttle service, which helps the community by reducing the number of cars on the road heading to campus," said Schultz. "I also hope that the growth in convenient and quality student housing apartments will reduce the demand for college students renting individual houses within family neighborhoods, which can create a lot of issues due to the different lifestyles of students and families."

Of course, many students choose to live in other places around Rochester—from trendy houses on Park Avenue in the city to other apartments in the Henrietta area.

Elizabeth Ferrari and her twin brother, Chris, commuted to school their freshman year while living at home in Spencerport, N.Y. For their second year, they both wanted to live closer to RIT. He chose to live in RIT housing at University Commons, while she and her friend got an apartment at The Lodge.

"I need that little bit of separation from campus, so I can get into a different mental space when I lay my head down at night," said Elizabeth Ferrari, a third-year accounting major. "I also love that my place is a townhouse with its own front door and backyard patio."

Ferrari and her roommate enjoy longboarding around the complex at night and cooking their own meals—a mix of comfort and healthy foods. Ferrari has her own car, which comes in handy when she goes shopping at Wegmans or wants to stop by campus.

"I'll even make extra food to bring to my brother," Ferrari said. "I think he really appreciates having a home-cooked meal once in a while."

**Scott Bureau '11, '16 MBA**



# Making Magic in Real Time

RIT educates tomorrow's experts in

A massive LED wall displays a stirring scene in which a helmeted actor mounts a prototype electric motorcycle before it appears to speed off down the highway. Meanwhile, a team of advertising company artists works with 3D digital design students alongside engineering, motion picture science, and film and animation peers to seamlessly produce the action.

While it might sound like something that could only happen inside a Hollywood film studio or a production stage in New York City, the video for RIT's Electric Vehicle Team was produced on campus last

spring using the latest in virtual production (VP) technology inside MAGIC Spell Studios—RIT's world-class digital media research and production facility.

VP blends filmmaking, 3D graphics, computational photography, and real-time game engine rendering to produce in-camera visual effects similar to those seen in the groundbreaking work on Disney's *The Mandalorian* and Marvel's *Avenger* films.

"Virtual production represents a sea change in the way content is being created today," said Aaron Gordon '13 (film and animation), founder and CEO of Optic Sky Productions, a commercial and digital

experience advertising company borne from RIT's Venture Creations business incubator in 2015.

A multidisciplinary team of RIT students and faculty, together with Optic Sky, collaborated with EPIC Games, creators behind Unreal Engine and popular video games such as *Fortnite*; THE THIRD FLOOR (TTF), an award-winning visualization studio co-founded by Chris Edwards '97 (film and video production); and Production Resource Group (PRG), one of the leading providers of entertainment and event technology.

"Because MAGIC has such a strong



Sebastian Nazario-Colon/RIT student

**Start** **In studio**  
Virtual production allows filmmakers to make movies with actors, lighting, and visual effects all shot live, in-camera using LED walls. At left, Sullivan Slentz '14 (film and animation) experiments with camera angles for a virtual production video made in MAGIC Spell Studios on campus.

## virtual production



Still from Optic Sky Productions

**Finish** **On screen**  
This image comes from the final 4K video that is the culmination of weeks of work. The video was created for the Electric Vehicle Team at RIT. See the full video at [bit.ly/EVTvideo](http://bit.ly/EVTvideo).

### Stills from the final footage

The video, which featured a yet-to-be-manufactured electric superbike, was shot entirely in MAGIC Spell Studios and was used to teach students the technical know-how of virtual production.



### In-camera view

A monitor shows the live, in-camera visual effects made possible by virtual production technology.

Sebastian Nazario-Colon /RIT student



Stills from Optic Sky Productions

educational component, it is fostering research and development with partners like us that other studios can't do because it's not the business model," Gordon said. "For us, MAGIC has changed the game completely because we have both a research partner and a studio partner helping to bring virtual production to our clients."

David Long, MAGIC Center's director, explained that VP uses on-set displays to create in-camera visual effects. Compared

with more traditional methods, like green screen compositing, VP can save weeks and often months in post-production.

"Real-time responsiveness and creativity is why it's so cool now and gaining so much attention," Long said, noting that RIT is in a unique position to educate tomorrow's experts in virtual production. "We are in an exclusive club that is training the future technologists and engineers, alongside the artists."

Last year, a grant that Long co-wrote with Shaun Foster for the development of a multi-departmental Virtual Production curriculum (using Unreal Engine) was funded by Epic Games. The curriculum has enabled RIT students to learn and research state-of-the-art techniques at MAGIC.

Foster, undergraduate program director of 3D digital design, had already been leveraging his own grant from Epic Games to explore and develop dynamic virtual content that has opened the eyes of many to the software's possibilities. As part of the grant funding, he launched a new course called Cinematography and Pre-visualization during the spring 2020 semester.

One of his former students, Noah Mesh '21 (3D digital design), credits Foster's class with playing a key role in helping him land a job last summer as a previsualization artist at TTF.

"Shaun Foster's 'previz' and cinematography class first exposed me to what previsualization is all about—its function as well as the basics of cinematography and storytelling," Mesh said. "Previz is definitely heavy on animation, so I also was excited to have taken animation classes while at RIT."

Today, as a previsualization artist, Mesh said he is building 3D-animated scenes based on storyboards and scripts developed for the project to which he's assigned.

"More specifically, we place virtual lights, cameras as well as real (digitized actors), and CGI (computer-generated imagery) characters in virtual environments and then animate them to create a high-quality conceptualization of each shot that needs planning," Mesh said.

"It's complementary to 'real-time virtual production' with big LED walls, using similar tools and techniques, just at a pre-production stage in the project," he added.

Foster currently is teaching a previsualization and virtual production course that connects to 3D digital design's emerging specialty in "real-time 3D" using the Epic



Trisha Pickelhaupt '21

### Correcting the composition

Aaron Gordon '13 (film and animation), left, and Sullivan Slentz '14 (film and animation), both with Optic Sky Productions, assess composition for the foreground motorcycle and background virtual environment.



## Pivotal VP players

During the motorcycle project, **Mark Reisch**, assistant professor in the School of Film and Animation (SOFA), was instrumental in assembling the virtual art department and researching the virtual set pipelines for the production.

He worked closely with adjuncts **Tim Stringer '19** (film and animation) and **Emily Haldeman '19** (film and animation), who work for Optic Sky. Together, the dynamic trio set up and ran all virtual elements of the production.

**Frank Deese**, a SOFA assistant professor, was a key contributor to grant writing that helped RIT earn a \$435,000 megagrant from Epic Games. He also consults on elements of VP story structure.

**Jennifer Indovina**, adjunct faculty, contributed virtual camera research and was key to bringing the Electric Vehicle Team together with Optic Sky to conceptualize the video.

### Learning experience

Students Carla Bello, left, and Malcolm Zale receive camera instruction from freelancer Dave Maslyn.

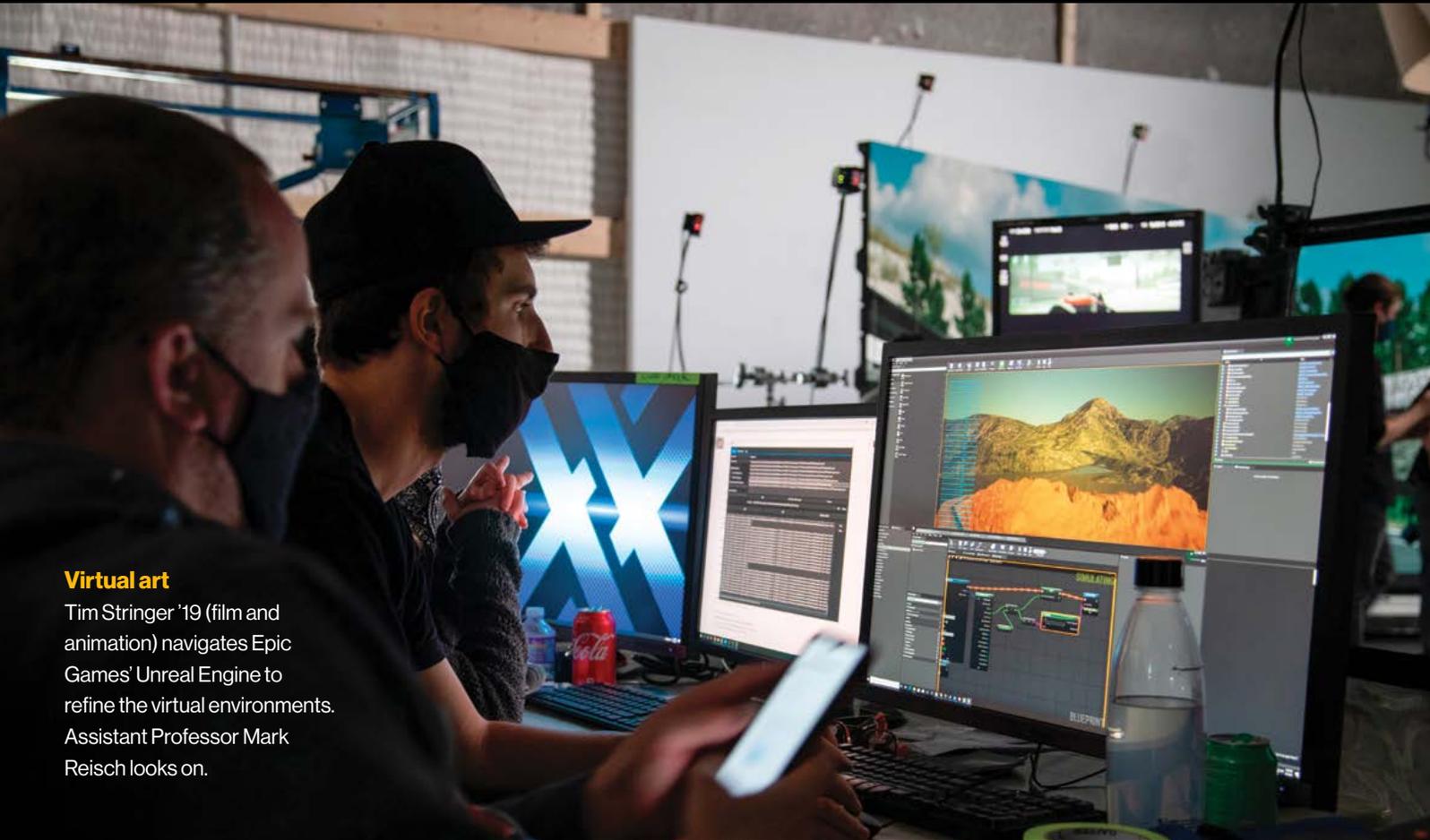


Sebastian Nazario-Colon /RIT student



### LED display wall in action

Students Simon Yahn, Dallas Calkins, Malcolm Zale, and Johnny Gates observe camera operation.



### Virtual art

Tim Stringer '19 (film and animation) navigates Epic Games' Unreal Engine to refine the virtual environments. Assistant Professor Mark Reisch looks on.

Sebastian Nazario-Colon /RIT student



Sebastian Nazario-Colon /RIT student

Games Unreal Engine. He's also taught a previsualization course with virtual production elements for the past two years. During the spring, Long and Flip Phillips from the School of Film and Animation co-taught their own virtual production class, which overlapped heavily with Foster's.

Long said a top goal for MAGIC is to be able to teach on these platforms "so building a curriculum around them and showing the students from multiple programs how to use the technology is vital to our mission."

Todd Jokl, dean of RIT's College of Art and Design, points to virtual production as one more example of the growing number of learning opportunities inside MAGIC Spell Studios for students in a wide range of disciplines at the university.

"VP is not just for movies," Jokl said. "It points to RIT's progressive view of how a wider range of disciplines such

as photography, imaging, and generated experiences are converging."

Jennifer Hinton, MAGIC's associate director, said successful advertising companies like Optic Sky and Mountain House Media are prime examples of "companies that are raising an ecosystem of economic development in the region by growing the economic impact of digital media production in Rochester," including the hiring of RIT co-ops and graduates. The founder and CEO of Mountain House Media, Jeremiah Gryczka, is a former Gap Year Fellow and a 2019 graduate from RIT's School of Individualized Study.

For its part, PRG officials expressed pride in "supporting the next generation of production, technology and cutting-edge creatives who are integral to the future of our industry," said Andrea Vestrand, an account executive with the company.

**Rich Kiley**

Since its inception, the Golisano College of Computing and Information Sciences has become one of the largest and most comprehensive computing colleges in the nation, spanning the breadth and depth of the field.

A lot has changed, but RIT has always been on the forefront of the evolving computing world. Here are some highlights.



**1972**  
One of the first universities to offer an undergraduate degree in computer systems (later computer science).



**1996**  
An undergraduate program in software engineering, the first of its kind in the U.S., is established.



**2001**  
The idea for the computing college is launched on Feb. 7 when RIT received a \$14 million gift from Tom Golisano. **The Golisano College of Computing and Information Sciences is formed on July 1.** The building breaks ground in October.



**2002**  
Jorge Diaz-Herrera named founding dean of GCCIS.

**1998**  
Google is founded.



# From floppy disks to the cloud

## RIT's Golisano computing college turns 20

In 2001, the dot-com bubble was bursting and investors had lost confidence in internet companies.

At the same time, RIT was going all-in on a future in computing. The university had just announced that it would create one of the first comprehensive computing colleges in the nation—the Golisano College of Computing and Information Sciences (GCCIS).

“Anyone who was into technology at the time knew that the dot-com bubble was just a momentary setback,” said Gus Weber ’02 (information technology), who attended the GCCIS groundbreaking in 2001. “Data, computing, and the web were not going to get any less important in our world.”

Twenty years later, technology stocks are soaring, network infrastructure allows people to video chat and access electronic health records, data has become a new currency, and people can access just about anything from their smartphones.

Throughout all these changes,

GCCIS has evolved into the largest college at RIT, with more than 4,600 students this year. Since its creation 20 years ago, GCCIS has awarded more than 14,000 degrees—in a growing number of computing disciplines.

Weber, who is now senior vice president of Customer Data, Marketing, and Analytics Technology at Fidelity, said that throughout his career he has hired a lot of these RIT alumni.

“When I was at RIT, all the experiential learning and co-ops that I did set my expectations for the next 50 years of computing,” said Weber. “GCCIS is constantly evolving, just like the industry. That combination prepares RIT students to hit the ground running on day one of the job.”

RIT has always been ahead of the curve in computer education. The university offered a computer systems degree in 1972, back when most computers were the size of

a room and personal computers were still in their infancy. Computing had uses in engineering, mathematics, and science,

“

**GCCIS is constantly evolving, just like the industry. That combination prepares RIT students to hit the ground running on day one of the job.**

”



**2003**

GCCIS building opens in May 2003.

The Dean's Lecture Series is established, bringing experts like internet pioneer Vint Cerf to talk at RIT.

**2004**

The free and open-source web browser Firefox 1.0 is released.



**2005**

Former President Bill Clinton tours the new college and talks about getting more young people into science and technology.

**2006**

A Ph.D. program in computing and information sciences is launched. This marks RIT's third Ph.D. program.

**2007**

The iPhone is invented.



**Women in Computing**

**2008**

The all-inclusive Women in Computing group is created to help diversify the industry.

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Jim Montanus





A. Sue Weisler

**Hackathons** have become a favorite way for GCCIS students to collaboratively create outside of the classroom.

but it was also becoming a distinct discipline.

“It was an incredibly exciting time, because the field was evolving every day,” said Evelyn Rozanski, Professor Emerita, who worked at RIT for 43 years. “But, RIT had the foresight not to put all its marbles in one basket.”

Computer science began splitting into specialty areas. In the 1980s, Rozanski started

using computers for animation and created RIT’s first course in computer graphics. Later, she co-developed a master’s program in human-computer interaction.

By the late 1990s, the secret was out. About half of the students in RIT’s College of Applied Science and Technology (CAST) were in computing majors, and the dean at the time, Wiley McKinzie, began to plant the seeds for GCCIS.

“We were bursting at the seams—students were literally lining the hallways because the growth was so explosive,” said Jeffrey Lasky, Professor Emeritus, who retired in 2019 after 36 years at RIT. “Wiley foresaw that

with a new space to house our several computing programs, synergies would arise to create even more exciting computing programs for our students.”

McKinzie worked with Lasky and other leaders from computer science, software engineering, and information technology to write a concept paper calling for the creation of a new college. Then, RIT President Al Simone presented the opportunity of investing in a new computing college at RIT to founder of Paychex Tom Golisano.

It didn’t take Golisano long to consider what that might mean for Paychex and people around the world. With a \$14 million gift from the philanthropist, the college was launched, it got a name, and the university began constructing a 126,000-square-foot building to house state-of-the-art labs and facilities.

“It was apparent 20 years ago, in my conversations with RIT leadership, that a college dedicated to innovation and learning in computing and information sciences would be indispensable,” said Golisano. “This is a field that impacts almost all aspects of our lives. It is rewarding to see how the college has evolved.”

Today, the college has 23 degree programs and advanced certificates—along with offerings at RIT’s global campuses—that span the breadth and depth of computing. All students start with a comprehensive background in computing. Then, they get to expand on different areas, including computing security, game design and development, and many others.

The college also hearkens back to its history of teaching computing as a tool for other areas of study, by offering service courses to non-computing majors. GCCIS now offers an immersion for non-majors in Principles of Computing.

“Computing is for everyone and it’s become a fundamental skill like reading, writing, and math,” said Anne Haake, dean of GCCIS. “It wasn’t 20 years ago, but it is now.”

Haake said that the college has always had a reputation for predicting the next big thing.

The master’s in data science has become one of RIT’s most popular online programs, just as Glassdoor named data scientist one of the top jobs in America for 2021. And in a time when the cybersecurity talent drought continues to get worse



**2009**  
The School of Interactive Games and Media is founded. The school has been ranked a top video game design and development school by The Princeton Review.

**2010**  
*Angry Birds* becomes a top-selling mobile game.

**2011**  
IBM’s Watson artificial intelligence defeats *Jeopardy!* contestants.



**2012**  
Andrew Sears named the second dean of GCCIS.

The college forms its computing security department, dedicated to protecting computing devices and data.



**2013**  
The college’s cyber defense team wins the National Collegiate Cyber Defense Competition. April 21, 2013

**2014**  
Heartbleed bug is uncovered as a serious security flaw.



nationwide, RIT has created a 15-week professional training bootcamp to help people start entry-level careers in cybersecurity.

Sponsored research for faculty and students continues to grow, too. Currently, GCCIS researchers are using artificial intelligence to advance non-invasive personalized healthcare for heart diseases, while others in the college are developing new technologies to make large-scale software systems more secure, faster, and more reliable.

“We know what industry needs because of our students and alumni,” said Haake. “They tell our faculty that they want to learn about a new area, and our college makes it happen. That’s what keeps us competitive and moving forward.”

**Scott Bureau '11, '16 MBA**

Read about five notable GCCIS alumni on the next page ▶



Elizabeth Lamark



Elizabeth Lamark

**Global Cybersecurity Institute**, which opened in 2020 attached to GCCIS, focuses on training the next generation of cybersecurity professionals.



**2016**

RIT Esports is formed. Ever since, RIT is among the top schools in competitive video gaming, having won several national championships.



Anne Haake named third dean of the college.



**2018**

MAGIC Spell Studios facility opens, where students can produce interactive media.



**2019**

The iSchool is formed, housing degrees in IT, human-computer interaction, user experience, and more.



**2020**

Global Cybersecurity Institute opens, adjoining GCCIS.



**2021**

RIT students take down three-time defending champion Stanford University to win the university's first Collegiate Penetration Testing Competition trophy.



# Notable alumni

Golisano College of Computing and Information Sciences

## Mixed-reality pioneer

As a technical fellow at Microsoft, Alex Kipman '01 (software engineering) is bringing mixed reality to life.

His passion led to creating the Kinect motion-sensing input device in 2010, for the Xbox. Kipman continues with the HoloLens products—the world's first fully self-contained augmented reality device that displays holograms users can manipulate over the real world. Most recently, Kipman announced Microsoft Mesh, a mixed-reality platform for collaborative experiences—allowing users to interact and feel physically present with each other, even when they're not.

Kipman was named National Inventor of the Year in 2012 and received a Smithsonian American Ingenuity Award in 2019.

## Games industry veteran

For Anna Sweet '04 (computer science), a career in gaming has been a lifelong pursuit.

She was a founder of RIT's Electronic Gaming Society and one of the first students to enroll in video game development classes. After graduation, she worked on the Xbox team at Microsoft, led the business and product strategy for the Steam games platform at Valve, led content strategy at Oculus for the launch of the Rift, and has been an advisor to venture capitalists investing in gaming.

In 2020, she was named CEO of Bad Robot Games—the game division of JJ Abrams' entertainment company—where she aims to constantly reinvent the way stories are played.

## Square revolution

As co-founder of the digital payment company Square, the late Tristan O'Tierney '08 (computer science) helped revolutionize the mobile payment process for small retailers.

O'Tierney developed the original iPhone application for Square and joined Twitter creator Jack Dorsey in co-founding the company in 2009. The electronic payment service allows people to accept credit cards with a square-shaped card reader that attaches to a tablet or mobile phone. O'Tierney died in 2019.

## Katie Linendoll '05

(information technology)

is a popular on-air personality and technology expert.

## Emmy Award-winning tech expert ▶

Katie Linendoll '05 (information technology) travels the world seeking out innovative stories on cutting-edge science and technology.

Audiences might recognize her reporting and frequent appearances as a tech contributor on the *Today* show. She is also a regular consumer tech expert on *Rachael Ray*, *The Weather Channel*, *CBS Sports Radio*, and on her own digital series "Technically, Katie."

Linendoll launched her television career on RIT's *SportsZone* program, which led to a permanent position where she won an Emmy Award as associate producer for ESPN's *SportsCenter*. She credits RIT's Mark Fragale and James Watters for her step into the media world.

## Creator of jQuery

Just about anybody navigating the internet encounters John Resig's work—whether they know it or not.

When he was still a student, Resig '05 (computer science) became frustrated with how hard it was to write cross-browser JavaScript, so he created his own library to fix the problem.

In 2006, he released jQuery, a free and open-source library that simplifies HTML document traversing, among other things. It's now a dominant part of modern web development, with 77 percent of the top 10 million websites using it.

Today, Resig is chief software architect at Khan Academy, where he works to provide a free education to everyone, everywhere.



The truth about how alumni giving makes a **BIG impact**

# Test your Tiger IQ



1

## MYTH

*I can only give a small amount to RIT, and that won't make an impact.*

## REALITY

### There's power in numbers.

Last year, more than 2,700 alumni gave \$100 or less, providing over \$152,000 to help support an unprecedented need for scholarships, experiential learning opportunities, and more. With 94% of full-time undergraduate students receiving financial assistance, **your support is critical.**

2

## MYTH

*My gift won't make a real day-to-day difference.*

## REALITY

While RIT carefully plans and allocates budgets, **annual gifts from alumni help cover unplanned expenses** from emergency needs to new initiatives. These funds go to work immediately and give flexibility—for example, they help a college dean fund an innovative student group idea or an athletics team purchase new training equipment.

3

## MYTH

*With nearly 140,000 alumni, RIT doesn't need me.*

## REALITY

**Did you know that only 4.9% of alumni gave last year?** Giving at any level helps increase RIT's alumni participation rate and national rankings. That boosts the value of YOUR degree. Any amount counts.

**Just think...if every alum gave \$10 each—that would total to more than \$1.3 million.** Talk about an impact! And, all gifts made during Transforming RIT: The Campaign for Greatness are included in each donor's campaign giving total.

Now that you know the facts.

**Choose to make a difference.**

**Give every year. Make a difference every day.**  
[rit.edu/TigersGive](http://rit.edu/TigersGive)

# SETTING THE

# STAGE

## FOR THE PERFORMING ACADEMIC

**R**IT students have never had as many ways to pursue their love of performing arts than they do now.

From scholarships, new clubs and classes, private music lessons, community partnerships, and exciting new venues being built on campus, performing arts for RIT students is literally becoming a show stopper.

RIT is well on its way to developing the leading performing arts program in the nation for non-majors, attracting talented and creative students who can continue their passions for music, dance, theater, and other performing arts.

RIT President David Munson has said the best students are students who are also involved in performing arts, which allow them to think creatively. It not only helps the students, but that experience gives them a leg up with prospective employers who seek the best, well-rounded candidates who can think creatively in a variety of situations.

This year, RIT welcomed a record 457 new students with a performing arts scholarship. That's up from 366 scholarships awarded to new students in 2020, and 126 in 2019, the first year the scholarships were offered. The partial scholarships are renewable for up to five years, as long as the students stay involved in performing arts.

Disciplines listed for this year's newest scholars are voice, strings, brass, musical theater, percussion, dance, woodwinds, acting, guitar, technical production, piano, jazz, video game composition, and commercial music.

They come from all of RIT's colleges, with the majority from engineering

and computer sciences.

David Hult, director of the Performing Arts Scholars Program, calls the scholarship recipients "talented, bright, highly motivated, self-starters, high achievers, disciplined, and academically gifted. They are truly an impressive group of students and want to leave space in their lives for the performing arts."

For years, students have been able to take private music lessons at RIT. But now, they can also learn more about the music industry by taking a class called Tiger Records, which focuses on artist management, recording, production, and marketing.

RIT also has partnered with outside experts. Last summer, RIT and its National Technical Institute for the Deaf began a partnership with Garth Fagan Dance for a "cooperative-creation-connection."

In its 50<sup>th</sup> year, Garth Fagan Dance is an internationally acclaimed contemporary American dance company based in downtown Rochester. Its founder, Garth Fagan, may be best known for his Tony and Olivier award-winning choreography for Disney's *The Lion King*.

The opportunities for performing artists on campus will continue to grow with the addition of two new buildings.

The Student Hall for Exploration and Development (the SHED) is currently under construction and set to open in the fall of 2023. The building will house a performing arts component that includes individual rehearsal spaces, a large dance instruction studio, and a music rehearsal studio. A black-box/glass-box theater seating 180 can be reconfigured to allow for,

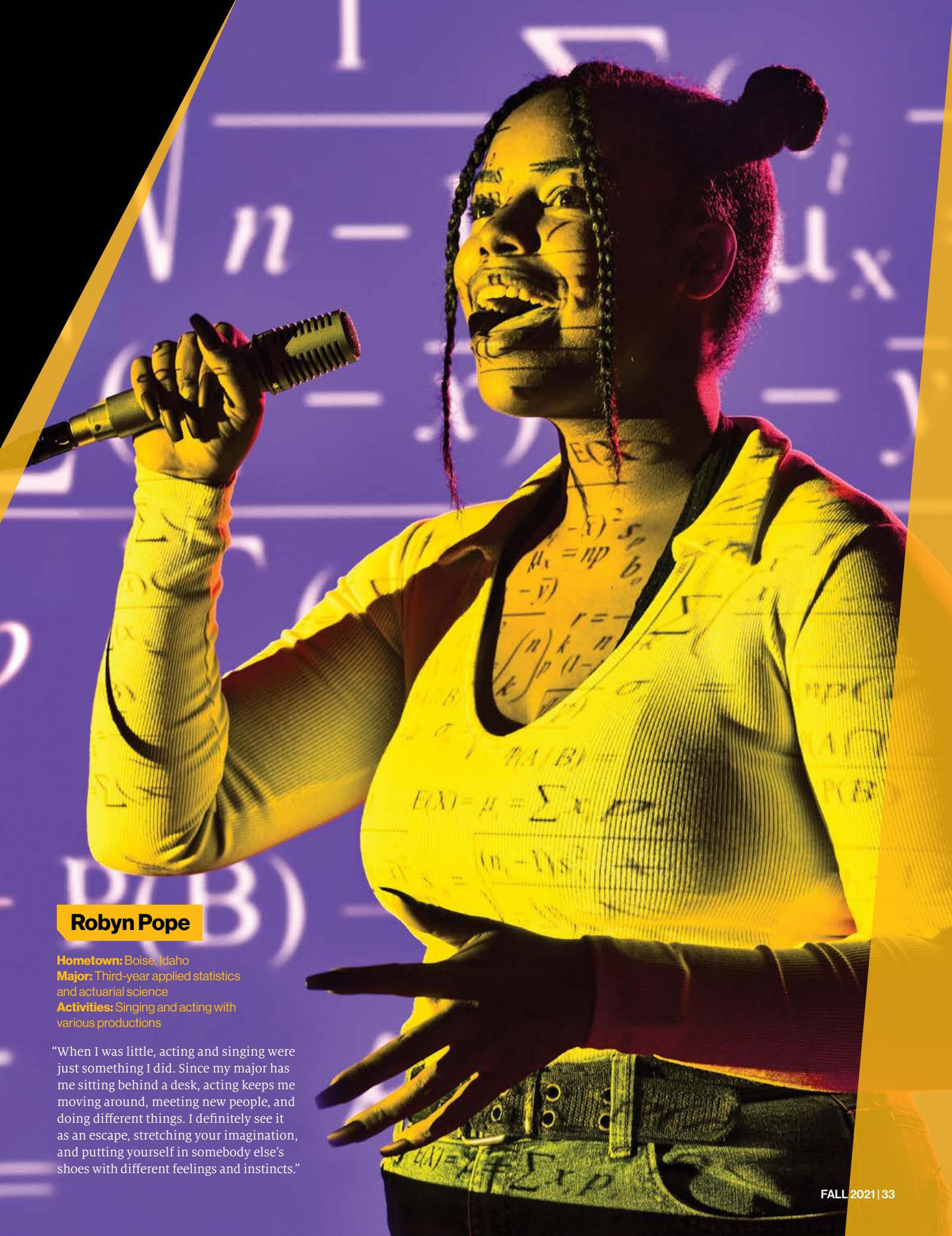
or block, light into the space.

And the first phase of a new performing arts complex is also planned to open in 2023. Its first phase is an 800-seat theater for musical productions and will include a historic pipe organ. The second phase will include a 1,500-seat orchestra hall for larger audiences.

**Greg Livadas**

On the pages that follow, meet some of the students who are thriving by combining their creative passions with their academic ambitions.

Photos by Clay Patrick McBride



## Robyn Pope

**Hometown:** Boise, Idaho  
**Major:** Third-year applied statistics and actuarial science  
**Activities:** Singing and acting with various productions

“When I was little, acting and singing were just something I did. Since my major has me sitting behind a desk, acting keeps me moving around, meeting new people, and doing different things. I definitely see it as an escape, stretching your imagination, and putting yourself in somebody else’s shoes with different feelings and instincts.”

## Serena Rush

**Hometown:** Silver Spring, Md.

**Major:** Second-year psychology

**Activities:** RIT Drama Club and various productions

“When I grew up, I always loved the theater. My family is very strong in theater. We’d see shows all the time, even RIT’s deaf theater, which has very visual, very powerful stories in sign language. Sign language is my first language. Acting gives me an escape from reality. It allows me to let go from who you are. You don’t have to worry about anything, just follow the script and enjoy your time on stage.”



## RJ Pearsall

**Hometown:** Malone, N.Y.

**Major:** Third-year motion picture science

**Activities:** Vice president of Velocity;  
RIT's Urban Dance Crew

"Dance has always been a special way of communicating for me. It's a language that allows me to share feelings and ideas that would otherwise go unsaid. I started doing little performances for my family when I was about 6 years old. Later, I would dance just about anywhere I could get an audience: school dances, talent shows, the cafeteria. RIT has been the first place I've had a community of people to dance with, and being able to share the art with others is one of my favorite aspects of dance."



## Andrew Dey

**Hometown:** Long Pond, Pa.

**Major:** First-year computer science

**Activities:** RIT Philharmonic Orchestra, RIT Concert Band, RIT Jazz Band

"I always loved the arts and wanted to express myself. Sometimes it's just getting my emotions out there, not just being in front of a computer. With computer science, I spend a lot more of my time isolated in my room putting together my code and documentation and getting the program to run. I don't get to interact with others. Sometimes I like to engage with others, and playing before an audience does that."



**Emily Ruddell**

**Hometown:** Warrington, Pa.  
**Major:** Second-year chemistry  
**Activities:** RIT Flute Ensemble,  
RIT Wind Quintet

“I’ve always been into math and science, but I really do enjoy the arts and playing instruments. It’s a nice way to get out of the math and science mindset and get into something a little bit more expressive and creative.”



## Eli Anderson

**Hometown:** Boise, Idaho

**Major:** Second-year mechanical engineering

**Activities:** RIT Philharmonic Orchestra

“I grew up listening to folk music and developed a love for strings. It’s just something that is emotional. I think there’s a lot that can be expressed in music that is difficult to express otherwise. And being a part of an orchestra is like being part of a team, especially when you know the others and have that same connection.”

## About the photographer

**Clay Patrick McBride**, a senior lecturer in the School of Photographic Arts and Sciences, College of Art and Design, joined RIT in the fall of 2014. He is widely recognized in the photo industry for his striking portraits of top athletes and musicians. His portraits of such celebrities as LeBron James, Kanye West, and Norah Jones have adorned the pages of *Rolling Stone* and *Sports Illustrated*, and leading record companies.

Check out a behind-the-scenes video of McBride working with the students on this project at [rit.edu/performingacademic](http://rit.edu/performingacademic).

# Your gift provides **unrestricted possibilities.**

*Become a member of the **Sentinel Society**.  
Make a direct, immediate, and substantial  
impact on RIT students.*



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“We want to be able  
to help others reach  
their full potential...”

—Manu Mathew BS '94, MS '94  
and Soni Sayana BS '93

Sentinel member giving provides vital funding that impacts students in meaningful ways every day. Your annual, unrestricted, five-year pledge of support gives RIT the flexibility to address our highest priorities and seize new opportunities. Your Sentinel support enables us to be responsive to the changing needs of our students and our campus, fueling the success of Transforming RIT: The Campaign for Greatness.

Founding Sentinel Society members Manu Mathew BS '94, MS '94 and Soni Sayana BS '93 were inspired to give back to RIT after visiting campus to take part in the RIT 365 program for first-year students. “We want to be able to help others reach their full potential,” they said. “Everyone’s contributions will inspire the next generation to aim high, further strengthening RIT’s standing in a global landscape. If others can be given a chance for a bright future, then our gift is worth every penny pledged.”

**Sentinel members are turning aspirations into achievements.** Learn more about how you can be a member by visiting [rit.edu/sentinel](https://rit.edu/sentinel) or by calling 585-475-5500.

**RIT** | Sentinel Society

**RIT**

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Assistant Professor Eli Borrego joined RIT in 2019 to help the university expand into new areas of research related to genomics and agriculture. He has a small plot of land on campus, where he conducts genomics research on maize.



# Growing Diversity

Faculty recruitment program,  
new strategies aim to  
improve representation

While tending to corn crops in a small plot of land on the south end of campus, Assistant Professor Eli Borrego is pushing RIT into new territory. As he pollinates maize lines with broken genes, he is laying the foundation for years of research studying hormones and their roles in agriculturally important processes.

Borrego is an expert in the genetics and biochemistry of plant-microbe and plant-insect communication and ecology. RIT recruited him to help the university expand into new areas of research related to genomics and agriculture.

“I think there’s nothing more important than helping to feed the world,” Borrego said. “We also need to show people, especially the next generation, that agriculture is more than just crops and cows. For students who are interested in molecular biology and biochemistry, you can use sophisticated approaches—genomics, transcriptomics, metabolomics, and lipidomics—on agricultural crops.”

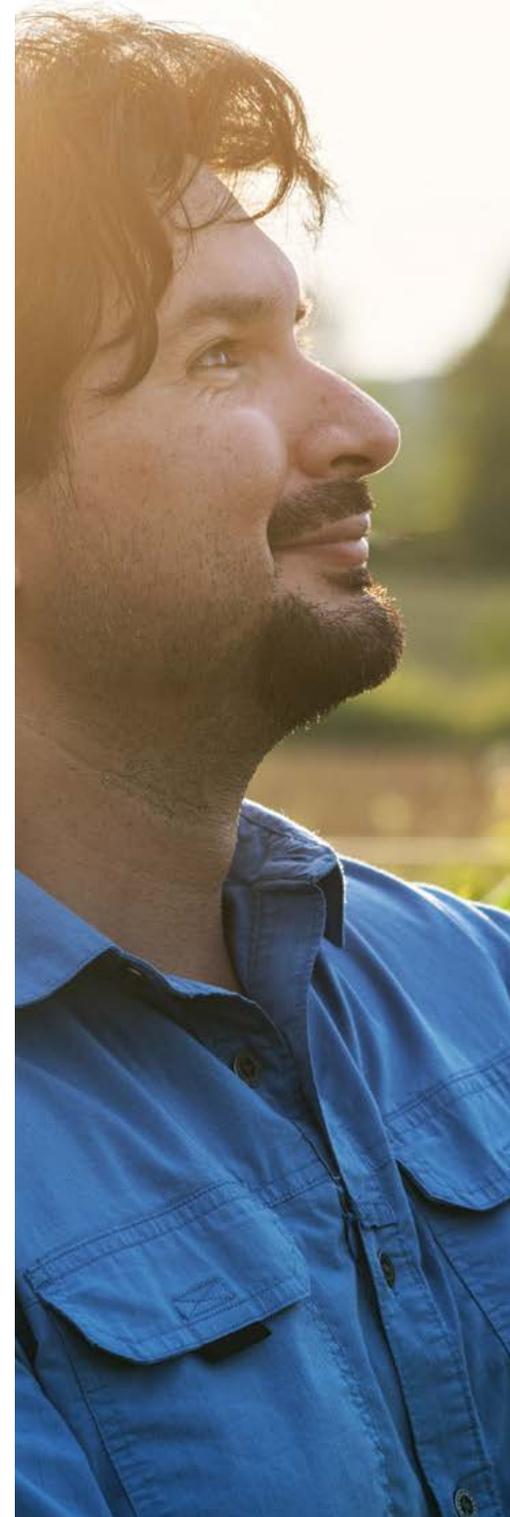
Borrego might not have come to RIT without the Future Faculty Career Exploration Program (FFCEP). FFCEP is a rigorous four-day program designed for African American, Latino American, and Native American (AALANA) scholars and artists to experience a behind-the-scenes glimpse into life as a faculty member at RIT.

Each year, 20 to 25 participants spend time learning from and networking with RIT administration, faculty, and students, practicing interview skills and research presentations while exploring the research, teaching, and service expectations of RIT faculty.

Borrego was an assistant research scientist at Texas A&M University when he participated in FFCEP in 2018. He said one of the most important people he met was Professor André Hudson, head of RIT’s Thomas H. Gosnell School of Life Sciences.

It was a chance for Borrego to showcase his expertise and for Hudson to explain the university’s emerging research interests. The relationship they established helped lead to Borrego joining the College of Science in 2019.

“André’s been a great mentor and influence,” Borrego said. “He recognizes that my program is a long-term investment. And actually, I was kind of terrified about living in the north because of the cold and snow. But he said, ‘I’m from Jamaica. If I can make it here, anyone can.’”



Keith Jenkins, RIT’s vice president and associate provost for Diversity and Inclusion, said that intentional efforts like these to help attract diverse scholars are crucial to the university reaching its potential.

“Fundamentally, what research has shown is that diverse work teams are more creative, innovative, and generate greater ideas and outcomes than those that are less diverse,” Jenkins said. “Our strength rests in our diversity. Whether as a department, as a college, as a university, or as a society, there is no way to get around it. We need it.”



Elizabeth Lamark

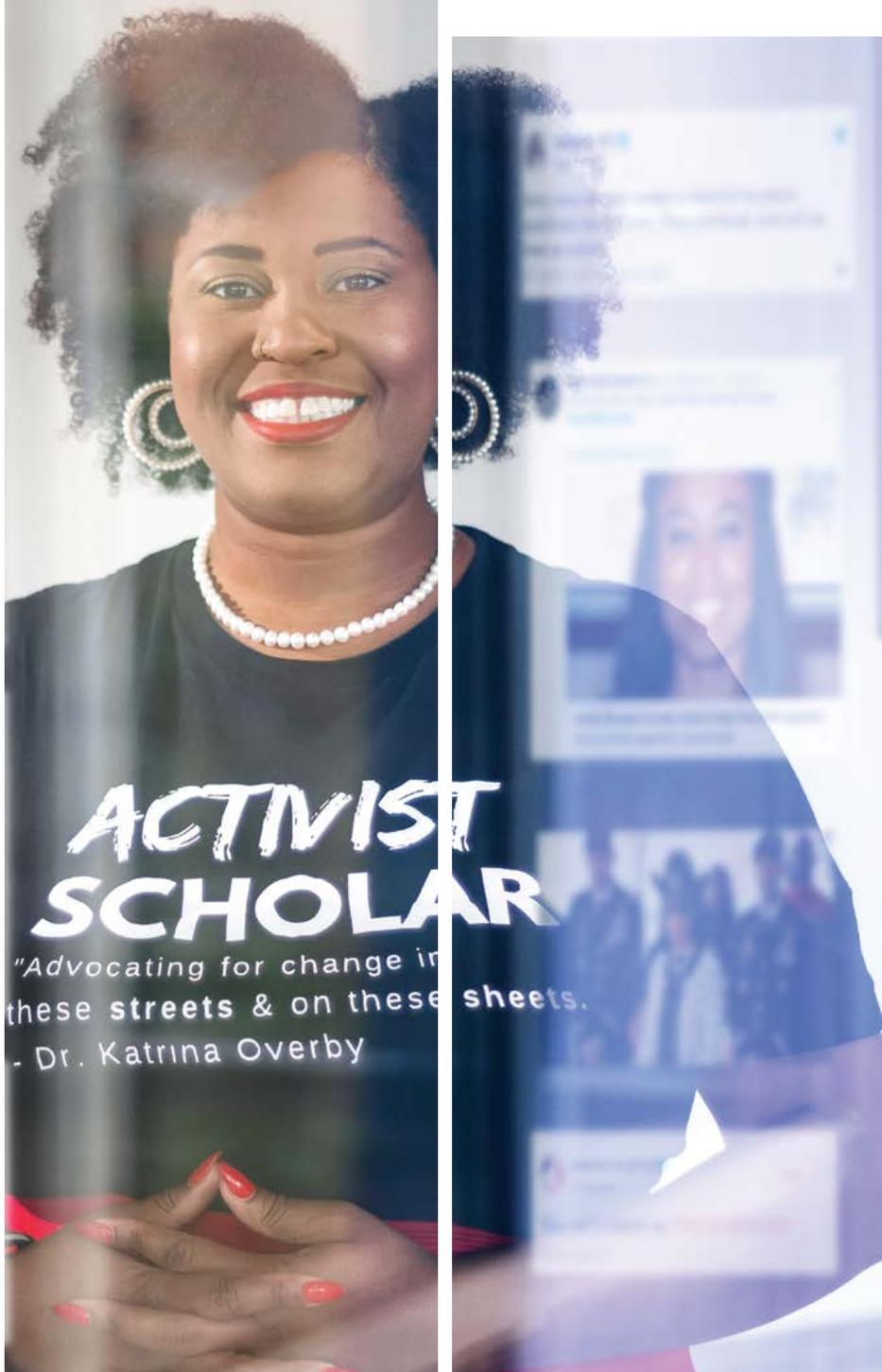


Borrego pollinates maize lines with broken genes, laying the foundation for years of research studying lipid-derived hormones and their roles in agriculturally important processes.

### Action Plan for Race and Ethnicity

The plan will guide RIT's efforts over the next several years as it rolls out new programs, services, and policies to help create equal access, opportunities, and respect for all students, faculty, and staff. One of the plan's three key pillars focuses on faculty and staff recruitment, retention, and advancement. Some of its strategies include bolstering personnel and funding support for the Office of Faculty Diversity and Recruitment, requiring inclusive hiring training for people on search committees, and building new relationships with historically Black colleges and universities, Hispanic serving institutions, and Native American scholars initiative universities. To view the plan, go to [rit.edu/actionplanforraceethnicity](http://rit.edu/actionplanforraceethnicity).

Assistant Professor Katrina Overby joined RIT's School of Communication in the College of Liberal Arts as a postdoctoral researcher in 2019 and transitioned to a tenure-track faculty role this fall.



**A growing need**

While faculty diversity has increased some at universities across the nation over the past several decades, the growth in student diversity has far outpaced it. A study from the National Center for Education Statistics showed that in fall 2017, 76 percent of postsecondary faculty were white, but only 55 percent of undergraduate students were white.

In the fall of 2020, 75 percent of RIT faculty were white, while 62 percent of RIT

undergraduate students were white.

This summer, the university unveiled a new Action Plan for Race and Ethnicity, a series of initiatives aimed at making the university more diverse, equitable, and inclusive.

One of the three key pillars of the plan focuses on faculty and staff recruitment, retention, and advancement.

The plan outlines several strategies for the university to roll out over the next three

years aimed at helping to close the gap in diversity between faculty and students.

Lorraine Stinebiser, director of faculty diversity and recruitment, said closing the gap won't be easy.

"Faculty diversity is on the radar of every single institution," Stinebiser said. "There has been a growing number of recruitment programs offered, including recruitment models similar to FFCEP. There's competition all around. We need

to continually work on developing new relationships and programs.”

FFCEP has long been an important avenue for RIT to grow diversity in the faculty ranks. Launched in 2003, the program has hosted hundreds of AALANA scholars since its inception, 23 of whom—including Borrego—have joined RIT’s faculty ranks.

Donathan Brown, assistant provost and assistant vice president for faculty diversity and recruitment, said he and his team work hard to prepare program participants for their next step—whether it is at RIT or somewhere else.

“In my mind, it’s not enough to engage you about RIT if I’m not providing at least some guidance about how to apply to RIT and beyond,” said Brown. “Our conversation is not only about RIT, who we are, what we do, and our current faculty and fellowship opportunities. We also talk about creating competitive faculty applications.”

Assistant Professor Katrina Overby participated in the program the same year as Borrego, joined RIT’s School of Communication in the College of Liberal Arts as a postdoctoral researcher in 2019, and transitioned to a tenure-track faculty role this fall.

“Each year the program is building a cohort of people who have something in common and they don’t know where those relationships can go,” said Overby. “So, as a byproduct, RIT is instrumental in sort of creating space for groups of minority scholars to come together and learn from one another and encourage each other.”

Overby has a wide, interdisciplinary range of research interests that include Black Twitter, social media and culture, African American cinema, race and identity in television and popular culture, sports media, and the scholarship of teaching and learning.

She said she still keeps in touch with many of her fellow FFCEP participants and has collaborated with some on research, brought them to guest lecture in her class, and may even start a podcast with a fellow participant.

Overby said the program is important because it closely mimics the job interview experience in a lower stakes environment. She said she wishes more universities offered programs like it because it helps undermine the false assumption many search committees have that there are not enough quality diverse candidates.

“FFCEP says they’re here and we’re going to bring them to you to show you the quality of scholars that are out there that you may be overlooking,” she said. “RIT has a model program that should be mimicked elsewhere at other institutions.”



## Minett Professorship celebrates 30<sup>th</sup> year

A long-running program that brings distinguished Rochester-area multicultural professionals to share their knowledge and experience with the RIT community reached a major milestone this year.

Perry Ground, an educator and storyteller from the Turtle Clan of the Onondaga Nation, became the latest person to serve as Frederick H. Minett Professor 30 years after the yearly appointment began under former RIT President Albert J. Simone.

Ground becomes the second Native American individual to hold the title of Minett Professor, following G. Peter Jemison from 2007-2008. The first person to serve the role was Wyoma Best, a former local news reporter and anchor and vice president of marketing and communications for the Rochester Chamber of Commerce.

Others who have served as Minett Professor include former mayor of Rochester William Johnson (1993-1994) and retired Kodak chemist and member of the University of the State of New York Board of Regents Walter Cooper (1996-1997).

This fall, Ground will offer public lectures about topics related to Native American history and culture. In the spring, he hopes to teach classes on the Native people of New York through the Haudenosaunee worldview, and on Native American storytelling, pulling perspectives from different tribes from across the country.

“It’s wonderful that RIT is bringing in various cultures from around the greater Rochester area to campus to try to connect the campus community with the local cultural communities,” Ground said.

**Building a community**

The Office of Faculty Diversity and Recruitment (OFDR), led by Brown and Stinebiser, supports the faculty search process by working with search committees to increase the diversity in candidate pools for every posted faculty search.

Since Brown assumed his role in 2019, OFDR has built a scholars network of more than 700 women and AALANA faculty, post-doctoral researchers, and MFA and Ph.D. students from more than 140 universities across the country. When a faculty opening at RIT is posted, OFDR engages with search committees to identify AALANA and women scholars for referral by querying the scholars network, as well as other resources of diverse scholars offered by organizations such as the Southern Regional Education Board and The Ph.D. Project.

Brown said his office has been able to quickly build its scholars network by not relying on the annual or biannual conference as its sole method of faculty recruitment.

“Such a passive approach exposes us to risks that are outside of our control, such as failing to engage excellent and diverse scholars and artists who simply cannot afford to attend,” said Brown. “My vision is to meet people where they are on college campuses. We are engaging predominantly white institutions who graduate the highest number of women and AALANA graduates in the areas we serve at RIT, in addition to historically Black colleges and universities, Hispanic serving institutions, and Native American scholars initiative universities.”

While the pandemic has limited in-person outreach, Brown and Stinebiser have been using Zoom to meet with prospective faculty. They rolled out a new Pathways to RIT virtual program that engaged nearly 70 scholars and artists in an academic open house. They also launched the #IamRITfaculty social media campaign to celebrate RIT’s diverse scholars in a personal and professional manner.

In addition to recruiting diverse faculty, another key factor for RIT’s goal of improving faculty diversity is ensuring that AALANA scholars stay and thrive.

Marcos Esterman, a professor in the Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering, believes that comes from creating a positive campus climate and a strong culture of mentorship, particularly for young scholars.

Esterman was part of the first ever cohort of FFCEP in 2003. He was one of three participants to join RIT as faculty, along with Associate Professor Robert Osgood from the biomedical sciences program and Associate

Professor Edward Brown from the Department of Biomedical Engineering.

Esterman said when he was asked to participate in FFCEP, he was working at Hewlett Packard and had no intention of making the move from industry to academia.

“My view of academia at the time was that an academic career would be something I would eventually retire into,” said Esterman. “When I was invited, I viewed it as a networking opportunity, as a chance to learn more about the academy, but I was very happy with my role at HP and saw very little chance of making a move. Obviously, that’s not what transpired.”

He said when he visited RIT, he found a tight-knit community that looked out for one another. He was intrigued, and after talking with other diverse faculty members who had moved from industry to academia, he realized he should not wait until retirement to make the change. Since then, he has climbed the faculty ranks and served as the university’s faculty associate to the provost for AALANA faculty from 2013-2019.

“Certainly there are systemic things we can do to help retain diverse scholars, but to me that department head to faculty relationship is key,” said Esterman, who was promoted to full professor this fall. “If you have good foundations there supported by good mentorship within the college and someone feels welcomed, it will go a long way.”

**Unique challenges**

Back in his office in Gosnell Hall, Borrego reflects on what helped him and what universities need to do more of to further diversify faculty. While there are many systemic issues that need to be addressed, he said the roots of some of those problems extend all the way back to grade school.

“I’m a first-generation college student and academia is so far removed from my culture, my community, and my background,” he said. “By the time I was in high school, my parents couldn’t help me with my studies and applying to college was even more difficult.”

He said AALANA scholars are more likely to be first generation and underprivileged, so they need early resources and especially excellent mentors to understand how the academic game is played and to prepare them for it.

Borrego also noted a recent study led by University of Colorado-Boulder scholars found that tenure-track faculty are 25 times more likely to have a parent with a Ph.D. than the general population, and that faculty with Ph.D.-holding parents are more likely to be employed at elite universities.



The Office of Faculty Diversity and Recruitment, led by Donathan Brown, top, and Lorraine Stinebiser, bottom, supports RIT’s faculty search process by working with search committees to increase the diversity in candidate pools for every posted faculty search.



Illustrations by Sarah Keane



Furthermore, he noted that many of the key stepping stones to becoming a faculty member are unavailable to those who cannot afford them.

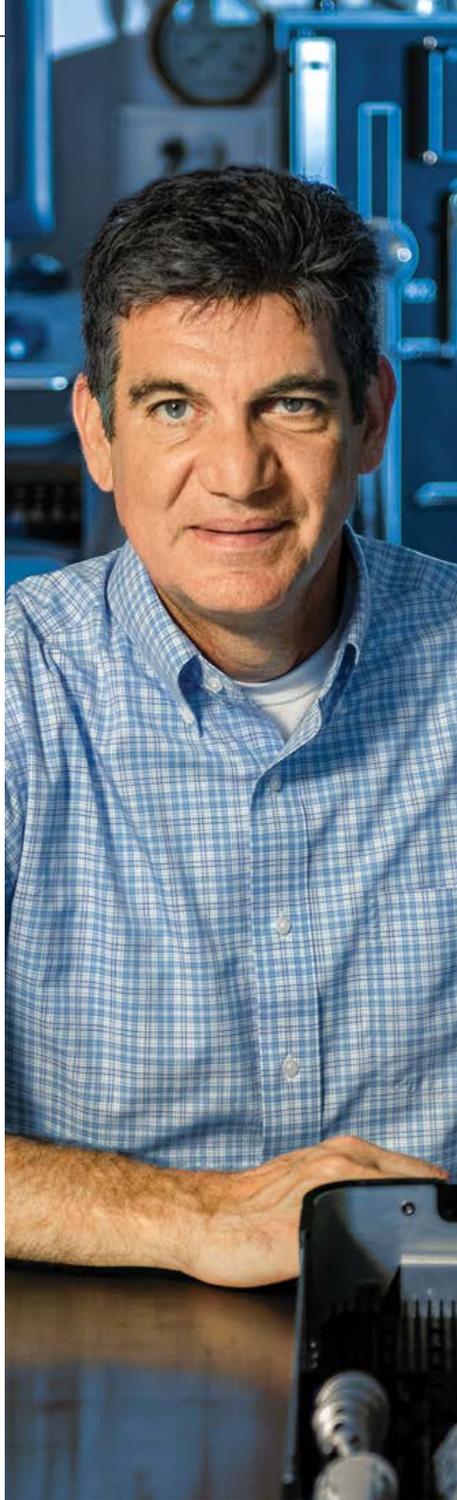
“There are opportunities to get research experience and potential publications as an undergrad student, but many are through unpaid internships that unless you’re already able to afford not working, you can’t participate,” Borrego said. “There are also paid summer internships, but sometimes you don’t even know that they exist and that you should be applying for them. The reason I’m here is because my undergraduate and graduate mentors told me to go do these things, gain these experiences, and I said, ‘OK.’ I am very grateful to them.”

Borrego said he’s also grateful for programs like FFCEP that helped him find a home where he can do meaningful work in a positive environment.

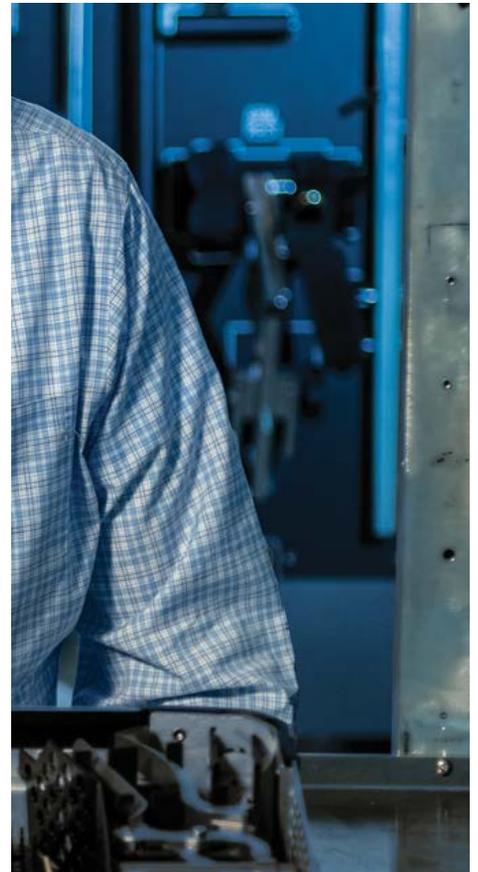
“Everyone here is really friendly and that’s something I wanted—a community that was interacting with each other,” said Borrego. “Since I do agricultural work and that’s an area that RIT wants to move into, it’s been a great opportunity to jump in at the initial level, help guide the areas they need, and start my research program.”

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**Luke Auburn '09, '15 MS**



Marcos Esterman, now a full professor in the Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering, was part of the first ever cohort of the Future Faculty Career Exploration Program in 2003.

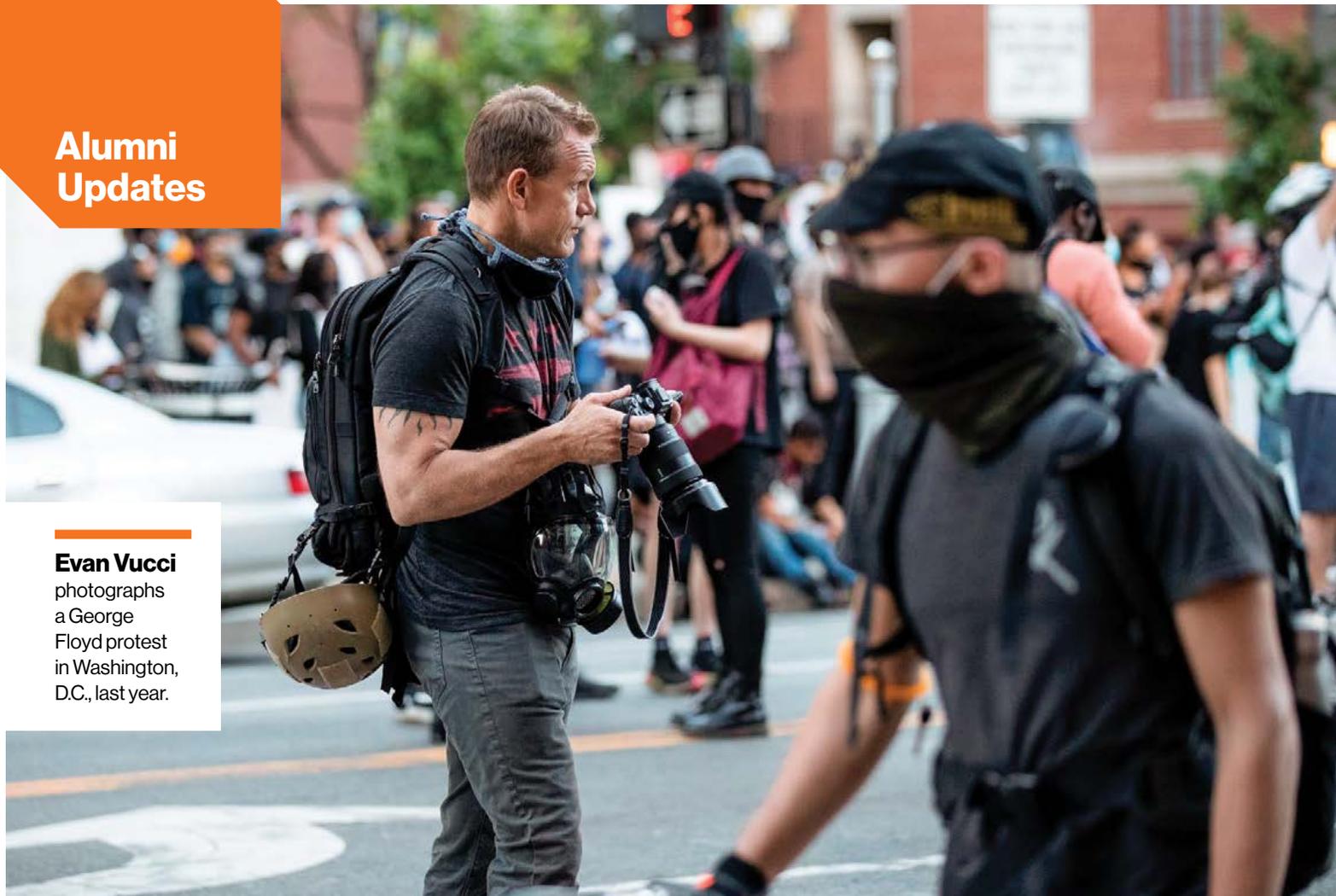


Elizabeth Lamark

### Transforming RIT: The Campaign for Greatness

The campaign is RIT’s \$1 billion fundraising effort, the largest in university history. The first pillar of the campaign focuses on attracting exceptional talent. One of the campaign’s goals is to increase underrepresented faculty proportional to the number of underrepresented students, since students are more likely to thrive in a setting where there are faculty with whom they can identify. This blended campaign seeks support from a variety of investors, including alumni and friends, government and corporate partners, and research foundations and agencies. To learn more, go to [rit.edu/transformingrit](http://rit.edu/transformingrit).

**Evan Vucci**  
photographs  
a George  
Floyd protest  
in Washington,  
D.C., last year.



AP Photo/Alex Brando

# Vucci

joins growing list of graduates to win

# Pulitzer Prize

**W**hen Evan Vucci '00 (professional photographic illustration) was recognized as part of a 2021 Pulitzer Prize-winning team in June, he joined an ever-growing list of journalism's top award winners with an RIT education.

The chief photographer for the Associated Press (AP) in Washington, D.C., helped the AP photography staff win the top prize in Breaking News Photography for a collection of compelling photographs from multiple U.S. cities that cohesively captures the country's response to the police killing

of George Floyd. Vucci becomes one of 11 RIT graduates who have now won a combined 15 Pulitzer Prizes.

"When they announced the award, I couldn't believe it," said Vucci, who watched the awards ceremony virtually from his D.C. home with his wife and two daughters. "It was very special; my wife took a video with my kids. It was a really nice moment."

"I'm not much of an awards guy, but I was very happy and proud—especially watching it with my family," he added. "I was shocked how happy I was."

Vucci had two photos submitted among the 10-member AP photo team judged on 20 images. One of his photos from June 4, 2020, shows demonstrators protesting in the driving rain near the White House in Washington, D.C.

Another powerful shot captures demonstrators overturning a car on May 31, 2020, as they protest the death of Floyd, who died after being restrained by Minneapolis police officers.

The Olney, Md., native, who joined AP as a photographer in 2003, said he was



AP Photo/Evan Vucci

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### Demonstrators overturn a car

on May 31, 2020, as they protest the death of George Floyd, who died after being restrained by Minneapolis police officers. This photo was part of the Pulitzer Prize-winning entry.



AP Photo/Evan Vucci

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### Demonstrators protest

in the driving rain near the White House on June 4, 2020. The photographer, Evan Vucci, is one of 11 RIT graduates who have won a combined 15 Pulitzer Prizes.

particularly honored because “one day we’ll look at 2020 the same way we did 1968 as far as American history.”

“It’s exactly why you want to become a photographer, especially why you want to become a photojournalist, to do this kind of work truly documenting history,” he said. “To see that recognized is unbelievable, and to achieve that with your friends and peers is even better.”

While it’s been more than two decades since graduating from RIT, Vucci said he continues to hearken back to his days at

the university and credits former School of Photographic Arts and Sciences (SPAS) chair Bill DuBois with giving him the passion for photography he still carries with him today.

“His excitement for photography was infectious—he made it fun with his passion,” Vucci recalled. “I knew right away I made the right decision to get into photography, and that I was in the right place.”

William Snyder, SPAS professor, a four-time Pulitzer winner, and the former director of photography at *The Dallas Morning News*, said RIT’s extraordinary photo school

faculty with its diverse experience and teaching styles sets the school apart.

“At RIT, we have literally dozens of faculty who have a significant influence on photojournalism students’ style and perspective,” he said. “The photojournalism program has embraced that variety and versatility of style with its strong focus on storytelling, which allows students to develop their own unique voice and vision. That’s what separates us—and our alumni like Evan—in our work.”

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**Rich Kiley**



Deborah Stamps '18 (EMBA) was named president of Rochester Regional Health's new College of Health Careers. Stamps led the charge to establish the college, which welcomed its first cohort of nursing students in March 2021.

A. Sue Weisler

## Alumna establishes College of Health Careers

Executive MBA alumna Deborah Stamps '18 was named president of Rochester Regional Health's (RRH) new College of Health Careers. Stamps led the charge to establish the college, which welcomed its first cohort of nursing students in March 2021.

In 2016, RRH made an investment to grow the Isabella Graham Hart School for Practical Nursing program, which was established in 1964. The goal was to provide a seamless progression for students, in which they could graduate as a practical nurse and continue their education in the nursing associate of applied science program to become a registered nurse, then move on to obtain a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree.

Stamps, who serves as RRH's executive vice president and chief nursing education and diversity officer, approached the New York State Education Department about establishing a college within RRH.

She put a plan of work together, developed a strategic approach, and organized

programming before submitting an application in January 2020.

Once the program was approved by the state, more than 200 students applied.

"Our College of Health Careers is opening doors and changing lives," said Stamps. "We are laser focused on taking members of our community and having them change where they are today. We are truly invested in our students' success."

Stamps was a member of the Nursing Leadership Program, designed by RIT's customized executive education program to raise the leadership level for a select group of nurses at RRH. After the program, Stamps chose to continue her education and pursue an EMBA from RIT.

"I don't think there's one part of the MBA that I didn't apply when establishing the College of Health Careers. It's about understanding the finance, the accounting, the marketing plan—all those components came together."

The new college will offer two programs—the long-standing Isabella

Graham Hart practical nursing program and a nursing associate of applied science program. Stamps said her goal is to grow the college while promoting diversity and healthcare equity.

"It's multi-faceted. We have a diverse community, and a community with a very high poverty rate. We're not only impacting the workforce for the community by educating more nurses, but we're educating them in a way that they can pass that knowledge on to their families to make better healthcare decisions. But through education we can also impact poverty. It's like a trifecta, I'm really proud about that."

When reflecting on her time at RIT, Stamps thought back to the faculty who shaped her education.

"Even now, some of the faculty have reached out to me after hearing that we've started the college to see if there's anything they can do to help. You get the sense that you weren't just a student there."

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Shelly Meyer



James Frederick '03 MS (environmental, health, and safety management) was appointed deputy assistant secretary for OSHA as part of the Biden administration.

Lacey Johnson

## Advocate for worker safety helps lead OSHA

When news was announced that RIT alumnus James Frederick was named deputy assistant secretary for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), many in industry praised the selection because of his skills and unwavering advocacy for workers.

OSHA is one of 26 departments in the U.S. Department of Labor, and Frederick '03 MS (environmental, health, and safety management) became an integral part of the agency after he was appointed in January by President Joe Biden.

Frederick is seen as a “leader of intellect and empathy,” according to Tom Conway, president of United Steelworkers.

“There is no stronger advocate for worker safety in this country than Jim Frederick,” Conway said. “He brings to OSHA not just a deep commitment to safer workplaces for all Americans, but the expertise and experience to get the job done right.”

That expertise is built on more than 30 years as an environmental, health,

and safety management professional.

Prior to his current work, Frederick was the assistant director and principal investigator for the United Steelworkers union’s health, safety, and environment department, one of the country’s largest and oldest unions.

He has seen how safety professionals have contributed to workplace improvements, and he’s held on to the philosophy that employees themselves provide keen insights into workplace safety.

More environmental management staff are being embedded in all types of organizations. Frederick sees these individuals as key to making workplaces safer.

“No one knows more about workplace health and safety than the people who do the jobs,” Frederick said. “That awareness could mean the difference between minor down-time and tragic accidents.”

Influences from his father, an engineer, and mother, a public health nurse, allowed Frederick to see two distinct sides of the workplace—processes and safety.

The United Steelworkers union is a collective of multiple industries from manufacturing and utilities to healthcare and transportation. Frederick was involved in work that took him to shop floors, as well as company board rooms.

He supplemented this “experiential learning” with graduate coursework, coming to RIT after several years in industry and taking courses in environmental, health, and safety management part time.

Giving workers a strong, collective voice and the tools to be effective leaders and contribute to organizations has been a mainstay for Frederick, and one he’ll continue to advocate for as he leads OSHA.

“I have always thought that the obligations are one part legal but three or four parts moral,” he said. “It’s a moral imperative that employers provide safety and health in their workplaces, reducing risks so that folks can get home the same way they showed up.”

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Michelle Cometa '00



Megan Baldwin '07 (MBA) supported all aspects of New York's response to COVID-19 as assistant secretary of health. Now, she is special advisor to the chancellor for public health policy for the State University of New York system.

Joseph Trumpler

## Baldwin builds career in public health policy

**M**egan Baldwin '07 (MBA) was one of the first to know when COVID-19 hit New York.

Baldwin, assistant secretary of health in the New York State Executive Chamber, received a call in the middle of the night from the health commissioner alerting her to New York's first positive case.

"We had a 6 o'clock meeting the next morning with Gov. Andrew Cuomo, and it was all hands on deck," Baldwin said. "COVID was here. It had been here in the community, and we had to catch up."

The staffers had to balance the health crisis, growing public fear, and economic worries.

Baldwin supported all aspects of the response effort, from adding lab capacity, to building testing programs in the community, to providing personal protective equipment to health care workers, and making policies around hospital visitations.

She assisted senior staff to work through those issues and managed the department of health to ensure policy and implementa-

tion follow through.

"It became evident that COVID was everywhere—in our hospitals, nursing homes, in the community," Baldwin said.

At the same time, she also was working to finalize the New York state budget process and to close a \$4 billion gap in the Medicaid program. "It was a whirlwind," she said. "It was probably June or July when I came up for air."

After four-and-a-half years in Cuomo's administration, Baldwin, in October 2020, became the special advisor to the chancellor for public health policy for the State University of New York system.

The SUNY system consists of 64 higher education institutions, including three teaching hospitals and five medical schools. (Baldwin is both a SUNY and an RIT alumna. She earned her BA in business management from SUNY Brockport before coming to RIT through a four-plus-one program between the two universities.)

A month after she started her new position at SUNY, the governor's office asked

her to join the vaccine task force. Baldwin helped oversee vaccine allocation, distribution, and eligibility, and worked closely with the Department of Health and providers to ensure equity across New York state. When college students were finally eligible for the vaccine, Baldwin returned to SUNY to help implement a rollout plan across the system.

Throughout her time on the state's vaccine task force, Baldwin helped write SUNY's reopening policy and testing plans, and advised on the vaccine mandate.

Now, Baldwin is looking forward to focusing on SUNY's three hospitals and four academic health centers and collaborating with the college and university campuses on women's health and LGBTQ+ health policies. "And I want to make sure students have the mental health services they need coming out of COVID, especially because it's been a really hard year-and-a-half for everyone."

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Susan Gawlowicz '95

“RIT prepared me for a successful career. So it only feels natural for me to give back some of the blessings I’ve earned today and the success that I enjoy to continue the RIT legacy.”

– Amy (Johnson) Dragon

**Glen Dragon**  
BS '02, MS '11  
*Engineering*

**Amy (Johnson)**  
Dragon BFA '92  
*Industrial Design*



Photo by Heather McKay BFA '96

## Use Your Retirement Plan to Create a Legacy of your Own

Everyone has a reason why they give back. For **Amy (Johnson) Dragon BFA '92** and **Glen Dragon BS '02, MS '11**, it's to help the next generation of Tigers. As a transfer student, Amy's scholarship enabled her to enter RIT's renowned industrial design program. This allowed her to work as a co-op student for Fisher-Price, Gunlocke furniture, and Kodak Health Care Systems. That experience propelled Amy into a successful career in technical sales with one of the largest paper-based packaging manufacturers that supply some of the world's most recognized brands.

To create their legacy, Amy and Glen used their beneficiary designation through a retirement plan to create a forward-thinking, tax-efficient way to help make experiences like Amy's available to future Tigers.

You can use your retirement plan to support an area of RIT that you care about. Download our free guide to help you create a legacy of your own at [legacyrit.org](https://legacyrit.org).

**Contact us to learn more today.**

**Hal Burrall and  
Tamra Werner BS '91, MM '20, MS '21**  
RIT Office of Planned Giving  
585-475-3106 | [plannedgiving@rit.edu](mailto:plannedgiving@rit.edu)  
[legacyrit.org](https://legacyrit.org)

**RIT | Ellingson Society**

# Class Notes

## Abbreviations

### CAST

College of Applied Science and Technology (now CET)

### CAD

College of Art and Design

### CCE

College of Continuing Education (now SOIS)

### CET

College of Engineering Technology

### CHST

College of Health Sciences and Technology

### CIAS

College of Imaging Arts and Sciences (now CAD)

### CLA

College of Liberal Arts

### COS

College of Science

### FAA

Fine and Applied Arts (now CAD)

### GAP

Graphic Arts and Photography (now CAD)

### GCCIS

Golisano College of Computing and Information Sciences

### KGCOE

Kate Gleason College of Engineering

### NTID

National Technical Institute for the Deaf

### SOIS

School of Individualized Study

### SCB

Saunders College of Business

### SVP

NTID "Summer Vestibule Program"

## About Class Notes

Class Notes are edited for space, clarity, and style. Share information by going to [rit.edu/alumni/class-notes](http://rit.edu/alumni/class-notes).

## 1963



**John Surgent '63 (KGCOE)** retired from IBM in 1992 after 33 years working as a senior advisory electrical engineer. He spends part of the year in Florida where he takes wildlife and travel photography, and some astrophotography. He has been married to his wife, Jeannine, for 55 years and they enjoy traveling.

## 1967

**David Jones '67 (SCB)** retired as the president and CEO of the George and Barbara Bush Foundation at the George H.W. Bush Presidential Library.

## 1971

**David S. Loshin '71 (GAP)** retired from his position of dean at Nova Southeastern University College of Optometry, a position he held for the last 24 years. He was named Dean Emeritus in 2020 and will complete a one-year sabbatical in 2021.

## 1973

**W. Martin Seiler '73 (GAP)** has retired after 35 years of practicing law in Memphis, Tenn. The emphasis of his practice was tax and labor law. In retirement, he plans to write on political, tax, and financial matters, as well as spend time on his hobbies, which include photography.

## 1975

**Bill Truran '75 (GAP)** has been a paid photographer since 1972 and a food photographer since 1989, with studios in New York City from 1975 until 1989. He moved to Nabisco Foods in New Jersey from 1989 to 2002 and Kraft Foods from 2002 to 2004. He has been a freelance photographer since 2004.

## 1976



**Leo Flynn '76 MBA (SCB)**, a permanent deacon in the Catholic Archdiocese of Washington, D.C., had planned another pilgrimage to Medjugorje in October. Learn more at [pilgrimages.com/dcnflynn](http://pilgrimages.com/dcnflynn).



**Deborah Kinahan '76 (SCB), '88 MBA (SCB)** retired from the Defense Department in 2010 and published *My Zestful Years*, the third book in a series following the life and loves of a female CPA.

## 1977



**Doug Batt '77 (COS)** has retired after nearly 40 years in drug discovery research. After obtaining his

Ph.D. from Cornell, he worked at DuPont Pharmaceuticals and Bristol Myers Squibb, seeking drugs for the treatment of autoimmune and cardiovascular diseases. He and his wife, **Karen (Siegel) Batt '75 (COS)**, live in Wilmington, Del., and plan to move to the foothills of the Adirondacks in the near future.

**Harvey Brandt '77 (GAP)** retired from the Phoenix Union High School District in Arizona after more than 30 years as a teacher, working with students with visual impairments in travel skills.



**Kevin Hall '77 (FAA)** has been awarded the American Graphic Design Award by Graphic Design USA for his identity work for the Milford Senior Center of Milford, Conn. Former classmates can contact him at [kevinhalldesign@aol.com](mailto:kevinhalldesign@aol.com).



**Michael E. Pollock '77 (GAP)** received the New York State Senate Commendation Award in May 2021. The award recognizes people who have made a lasting contribution to

their community through volunteerism, leadership, and charitable work. He has served as a volunteer for nearly 35 years with Brighton Volunteer Ambulance.

## 1978

**Eugene Rusiecki '78 (CAST)** is an electrical engineer and project manager for Veteran Affairs medical centers in Gainesville and Lake City, Fla.

## 1979



**Collette Fournier '79 (GAP)** is working on a book about her journey into photography. She is actively photographing and lecturing with her "Retrospective: Spirit of A People" to colleges, libraries, and diversity communities.

## 1980

**Bob Finucane '80 (GAP)** is spending his retirement teaching around the world, including in Thailand, Vietnam, Portugal, and South and Central America.



**Barbara-Ann Mattle '80 (CCE)** retired as CEO of Child Care Council after a 32-year career, during which the agency

grew from a 1.5 person staff to a staff of 60 and a budget of \$20,000 to \$7 million.

## 1981



**Gale Gand's '81 (FAA)** long-running TV show on Food Network, *Sweet Dreams*, got picked up by the Discovery+ channel and is running Season 5 On Demand.

**Jeffrey Knoll '81 (CAST)** retired from Performance Software Corp. after 40 years in the embedded software industry.



**Doug Schenk '81 (CAST)** retired as Airbus A321 captain at Delta Air Lines in September 2020. Future plans include aerobatic competition in a Pitts S-2C biplane.

### 1983

**Laura (Moran) Cavanaugh '83 (CAST)** is employed as a business development analyst for TTM Technologies in East Syracuse, N.Y. She is also the cemetery director for St. Mary of the Assumption Cemetery in Minoa, N.Y.

**Paul-James Jones '83 (COS)** retired in January 2021 after 30 years in the analytical sciences and information technology departments at Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals USA in Ridgefield, Conn.



**Gerard Kiernan '83 (CAST)** is the facilities engineer and sustainability coordinator for the city of Springfield, Mass. He successfully applied for a \$200,000 grant from the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources to replace the antiquated oil-fed burners at the facility headquarters.

**Cheryl Kowalik '83 (CAST)** started a new job as a data processing clerk with the Batavia City School District.



**John Letteney '83 (CLA)** retired in January 2021 after a 24-year career in New York law enforcement and 15 years as chief of police in North

Carolina. He has accepted a position as chief of police for the Thomasville, Ga., Police Department.



**Robert Ripps '83 (GAP)** has a project called "Negativityness Abounds," which started as his response to the political climate in America for the last several years. The display can be seen at the Christine Frechard Gallery in Pittsburgh, Pa. Learn more at [christinefrechardgallery.com](http://christinefrechardgallery.com).

### 1984



**Seth Affoumado '84 (GAP)** started The Skillet Doctor more than 12 years ago. His curiosity and excitement about the history of American cast iron cookware inspired him to become one of the leading cast iron skillet restoration experts. Learn more at [theskilletdoctor.com](http://theskilletdoctor.com).

**Michael Miconi '84 (FAA)** has been working at MWI Inc. for 13 years as a manufacturing process engineer.

**Ken Staffan '84 (CAST), '93 MS (CAST)** retired after a 38-year career in software engineering, teaching, and systems engineering at Xerox, Redcom Labs, St. John Fisher College, and Eastman Kodak/Johnson & Johnson/Ortho Clinical Diagnostics. He and his wife, **Mary (Higby) Staffan '83 (FAA)**, will now have more time to enjoy their first grandchild.

### 1985

**Richard Tenbraak '85 (CAST)** retired April 1, 2021.

## Alumna makes directorial debut



**Tisa Zito '09**

From a young age, Tisa Zito has been intrigued by what makes an artist, their processes and inspirations, and what keeps them going in the whirlwind of an industry where anything can happen overnight. Now, Zito '09 (film and animation) is making her directorial debut with her film, *ForeverMoore; The Angelo Project*.

The film is a character study on Los Angeles native Angelo Moore, lead singer of the band Fishbone, and asks questions about the legacy and process of an artist. It follows Moore's lifelong devotion to weaving a legacy—crafting art through spoken word, music, and fashion.

Zito met Moore at the 2018 DOCUTAH International Documentary Film Festival in St. George, Utah, where he performed, and she was "blown away by his genuineness, skill, and James Brown-like energy." Zito said she is fascinated with the process and journey of artists, including what makes them so unique, and she felt inclined to dive deeper into Moore's life to discover more.

Zito said that making the film took more than three years, with the edit hours, alone, well into the thousands. But she was determined to produce, direct, shoot, and edit the film herself.

"Financially, when you put yourself on the line, it

becomes a bit daunting," she said. "But because I believed strongly in the film and telling of this man's story, it was enough to keep me going."

In the film, Zito takes the audience on a journey through Moore's mind hoping they get a glimpse of the artist who inspired other musicians, including Gwen Stefani, Red Hot Chili Peppers, and others.

"Through the whole process, I learned that I can do anything I set my mind to and that's the take away I'd like to leave with others. I started Old Soul Productions years ago in the name of loved ones that I lost early on."



David Yeager

**The promotional movie poster for Tisa Zito's film, *ForeverMoore; The Angelo Project*.**

Through Old Soul Productions, Zito offers a professional documentary service, called Legacy, for people to leave behind a film or create one for someone from their past. "I find the process of making these films very cathartic, as do my clients."

The film was screened at the DOCUTAH film festival this November, as well as other locations in the U.S., Canada, and the United Kingdom. Learn more at [imdb.com/title/tt12409000](http://imdb.com/title/tt12409000).

**Rochelle Allan '22**

## Legacy Family

From left to right, Allen, Andy, Carmen, Andrew, and Ciara Bailey opened Carmen's Cooking in January 2021.

## RIT legacy family

# opens Carmen's Cooking restaurant

The Baileys, an RIT legacy family, have dreamed of opening a restaurant in the Rochester area for more than 11 years. In 2020, when their youngest child graduated from high school, they decided it was finally time.

Despite being in the midst of a global pandemic, a time when many restaurants were forced to shut their doors, the family opened Carmen's Cooking to the public on Jan. 29, 2021.

Carmen Bailey, a former staff member in RIT's English Language Center, and her son, Andrew Bailey '17 MS (sustainable systems), run day-to-day operations. They are in charge of the menu, run the kitchen, manage staff, and handle customer service.

Carmen's husband, Andy Bailey '07 (MBA), is in charge of operations management, mar-

keting, and accounting for the restaurant—skills he learned as an MBA student at Saunders College of Business. He also taught at RIT as an adjunct professor for several years.

"A lot of what I learned and taught at RIT is being implemented here at the restaurant," Andy said. "For instance, applying Dr. John Ettl's Triangle to this endeavor has been very beneficial. Dr. Clyde Hull also helped us quite a bit. He transformed a catch-up conversation into an invaluable exchange regarding the business. Several of his ideas are part of our current operations and several others are in the queue."

Andy isn't alone in using his RIT degree to benefit the restaurant. His son has implemented several sustainable solutions to help the Earth and the business at once.

"Sustainability, and managing a sustainable operation, have been at the forefront since we started the business," Andrew said. "One of our most important efforts is waste reduction. We try to minimize food waste through predictive purchasing, we've partnered with a commodity broker to ensure grease by-products are recycled, we use compostable or paper packaging, all our lights are LED, and we use occupancy sensors in certain lighted areas."

From the start, the family had to overcome impediments due to the pandemic, but the Baileys decided to turn these obstacles into an opportunity.

"Because we opened during the pandemic, we planned operations based on all the COVID-19 restrictions and requirements, so there were no surprises. For example, we offered curbside

pick-up and online ordering right away. And we established a hiring plan to engage personnel based on demand. It gives our business room to grow as demand increases."

The restaurant was met with positive feedback right away, the family said. Repeat customers were common. More than once, new menu items or daily specials appeared based on requests from regulars.

"A customer of ours asked for chili, so the next week our soup of the day was chili," the Baileys said.

The Baileys also have a daughter, Ciara, who is a biomedical sciences major in the College of Health Sciences and Technology, and a son, Allen, who graduated from Syracuse University in May 2021.

Shelly Meyer

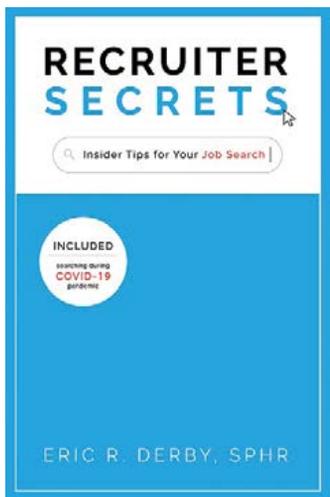


**Tom Willard '85 (GAP)** celebrated his fifth anniversary in standup comedy on July 5, 2021, by making his fifth appearance at the famous Comedy Cellar in New York City. He started doing standup at age 58 with no stage experience after a long career in arts administration and journalism. He talks and uses sign language in his act.

**1986**



**Walter Colley '86 (GAP)** accepted a full-time position teaching in the advertising program at SPAS/CAD. He is also a full-time graduate student at Visual Studies Workshop in Rochester and is working toward an MFA in fine art photography. Learn more at [waltercolleyimages.com](http://waltercolleyimages.com).



**Eric Derby '86 (CAST)** has written and published a book, *Recruiter Secrets: Insider Tips for Your Job Search*. The book contains more than 180 topics related to a job search to help people find a job they love.

**Rosemarie Eskes '86 MS (SCB)** retired from the University of Rochester's International Student Office in 2020, where she was helping international students with their taxes. She still works with private tax clients from home.

**1988**



**Marc Raco '88 (GAP)** became the head of audio for Linktree, the technology platform to

connect online ecosystems. He had led the audio-for-business company and podcast network MouthMedia Network, which he cofounded.

**1989**



**Paul Tracy '89 (GAP)** started his video production business, Envision Productions, while in college more than 25 years ago. His company launched its new website this year at [enprod.com](http://enprod.com).

**1990**



**Joe Dominski '90 (KGCOE)** purchased Abrading Methods Inc. He is proud to be joining the group of machinists, craftsmen, and professionals at Abrading Methods.

**1991**



**Stacy Babcock '91 (CLA), '96 (NTID), '98 MS (CAST)** has been named deputy commanding general and Reserve

Personnel Management Directorate director for U.S. Army Human Resources Command in Fort Knox, Ky.



**Jennifer Judge '91 (GAP)** is living in Austin, Texas, and last year made a career

transition from human resources into real estate with Keller Williams after a long career in games and tech.

**Alumnus at Pfizer contributes to vaccine development process**



**Christopher Vollaro '21 MS** helped move the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine safely through development and distribution.

All eyes were on international pharmaceutical giant Pfizer this past year as it raced to produce needed COVID-19 vaccines. Staff across the company—from scientists in labs to its environmental management team—played a role in the development and distribution process.

Christopher Vollaro '21 MS (environmental, health, and safety management) helped as the company moved the vaccine safely through those processes, ensuring that mechanisms were in place to protect colleagues in the research and development setting.

“Our focus is on industrial hygiene, and my role is to make sure our colleagues and contractors are safe with regard to what they are working with. This could be standard chemicals, drug compounds, biological and radioactive materials,” said Vollaro, Environmental Health and Safety manager, Industrial Hygiene lead for Pfizer Global Workplace Solutions. He helps determine engineering controls, risk assessment plans, and priorities as well as making recommendations for protective equipment.

As the pandemic unfolded,

company employees had questions about the different styles of masks to be used and how ventilation equipment, for example, might need to be upgraded. The company needed to manage these concerns and maintain production in the face of supply chain challenges across the country.

Prior to work at Pfizer, Vollaro spent several years with two pharmaceutical companies coordinating controlled substance waste management and facilitating safety training programs and investigations.

Vollaro completed his graduate work at RIT with some of the EHS courses taken online and, when possible, on campus prior to the pandemic. His course projects were directly work related, and that allowed him to collaborate with faculty in the program, also professionals in the field, and to align coursework with what he was seeing in his workplace.

“The environmental health and safety function has expanded significantly even before COVID-19,” Vollaro added. “You can work in a variety of settings—government, health, corporate. Your job opportunities are limitless.”

**Michelle Cometa '00**

# Tiger Cubs



**1 Thomas Ethington '81 (GAP)** welcomed his granddaughter, Salem Victoria Zell Ethington, in February 2021. She joins her brother, Corbin Charles Ethington, in Toledo, Ohio.

**2 Matthew Elman '87 (GAP)** and Kathleen Rowe welcomed their first grandchild. Rowan Scott Elman was born in December 2020. Parents Dylan Elman and Breanna Peck are elated.

**3 Joanna Kha '06 (SCB)** and Alex Van welcomed their first child, Jonathan Van, in December 2020. They live in Orlando, Fla.

**4 Renee Reeves '07 (COS)** and her husband, Scott Long, welcomed their son, Eli Walker, in January 2021.

**5 Lindsay Tendler '07 (CIAS)** and Paul Huntington are pleased to announce the birth of their first child, pandemic baby Isla Astrid, born in February 2021.

**6 Anthony Macri '08 (KGCOE)** and his wife, Alisha, celebrated the birth of their second child, Bennett Anthony, in January 2021. Big sister Maggie, 2, is obsessed with her little brother.

**7 Heather Meers '08 (CIAS)** wishes to announce the birth of her identical twin girls, Willow and Genevieve, born in December 2020.

**8 Larissa (Clark) Matesevac '09 (CIAS)** and her husband, Jeffrey Matesevac, welcomed a baby boy, Damian Ryan Matesevac, in April 2021.

**9 Edward Wolf '09 (KGCOE)** and his wife, Elizabeth Ihidoy-Wolf, are thrilled to announce the birth of their third daughter, Isobel, who was born in April 2021.

**10 Scott Bureau '11 (CLA), '16 MBA (SCB)** and **Lindsay Power '10 (KGCOE), '10 ME (KGCOE)** welcomed Marcella Bureau into the world in January 2020. Marcella is a lover of all animals and berries.

**11 Jacquelyn Schulman '12 (COS)** and **Tyler Herrman '13 (GCCIS)** welcomed identical twin boys, Sawyer Allen Herrman and Avery Jax Herrman, in February 2021.

**12 Hilary (Young) Sinclair '14 (CHST)** and **Garth Sinclair '15 (KGCOE), '15 ME (KGCOE)** welcomed their first child, Aiden James Sinclair, in December 2020.

**13 Samantha (Vent) Schreiber '15 (SCB), '20 MS (CLA)** and **Andrew Schreiber '16 (KGCOE)** welcomed twin daughters, Penelope Elizabeth and Emma Louise, in April 2021.



**Scott Saldinger '91 (GAP)** joined PeopleGrove as director, University Partnerships, in March 2021. PeopleGrove is a leading

provider of higher education communication, connection, mentorship, and career platforms.



**Robert Schott '91 (FAA)** is director, communication consulting, at Schwab Retirement Plan Services. He was awarded the pension and investments first place Eddy Award for communication excellence in the pre-retirement readiness category. He also built a half-scale Abraham Lincoln Memorial snow sculpture for President Lincoln's birthday.

### 1992

**Diane Becker '92 (GAP)** is a 2021 Emmy nominee for Outstanding Documentary or Nonfiction Special for *TINA*, about the life of rock icon Tina Turner. The film is currently available on HBO.

### 1993

**Analisa Dominic '93 (CCE)** joined Opengear as vice president of marketing /chief marketing officer.

### 1994



**Matt McKee '94 (CIAS)** was listed in the top nine commercial photographers in Boston by PeerSpace.com. He has found his niche in the health sciences space. During the pandemic, he also developed the podcast *Cherry Bomb! The Podcast*. Find it at [theartofmattmckee.com](http://theartofmattmckee.com).

### 1996



**Timothy Cosgriff '96 (CAST)** had work accepted in the exhibit "International Art of the Book" at the Rochester Public Library. The work, "Edgar Allen Poe Steampunk Purses," is crafted from altered books and found objects. This is the third time he has been accepted in the exhibit.



**Sandra Dolitz-Vasquez '96 (CLA)** was promoted to director of education for SmartMLS, Connecticut's largest MLS, supporting nearly 20,000 subscribers. Her son, Ben, is graduating from Norwalk, Conn. P-Tech High School and will hopefully be a future RIT student.

**Todd Hess '96 (CAST)** has started a new chapter in his career. He is now director of business software for Protective Industrial Products, a global provider of personal protective equipment headquartered in Latham, N.Y.



**Mike Hunsberger '96 (KGCOE)** retired from the United States Air Force after more than 25 years of service. The colonel held a variety of positions including commander, 30<sup>th</sup> Mission Support Group, and will retire as the vice commander, Space Launch Delta 30, in the newly formed United States Space Force.

### Engineering alumna co-founds high-tech start-up



**Erin Crowley Ellis '08 (mechanical engineering)** co-founded Sanatela Medical Solutions, a bioengineering company.

Michelle Cometa

The name Wharton's Jelly may not immediately conjure images of health care products, but soon it may.

Formally called Decellurized Wharton Jelly Matrix, and informally called The Matrix, the natural in vitro cell culturing system can be used by researchers and clinicians to test the effectiveness of chemotherapies before they are given to patients.

When Erin Crowley Ellis '08 (mechanical engineering) and her father, Michael Crowley, saw the promise of The Matrix, they began a journey to launch Sanatela Medical Solutions, a new bioengineering company in Rochester.

The Matrix is a patented, biometric substance made up of proteins, enzymes, and small molecules that once processed, can be used as a scaffold, or medium, to grow and culture other cells and tissues. The environment is similar to the human body's tissue and provides a testbed to screen the effects of cancer treatments by administering the drugs onto the scaffold. Testing this way enables researchers to better diagnose disease progression and to adapt treatments accordingly.

Sanatela acquired the patent for The Matrix in 2019. Ellis and Crowley began building a

business plan and put together an advisory board consisting of medical experts from universities, such as Stanford, and research hospitals, such as the Roswell Clinic.

Ellis, managing director of AT Venture Center, a venture capital and consulting enterprise and parent company of Sanatela, used a "matrix" of skills from positions she's held since graduation. This includes automotive engineering with Toyota Corp., to training and certifications in the areas of project management, sales, and the regulatory field.

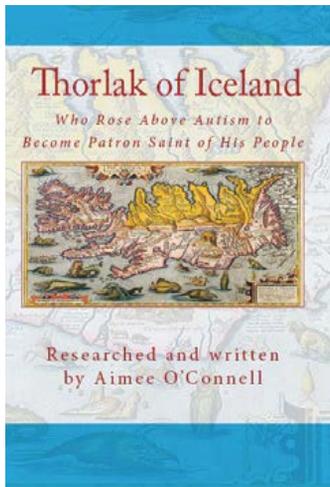
Coupled with her father's extensive experience in business development, commercialization, international law and teaching, as well as his connections to RIT—Crowley is the former RIT Research Professor for Innovation and Entrepreneurship and served as a member of the Dean's Board of Advisors for Saunders College of Business—the two made a dynamic team.

Up next for the company is the launch of phase two human clinical trials, followed by the release of The Matrix as a lab-developed test that can be ordered by both patients and doctors to isolate, culture, and target cancer stem cells.

**Michelle Cometa '00**

**David J. Stern '96 (KGCOE)** is serving as a network engineer for the White House Situation Room.

1997



**Aimee O'Connell '97 (CLA)** has taken a hiatus from school psychology and has focused on raising and homeschooling three children. She co-founded the website Autism Consecrated, as an online spiritual resource for autistic people, and has authored and published the historical biography *Thorlak of Iceland*, available from Chaos to Order Publishing in paperback and Kindle on Amazon.com.

1998

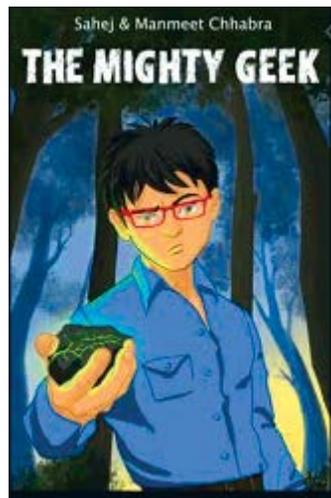


**Tiffany Owens '98 (KGCOE)** was selected as the Department of Defense Science Technology Engineering Math Advocate of the Quarter in Fiscal Year 2020. She works as lead safety engineer on naval laser weapon systems and resides in Richmond, Va.



**Sal Pellingra '98 (CIAS), '01 MBA (SCB)** celebrated the opening of ProAmpac's Collaboration and Innovation Center in Rochester. ProAmpac invests in flexible packaging capabilities.

2001



**Manmeet Chhabra '01 MBA (SCB)** and his 8-year-old child collaborated to write *The Mighty Geek* amidst the COVID shutdown.



identify unmet health and wellness needs, design, incubate, and launch DTC brands into the world.

**Ali Madad '01 (CIAS)** has joined Hologram Sciences as its first vice president, creative director, to

2002



Robert Morris University in suburban Pittsburgh, Pa.

**Christine Holtz '02 MFA (CIAS)** has been promoted to the rank of university professor of media arts at



expert, has been named to the cabinet of professional advisors for the Foundation for the Carolinas (FFTC). The FFTC serves as a catalyst for philanthropic activity in a 13-county region.

**Rob Snowden '02 MBA (SCB)**, founding partner of South Park Advisors and business valuation

2003

**Kevin Rewkowski '03 (GCCIS)** accepted a position in April 2021 with Microsoft as a customer success account manager in Raleigh, N.C.

2004

**Nate Gardner '04 (COS)** completed his Doctor of Medical Science degree through AT Still University's Arizona School of Health Sciences in May 2021. He is the program director at the Center for Physician Assistant Studies at Albany Medical College.



consecutive year on the Inc. 5000 list of fastest-growing privately held companies.

**Lindsey Rima Felix '04 (CIAS)** is co-founder and COO of Felix Media Solutions and is celebrating her company's third

2005



Bergmann, is one of 13 finalists for the 2021 ATHENA International Young Professional Award. The ATHENA awards, which honor and empower women in business, are presented annually in three categories by the Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce and its Women's Council Affiliate.

**Stacy Lake '05 (SCB), '07 MBA (SCB)**, corporate communications manager for national architecture, engineering and planning firm

2009



in the hemp and cannabis industry in 2019. He now sells equipment within this space and loves working with processors who need integration and systems designed to fit their needs.



the education of deaf learners program from Gallaudet University.

**Dae-Kum Kim '09 (GC-CIS), '12 MS (NTID)** graduated with a Ph.D. in critical studies from

was been promoted to brand manager at Girl Scouts of Western New York.

2010



invented a product to hang eyewear on a wall or mirror. The Cactus Eyewear Hook is a cactus-shaped hook that is manufactured and sold through his newly formed business, Lavajet Lab, and is available for purchase online.

2012

**Greisy Campsteyn '12 ME (KGCOE)** is the operational risk manager for the Bank National Regulatory Authority.

2007

at the Henrietta Fire District on March 22, 2021, after 13 years of volunteer service. Since his hire date, he has been attending the Monroe County Recruit Firefighter Training Academy and graduated on June 12, 2021, with 22 fellow firefighter recruits.



his family relocated to Seattle in January 2021. In February, he started a new position as a senior research associate with Lyell Immunopharma.



**Sarah (Hannon) Fitzgerald '12 (CAST)** and **Bryan Fitzgerald '12 (CHST)** were married in a small ceremony on Sept. 6, 2020. Alumni in attendance included **Jeremy Allston '10 (GCCIS)**; **Brittany Ambeau '13 (COS)**, '17 (COS); **Alexandra Atzl '12 (CIAS)**; **Justin Harms '16 (COS)**; **Josh Kramer '13 (KGCOE)**; **Kristen Kramer '12 (SCB)**; and **David Pearson '11 (GCCIS)**.

## 2013



**Breanna (Smith) Rice '13 (SCB)** teamed up with six Pittsburgh-based graphic designers to create a passion project during quarantine. The project, a deck of playing cards, features 54 custom illustrations of vulnerable, near threatened, endangered, and critically endangered species, and is now live on Kickstarter.



**Philip Rodriguez '13 (GCCIS)**, '21 **MS (GCCIS)** and his wife, Anna, were married on June 26, 2021, at St. Nicholas Church.

**Christopher Tarantino '13 (SCB)** founded Epicenter Innovation, which ranked No. 762 on the Inc. 5000 list of fastest-growing private companies in the United States.

## 2014



**Alexandra Rebeck '14 (CIAS)** and her VFX production team were nominated for an Emmy for their work on

*The Falcon and the Winter Soldier*. After wrapping on *Falcon*, a large group flew to Budapest where they have been living and working together on their next Marvel project.

## 2015

**Dina Johnson '15 (CHST)** founded and became CEO/president of The Monroe County Family Coalition, Inc. MCFC is a nonprofit organization that seeks to bridge inequality gaps in the community by providing services for underserved youth and families.



**Juliana Shaw '15 (COS)** and **Scott Gentile '13 (CET)** were married on Oct. 10, 2020, in Negril, Jamaica, surrounded by their family and closest friends. They live in Boston. They started dating in 2012 when they were at RIT.

## 2016

**Joseph Enright '16 (CAST)** graduated with a Master of Science in civil engineering from Ohio University in spring 2021.

**Nikhil Patel '16 MS (CAST)** leveraged his packaging skills and started his own business and a side career as a consultant. Today, he is in the process of building his business of gift boxes, which is still very new, but going well.



**Danica Zielinski-Natter '16 MS (NTID)** and **Evan Natter '16 (GCCIS)** were married on April 3, 2021, in Baltimore.

## 2017



**Emily O'Connor '17 (COS)** started a new job within Boeing Defense and Space with Chinook Reliability

and Maintainability, supporting the 50-year-old program with data analysis and predictions.

**Brian Palamar '17 (CLA)** was admitted to the New York State Bar Association on Feb. 26, 2021, and is now a licensed attorney.



**Zachary White '17 (SCB)**

spent two weeks during June 2021 climbing to the top of North America on Denali in Alaska. His team summited after enduring

-30 degree temperatures, high winds, and icy conditions. Follow his journey on Instagram: @Zachoneverest

## 2018

**Tre DiPassio '18 (KGCOE)** has a vocal arrangement of "Counting Stars," which was nominated for a Contemporary A Cappella Recording Award (CARA) for Best Lower Voices Collegiate Arrangement. DiPassio is a current Ph.D. student in musical acoustics at the University of Rochester.



**Linden Pohland '18 (CET)**

was promoted to staff accountant at the Four Seasons Resort Hualalai in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii.

**Salih Tamim '18 (GCCIS)** started a new job as events and community manager at Localized.

## 2019



**Caroline Davis '19 (CHST)** is in her third year in the Doctorate of Occupational Therapy program at the University of the Sciences

in Philadelphia. She has level II fieldwork placements in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C., beginning in January 2022.

**William Avis '19 (CAD)** is one of 75 Americans selected to study and work in Germany as part of the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange for Young Professionals program, now in its 38th year.



**Dave Gallagher '19 (CAD)** saw three RIT alumni at the Phase One America's national headquarters. All three graduated from the College of Art and Design with 26 years between graduation days.

## Kelly Redder retires



Elizabeth Lamark

**K**elly Redder retired from RIT in June, after helping grow alumni engagement for more than 20 years.

Redder was a familiar face at alumni events and around campus, where she most recently served as executive director of the Joseph M. Lobo Alumnus House. She was a fixture in RIT Alumni Relations and University Advancement and helped a five-person alumni relations team grow into the department it is today.

Many of RIT's signature programs like the Presidents' Alumni Ball, Golden Circle Reunion, Summer Send-Offs, Tiger Walk, and the Alumni Association Board were built under Redder's management.

# In Memoriam

## Alumni

### 1942

Arthur Clark '42  
(KGCOE) Jan. 2, 2021

### 1943

Jane (Zogg) Talbot '43  
(SCB) March 4, 2021

### 1946

Virginia (Eddy) Carl '46  
(SCB) Jan. 14, 2021

Alvin Boss '46  
(KGCOE) Feb. 6, 2021

Janet (Graves)  
Peterson '46 (SCB)  
Feb. 1, 2021

### 1949

William Lawson '49  
(KGCOE) Feb. 7, 2021

Jack Dukelow '49  
(FAA) Feb. 22, 2021

### 1950

Andy Trechock '50  
(GAP) Feb. 22, 2021

Charles Nesta '50  
(KGCOE) Feb. 23, 2021

William Lynch '50  
(KGCOE) Feb. 27, 2021

### 1951

Leon Laux '51 (FAA)  
Jan. 27, 2021

### 1952

Frank Roselli '52  
(KGCOE) Jan. 2, 2021

John Hawkins '52  
(KGCOE) Jan. 21, 2021

### 1954

William Hemiup '54  
(CCE) Feb. 3, 2021

### 1958

Eugene Porter '58  
(CCE) Jan. 15, 2021

Kenneth Krug '58  
(GAP) Jan. 31, 2021

### 1959

Philip Wiegand '59  
(KGCOE) Jan. 9, 2021

Joan (Mc Adam) Rice  
'59 (SCB) Jan. 30, 2021

Simon Braitman '59  
(CCE) March 2021

### 1960

Thomas Nolan '60  
(KGCOE) Jan. 17, 2021

Frank Julian '60 (CCE)  
Feb. 1, 2021

### 1961

Moreland Lysher '61  
(SCB) Jan. 2, 2021

Elaine (Galante)  
Armanini '61 (SCB)  
Jan. 30, 2021

Truman Hall '61 (CCE)  
February 2021

John Havens '61 (CCE)  
Feb. 25, 2021

Kay Michael Kramer '61  
(GAP) April 2, 2021

### 1962

Arthur Streppa '62  
(SCB) Jan. 7, 2021

Edward Moskal '62  
(KGCOE) Jan. 14, 2021

Marlon Ginney '62  
(KGCOE) Feb. 4, 2021

Raymond Limoges '62  
(KGCOE) Feb. 7, 2021

### 1963

Victor Cappotelli '63  
(CCE) Jan. 6, 2021

Wolodymyr  
Pylyshenko '63 MFA  
(FAA) Feb. 8, 2021

Harold Thurston '63  
(SCB) Feb. 11, 2021

### 1964

Douglas Lang '64  
(GAP) Jan. 3, 2021

Marilyn Grimm '64  
(FAA) Jan. 16, 2021

Sherwood Smith '64  
MFA (FAA) Feb. 9, 2021

### 1965

Loren Geer '65 (CCE)  
Jan. 1, 2021

### 1966

James Moore '66  
(CCE) Jan. 16, 2021

C. Burchfield '66 (CCE)  
Feb. 21, 2021

Robert Lezo '66 (CCE)  
Feb. 22, 2021

Leslie Heagney '66  
(GAP) Feb. 27, 2021

### 1967

Carl Kayser '67 (SCB)  
Jan. 4, 2021

Joellen (Halpin)  
Martino '67 (SCB)  
Jan. 8, 2021

Susan (Johnson)  
Nestel '67 (COS)  
Jan. 9, 2021

### 1968

Robert Ledsome '68  
(CCE) Feb. 4, 2021

George Cole '68 (SCB)  
March 7, 2021

### 1969

Michael Perri '69 (CCE)  
Jan. 16, 2021

Alvin Austin '69  
(KGCOE) Feb. 3, 2021

Elizabeth (Merry)  
McCurdy '69 (COS)  
Feb. 8, 2021

### 1970

Louis Telarico '70  
(CCE) Jan. 8, 2021

Philip Stevenson '70  
(KGCOE) March 10,  
2021

### 1971

Jerritt Ritter '71 (SCB)  
Feb. 2, 2021

### 1972

Stephen Drumm '72  
(SCB) Jan. 18, 2021

Dean Batterman '72 MS  
(SCB) Jan. 20, 2021

Richard Strazzeri '72  
(CCE) Jan. 23, 2021

Rodger Burkhart '72  
(CCE) Jan. 26, 2021

Brian Ives '72 MS  
(SCB), '98 MS (CAST)  
Feb. 4, 2021

Freddie Allen '72 (CCE)  
Feb. 18, 2021

### 1973

Beverly Celmer '73  
(FAA) Jan. 7, 2021

Guy Casaceli '73 (CCE)  
Jan. 16, 2021

Stewart Whitney '73  
(CCE) Feb. 7, 2021

William Brown Jr. '73  
(KGCOE) March 13,  
2021

Michael L. Adler '73  
(KGCOE) May 28, 2021

### 1974

Bertram Straube '74  
(CCE) Jan. 23, 2021

### 1975

Robert Guelzow '75  
(CCE) Jan. 7, 2021

### 1977

Patricia Grabow '77  
(CCE) Jan. 10, 2021

David Malone '77 MS  
(SCB) Jan. 24, 2021

Bradley McCarthy '77  
MS (CCE) Feb. 16, 2021

### 1978

David Williams '78  
(NTID) Feb. 10, 2021

Suzanne (Pflanz)  
Schroeder '78 (CHST)  
April 18, 2021

### 1979

Roseanne Judd '79  
(CCE) Feb. 8, 2021

Joseph Sudore '79  
(CCE) Feb. 11, 2021

Ronnie Dinatale '79  
(CCE) Feb. 21, 2021

### 1980

James Criswell '80  
(KGCOE) Jan. 8, 2021

Michael Murphy '80 MS  
(SCB) Jan. 20, 2021

### 1981

Anthony Paolini '81  
(KGCOE) Jan. 7, 2021

William Raymond Jr. '81  
(CAST) Jan. 30, 2021

### 1983

Albert Dizon '83 (SCB)  
Jan. 11, 2021

Stephen Tunney '83  
(CCE) Jan. 23, 2021

**1985**  
**Mark Reich '85 (CAST)**  
Feb. 20, 2021

**1986**  
**Anthony Morabito '86**  
(CCE) Jan. 8, 2021

**Carter Anderson Jr. '86**  
(CAST) Jan. 17, 2021

**Daniel Kane '86 (SCB)**  
Feb. 14, 2021

**1987**  
**Kirke Cowdery '87**  
(CAST) Jan. 16, 2021

**1990**  
**Craig Printy '90**  
(KGCOE) Feb. 19, 2021

**1991**  
**Christopher Mulhern**  
'91 (CCE) Feb. 11, 2021

**1992**  
**Sharon Gibson '92 MS**  
(GAP) Feb. 9, 2021

**1993**  
**Sean Joyce '93 (SCB)**  
March 9, 2021

**1994**  
**Sharon Tczap '94 MS**  
(SCB) Jan. 21, 2021

**1997**  
**Joseph Healey Jr. '97**  
(CAST) Feb. 5, 2021

**1998**  
**Phillip Vallone '98 MS**  
(KGCOE) Feb. 5, 2021

**2000**  
**Brent Moreland '00 MS**  
(CAST) Feb. 3, 2021

**2005**  
**Teri Proietti '05 MS**  
(SCB) March 6, 2021

**2006**  
**Michael Batista '06**  
(CAST) Jan. 7, 2021

**2007**  
**Austin Jennings '07**  
(GCCIS) Jan. 10, 2021

**Michael Magura '07**  
(CAST) Feb. 3, 2021

**Ashley Burgin '07 MS**  
(SCB) Feb. 16, 2021

**2010**  
**Garrett Spier '10 (CIAS)**  
Jan. 12, 2021

**2015**  
**Britta Moberg '15**  
(CIAS) Jan. 12, 2021

**2017**  
**Mary Elizabeth Warner**  
'17 MS (KGCOE)  
Aug. 20, 2021

**2018**  
**Brooks Arensberg '18**  
(CET) Jan. 2, 2021

## Faculty and Staff

Retired CLA faculty member **Roy "Butch" Rodenhiser**, Aug. 19, 2020

Retired NTID faculty member **Susan K. Keenan**, March 3, 2021

**Nancy Evans Hargrave**, area director for Ellingson, Peterson, and Bell Halls from 1980-1983, March 11, 2021

Retiree **Chester Daniels '56**, March 12, 2021

KGCOE Dean Emeritus **Richard Kenyon**, April 16, 2021

RIT Trustee Emeritus **Margie Fitch**, April 19, 2021

Retiree **Joan Laforce**, May 8, 2021

Retired NTID faculty member **Barbara McKee**, May 13, 2021

Retiree **Gilda Nobles**, May 25, 2021

RIT Trustee Chairman Emeritus **Bruce Bates**, May 28, 2021

RIT Trustee Emeritus **Sandra Parker**, June 5, 2021

Retired CIAS faculty member **Bradley Hindson**, June 14, 2021

Retired NTID faculty member **James Jensen**, June 14, 2021

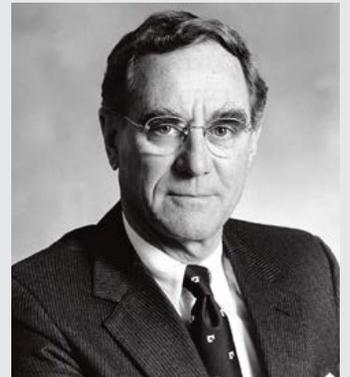
NTID retiree **Elissa Olsen '80, '99 MS**, July 8, 2021

RIT Trustee **Mark Hamister '74**, Aug. 20, 2021

RIT Trustee Emeritus **Paul Briggs**, Sept. 1, 2021

RIT Trustee Emeritus **Klaus Gueldenpfennig**, Sept. 10, 2021

**Rene Rodriguez**, a food service manager, Sept. 15, 2021



## Remembering RIT's seventh president

President of RIT from 1979 to 1992, M. Richard Rose, died on April 10 at his Florida home. He was 88.

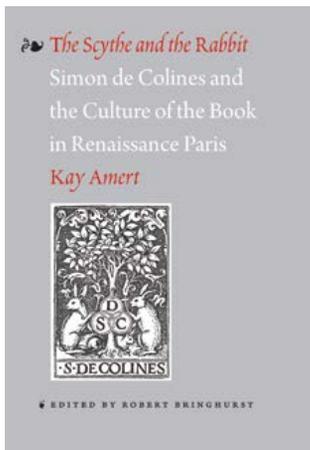
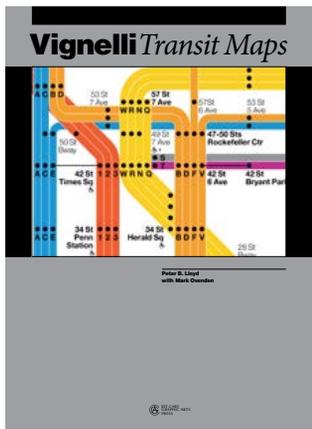
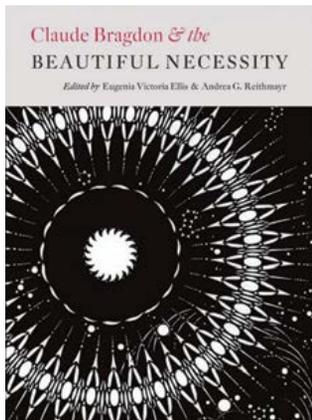
As RIT's seventh president, Rose played a pivotal role in changing its trajectory from a regional institution into a nationally recognized research university. He expanded RIT's curriculum, helping launch the university's first doctoral program, and increased liberal arts and humanities offerings.

He also helped transform RIT's athletics program, from one that seldom saw national championship play into one where NCAA appearances became commonplace.

Rose served in the U.S. Marine Corps as a platoon leader and became a professor of education, before moving up in university administration. He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Clarice, with whom he had three sons.

**RIT Press**

RIT Press is a regular contender for national and international awards for content and design for works across a spectrum of disciplines.



▲ **Early book**

*Melbert B. Cary, Jr. and the Press of the Woolly Whale* (2002) was one of the first award-winning books published by the Cary Graphic Arts Press (precursor to the RIT Press) and made the AIGA design association's list of 50 Books / 50 Covers of 2002.

# RIT's scholarly book publisher comes of age

RIT Press turns 20 this year, and the future is bright for the scholarly book publisher. Expanded partnerships and community-related projects give RIT Press new momentum as it enters its third decade.

RIT Press was founded in 2001 by then-Cary Graphic Arts Collection curator David Pankow and now-associate curator Amelia Hugill-Fontanel '02 MS (printing technology, publishing).

Lead designer Marnie Soom '02 (graphic design), '03 MS (print media) is the resident historian and staff member who bridges the early days of the press to its current operation. Her connection started in 2002 as a graduate student working in the Cary Graphic Arts Collection. Her work included tasks for the new press, and she was brought on as a full-time staff member in 2005.

"It's been amazing to be a part of the RIT Press as it grew from one person at a desk in a workroom, to a staff of four and our own facility," Soom said. "We have broadened our scope from graphic arts-related titles to many other subjects, but our main mission has never changed. I love the process of working together to bring the author's idea to life in the best way."

In 2007, RIT Press moved outside of the Cary Collection and into the glass-enclosed office space, the Alexander S. Lawson Publishing Center, on the second floor of Wallace Library.

"From its early years, the press has embraced diverse audiences by broadening its editorial scope," said Bruce Austin, RIT Press director since 2014.

It has also increased distribution of its catalogue of more than 125 titles through sales representatives covering both coasts and the Midwest, as well as Europe and Asia. RIT Press is a member of the Association of University Presses (AUP).

"The AUP, numbering more than 130, views itself as the most significant outlet for works destined to attract smaller-sized audiences by virtue of the specialized and focused content of the books published," Austin said.

RIT Press is a regular contender for national awards for content and design, noted Molly Cort '13 (communication and media technologies). Most recently, *Late Harvest*, by Forest McMullin '77 (photography) won the Silver Award in the Book/Fine Art category at the Arts & Sciences Prix de la Photographie Paris. Professor Emeritus Richard Lynn Shearman's *Finding Our Place in Nature: Aristotle for Environmental Scientists* was a finalist for the Prose Award in the Environmental Science category.

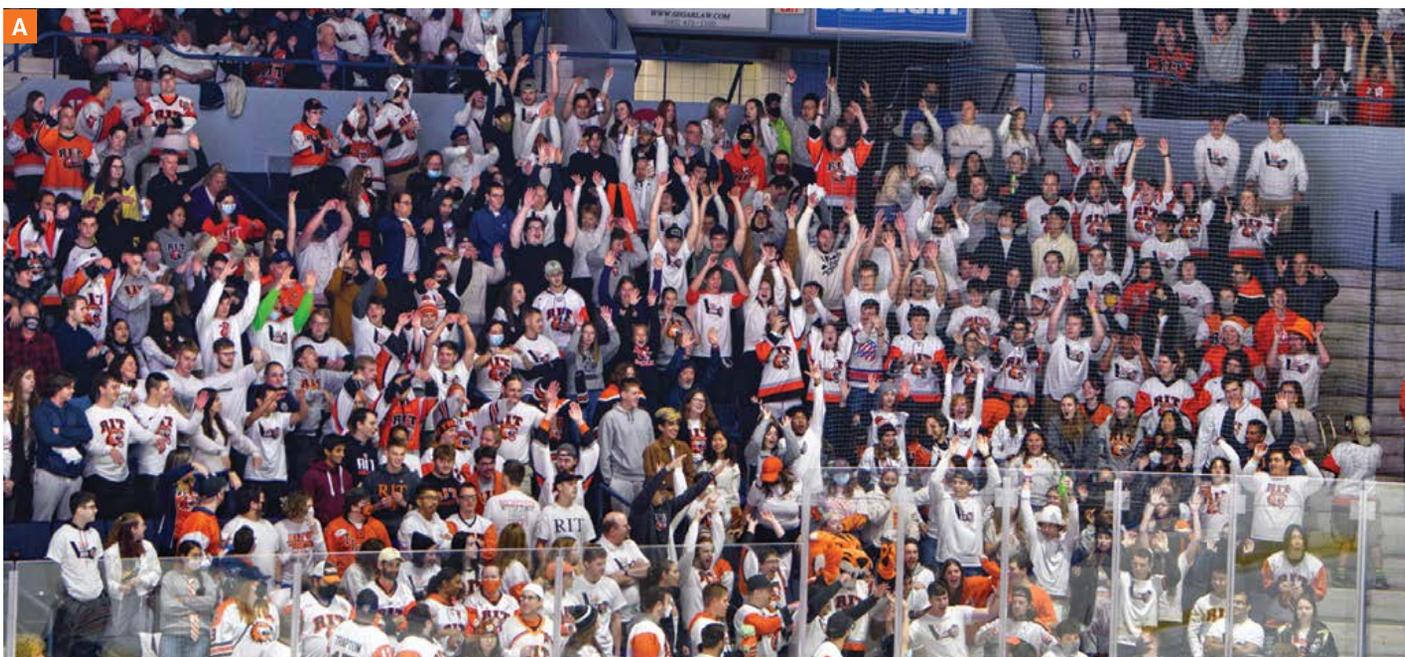
"As RIT continues to grow with new faculty and academic degrees, it gives RIT Press an opportunity to expand our title listing and professional publishing counsel to the scholarly community," Cort said. "Our knowledge and experience can benefit anyone who asks about publishing."

**Susan Gawlowicz '95**



# 2021

## Brick City Homecoming and Family Weekend



**A** Enthusiastic fans watched the men's hockey team skate to a 2-1 victory over St. Lawrence University at Blue Cross Arena.

**B** Film and animation student Michelle Snow and her grandmother, Wendy Katz, took a lap around campus during the Brick City 5K Fun Run and Walk.

**C** The women's volleyball team extended its winning streak to 12-straight games during Brick City Weekend.

**D** Families stopped by to take photos with the Tiger Statue, which has been moved to a temporary location near Global Village as work is done to create the SHED—Student Hall for Exploration and Development.

**E** The African Percussion Ensemble was one of many performing arts groups that entertained participants.

**F** Students created nitrogen ice cream at a science fair that was part of the weekend.

**G** Emmy- and Grammy-nominated stand-up comedian, writer, radio contributor, and actor Tig Notaro entertained the crowd.

A. Josh Boland B. Daniel Bacon C. Elizabeth Lamark D. Elizabeth Lamark E. Myers Creative Imaging F. A. Sue Weisler G. Elizabeth Lamark



# New Economy Majors

Technology is driving unprecedented changes in the way we work. To meet the needs of this new economy and ensure successful outcomes for our students, RIT has created a new category for study.

**Multidisciplinary.**  
**Transformative.**  
**Future-proof.**

[rit.edu/neweconomymajors](http://rit.edu/neweconomymajors)