



# RIT

**University Magazine**

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# UN FOLD ING THE UNI VERSE

**Also inside:**

Helping the Flower City bloom  
with art and design

Squishing the barriers of physics



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Elizabeth Lamark

More than 70 RIT students participated in 16 performances during this year's Ovation: RIT Performing Arts Showcase. RIT is working to create experiences for students to enhance their sense of belonging.

## Creating memories with shared experiences

Imagine arriving into a world that is larger than you've ever encountered. That was my situation as an undergraduate at the University of Delaware and, later, as a graduate student at Princeton University. The sheer joy of learning everything from nuclear power to social psychology, circuit analysis to philosophy of logic, probability to anthropology, and real analysis to digital signal processing.

I learned from outstanding and caring professors. Yet some of the fondest memories of my college years occurred outside the classroom. As I reminisce, I vividly recall:

- **Singing** in various choral groups.
- **Making friends** who broadened my world view.
- **Dorm life** and the associated pranks with fellow students.
- **Attending athletic events** and concerts with my future wife, Nancy.
- **A summer job** as a laborer on a construction crew.
- **A fabulous summer job** with a major corporation where I learned what I didn't want to pursue.
- A year-long, **independent design project** with a close friend, providing the "other half" of my education.

At RIT, we are working diligently to create collaborative experiences for our students to enhance their college experience and sense of belonging. This fall, we will dedicate the new Student Hall for Exploration and Development (SHED),

which will showcase our technology, the arts, and design in a massive way. The SHED is more than steel and glass. It will be about creativity every day. The SHED will offer students hands-on activities outside of their degree programs, outside of the curriculum. It could be that students are members of the Hot Wheelz solar car race team, or RIT Launch Initiative, the student rocket team, or any of RIT's many other teams and clubs.

In addition, many of our Performing Arts Scholars will take advantage of resources in the SHED. Performing Arts Scholars are an especially happy and engaged cohort of students. They're playing in rock bands and jazz quartets, dancing, acting, and more.

Our arts programs will be more visible in the new building. Student participation in arts programs has been found to develop strong bonds outside of students' normal social circles, increase personal confidence, improve academic performance, expand creative and critical thinking skills, and develop an appreciation for unique perspectives. This ultimately will drive creativity, discovery, and innovation, leading to the attributes sought after by future employers.


Imagine the possibilities. They are endless!

Yours in Tiger pride,

*Dave*

David C. Munson Jr., President  
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## 10 Squishing the barriers of physics

Faculty members are opening up soft matter physics to a new generation of diverse scholars.

Scott Hamilton

## Departments

- 2 On Campus
- 6 About Students
- 36 Alumni Updates
- 44 Alumni Awards
- 46 Class Notes
- 54 In Memoriam
- 56 Archives
- 57 Puzzle

## Features

### 16

#### Doctoral degrees

Personal experiences inspire RIT's first deaf Ph.D. candidates.

### 22

#### Giving back

Students, faculty, and staff help Flower City bloom with art and design.

### 28

#### Unfolding the universe

An RIT astrophysicist puts students first while researching the origins of thousands of galaxies with the James Webb Space Telescope.

#### Cover photo

Associate Professor Jeyhan Kartaltepe is co-leading the biggest general observer program in the James Webb Space Telescope's first year.  
Cover photo by Scott Hamilton

## On Campus

The new arts enrichment program hosted a pilot workshop where students learned about welding and working with molten glass.







## New program opens doors for creative exploration

**R**IT students will have more opportunities to flex their creative muscles outside of the classroom through a new arts enrichment program.

The non-credit-bearing program, which will launch for the incoming class this fall, creates opportunities for students outside of the College of Art and Design to engage with the resources and expertise available within the college.

“This is a signature initiative that will offer programs from our renowned School of Art and School for American Crafts to students in other areas like engineering, computing, business, health, the physical sciences, and liberal arts,” said RIT President David Munson. “It is a program that could take place only at RIT.”

Robin Cass, the director of the new program, describes its offerings as a series of creative adventures that will augment and enrich students’ college experience.

“Students will learn how to fabricate metal, shape molten glass, create ceramic forms, work with wood—all activities that are unlike anything most people have an opportunity to engage with in their regular lives,” Cass said.

The program will consist of a series of workshops, visiting artist lectures and demonstrations, off-campus field trips, and other community-oriented activities. There are no required assignments or quotas to fill, and all participation is self-driven.

Cass believes that the program will help further establish RIT as a place where technology and the arts converge, and as a school where students can fulfill their creative drive regardless of their primary major.

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Felicia Swartzenberg '19





The SHED will have makerspaces, performing arts spaces, and extra-large classrooms that promote active learning.

## Get ready for the SHED

RIT is on the verge of creating a new kind of community when construction ends on the Student Hall for Exploration and Development (SHED) and the doors swing open for the fall semester.

From student performance teams to performing artists, nearly 70 different teams and clubs will use spaces throughout three floors of the building in various studios, practice rooms, and makerspaces.

Nearly two-thirds of the interior walls are made of glass, and the architectural design will showcase students working on projects and practicing their craft. While students create and collaborate, others will head to and from the 27 classrooms in the SHED and Wallace Library.

The countdown to opening day will begin in earnest when the SHED receives its certificate of occupancy later this spring and the project begins its final stretch.

Scott Hamilton



The SHED will look like nothing else on campus. This inside view shows glass dominating the structure.

"It allows RIT to start moving in the makerspace equipment, setting up the machine shops, and doing all the final testing to get ready for students in August," said Mark Williams, principal project manager in RIT's Facilities Management Services.

The facility includes a 98-foot-tall atrium, the Brooks H. Bower Maker Showcase, the Sklarsky Glass Box Theater, and music and dance studios with advanced audiovisual technologies.

The 200,000 gross square feet of

combined new and renovated construction is the largest construction undertaking on the Henrietta campus since it originally opened in 1968.

The project was made possible because of Transforming RIT: The Campaign for Greatness, a blended fundraising effort.

The SHED will be open for viewing during Brick City Homecoming and Family Weekend, Oct. 13-15.

Susan Gawlowicz '95



# What's new

## Graduate degree

RIT is offering a new master's degree in artificial intelligence (AI) beginning this fall.

The Master of Science degree aims to prepare students from diverse educational backgrounds to become well-rounded AI professionals. Graduates will develop skills in designing, developing, and deploying AI systems, as well as understanding and analyzing AI's impact on society.

## New partnership

A new partnership between RIT and Griffiss Institute aims to expand access to high-quality educational training, research, and entrepreneurial opportunities in Upstate New York.

The partnership will stimulate collaborative approaches to experiential learning, use-inspired research translation, and technology commercialization in artificial intelligence, machine learning, quantum, cyber, and uncrewed aerial systems in the upstate New York region.

## Scholarship expansion

RIT's scholarship program that provides City of Rochester graduates full-tuition scholarships and academic support is expanding its eligibility.

The Destler/Johnson Rochester City Scholars program will now be open to students participating in the Urban-Suburban Inter-district Transfer Program.

The program offers full-tuition scholarships for entering full-time, first-year students from public and charter schools within the Rochester City School District.

More than 100 people helped kick off RIT's United Way Campaign in March by making more than 1,000 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, which were donated to community agencies.

Enise Alpaydin



## Design internship for the win

Many common household items have historical value, even the board games collecting dust in the closet. Allie Cervantes, a fourth-year graphic design student with a museum studies minor, helped bring some of America's favorite board games out of the dust and into the spotlight at The Strong National Museum of Play in Rochester.

As part of her summer internship in 2022, Cervantes designed an interactive display based on the board game Chutes and Ladders for an upcoming new exhibit, "Hasbro Board Game Place."

Cervantes, from Medway, Mass., was given a part-time position at the end of the summer to continue her work on the interactive display and to provide artistic and design direction for the exhibit's signage, labels, and other displays.

"I thought I was going to be correcting typos or helping with formatting, and instead they gave me this huge centerpiece to a permanent exhibit. For them to have that trust in me, and then to give me more responsibility over time, it makes me feel very honored," said Cervantes.

"Hasbro Board Game Place" examines and celebrates the gameplay, historical context, and social impact of board games. The all-new exhibit will feature historical artifacts, interpretive material, and custom-designed interactives, including the 15-foot-tall interactive version of Chutes and Ladders designed by Cervantes. This is one of two new exhibits highlighting

Hasbro games, the other being an outdoor exhibit called "Hasbro Game Park."

Michael Streb, director of exhibits at the museum, shared that Cervantes's talent and positive demeanor made extending her position through her graduation this May an easy decision.

"Interactive exhibit development draws from myriad disciplines to create new and engaging ways to educate, curate, and provide memorable experiences to museum guests. Student designers like Allie bring new perspectives, skillsets, enthusiasm, and a propensity to learn that improves any exhibit development process and product," said Streb.

The most significant lesson Cervantes got from her experience was recognizing how she can use her skills in graphic design to help uplift the community.

"You don't learn the history of board games in school, but they have an incredible impact on our lives and how we all grew up," Cervantes said. "I hope that the interactive I designed, and the exhibit as a whole, gives people an understanding of the way that they can impact the world. You don't have to make huge scientific discoveries—your impact can be creating something that makes people smile."

"Hasbro Board Game Place" and "Hasbro Game Park" are both part of the museum's expansion campaign and are set to open on June 30.

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Felicia Swartzenberg '19







**Allie Cervantes**, a fourth-year graphic design student with a museum studies minor, designed this 15-foot-tall Chutes and Ladders game for The Strong National Museum of Play.



A few members of the  
**Hot Wheelz Racing  
Team** work on their  
solar race car.

# Hot Wheelz Racing is going solar

**H**ot Wheelz Racing is preparing for its first Sun Grand Prix, taking place this summer in Kansas.

The team is building a 16-foot solar vehicle for the national and international collegiate competition.

Moving to a new technology is not a surprise to those familiar with the team.

The group's original race car 10 years ago was a go-kart, which over the years developed into an award-winning Formula hybrid vehicle. The internal combustion

engine and hybrid electrical components in that vehicle are being replaced with solar arrays, high tech sensors, and lithium-ion batteries.

"We knew we were going to learn a lot with this project. We're getting this done through peer dedication and a lot of people putting in a lot of hours," said Shannon Nosal, Hot Wheelz team project manager and a fifth-year mechanical engineering major from Old Lyme, Conn.

Over the past three years, the team

sought out alumni across the country and collegiate partners around the globe to be involved in the development process. Members also engaged faculty and staff with expertise in solar design and alternative materials to help provide new skills for team members.

Originally an all-female team, Hot Wheelz is now open to all students and has increased contributions from peers across campus to support technical, communications, business, and industrial design



Hot Wheelz will participate in **Sun Grand Prix**, a closed-track competition where teams measure laps and maneuverability over several days this summer.



Electrical engineering student Alexis Smith works on control systems to propel the solar car.



From left to right, Emily Lawton, Shannon Nosal, Mari Carmen Fuentes, and Aurora Meinsen, all mechanical engineering students, discuss the status of the project.



Amarisse Rodriguez, mechanical engineering, works in the machine shop where parts for the solar car are being designed and built.



From left to right, Apsara Som, Aurora Meinsen, and Jonina Yang, all mechanical engineering students, sand part of the 16-foot chassis mold that will become the base of the car's solar panels.

Photos by Scott Hamilton

needs. One of the biggest investments is in the solar cells needed.

Hot Wheelz won its 850-watt array through a drawing at a conference the team attended in 2021. The array was donated by Sun Power, a residential and commercial solar technology company.

Experienced teams recommended not designing the vehicle chassis from scratch, a process that could take up to three years. Hot Wheelz purchased design specs from an Australian university and modified them

to comply with U.S.-based competitions.

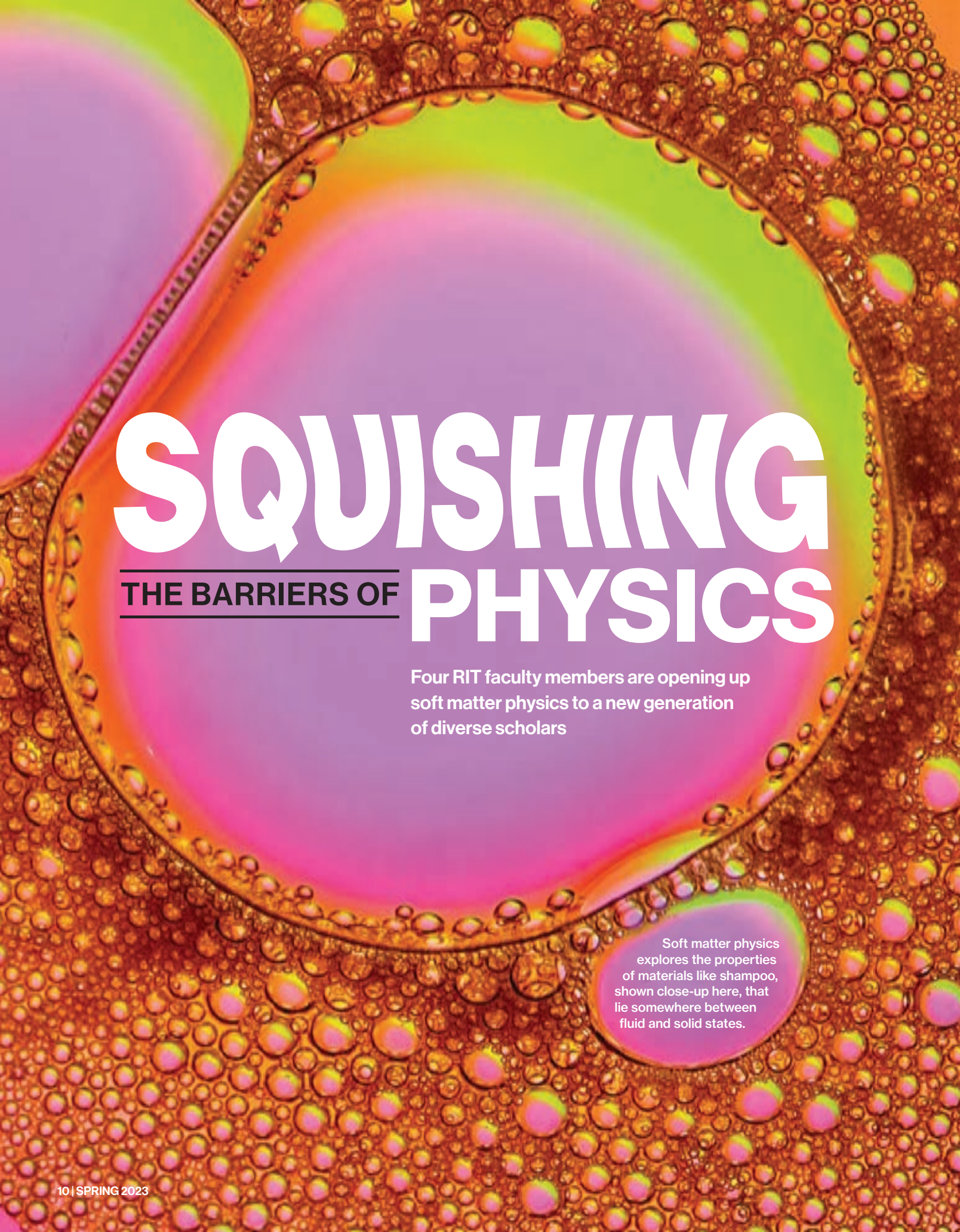
Team members are manufacturing a flat-top car made of composite materials fabricated in the machine shop located in the Kate Gleason College of Engineering. More than three tons of industrial strength foam was shipped to RIT to prepare the mold for the four-wheeled vehicle with a driver dome.

Learn more at [rithotwheelz.com](http://rithotwheelz.com).

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**Michelle Cometa '00**



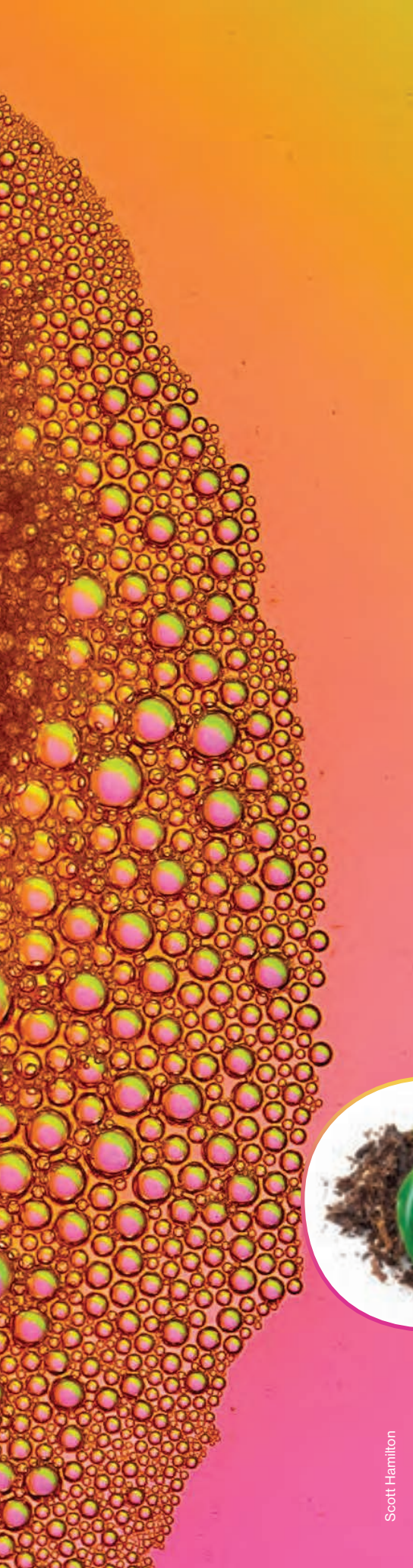


# SQUISHING THE BARRIERS OF PHYSICS

Four RIT faculty members are opening up soft matter physics to a new generation of diverse scholars

Soft matter physics explores the properties of materials like shampoo, shown close-up here, that lie somewhere between fluid and solid states.





**A**n interdisciplinary group of faculty members is working to make RIT and upstate New York a vibrant hub for the burgeoning field of soft matter physics.

Sometimes known as “squishy physics,” the field explores the properties of materials somewhere between fluid and solid states that can be manipulated easily with changes in temperatures or via other forces. The properties of everything from toothpaste to paint, new drugs to food products, shaving cream to shampoo, and even cells and tissues are governed by the rules of soft matter physics.

In recent years, RIT has made a concerted effort to add expertise in soft matter physics across the university. Now, faculty members Moumita Das, Poornima Padmanabhan, Shima Parsa, and Lishibanya Mohapatra are helping RIT make its mark in the field.

In the process, they are opening up soft matter physics to a new generation of diverse scholars, which will expand the potential for innovation.

The group has already earned millions in prestigious sponsored research grants, launched a conference to connect soft matter physicists from the region, and provided cutting-edge research opportunities for RIT students.

The outside world is beginning to take notice. Jennifer Schwarz, a professor of physics at Syracuse University, was an invited speaker at the Upstate New York Soft Matter Workshop hosted by RIT last fall and referred to the work in soft matter physics happening at RIT as “top notch.”

“I was really kind of awed by a presentation by these four powerful women from RIT about really interesting things they are working on in the field,” said Schwarz. “At RIT, they are definitely making a clear move to really excel in soft and living matter physics.”



Scott Hamilton

Assistant Professor Shima Parsa is studying how organic contaminants, such as petroleum, disperse in the soil. The research could impact environmental preservation efforts.



## The first to arrive

Das knew she wanted to be a physicist since she was in middle school. A self-described introvert, she spent much of her time observing the world around her and trying to figure out how things worked.

"I was very fascinated by how some insects could walk on water and eventually I was told that it was because of surface tension and physics could explain that," said Das.

"I learned that if there was an oil spill on the road, you could see all of these colors of the rainbow because of interference. So I decided that if physics could explain all of these things, I would become whatever I had to become so that I can study this subject forever. I was told that means you have to become a physics professor."

Das reached that goal in 2012 when she joined the faculty at RIT. Now an associate professor in the School of Physics and Astronomy and program faculty for the School of Mathematical Sciences, her research focuses on biological systems, using mathematical modeling to explore their mechanics, geometry, and structural properties.

Das has earned more than \$3.2 million in sponsored research to date, and her expertise in modeling biological systems has

led to collaborative projects with investigators all over the United States.

In 2017, she was part of a \$4 million National Science Foundation (NSF) "Big Ideas" initiative grant to build synthetic neurons that can be used in programmable networks. The goal is to identify the rules that govern life and predict an organism's characteristics.

She has received other large grants from NSF, National Institutes of Health (NIH), and private foundations to collaborate on projects to study the fundamental rules that allow bacteria to compartmentalize the functions within their cells and to design and create next-generation materials inspired and empowered by biological cells. The research could pave the way for materials that can be used to build bridges that repair themselves or wound-healing prosthetics, for example.

When she started as an assistant professor, Das said her field of physics was largely homogeneous, predominantly composed of faculty who were white men. According to the Institute of Physics, in 2018 just 27 percent of newly hired physics faculty members were women. White people accounted for 84 percent of U.S. physics Ph.D.s earned in the classes of 2018 and 2019.

But she said that has begun to shift in recent years. She felt the tides start to turn at RIT in 2017 when Padmanabhan joined the Kate Gleason College of Engineering's Department of Chemical Engineering as an assistant professor.


Soon others would follow, including Parsa in 2019 and Mohapatra in 2020, and RIT had gained what Das called a "critical mass" to start making a broader impact.

"We now have experts in living and non-living soft matter, fluids, gels, granular matter, liquid crystals. And in my department and others, we want a diverse demographic not just in terms of gender, but also race, ethnicity, country of origin, socioeconomic status, and more."

Moumita Das's research could lead to next-generation materials inspired by biological cells, such as self-healing bridges or dynamic prosthetics.

Scott Hamilton



A portrait of Poornima Padmanabhan, a woman with long dark hair, wearing a maroon short-sleeved top and light grey pants. She is smiling and standing with her hands on her hips. The background is a warm, orange-yellow gradient.

Poornima Padmanabhan is exploring how different cell types are formulated in biochemical development, which could lead to synthetic materials for agriculture, pharmaceuticals, and imaging.

## Expanding the pipeline

Padmanabhan was brought to RIT for her expertise in thermodynamics at the nanoscale and development of novel material structures. By that time, she had already begun to make her mark on the upstate New York region at Cornell University.

There she was a postdoctoral researcher and received the university's Alice H. Cook and Constance E. Cook Award, given by the Office of Faculty Development and Diversity for commitment to women's issues and improving the climate for women at the university.

Since joining the RIT faculty, she became co-director of the Computational Materials Research Nucleus Lab, and in 2022, she earned a prestigious NSF Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) award from the NSF's Division of Materials Research.

She aims to discover how chiral polymers—or mirror-image, entangled molecules—interact and self-organize, a process essential to developing novel ways of synthesizing materials and, more fundamentally, to understanding the origins of life.

The project could have big implications for use in the pharmaceutical industry, in agriculture or food analysis, and in the development of novel materials to enhance sensing and imaging applications.

"You have companies developing sophisticated things like new drugs and they are offering well-paid careers for soft matter scientists," said Padmanabhan. "But even humble everyday industries developing things like food products, paints, and coatings have terrific job opportunities and use soft matter physics in their technologies."

RIT undergraduate and graduate students are working closely alongside Padmanabhan and her colleagues in their research, and she said RIT's expanding doctoral offerings are helping them expand their research firepower.

"We just started our Ph.D. program in biomedical and chemical engineering in 2021, and it's a huge game changer for me," said Padmanabhan. "The collective effort is really gaining momentum."

RIT's mathematical modeling Ph.D. launched in 2017 also added to the soft matter physics researcher pipeline. The Ph.D. program in physics coming in 2024 will bring even more researchers to the field.



Shima Parsa's research could help explain how environmental contaminants like petroleum move through soil.

## Launching the workshop

Parsa was still a postdoctoral researcher at Harvard in 2019 when she met Das, who was chairing a faculty search committee. Parsa secured the job and joined RIT's School of Physics and Astronomy as an assistant professor that fall. But while Das and Parsa quickly formed a close bond and share a field, their research interests are far apart.

Parsa is an experimental physicist and studies problems that are mostly environmental. In her lab in the Chester F. Carlson Center for Imaging Science, she uses techniques including optical imaging and microfluidics to study natural phenomena such as the transport of contaminants in soil.

"Whatever we see outside, I'm making a smaller version of that in my lab that we can measure," said Parsa. "What I love about soft matter is that it is very accessible. It's exploring the physics behind things that everybody can see."

The American Chemical Society provided Parsa funding to study how organic contaminants such as petroleum disperse in the soil. She is active in her field at the national level through the American Physical Society and serves in the Group of Statistical and Nonlinear Physics.

Last fall, the RIT team helped gather the region's top researchers in the field by launching the Upstate New York Soft Matter Workshop. The event filled a void left after a similar workshop fizzled out after 2014.

Spearheaded by Parsa, the new workshop brought faculty, postdoctoral researchers, and students from nearby universities including Syracuse University, Cornell University, University at Buffalo, and University of Rochester to the RIT campus to share the latest breakthroughs.

Parsa said she envisioned the workshop as an inclusive place for soft matter physicists to share the latest developments

in their disparate areas of focus.

"We had very good representation from people of color and female faculty and students, which does not usually happen in physics because talks are usually given to other faculty with established work," said Parsa. "We are glad to have built an environment in which the students have the opportunity to talk to faculty without being intimidated by their status."

Creating a supportive environment where all colleagues can openly discuss their interests, successes, and challenges is key to helping scientists thrive, said Parsa.

"At RIT, it's empowering having the four of us, all women of color, get together and talk about research," said Parsa. "It's a safe space when you have people who understand you and they know your problems. We want the students and future hires to feel the same."



# The art of communicating

Communication also is key to working in such an interdisciplinary field, according to Mohapatra, who was the last of the four to join RIT in 2020.

Mohapatra came to RIT's School of Physics and Astronomy from Brandeis University, where she was a science communication fellow and co-director of the Quantitative Biology Research Community, a Howard Hughes Medical Institute-funded research program for undergraduate students working at the intersection of physical and life sciences.

She uses math, physics, and computation to study how cells measure and control the size of their organelles. That requires collaboration with scientists and engineers with very different backgrounds from her own.

"You're going to be talking to chemists, biologists, computer scientists, and more," said Mohapatra. "You have to speak in a language that is accessible to all. My love of science communication in general has become a very natural part of this."

Last year, Mohapatra earned a five-year, \$1.7 million Maximizing Investigators' Research Award for Early Stage Investigators from the NIH to study how cells control the size of organelles.

She will lead an interdisciplinary team of collaborators from McGill University, Emory University, and the University of Virginia in work she hopes will eventually lead to therapies for neurodegenerative diseases.

This academic year, Mohapatra became chair of RIT's Women in Science program, expanding her reach beyond the students she advises and teaches in the classroom.

Looking ahead, Mohapatra and her colleagues want to build on the momentum started by the upstate workshop and increase collaboration between experts across the region. The plans are for the workshop to become an annual offering. The next iteration will take place in Syracuse this fall.

Eventually, they hope the region can establish an NSF-funded research center in soft matter physics that benefits the faculty and students at RIT.

"We're very lucky that the upstate area has a wonderful roster of people who do amazing research in soft matter physics," said Mohapatra. "We want to bring the geographical focus of the soft matter community to upstate New York."

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Luke Auburn '09, '15 MS



**Lishibanya Mohapatra's** studies of cells could ultimately lead to therapies for neurodegenerative diseases like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.









From left to right, **Abraham Glasser**, **Noella Kolash**, and **Matthew Seita** will become the first three students supported by the National Technical Institute for the Deaf to earn their doctoral degrees from RIT.

# Personal experiences inspire RIT's first deaf doctoral candidates

For decades, deaf and hard-of-hearing students attending RIT's National Technical Institute for the Deaf have been earning associate, bachelor's, and master's degrees. This year, the first three NTID-supported students are on track to earn their doctoral degrees from RIT.

As the university continues to grow its doctoral degree portfolio, more deaf and hard-of-hearing students are choosing to pursue areas of advanced research at RIT instead of studying elsewhere. RIT currently offers 11 Ph.D. programs, with a new one in business administration starting this fall.

"The combination of world-class access services along with mentoring and support from dedicated faculty engaged in these programs is providing yet another career education pathway for deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals," said Gerry Buckley, NTID president and RIT vice president and dean. "We are confident that each student will make an impact on their fields and disciplines as they move forward."

All three computing and information sciences Ph.D. candidates—Abraham Glasser, Noella Kolash, and Matthew Seita—are researching unique ways to improve accessibility.

Research in accessibility for deaf and hard-of-hearing people is vital to this community, according to Matthew Huenerfauth, dean of RIT's Golisano College of Computing and Information Sciences and Ph.D. adviser for Glasser and Seita.

"I have discovered that the most thought-provoking and innovative research topics from our Ph.D. candidates are often the result of personal experiences that have shaped their views on what is most needed in this world," said Huenerfauth. "These students are looking years into the future as to where computing technologies will be, and they are asking how deaf and hard-of-hearing people would want technology to support communication and information access."

Photos by Scott Hamilton and Lacey Johnson



## Doctoral degrees

### Abraham Glasser

Rochester native Glasser '19 (computer science), '23 Ph.D. (computing and information sciences) has always known that a typical 9-to-5 job wasn't for him. For nearly two decades, he has immersed himself in assistive technologies research for deaf and hard-of-hearing people.

"Speaking from personal experience, it can be challenging for deaf and hard-of-hearing students to find support services, such as sign-language interpreting and captioning, at other universities," said Glasser, who returned to RIT for his Ph.D. "RIT/NTID does this so well. I was able to offload those responsibilities and focus solely on my research."

His research focuses on personal and home assistant devices, such as Amazon Alexa and the Google Assistant, that utilize voice-command queries to perform and automate tasks that users would have done themselves. Many deaf and hard-of-hearing people don't use their voices but use sign language, rendering these devices inaccessible.

Glasser notes that while these devices have improved their accessibility for people who speak slowly or quickly, have speech impediments, or even strong accents, they are still not usable with deaf and hard-of-hearing speech. "There is no way for natural sign language input, and that is a huge barrier."

As a result of his research, Glasser hopes that one day these devices will visually recognize sign language, receiving and understanding commands using artificial intelligence

and machine learning—and be able to determine nuances and tone in sign language, which is a visual-spatial language.

"Voice-control is becoming an increasingly ubiquitous interface to technology, and progress in sign-language recognition may enable these devices to respond to sign language," said Glasser. "Through my work, I have established deaf and hard-of-hearing user interest in this technology, investigated how they would like to interact with these devices, and what this interaction looks like. I am hopeful that the future will bring us many exciting technologies that help improve deaf and hard-of-hearing sign-language users' quality of life."

Glasser, who now lives in Olney, Md., is searching for a tenure-track teaching and research position that will allow him to continue his passion, while influencing the next generation of deaf and hard-of-hearing researchers.

"I go back-and-forth regarding my future plans, but I do love working in academia," he said. "I feel prepared by my experience at RIT/NTID, and we'll see where this road takes me."

**Abraham Glasser's** research is finding innovative ways that will allow deaf and hard-of-hearing people who don't use their voices to one day use personal and home assistant devices.



Lacey Johnson





Scott Hamilton

**Noella Kolash** is on a mission to improve the health literacy of deaf and hard-of-hearing community members through studying how people comprehend icons in mobile apps.

### **Noella Kolash**

According to the *Journal of Health Communication*, deaf health literacy is a staggering seven times worse than that of hearing people.

The use of icons in mobile health apps have been incorporated to help combat this disparity, but research by RIT doctoral candidate Kolash hopes to discover whether deaf people comprehend icons differently than hearing people using the top 10 health and top 10 general mobile applications.

Kolash '13 (information technology), '23 Ph.D. (computing and information sciences) gained inspiration for her research from her collaboration with NTID's Center for Teaching and Learning. The group developed Mars University, a video game created for deaf users by hearing RIT students.

Within the game, the "students" of Mars University express their political thoughts in the virtual community and vote for Student Government leaders. However, deaf users of the game didn't make any political statements. Hearing players did.

"Why?" Kolash asked. "Because in early design stages of the video game, the icon used to indicate making an announcement or statement is a megaphone. But the deaf players perceived that the megaphone operated the game's volume control, essentially a useless icon for a deaf person."

Kolash, who is from Boston, said the same can be said for icons used in health care apps. A heart/EKG icon could indicate an audible heartbeat or it could

prompt the user to schedule a check-up. This lack of clear information can result in inadequate care for deaf people.

Kolash's Ph.D. adviser, Peter Hauser, director of NTID's Research Center on Culture and Language, is an expert in cognition in deaf and hard-of-hearing people, and deaf adult health literacy. He said that Kolash brings her deaf experience and her knowledge of Deaf culture to her work.

"Noella's study of the culturability—how usability varies across cultures—of icons in healthcare apps is important not only for the Deaf community but for universal design," Hauser said. "Her findings will be beneficial for programmers who wish to develop apps to be accessible to all nationally and globally."

The next steps in Kolash's research include broadening her data collection set with the end goal of breaking down the architectural barriers that are created when software developers make apps. She also wants to encourage icon designers to make all-inclusive icons or have custom-tailored mobile applications for deaf or hearing people.

"If I can do my small part to help improve how deaf and hard-of-hearing people gain access to important health information, all of this hard work will be completely worth it."



**Matthew Seita**

hopes to improve how deaf, hard-of-hearing, and hearing people use automatic speech recognition to better communicate with each other.

**Matthew Seita**

The human aspect of human-computer interaction has always interested Seita '17 BS/MS (computer science) '23 Ph.D. (computing and information sciences), so much so that his research lies in how the design of automatic speech recognition, or ASR, can help deaf, hard-of-hearing, and hearing people communicate better with one another.

ASR isn't new but, according to Seita, the technology isn't truly designed for deaf people. He plans to change that.

"If a hearing person is speaking too quickly or has a nervous shake in the voice, the ASR devices make lots of errors resulting in the deaf person misunderstanding the exchange," explained Seita. "There are times when the live captions that hearing people use are inaccurate. But hearing people can often

look past this and gain context into the conversation based on what follows. Deaf people really rely on ASR to converse and communicate."

Seita is exploring how to design this technology to alert the user if they're speaking too quickly, or are inaudible. His work is about preventing miscommunication and facilitating quality communication between deaf and hearing people.

Like Glasser, the Rochester resident lost interest in sitting behind a desk and writing code. His passion is finding ways to incorporate human-computer interaction into traditional computer science.

His practical work has included research in RIT's Center for Accessibility and Inclusion Research lab, which brings together faculty and students who conduct and publish research at leading computing and education venues on accessibility and assistive technology for diverse users. The opportunity to work in this type of specialized lab right on campus was an invaluable experience that enabled him to hone in on his research, according to Seita.

"There's so much room for improvement in ASR technology. It would be great if the technology can be designed to be more aware of a deaf person's needs. I'm glad that I have the unique opportunity to use my personal experiences as a deaf person to enhance this for others."

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**Vienna McGrain '12 MS**





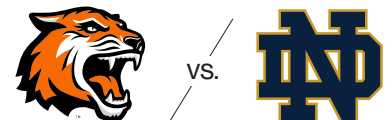
# BRICK CITY

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# Helping the **Flower City** **bloom** with **art** and **design**

Children approach the table and Kate Jacobs '20 (illustration) introduces them to stamp printing. As they create, Jacobs asks them about their plans for the weekend, what their favorite colors are, and other questions that prompt even the shyest child to come out of their shell.

At first, many of the children were unsure about the new people visiting their school. But all of them left with smiles on their faces, new artwork in hand, and an excitement about creating.

Jacobs is enrolled in RIT's one-year master's degree program for teaching art and was volunteering at a three-day community art camp during February school break. Jacobs and the master's program cohort regularly host free arts and crafts events for the local community.

"Most of the projects are open-ended, and it empowers the kids to explore their own creativity and to discover their creative voice," said Jacobs. "For me, it's also a good reminder that one of the aspects of a teacher's role, in a sense, is being a community builder and relating back to those around you, especially your students."

Over the last year, RIT students, alumni, faculty, and staff have worked to give back to the Rochester community by leveraging art and design. From providing creative outlets for young students to making a shelter to protect residents from the weather, RIT community members are dedicated to giving back to the city where they blossomed into the professionals they are today.







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Graduate student  
**Kate Jacobs '20**  
engages with kids in  
the local community to  
prepare for her future  
teaching career.

Graduate students, from left to right, **Anna Henry, Gabriel Rivas, and Emily Sudock** helped kids create art projects during a free camp.



Carlos Ortiz

## Creating without boundaries

The camp was one of several events students enrolled in the visual arts-all grades (art education) Master of Science for Teachers (MST) program provide for school-aged children each year.

These events began five years ago as a partnership with the Joseph Avenue Art and Culture Alliance (JAACA), a local nonprofit organization that supports art and cultural offerings in Rochester.

"A lot of institutions have programs that are free and available for anybody to attend, but that doesn't mean the people in the city of Rochester are able to get to them," said David J. Pacific, executive director of JAACA. "Bringing these institutions into the community is a transformative experience for children and families, and we have been proud to facilitate that."

Lauren Ramich is graduate director of the MST program, one of two teaching programs at RIT. She said that engaging with children at these events helps her students recognize the community impact they can have as an educator.

"Pragmatic experience like this helps to widen our perspectives as educators, and it better prepares our candidates to be more inclusive and culturally

responsive teachers," Ramich said.

Tracy Pakusch '10 (illustration), '13 MST (visual arts-all grades) has taught art at John Williams School No. 5 for six years, working with students from kindergarten to sixth grade.

Pakusch fondly recalls working directly with the local community during her time as an MST student. After attending one of the arts and crafts events hosted by the MST program, she was inspired to work with the program, and JAACA, to host a free art camp for the students at School No. 5 during February break 2023.

"I'm hoping this is something we can do every year going forward," said Pakusch.

Anna Henry, an MST student and Rochester native, said removing the assumed authority dynamic between teacher and student by volunteering at the community art events has altered her approach to teaching and community building.

"When you're sitting next to somebody at a table and there isn't that moment of instruction, it really makes you consider how you engage and build relationships with your students on a peer-to-peer level," Henry said.



## Making a tangible impact

Along with nurturing creativity, faculty and students in the School of Art are making a physical impact on the city of Rochester by creating a bus shelter for the Joseph Avenue neighborhood.

The idea was put forward by Neil Scheier, board vice president of the Joseph Avenue Business Association and board president of JAACA.

“Walking the streets of Rochester’s Northeast quadrant one winter day, I witnessed many cold, sneakered feet awaiting buses while standing in slush and snow,” said Scheier. “My mind flashed back to a previously completed vision plan for the region sponsored by the Joseph Avenue Business Association and its call for more bus shelters. This eventually led to an outreach to RIT, and a bus shelter was later born.”

The shelter was designed by students in a Topics in Studio Art: Public Art course for graduate students, taught by Matt Wicker, adjunct faculty, in the spring of 2020.

“From the beginning we had to recognize that form has to follow function. We had to try not to over design it and to make sure it hit all the marks it needed to as far as keeping the rain off but not being overly enclosed, and having the structure be durable and easy enough to repair should it get damaged,” said Wicker.

Gretchen Ettlie ’02 (graphic design), ’21 MFA (fine arts studio) was a student in the public art course where the shelter’s design was finalized. Her experience prompted her to think about the importance of working with the community as a partner rather than approaching projects like this as a content expert.

“When we visited a local library to share our ideas with people in the community, we talked to the security guard who worked there and he shared some information that we hadn’t thought of, the kind of thing you had to live in the neighborhood to know, and that would highly influence



Once it’s installed, the **new bus shelter** will be placed at one of the preexisting bus stops located on Joseph Avenue.

the design,” said Ettlie, now an adjunct faculty member in the College of Art and Design (CAD).

While the work was halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the shelter was completed and delivered by faculty and students to the city of Rochester last summer. The goal is to install the shelter before the end of this year.

**RIT students** helped design, manufacture, and assemble the bus shelter.



## Supporting local students

Other RIT community members are creating pathways within the classroom to make higher education more accessible for local high school students.

Last year, RIT's School of Photographic Arts and Sciences established a dual-enrollment program in photography with the Rochester City School District through the Virtual Academy of Rochester online learning program.

"This is an opportunity for self-motivated students to experience a college course while being fully immersed in their high school experience," said Christine Shank, associate dean of undergraduate students in CAD, who helped establish the program.

Students in the program also can familiarize themselves with navigating a campus through two visits to RIT. Their coursework will culminate in an art show, hosted at RIT's City Art Space, and students who meet the grade requirements will receive both high school and college credit.

Susan T. Rudy, art instructor and mentor at Rochester's School of the Arts and lead teacher for the Virtual Academy of Rochester, worked with RIT to establish the new course. She adapted the curriculum of an RIT Introduction to Photography course for non-majors to suit a high school audience, with advisement from Meredith Davenport, director of the photojournalism program at RIT.

"Our students have the opportunity to learn time management, which is sometimes a big adjustment for students when they head to college, and they also learn how to persevere," said Rudy.

Davenport said that exposing high school students to a college-level photography course will have a lasting impact, regardless of their chosen career path.

"Learning photography and exploring your identity through the very accessible tool of the camera can help students build a stronger sense of identity and self-esteem," Davenport said.

MacKenna Rhoads, a high school senior taking the dual-enrollment course, is a testament to the success of partnering with the community to support future innovators and creators.

Rhoads, who plans to major in forensics or biochemistry when she goes to college, shared that the dual-enrollment course helped her feel more confident when planning her future.

"I knew it was a good idea to take some college courses in my senior year, and I think this course really helped prepare me for going to college," Rhoads said. "Now I know what to expect and what I'm looking for."

**Felicia Swartzenberg '19**



Carlos Ortiz

**Clay Patrick McBride**, a senior lecturer and nationally recognized photographer, shows high school students how to screen print on glass during a tour of RIT's Printmaking Studio.





Rochester City School District senior **MacKenna Rhoads** gets first-hand experience as part of a dual-enrollment program with RIT.








Associate Professor Jeyhan Kartaltepe from RIT's School of Physics and Astronomy is co-leading COSMOS-Web, a massive study of thousands of the earliest galaxies in the universe.



# UNFOLD THE UNIVERSE

RIT astrophysicist  
puts students first  
while researching the  
origins of thousands  
of galaxies



While speaking with a student over Zoom on a seemingly normal day in April 2021, Associate Professor Jeyhan Kartaltepe received a Slack message with news that would alter her career.

"Oh my god, oh my god, oh my god," said Associate Professor Caitlin Casey, Kartaltepe's collaborator from the University of Texas in Austin.

"What's going on?" asked Kartaltepe.

"We got it! We got it," replied Casey.

The Space Telescope Science Institute (STScI) had just revealed the proposals selected for the General Observer programs for the James Webb Space Telescope's (JWST) first year of operation. Panels of scientists had winnowed approximately 1,200 proposals into 266 programs approved for the telescope's first year. The largest was COSMOS-Web, a massive study of thousands of the earliest galaxies in the universe to be led by Kartaltepe and Casey.

Since that day, Kartaltepe's work with the most powerful observational instrument ever made has gone at light speed. The telescope had a long-awaited launch on Christmas Day 2021, released its first official images in summer 2022, and began collecting data for COSMOS-Web in January 2023. Ultimately, the telescope will help explain the origins of the universe.

"Everything about JWST so far has exceeded expectations," said Kartaltepe. "The

sensitivity is higher than people expected, and that almost never happens. This is better than we could have hoped for."

Kartaltepe now has her hands full studying data from COSMOS-Web and other large JWST programs, while continuing to bolster her reputation as a teacher and mentor. Her work has gotten the attention of the astronomy community worldwide.

"She is a tremendous asset to RIT," said Professor Bahram Mobasher, a longtime collaborator from the University of California Riverside. "RIT was already on the map, but she has really done a lot for that program."

### Evolution as a scholar

Kartaltepe's interest in studying the evolution of galaxies in the early universe began in earnest while she was an undergraduate astronomy-physics major at Colgate University in the early 2000s.

She secured an internship at STScI and worked on what would become the Great Observatories Origins Deep Survey (GOODS), which used Spitzer Space Telescope, Hubble Space Telescope, Chandra X-ray Observatory, and XMM-Newton to survey the distant universe to the faintest flux limits across the electromagnetic spectrum.

These were the most advanced space-borne observatories at the time and allowed astrophysicists to conduct studies across many different wavelengths, including visible light, gamma rays, X-rays, and infrared.

That internship linked her with scientists she still collaborates with today.


She moved on to pursue her master's and Ph.D. at University of Hawaii at Manoa, where she first heard about the Cosmic Evolution Survey (COSMOS).

The COSMOS survey began in 2002, studying a specific patch of sky to better understand the formation and evolution of galaxies. It began as a Hubble Space Telescope program but has since included imaging by most of the major space-based telescopes and many large ground-based telescopes. The program has grown to include more than 200 scientists in a dozen countries.

"The person who became my Ph.D. adviser came to recruit students for his research group and told us about COSMOS," Kartaltepe said. "He said we're going to look at a million galaxies and see all these things and that just blew my mind away."

Mobasher, one of the co-founders of COSMOS, said Kartaltepe quickly stood out for her intelligence, vision, integrity, and



A woman with long brown hair is shown in profile, looking upwards towards a dark sky filled with numerous bright, out-of-focus stars and galaxies. She is wearing a dark top and a necklace with a small pendant. The background is a mosaic of astronomical images, creating a sense of looking into the cosmos.

collaboration skills. The two have collaborated on countless projects over the years, most notably COSMOS and the Cosmic Assembly Near-infrared Deep Extragalactic Legacy Survey (CANDELS), two of the biggest projects in the Hubble Space Telescope's history.

CANDELS was designed to study "cosmic dawn," less than 1 billion years after the Big Bang when the universe's structure began to take shape, and "cosmic high noon," 2 billion to 4 billion years after the Big Bang when galaxies experienced a major growth spurt.

After earning her Ph.D. in 2009, Kartaltepe spent time at the National Optical Astronomy Observatory as a postdoctoral research associate and Hubble Fellow. She then joined the faculty in RIT's School of Physics and Astronomy in 2015.

"I really liked the balance that RIT has because teaching is valued and that's not always the case at some universities," said Kartaltepe. "I liked that I was asked about teaching and the outreach work I did, as well as my research. The College of Science has a portfolio model where you kind of get to choose your balance, and I find it healthy that everyone's balance can be different."

The background image is a mosaic created by some of the first observations for the COSMOS-Web program taken by JWST's NIRCам from Jan. 5-6, 2023.

**IMAGE CREDIT** COSMOS-Web/Kartaltepe, Casey, Franco, Larson, et al./RIT/UT Austin/CANDIDE

Scott Hamilton

Kartaltepe provides her students unique opportunities to become deeply involved in projects like COSMOS-Web and CEERS. Kartaltepe, center, is pictured here with her astrophysical sciences and technology Ph.D. students Brittany Vanderhoof and Isabella Cox '20 (physics), '22 MS (astrophysical sciences and technology).



## Science is for everyone

Kartaltepe said she hopes JWST's launch and early success can be an energizing moment for the public's interest in science. She compares JWST's launch to that of Hubble in 1990.

"Most of the public knows what Hubble is, and I think JWST is quickly becoming that household name, and it's exciting," said Kartaltepe. "Seeing the launch and learning about the technology was a point of interest for a lot of people."

She is working to make sure that excitement is shared by all. A passionate advocate for women in her field, Kartaltepe wants the field to have a different environment than the one she grew up in.

"Ever since I was an undergraduate student, most of my mentors have been men," said Kartaltepe. "Every supervisor I've ever had has been a man. Fortunately, they have all been great and have been very supportive, because not everyone has that. But I want to ensure there are positive women mentors for students and scientists at all stages of their careers."

Kartaltepe is a former chair of RIT's Women In Science program and continues to serve on its executive committee. She mentors women and students from other underrepresented populations at the undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral research levels.

"She believes that science can be for everyone," said Isabella Cox '20 (physics), '22 MS (astrophysical sciences and technology), one of Kartaltepe's Ph.D. students. "I started working with her my freshman year and I got into multiple grad schools, but I was just so excited about what she was doing and the direction it was going, so I decided to stay here."

Cox is working with Kartaltepe on Cosmic Evolution Early Release Science (CEERS) Survey and COSMOS, using data from JWST to study how mass was assembled in early galaxies over time. Cox said that in addition to teaching advanced concepts in astrophysics and providing opportunities to work on cutting-edge research projects, Kartaltepe takes time to teach students how to be effective collaborators and good scientists.

"Jeyhan is very big on collaboration and communication, and really encourages people, even though we're working remotely often across the planet, to reach out to someone," Cox said. "I really appreciate that. She offers a lot of opportunities for her students to connect with other people and make connections, but also she's very good at making sure we're fully prepared to do those things."

Astrophysical sciences and technology Ph.D. student Brittany Vanderhoof said she came to RIT specifically to study with Kartaltepe. The two met at an Astronomical Society of New York meeting in the mid-2010s while Vanderhoof was an undergraduate student at Utica College.

"I was looking for graduate schools and I wanted to study galaxy evolution and be really involved in things like supporting women and underrepresented groups in science, and Jeyhan had all of that," said Vanderhoof. "She actually helped me with my whole graduate school process without even really knowing me and before I let her know I was interested in working with her. She was just very welcoming and helpful."

Vanderhoof is now also a member of the COSMOS and CEERS teams, and her thesis focuses on studying how galaxy mergers can increase star formation rates. She said that ultimately she hopes that she can continue in Kartaltepe's footsteps.

"As impressive as she seems with her dedication, research, intelligence, and the collaborations she is a part of, she is just as dedicated and caring to the people she mentors," said Vanderhoof. "She truly cares about her people and takes care of them."

Mobasher also noticed and admires Kartaltepe's involvement with diversity and women's advocacy in science. Empowering students the way Kartaltepe does, he said, is the ultimate mark of a great scientist.

"Science in general is constantly evolving, so after many years, the work we do today will be outdated and someone else will do it better," said Mobasher. "This is the nature of science. But what remains is the impact we have on scientists and how we help people to develop their own careers. Jeyhan's students will remember her long after they have left school."

Luke Auburn '09, '15 MS

## Worldwide attention

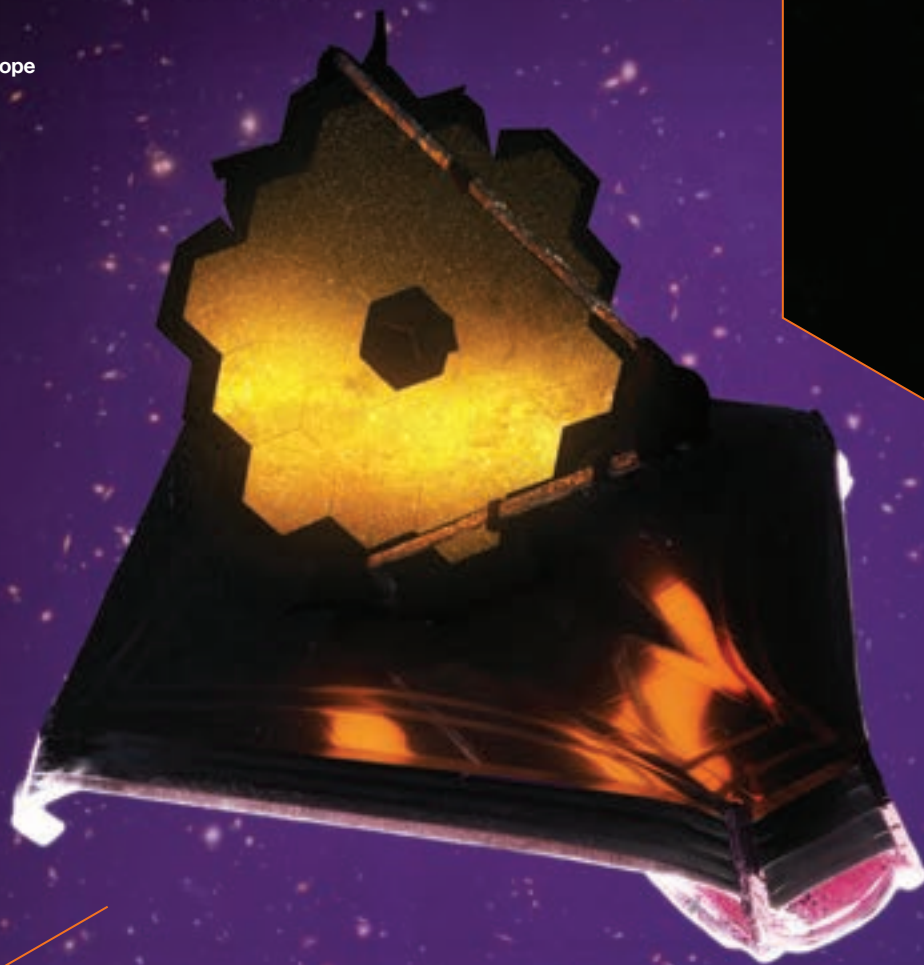
Local, national, and international media outlets have taken a strong interest in the work Associate Professor Jeyhan Kartaltepe and her colleagues have been doing with James Webb Space Telescope. Kartaltepe appeared in two episodes of the PBS TV program *NOVA* that focused on the telescope's first images and early science outcomes. She has also been featured in videos by *Scientific American* and the Bloomberg series *Giant Leap*. She is frequently quoted in publications like *The Washington Post* and has spoken at press conferences by NASA and the American Astronomical Society. Abroad, her work has been featured in outlets including *National Geographic Indonesia*, *Wired Italia*, and *Le Parisien*.



Scott Hamilton

A film crew came to the RIT campus to interview Kartaltepe about her work with JWST for an episode of the PBS program *NOVA*.





## What has the telescope shown so far?

The James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) has already begun to upend scientists' previous assumptions about the universe.

The telescope was designed to observe the universe at near-infrared and mid-infrared wavelengths, which are longer than the wavelengths of visible light. That makes JWST a great tool for studying what the earliest galaxies in the universe looked like.

As light travels from a distant galaxy toward us, it is gradually stretched into longer wavelengths and shifted toward the infrared part of the spectrum. Since the universe is expanding, the most distant light from the earliest galaxies has been shifted to the longer, redder wavelengths that can only be detected through infrared. The higher the "redshift" of a galaxy, the earlier it formed.

Since JWST came online, scientists have been finding lots of examples of high redshift galaxies.

Associate Professor Jeyhan Kartaltepe is co-leading COSMOS-Web, the largest general observer program in JWST's first

year, and is a key player in other JWST programs including the Cosmic Evolution Early Release Science Survey (CEERS), Public Release Imaging for Extragalactic Research (PRIMER), and the Next Generation Deep Extragalactic Exploratory Public (NGDEEP) Survey. While all of these programs look at galaxy formation in the early universe, they are different in scope.

At the two ends are COSMOS-Web and NGDEEP. COSMOS-Web looks at a relatively large portion of the sky but at relatively shallow glances, albeit still much deeper than anything possible before with the Hubble Space Telescope. NGDEEP, by contrast, looks at one point in the sky and stares at it for a long time.

By analyzing data from JWST taken for the CEERS study, Kartaltepe and her collaborators have found that the structures of galaxies in the early universe were much more diverse and mature than previously known.

The team examined 850 galaxies at redshifts of  $z$  three through nine, or as they were

roughly 11 billion to 13 billion years ago, using images taken by both JWST and those previously taken by the Hubble Space Telescope.

JWST's ability to see faint, high redshift galaxies in sharper detail than Hubble allowed the team of researchers to resolve more features and see a wide mix of galaxies, including many with mature features such as disks and spheroidal components.

Out of the 850 galaxies used in the study that were previously identified by Hubble, 488 were reclassified with different structures after being shown in more detail with JWST.

Kartaltepe said COSMOS-Web will provide an even larger sample through 255 hours of observing time with the telescope.

COSMOS-Web began its observing campaign in January and will finish in January 2024, studying an area of the sky about three times the size of a full moon.

The program team released COSMOS-Web's first images in March, but the bulk of data will become available in two batches this summer and winter.



An illustration of the James Webb Space Telescope deployed in space, far left. The telescope has a large mirror made of hexagons that are being illuminated by the galaxy being observed. Otherwise, the top side of the telescope is in the dark. The underside is being lit by the sun. The telescope is set against a starry background.

**IMAGE CREDIT** Adriana Manrique Gutierrez, NASA Animator



Images of four example galaxies selected from the first epoch of COSMOS-Web NIRCam observations, highlighting the range of structures that can be seen. 1 is a barred spiral galaxy; 2 is an example of a gravitational lens, where the mass of the central galaxy is causing the light from a distant galaxy to be stretched into arcs; 3 is a nearby galaxy displaying shells of material, suggesting it merged with another galaxy in its past; 4 is a barred spiral galaxy with several clumps of active star formation.

**IMAGE CREDIT** COSMOS-Web/  
Kartaltepe, Casey, Franco, Larson, et al/  
RIT/UT Austin/CANDIDE.

## Alumni Updates

**Justin Copie '05** didn't get a co-op position at Innovative Solutions at first. Now, he is the CEO.



James Bogue

## Copie climbs from co-op to CEO

Justin Copie '05 (information technology) has climbed the full career ladder at Innovative Solutions. Since starting as an inside sales representative co-op student, he has risen through the ranks to become the company's owner and CEO.

Innovative Solutions is a Premier Amazon Web Services (AWS) partner, headquartered in Henrietta, N.Y. The company helps to optimize more than 750 small and mid-sized businesses by migrating and managing their IT infrastructure in the cloud.

For Copie, Innovative Solutions is not only one of the most valuable tech companies in Rochester, it's also an opportunity to showcase the innovative things coming out of his hometown.

Copie will be the first to admit that you don't become CEO overnight. At RIT, he wound up switching majors during his first quarter. And it took him a year to really begin committing himself as a student. When he applied for a co-op position at Innovative Solutions, he didn't get the job—at first.

"I was persistent, I kept calling, and luckily the position opened back up for me," said Copie. "With that co-op, I was meeting with businesses to discuss the tech problems

they were facing. I was addicted. I remember thinking that I could do this for the rest of my career."

As the company evolved and grew, Copie's role did too. In 2016, after several years working with the former owner on a succession plan, Copie purchased Innovative Solutions.

Under his leadership, the company has pivoted from being an IT service provider to going all in on the growing platforms of AWS. For many businesses, the pandemic became the tipping point for a needed switch to cloud-based services.

"We help usher our customers into the future, with technology that is easier to manage, cheaper, and with more opportunities to add value," he said. "For example, we've developed ways to use existing data and artificial intelligence to help businesses better serve their customers."

Innovative Solutions is modernizing and optimizing a wide range of businesses, from Ferrari Financial Services to the Parkleigh gift shop in Rochester. The company now has about 130 employees in offices across the U.S. and Canada. About a quarter of those employees are RIT alumni—and they do hire co-ops.

Copie credits some of the company's success and employee loyalty to a few unique perks. Remote workers have the ability to fly into Rochester anytime, no questions asked. The main office also caters free lunches every day and offers a weekly onsite barber shop and salon services.

"I'm a firm believer that if you treat your employees right, then your customers will get that same treatment downstream," said Copie. "I also want to show that same commitment to the hometown where this company grew up."


That's why Innovative Solutions sponsored the renaming of Frontier Field—home of the Rochester Red Wings baseball team—to Innovative Field. The new name was announced in 2022. Copie said he got the idea when his out-of-state friend thought that the Rochester baseball field was named after Frontier Airlines.

"It's a little edgier and it's a good opportunity to change the perception of what we do here," Copie said. "I hope this inspires other entrepreneurs to help change the face of Rochester."

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Scott Bureau '11, '16 MBA





**Maricela Marquez '18, '22 MS** has worked to create a welcoming environment at Rochester Regional Health's Multicultural Resource Center.

Scott Hamilton

## Degree gives Marquez a seat at the table

A career in community health inspired Maricela Marquez '18, '22 MS to grow in her profession as an advocate for Latino patients. For Marquez, this meant advancing her career at Rochester Regional Health by enrolling in RIT's health systems management Master of Science program.

Marquez was encouraged by her mentor and role model, Lucia Colindres-Vasquez, chief program officer at Ibero-American Action League in Rochester. "She is a Latina, like myself, and she motivated me to get a higher degree, saying, 'If we want to take care of our people, our community, we have to be at that table. We have to be part of the organization from within.'"

Marquez agrees. "It's not just me wanting to move up for myself, but that is the only way we can get things done."

Marquez earned her BS from the School of Individualized Study and then reached out to Carla Stebbins, director of RIT's health systems management MS degree.

"Carla first asked me where I was and where I wanted to go," Marquez said. "She

dove into the classes and expectations and what we can do, and my eyes got huge. I thought, 'I want to do it. I want to be a part of this.' Carla was there every step of the way."

The RIT program positioned Marquez to take advantage of a new opportunity at Rochester Regional Health as a part-time project coordinator for the National Health Service Corp., a government-funded loan repayment program. She also worked part time as an access associate in the Rochester General Hospital Emergency Department, where she had started her career in health care.

Months before finishing the graduate program last August, Marquez was promoted to program manager for the National Health Service Corp. The office supports qualified health care professionals who work within communities of need. Marquez is the point of contact for these professionals.

Her graduate education led to her role on the team that created the Rochester Regional's new Multicultural Resource Center to serve Spanish-speaking people and individuals from other cultural backgrounds.

In her expanded position as lead to the Multicultural Resource Center, Marquez focuses on social determinants of health and connects people with resources from the community, such as care managers from Ibero-American Action League for Spanish speakers, and from agencies, including LawNY; the Empire Justice Center's Creating Assets, Savings, and Hope (CASH) program; and the Cornell Cooperative Extension, that assist speakers of other languages.

A new mural in the waiting room represents people from different cultures who might come to the center. Marquez hopes the mural's welcoming tone puts people at ease when they enter the facility.

"Most people come through our doors because they have some sort of illness or they're trying to prevent one," Marquez said. "I think sometimes in the United States we forget the niceties. At the end of the day, we're all human and would appreciate a helping hand."

Susan Gawlowicz '95

## Alumni Updates

From their first meeting, **James Wegner '09**, left, and **Jonny Widder '09** bonded over their shared curiosity about the printing industry.



Jesse Winter

Before

# Alumni cultivate business by doing things

James Wegner '09 (media arts and technology) and Jonny Widder '09 (media arts and technology) became quick friends after meeting at RIT Orientation, bonding over their desire to rebel from the “mandatory.”

Fourteen years later, they serve as co-presidents of their company, Volume Industries, providing creative support for luxury brands and high-end, boutique-style businesses.

Volume Industries offers a variety of services in technical design, fabrication, millwork, project management, logistics and installation, and digital imaging. They've created indoor and outdoor displays for brands such as Nordstrom and Christian Louboutin.

This one-stop shop of creativity and technical skill all started with Wegner and

Widder's friendship and their mutual desire to create something new.

Wegner, a Rochester native, and Widder, from Pleasantville, N.Y., discovered they both had an interest and curiosity about the printing industry. The pair longed to get out of the classroom and dive into more hands-on experiences, and they spent the majority of their time at RIT in the Digital Publishing Center. It was there that the seeds of Volume Industries began to take root.

“I think that got our gears turning about how we could do something different than the printing companies that were around at the time,” said Widder. “I think it was just that energy that was there in the lab with us. It all stemmed from the fact that we wanted to do something a little different.”

Both Wegner and Widder had experience

in the printing industry—Widder through his father's business and Wegner through jobs he worked in high school and college—but when they started interviewing for jobs after graduation, both were unsatisfied.

“I remember going to an interview with the U.S. Treasury for their printing office, and I remember the interview went really poorly because we were talking about this job that I didn't think made sense for me,” said Wegner. “That was a defining moment for me. After that, I got to thinking, ‘who am I going to work for that's going to make me feel proud of what I can do and allow me to push my boundaries?’”

Widder encountered a similar dissatisfaction when considering jobs after graduation, recalling an impactful conversation he had with his grandpa at the time.





This display promoting Chanel's No. 5 fragrance is one example of how Volume Industries leverages staff expertise to create striking immersive spaces.



In 2022, the company created displays for the FENDACE pop-up boutique in SoHo in New York City to celebrate the mashup collection between the brands Fendi and Versace.



After

Volume Industries has the capability to take on projects of all sizes. For the Louis Vuitton "200 Trunks, 200 Visionaries" exhibition in 2022, the company transformed the entire Louis Vuitton Beverly Hills storefront on North Rodeo Drive.

## differently

"My grandpa was a very point-blank type of guy. He was asking about who I would be working for and at one point just said, 'do you really want to work for this person?' and I realized no, I didn't," said Widder. "I think that's a mantra that James and I carried along our journey. It's a very core belief of our company to be a business that people actually want to work for—a business that allows people to grow."

Volume Industries is the culmination of three businesses founded by Wegner, Widder, and other collaborators. It all started in 2009 when Wegner and Widder founded Varidirect, a small design and print shop, while at RIT. They opened their first manufacturing facility in New York City in 2013.

After years of consistent growth, the team founded Substrate with Ken Thomas

and Daniel Morgan in 2016 to serve as a three-dimensional fabrication division. Two years later, they founded VSLA, which included a secondary facility based in Los Angeles. Finally, in 2021, the three companies merged to form Volume Industries.

One of the pair's most memorable client experiences from the past 14 years was working with Nike to create a mural for its annual Go Skate Day. It's not memorable because the job went perfectly, but because it showcased their team's ability to act on the fly and pivot in the face of obstacles.

"Our project was to create a printed mural on the ground of a skate park in Brooklyn. We found out that it was going to be raining for three days prior to the event so we couldn't use our vinyl designs," said Wegner. "We needed to scramble to completely

rethink what we were doing. We had never painted a mural in our lives, but with four days of extreme dedication and the help of some friends, we were able to pull together a mish-mosh painting crew to complete a gorgeous mural," said Wegner.

The experience demonstrated the value of their business and the talented team they cultivated, and it taught them an important lesson that stayed with them.

"If the two of us want to put our mind to something, we'll be successful," said Widder. "Sinking both of our brain power into it, James's analytical brain and my non-conventional brain, has allowed us to have a mindset that there is nothing too far out of our grasp."

**Felicia Swartzberg '19**

**Debra Meiburg '05**  
**MS** is one of only four  
Masters of Wine in Asia.  
The former RIT teacher  
has lived in Hong Kong  
for nearly 35 years.

## Saunders College alumna a true master of her industry

Douglas Kirkland

**T**hey didn't know it then, but RIT students taking Debra Meiburg's wine courses back in the late 1990s were learning from a bona fide master—literally.

Meiburg, who later earned a master's degree in service leadership and innovation from Saunders College of Business in 2005, became the first and today is one of only four Masters of Wine (MW) in Asia—a rigorous title to achieve. She is widely considered the global authority on the Asian wine market.

"I taught soft-skills courses at RIT that were designed to help students succeed in international workplaces and included several levels of wine appreciation and wine-making, but also a series of classes aligned with international business etiquette," she recalled.

Meiburg has become a veritable international star in the wine industry. A Hong Kong resident for nearly 35 years, she is an award-winning author, TV personality, and international speaker.

The founding director of Asia's leading wine marketing agency, Meiburg Wine

Media, she established MWM Wine School, widely recognized as Hong Kong's premier wine school. She also is the producer and host of several multinational documentaries, winner of numerous industry accolades, and the author of wine books available across four continents.

Yet the native of Sonoma County, a region synonymous with California's wine country, began her career as an accountant, not a wine expert. "It never occurred to me to enter the wine industry," she said.

After moving to Hong Kong in 1988 with Pricewaterhouse, she found Hong Kong's international wine selections so confusing that she decided to take a wine class. She subsequently enrolled in all of the courses she could find—studying theory, learning and tasting varietals, and presenting her dissertation—to earn the "holy grail" of wine: the Master of Wine title.

Meiburg's exploits have taken her from the wine harvest in Chile, to pruning vines in Bordeaux, and working as a cellar-hand in the Finger Lakes region.

"For me, wine is about history, culture, geography, science, and people."

She still looks back fondly on her years at RIT. "It was such a gift to teach at RIT. My time at the university accelerated my passion for teaching, and I'm still in contact with former students more than 20 years later."

"RIT students were curious and open-minded, seeing the relevance of the wine industry to their professional studies, no matter what their majors," she added.

Like a fine wine, Meiburg's connection to people, and her industry, gets better over time.

"I love the education side and connecting with people through wine, but I also love the grassroots, agricultural side," she said. "Nothing gives me greater pleasure than to have walked through the muddy vineyards with a winemaker, then see their treasured bottles on the table of a glamorous Hong Kong restaurant."

Rich Kiley



After working as a master silversmith for nearly two decades, **Lance Neirby '05 MFA** was named president and CEO of Montana Silversmiths.

**Neirby helped create trophies** at Tiffany & Co., including the Vince Lombardi Super Bowl Trophy. Now, his company creates trophies for the Professional Bull Riders and other rodeo associations.



Photos provided by Montana Silversmiths

## Metals graduate leads by example

When people ask what he does for a living, Lance Neirby '05 MFA (metals and jewelry) just says he leads an incredible team of people. Maintaining a strong, positive team environment has been a priority for him as the new president and CEO of Montana Silversmiths.

Headquartered in Columbus, Mont., Montana Silversmiths is known for skilled craftsmanship and sells a variety of traditional Western fashion items, including belt buckles, jewelry, and other Western lifestyle products. Neirby was named president and CEO of the 166-employee company on Jan. 1. Prior to this role, he served as vice president of operations and chief operating officer of Montana Silversmiths.

Before venturing into leadership, Neirby, from Laurel, Mont., made it a priority to become a master in his craft so he could lead by example under his personal tenants of authenticity and urgency.

"By leading authentically, not only can I inspire people, but our employees understand that I know how to do what they do. It brings accountability to the whole process," said Neirby. "I can share their pain when something is really hard to do, and we can work together to find a change that makes their jobs a little easier and more efficient."

In addition to his duties as president and CEO, Neirby uses his skills in the craft to actively engage with the creative design and engineering process for the company's unique products, which run the gamut from simple hoop earrings to large trophy buckles.

After graduating from RIT, Neirby worked at Tiffany & Co. for 11 years, serving in a variety of master silversmith and senior management roles. Neirby credits Leonard Urso, his former RIT professor, and Urso's connections with Tiffany & Co. for being able to get a start in the industry.

Some of Neirby's most cherished memories from his time at Tiffany & Co. involved

working in the sports league trophy shops, and he didn't wander far from celebrating national athletes when he joined the Montana Silversmiths team.

Montana Silversmiths is the official silversmith of the Professional Bull Riders, the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association, and the American Quarter Horse Association, and the company also creates hand-engraved trophy belt buckles for competitions. Neirby expressed that leading a company that helps commemorate athletes' success is a gratifying experience.

"Being part of the trophy world is pretty remarkable. What we do as a team—whether it was at Tiffany's or here in Montana—is mark the accomplishments of athletes that have worked their entire lives to win and be the best in their sport," he said. "The trophies serve as a testament for all of the hard work each athlete puts in to win, and it also stands as a celebration of the efforts, focus, and sacrifices."

Felicia Swartzenberg '19

### Nicole Rotondo

'16 was a trackside engineer at the 2022 Indianapolis 500. She is pictured here with winning driver Marcus Ericsson.



## Rotondo makes history at Indianapolis 500

Nicole Rotondo '16 (mechanical engineering) always wanted to be in motorsports. Taking her passion for cars and racing, she built an engineering career that put her on the fast track with Honda's Performance Development (HPD) team.

She made race engineering history as one of the first women to hold the position of HPD trackside engineer on a winning Indianapolis 500 team when Marcus Ericsson's No. 8 car crossed the finish line first at the 2022 race.

As a trackside engineer, Rotondo is assigned to a specific team for the season, from March to September, attending each race and providing a link between drivers on the track and the pit crew—a tight-knit group of engineers, mechanics, and engine builders who sup-

port the sophisticated, high-tech race cars.

"I did my best to align my experiences with my passion in every way that I could," said Rotondo. "I chose RIT because of the automotive option. Any amount of practical experience you could have for motorsport jobs is super helpful, especially if you want to go into racing. They want to know you have practical experience in addition to a traditional education."

Being the drivetrain lead on the RIT Formula team provided practical experience, and her traditional education included understanding the inner workings of internal combustion engines. Working on her own car in one of RIT's parking lots counted as much as her co-ops with Toyota and Meritor.

"I was never really a math or physics nerd, just mechanically

inclined," she admitted. "I was really good at using a wrench, and my dad didn't want me to be a mechanic, so I had to figure out math."

Rotondo also figured out how to maneuver in a male-dominated profession and found that it was secondary to being a successful engineer contributing to a major race team.

"I am not any different than my male counterparts," said Rotondo, who serves as an engine calibrator and who has been with Honda for five years. "There is nothing about me and my responsibilities that are different than what they do and how they interact with the team."

On race day, Rotondo and her teammates held their breath until the checkered flag was waved and Ericsson's 8 Car zoomed across the finish line.

"It was such a big moment," she said. "Everybody knows the pressure you are under. You have confidence in the team, but you are still feeling the high risk, high reward part of the job all the time."

Rotondo will continue with the No. 8 car this year, her fourth year with the team.

In October, she and a Honda colleague also will participate in the 2023 Rebelle Rally, a 10-day, all-female navigation rally that starts in Nevada and ends more than 1,500 miles later in southwest California.

"I don't think I can find my way out of a forest with a compass," she said. "I'm going to have to learn how to navigate, how to drive off road, and try to fit all of this in with the full race season. It will be an adventure."

Michelle Cometa '00



# Don't wait to make an impact.

Become a founding member of the Sentinel Society.

*As a **Sentinel Society** member, your annual and unrestricted gift plays a crucial role in allowing RIT to offer scholarship aid to attract a highly talented and diverse student body, while enriching the RIT experience for all students.*



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“I believe our Tigers deserve it all.”

—Krystle Jones-Ellis '09, '15 MS

*Founding Sentinel Society Member*

Alumna **Krystle Jones-Ellis '09, '15 MS**, College of Liberal Arts, is a Sentinel Society founding member.

“Though worth every second, during my time at RIT, there weren't many robust resources to support Black students through their collegiate journey, especially students who were deaf and hard-of-hearing. As an alum, it is critical that I not only participate in DEI initiatives, but that I assist students financially. Philanthropy is the scaffolding which supports the social, emotional, and financial needs of an individual and I believe our Tigers deserve it all.”

Your five-year pledge—at a specific level—entitles you to membership in the Sentinel Society where you will make a direct, immediate, and substantial impact on our students. **Sentinel members are turning aspirations into achievements. Become one of the founding members by making a pledge before June 30, 2023.**

**RIT** | **Sentinel Society**



Learn more about how you can be a member by visiting **[rit.edu/JoinSentinel](https://rit.edu/JoinSentinel)**.

**RIT**

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## Alumni Awards

### Austin McChord '09

hopes he can inspire others to give back to the university.

## McChord named Outstanding Alumnus

**R**IT is honoring Austin McChord as Outstanding Alumnus for 2022-2023. The award is the highest honor the university can bestow upon alumni in recognition of professional accomplishments as well as service and generosity to the university.

McChord '09 is the founder of Datto, a leading provider of IT solutions delivered through managed service providers. He launched the company in 2007 from a basement in Norwalk, Conn., with the mission to bring best-in-class data protection solutions to underserved small- and medium-sized businesses.

McChord served as Datto's chief execu-

tive officer for more than 10 years.

He continues to invest in and advise other technology growth companies and to invent and experiment in his lab in Norwalk.

"I am incredibly honored to receive this award and be recognized by the university," he said. "Being able to give back to the university and community as a whole has been incredibly rewarding. I hope that in receiving this award I can inspire others to give back as well."

McChord, who gave \$50 million to RIT in 2017, is a trustee and was the 2017 RIT commencement speaker. The donation was the largest ever made to the university and part of a continuing \$1 billion blended fundrais-

ing campaign, titled Transforming RIT: The Campaign for Greatness.

In 2020, McChord became the CEO of Casana, a healthcare technology startup with a mission to transform care management for patients with chronic conditions. Casana was founded by Nicholas Conn, '11, '13 MS, '16 Ph.D. (microsystems engineering).

"Austin embodies the creative and innovative spirit that characterizes RIT," said RIT President David Munson. "We are thrilled to present this award to someone who has been a source of inspiration for so many in our university community."

**Mindy Mozer**



# 2022 – 2023 Distinguished Alumni AWARDS

**Eleven RIT alumni have been awarded Distinguished Alumni Awards for the 2022-2023 year.** The Distinguished Alumni Awards are presented annually by each of RIT's nine colleges, the School of Individualized Study, and the Graduate School to alumni who have performed at the highest levels of their profession or who have contributed to the advancement and leadership of civic, philanthropic, or service organizations. It is the highest award an RIT college can bestow upon its alumni.

## **College of Art and Design**

John Traver '10 (motion picture science) is the co-founder/senior principal scientist at Frame.io. Frame.io is a video review and collaboration platform designed to unify media assets and creative conversations in a user-friendly environment. Today, the company supports nearly 1 million media professionals at enterprises including Netflix and BuzzFeed and is backed by leading investors such as Firstmark, Accel Partners, Signal Fire, and Jared Leto. Frame.io was acquired by Adobe in November 2021.

## **College of Engineering Technology**

William J. Collins III '83 (electrical engineering technology) is president of airframe services at HAECO, a global, commercial aircraft maintenance, repair, overhaul, and modification company. He has more than 30 years of experience in the aviation industry, leading large manufacturing and service companies that support commercial and military aircraft and the space industry.

## **College of Health Sciences and Technology**

Anna S. Cameron '84 (medical technology) is oncology global market access and pricing team lead at Sanofi. She joined the company in March of 2020 with more than 30 years of diverse commercial experience. Prior to that, she worked at Merck, BMS, and GSK.

## **College of Liberal Arts**

Luiz Freitas '07 (economics) is vice president of experience personalization at Fidelity Investments. Prior to this role, he held analytics and leadership positions at Google, Amazon, and Digitas. He has

remained involved with RIT, speaking with accepted students, mentoring students, and sitting on the Alumni Association Board.

## **College of Science**

Jonathan B. Phillips '99 MS (color science) is vice president of imaging science at Imatest, a leading company in image quality testing that supports camera development for companies across industries, including automotive, mobile electronics, security, aerospace, and medical imaging. Prior to joining Imatest, he was the leader of image quality in Google's Android organization from 2015 to 2021, particularly focused on the Google Pixel camera and display image quality.

## **Golisano College of Computing and Information Sciences**

Gleb Reznik '03 (information technology) is the chief information security officer for Consumer and Community Banking at JPMorgan Chase. Previously, he was global chief information security officer at Synchrony and at Capital One for the Shared Technology division.

## **Kate Gleason College of Engineering**

Michael Oshetski '03 (electrical engineering) is co-founder and CEO of Micatu Inc. Micatu's innovative technology enables decarbonization of the power grid and provides real-time information for predictive and reactive information, enabling a safer and cleaner power grid of the future.

## **National Technical Institute for the Deaf**

Robert Sidansky '77 (social work) retired as an administrator at the National Center on

Deafness, California State University.

In that role, he supervised the student services division with more than 200 employees, overseeing interpreting, captioning, notetaking, counseling, academic advisement, student development, orientation, and tutoring services for more than 200 deaf and hard-of-hearing students annually.

## **Saunders College of Business**

James G. Gould '85 MS (business administration: accounting) is the co-founder and president of Alesco Advisors. In addition to his leadership responsibilities, he is actively involved in business development and client service and is a member of the firm's investment committee. Prior to founding the firm, he was president of Clover Capital Management.

## **School of Individualized Study**

Nicholas Lemieux '13 (applied arts and sciences) is the founder and CEO of Athlete Studio, an e-commerce and Web3 platform for pro athletes. After graduating, he worked for Datto and Jebbit before founding Athlete Studio in 2016. Athlete Studio is an RIT Venture Fund portfolio company and was acquired by Dapper Labs in 2021.

## **Graduate School**

Bruce Smith '84, '88 MS, '95 Ph.D. (imaging science) is an RIT Distinguished Professor, and has been a member of the faculty in the Kate Gleason College of Engineering since 1988. He has published more than 200 student-involved papers and has been awarded 27 patents. He has been instrumental in the advancement of semi-conductor nanolithography.

# 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).

1964

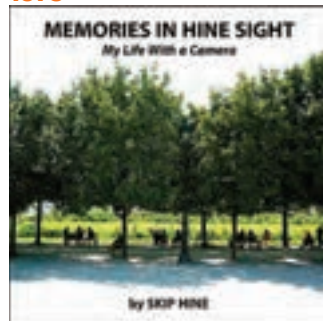


**Ron Sherman '64 (GAP)** had 25 selected photographic prints featured in the Roswell Cultural Arts Center during an exhibit that was held at the Atlanta Photography Gallery from November 2022 to January 2023.



**1966 Jeffrey Pollock '66 MBA (GAP)** was elected as a trustee of the George Eastman House in Rochester.

1975

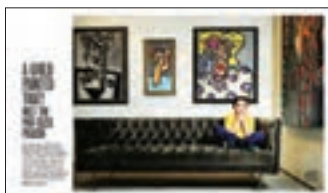


**Skip Hine '75 (GAP)** published *Memories in Hine Sight—My Life With a Camera* reflecting on his years at RIT and his ultimate destination of New York City. His career lasted more than 45 years, from assisting to running his own studio.



**Sharon Hoogstraten '75 (GAP)** has life-sized portraits that have been widely exhibited and collected. A book, *Dancing for Our Tribe: Potawatomi Tradition in the New Millennium*, was released in August 2022 by Oklahoma University Press.

1977



**George Kamper '77 (GAP)** captured a photo of Andres Valencia, an 11-year-old sensation who is being compared to the legendary Pablo Picasso.

1980



**Vinny Buscher '80 (CAST)** was promoted to partner, strategic solution leader at IBM

Consulting. He leads solution development for IBM Consulting's largest and most complex IT Services opportunities in North America.



**Gary Rosenfeld '80 (CAST)** retired after 13 years with Apple. Prior to Apple, Rosenfeld also worked at Calumet

Photographic, Fuji Photo Film, and more in the photographic industry.

1981



**Lisa (Sporleder) Stephens '81 (FAA)** received the Community Leadership Award from EDUCAUSE at its annual conference last October.

1982



**Owen Kissimir '82 (GAP)** has officially retired and has moved on to his true passion of coaching tennis and

pickleball. He also enjoys fishing and playing with his grandchildren. He is pictured with a 355-pound tuna.



**Scott Vile '82 (GAP)** was named president of the Society of Printers of Boston. He is the owner of the Ascensius Press in Bar Mills, Maine, one of the largest letterpress composition and printing offices in the U.S.

1983



**John Letteney '83 (CLA)** has been sworn in as president of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). His term began

Oct. 18, 2022, at the conclusion of the IACP Annual Convention and Exposition held in Dallas.



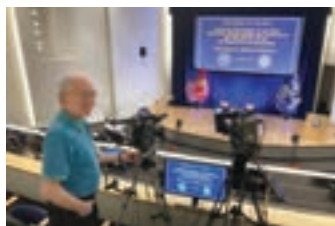
**Daniel Taylor '83 (FAA)** and **Nora Vaivads-Taylor '83 (FAA)** recently celebrated the 30th anniversary of Taylor Design, a Stamford, Conn.-based graphic, branding, and digital design studio. Nora, second from left, and Dan, fifth from left, are pictured with current and past employees.

1985



**Franklyn Athias '85 (CAST)** received the Diversity in Technology Award at the 2022 National Association for Multi-ethnicity in Communications (NAMIC) Conference, held Oct. 11-12 in New York City.





**Harry Friedman '85 (CAST)**, of Silver Spring, Md., retired from the United States Navy after a 37-year career in the communications department producing television, videos, and photography at the Naval Surface Warfare Center, Carderock Division, in West Bethesda, Md.

**Michael Vanderheyden '85 (SCB)** retired from Tiffany & Co. on June 13, 2022, after 37 years of employment there.

**1985**



**Mike Mooney '85 MFA (FAA)** entered his second year of teaching graphic design at Spring Arbor University in Spring Arbor, Mich.

**1988**



**Nam Nguyen '88 (SCB)** is the M365/Power platform solution architect for FPT/Intellinet and an author

with 2,400 e-books in 105 languages.

**1990**



**James Tabbi '90 (COS), '98 MS (SCB)** and his musical group, The Heroic Enthusiasts, released *Crimes and Passions* on Dec. 2, 2022, on Meridian/ECR Music Group. This is the second of the group's two EPs releasing this year.

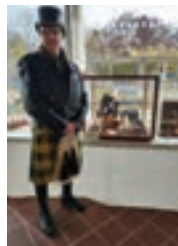
**1993**



**Tom Jacek '93 (SCB)** has accepted a promotion to business process manager at

Ford Motor Co. The new position manages process re-engineering and new business systems integration within the Ford Product Design organization.

**1996**



**Timothy Cosgriff '96 (CAST)** exhibited in the George Eastman Museum 2022 Sweet Creations Exhibit. His

work, "On the Seventh Day of Keaton, Buster Gave to Me!" is a gingerbread creation of the house from Buster Keaton's 1920 film, *One Week*.

**1997**



**Eve Schaub '97 MFA (CIAS)** wrote *Year of No Garbage*, which was published in April 2023. The book is about zero waste, the current plastic crisis, and what really happens to recycling when it leaves the curb.

**1998**



**Matt LaFever '98 (CAST)** is a hospitality management and health systems administration graduate/nurse practitioner. He opened the third medical aesthetics practice in Franklin, Mass.

## 'Minecraft' entrepreneur named to 'Forbes' list



RIT computer science alumnus Colin McDonald was named to the *Forbes* 30 Under 30 list for 2023.

*Forbes* has named Colin McDonald '22 (computer science) among the top young entrepreneurs helping to make tomorrow a brighter day.

McDonald and his software development agency, Moonsworth, were named on the *Forbes* 30 Under 30 list for 2023 in the Games category. Through the company that he co-founded while in college, McDonald is now making it easier for millions of people to play and explore in the video game *Minecraft*.

The prestigious *Forbes* 30 Under 30 list identifies the brightest young leaders turning to entrepreneurship to solve the world's biggest problems—on their own terms.

"I was shocked to learn that we were selected—the first thing I did was check to make sure the email was real," said McDonald, who is from Marlton, N.J. "When I first started playing *Minecraft*, I never thought I'd be able to make it a job."

McDonald began playing *Minecraft* when he was 12 years old.

Two years later, he was learning to code his own *Minecraft* mods and making friends through the game.

Two of those friends—Matheus Fonseca and Jordan

Iribarren—became his future Moonsworth co-founders.

They all met while working at a previous *Minecraft* company and decided to branch off on their own. What started as a *Minecraft* server project grew into something more.

In 2019, as a first-year student at RIT, McDonald co-founded Moonsworth. He said that he remembers eating a cheeseburger at the Ritz dining hall on campus when he got the email approving their business license. During the pandemic, as *Minecraft* use exploded, so did the business.

The main Moonsworth brand is Lunar Client, one of the most popular custom clients for *Minecraft*.

A *Minecraft* client is software that users can download to improve performance and add modifications and other features to the game. Essentially, the software that McDonald's team created helps players get the very best out of *Minecraft*.

Moonsworth now has more than a million monthly active users. Through Lunar Client, the company sells game enhancements—from mod packs that improve gameplay to pet characters, hats, and other cosmetics.

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

# Food and art **connect** **couple** over Zoom

**F**inding love on Zoom sounds like a pitch for a romantic comedy, but it's reality for two alumni who began their relationship during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pari Dukovic '06 (professional photographic illustration) and Pinckney Templeton '06 (graphic design) met in college and, over a decade later, they reconnected and started a family together. Their story began when they met in an art history class at RIT.

"Pinckney was always taking such good notes. She knew all the answers during class, and I thought she was really cute too, so I asked if we could study together," said Dukovic.

Templeton was skeptical, but said yes.

"I'm not an idiot. A guy can say he wants to study with you, but does he really?" said Templeton. "But Pari was actually very serious about studying. He really did want to read my note cards and go through the material together, so that's how we connected."

The pair never dated during college. Templeton said the only proof that they crossed paths was a photo from graduation. She held on to it for years, never realizing how significant it would become.

By March 2020, Templeton owned a ceramics studio in San Francisco, and Dukovic made a career as an award-winning photographer in New York City. When the world shut down that month due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they reconnected on Instagram. They both were quarantined alone, and Dukovic proposed that they catch up on a Zoom call.

"I remember on that first Zoom call she was sitting at her kitchen table. The way her laptop was po-



**Pari Dukovic and Pinckney Templeton at graduation in 2006.**

sitioned, it was like a flashback of us studying together in the library," said Dukovic.

While Templeton was nervous to talk again, her anxieties quickly vanished.

"We hadn't had a conversation for years, and people can change," said Templeton. "But I swear we got on Zoom and he smiled that same caring, warm, happy smile from college and I just knew he was the same."

They continued to date via Zoom, many of the dates revolving around food. Templeton showed Dukovic how to cook, and they would theme dinners around art history topics, an homage to how they met.

"The big thing with dating over Zoom is there's no added pressure about picking the restaurant, wondering what am I going to look like—it's just really getting to know each other," said Templeton.

After a few months, Dukovic moved across the country to live with Templeton and her beloved dog, Peppercorn.

At the end of the summer of 2020, just over 14 years after graduating, Dukovic and Templeton got married. The pair purchased a house in New Jersey and, in October 2022, their daughter, Minoa, was born.

"It was stressful at times for sure, but luckily it was the middle of the pandemic," said Dukovic. "We had all the time in the world to deal with these things, and now we have this new life together."

---

**Felicia Swartzberg '19**



2000



**Scott Gentles '00 (CAST)** received his MBA as a Welch Scholar at the Jack Welch

Management Institute. The Welch Scholar is the highest honor for graduates.



**Brian Moon '00 (CLA)** became the CEO of Pacific Telecommunications Council following a global search process.



**Paul Tracy '00 (CIAS)** has had a successful video production business running for 28 years, and in 2022 he started Westwood Studios, a local cinematic film company. A trailer for his first film, *A Date for Anya*, was shot in July 2022 and a full movie is expected to be complete in 2023.

2001



**Lisa Bennett '01 MS (CAST)**, author of *Just Keep Living: Conversations with Granny*, visited RIT and spoke on Sept. 15, 2022, at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

2003



**Matthew Poliniak '03 (CIAS), '08 MS (CIAS)** was promoted to senior manager, product marketing at Canon USA.

2005



**Ilena Finocchi '05 (CIAS)** is behind the stop motion animated short film *Creatures in My House*, which took the artist three years to make. The exquisitely handcrafted world in this stop motion animated short follows a house full of peculiar monsters waking up amuck in this askew home.

2007

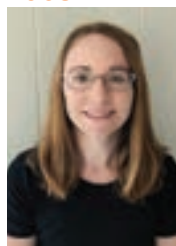


**Dmitriy Bekker '07 (KGCOE), '07 MS (KGCOE)** is an engineering lead on NASA's Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART) mission. On Sept. 26, 2022, DART impacted the asteroid Dimorphos and changed its orbit around the larger binary asteroid Didymos, thus completing the world's first planetary defense technology demonstration.



**Sylvia David-West '07 (CAST)** was a recipient of the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE)–Professional Leader, 2022 Evening of Excellence Award and was a nominee for the Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce's 2022 Colors of Success DEI Award.

2008



**Josa Hanzlik '08 (KGCOE), '08 MS (KGCOE)**

was promoted to senior manager, scientific services, at Haemonetics

in May 2022. In November 2022, she became a American Board of Toxicology Diplomate (DABT) by passing the Toxicology Board Exam.



**Jonathan Thomas '08 (CLA)** passed the Komuna Europa Referenckadro por Lingvoj (Common European Framework for Languages) exam at the C1 (fluent as a non-native speaker) level for the constructed language Esperanto, in less than two years of starting to study the language.

2009



**Aaron Heyman '09 (KGCOE), '09 ME (KGCOE)** has joined the Debra LaMay Insurance

Agency in Malta, N.Y., specializing in homeowners and small-business insurance.



**Susan (Cook) Wilson '09 (CIAS)** became the social media communications specialist for Inductive Automation,

a software company in Folsom, Calif.

2010

**Laura Carbonneau '10 (CLA), '12 (CAST)** was named the artistic director for theatre and C.A.K.E. (a summer arts program) for MoCo Arts, located in Keene, N.H.



**Rashid Tangirbergen '10 (GCCIS)** attended a wedding in October 2021 where **Alibek Katpabayev '10 (SCB)** got married to Aigerim Katpabayev in Astana, Kazakhstan, and was joined by nine other RIT alumni.

2011



**Therese Dane '11 (COS)**

was invited to be a guest speaker at the International Symposium on

ALS/MND 2022 and presented her research on C9orf72 in iPSC-derived motor neurons.

## Scholarship honors late NTID faculty member, alumna



Melissa Skyer

The mother and brother of a late RIT/NTID faculty member and alumna are paying tribute to her memory by establishing the Skyer Family Foundation Endowed Scholarship to help deaf and hard-of-hearing students achieve success in STEM-related majors.

Melissa Skyer '04 (biology), '06 MS (science) died March 9, 2022, after a long illness. The new scholarship is designed to recognize Skyer's excellence in teaching and leadership of women scientists, and it will be awarded to students who mirror her academic achievement and passion for science at the upperclass or graduate levels.

Skyer's mother, Solange "Sally" Skyer, was an academic advisor for NTID's business studies department and Counseling and Academic Advising Services. She retired in 2016. Skyer's brother, Michael '07 (fine arts studio), '09 MS (secondary education of students who are deaf or hard of hearing) until recently taught in NTID's master's in secondary education program. He is now at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

The college expects to award the first scholarship in spring 2024.

Vienna McGrain '12 MS



## Tiger Cubs

1



2



3



**1 Erin (Schmidtman) Purington '10 (COS)** and **Jonathan Purington '10 (COS)** welcomed their third son, Wesley Thomas, in March 2022. Wes has already demonstrated true Tiger fighting spirit.

**2 Audrey (Lallier) Braun '05 (SCB)** and Jordan Braun, of Austin, Texas, welcomed future Tiger Wyatt Allister Braun, born in March 2022.

**3 Katherine (Mendel) Bastow '03 (CIAS)** welcomed a baby girl, Bailey Maureen Bastow, in September 2022. She was born eight weeks early at 4 pounds and is doing well.





**Erika Heffernan '11 MFA (CIAS)** was awarded \$7,500 for The Florida Keys Council of the Arts' Art Builds Community Grant to build cultural equity by creating an art exhibition that evokes the various emotions and experiences during the pandemic for people with disabilities.

## 2012



**Samantha (Whalen) Bouthillette '12 (CHST)** and **Alex Bouthillette '14 (CAST)** got married in Simsbury, Conn., on Sept. 16, 2022.



**Joanne (Galvez) Dollhopf '12 (CCE)** married Jonathan Dollhopf in Rochester on Sept. 16, 2022.



**Emily (Sowa) Hartmann '12 (CIAS)** was recently recognized with two Emmy Awards for her work on *Eyewitness*

to 9/11: *Behind the Lens* and the true crime series *Missing: Leanne Marie Hausberg*, both available on Hulu. *Eyewitness* won best News Special and *Missing* won best Crime-News.

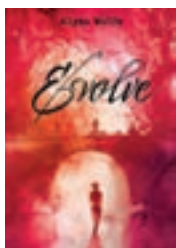


**Justin Katich '12 (NTID)** was recently promoted to his current position as bridge and structural drafter/designer for the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.

## 2014



**Alexandra Grant '14 (GCCIS)** married Christian Altamura in Savannah, Ga., on Oct. 8, 2022.



**Alysa Wolfe '14 (CIAS)** recently published her first novel, *Evolve*. The novel is a futuristic fantasy and coming-of-age

story of a young princess and is now available in Barnes and Noble and on Amazon.

## 2015



**William (Gerken) Hallett '15 (CLA)** and Nathaniel C. Hallett were married Sept. 10, 2022, at the Reikart House in Amherst, N.Y.

# Tigers Connect



## Become an RIT mentor today!

Join [TigersConnect.rit.edu](https://TigersConnect.rit.edu)

Whether you're a recent grad or a seasoned professional, alumni all have something in common: **a desire to help our students.**

**Join Tigers Connect today** and become a mentor. Our students are counting on you!

Visit [TigersConnect.rit.edu](https://TigersConnect.rit.edu) for more information.



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RIT | Alumni Association

## Scott advances the semiconductor industry



**Alicia Scott '97** is senior director of employee experience and engagement at semiconductor company onsemi.

**A**licia Scott, a human resources executive with onsemi, has made her mark as both a talented engineer and as one of her company's leaders advocating and showcasing diversity.

She bridged these distinct roles using engineering problem-solving skills to help build semiconductors for a growing industry, and by contributing to a company that surpassed its goals of improving gender and cultural diversity to further that industry.

Early in her career, Scott '97 (microelectronic engineering) contributed to an ethics program; a women's leadership initiative; and a science, technology, engineering, and math program for underrepresented populations.

She helped formalize internal processes and governance for recruiting, acquiring, and retaining staff. All remain in place today.

"When I was in the business unit, I had been tapped on the shoulder quite a bit for driving some corporate initiatives,"

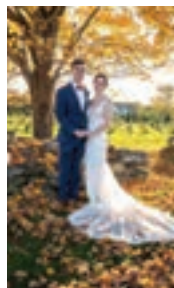
said Scott, senior director of employee experience and engagement. "I am female, but also a Black female and I saw that people of color, Black employees, Hispanic employees, were coming and leaving. The woman's leadership initiative gave all of us a voice to make change."

The company and its board of directors sought to implement a diversity, equity, and inclusion program—and Scott, who had been doing the work as a "side job" while she was still involved with the business group—was offered a full-time position with HR in 2017. Scott currently manages global diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives; talent management; succession planning; and learning and development programming.

"I can talk to this from a talent management perspective. I can talk to this from a talent acquisition perspective, and I can talk to this from a learning and development perspective."

**Michelle Cometa '00**

2016



**Ian Berringer '16 (CAST)** married Kerri Doyle at Allen Hill Farm in Brooklyn, Conn.



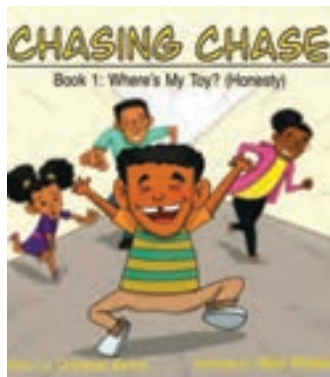
**Gabriel Isserlis '16 (CIAS)** raised £300,000 for Tutti, the tech company he started immediately after leaving RIT.

2018

**Kyle Blakely '18 (KGCOE)** was among the first Peace Corps volunteers to return to overseas service since the agency's unprecedented global evacuation in March 2020. He served as a community economic development volunteer in Fiji.



**Melissa (Barton) Derby '18 (COS)** and **Mitchell Derby '18 (GCCIS)** were married in Buffalo, N.Y., on Aug. 27, 2022. They met while at RIT and were thrilled that many college friends were able to attend.



**Charesse (Barrett) Forbes '18 (SOIS)** has authored and self-published *Book 1: Where's My Toy? (Honesty)*, the first of several children's books that will be part of the series she created called "Chasing Chase."



**Carly Kraft '18 (GCCIS)** is a software engineer during the day and a rock star by night. Her band, Coral Moons, went on tour Sept. 6, 2022, starting in Rochester and ending in Nashville. Rochester is always the band's favorite place to play.

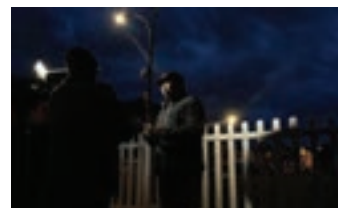


**Michael Nixt '18 (KGCOE)** has graduated from the Naval Postgraduate School (Monterey, Calif.) with a Master of Science in systems engineering, with a focus on reliability and maintainability. Nixt, right, is pictured with guest speaker Gen. John W. "Jay" Raymond, the first Chief of Space Operations.



**Shakierah Smith '18 (CLA), '19 MS (CLA)** graduated from the University at Buffalo School of Law on May 14, 2022.

2022

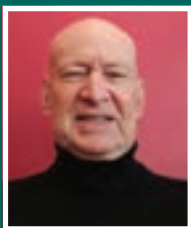


**Ben Braun '22 (CAD)** won the Award of Excellence in the Multimedia: Documentary Short category for his movie, *Saving our Sons*, at the College Photographer of the Year competition.



“When I first graduated from RIT, I decided it was important to give back, and I’ve been a contributor every year since 1970.

I still felt that this amount was small compared to what I got out of RIT, and I wanted to leave a legacy. I set up multiple CGAs with a variety of designations because there are so many areas of RIT that I really like. The process was simple, the steady income I receive is terrific, and the tax benefits were a nice bonus.”



—Paul Senior  
MBA '72

**RIT** | Ellingson Society

## 2023 is the Year of the Charitable Gift Annuity (CGA)!

- Higher payout rates
- Larger charitable income tax deductions
- More tax-free opportunities to support RIT students

CGA payout rates have increased twice since mid-2022, and the federal discount rate – which largely determines the size of the deduction – has more than quadrupled since the fall of 2021.

**NEW FOR 2023:** If you are age 70 ½ or older, you are now eligible to make a one-time tax-free distribution from your IRA to fund a life income gift for yourself and/or your spouse. The Secure Act 2.0 allows this tax-free transfer from your IRA directly into a CGA. Even if you do not itemize deductions, this opportunity may save you a bundle on taxes. Some restrictions apply, so please contact us for details.

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[legacyrit.org](https://legacyrit.org)

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# In Memoriam

## Alumni

### 1943

Ruth (Siebert) Conway '43 (FAA) Aug. 16, 2022

### 1948

Francis Drago '48 (COS) Nov. 2, 2022

### 1949

Herbert Pivnick '49 (GAP) Aug. 17, 2022

### 1950

Evelyn (Kill) Elsenheimer '50 (SCB) Oct. 23, 2022

F. Richard Frew '50 (KGCOE) Oct. 22, 2022

### 1954

Alice (Hellert) McArdle '54 (SCB) Nov. 19, 2022

Angela (Palm) McKeown '54 (SCB) Nov. 23, 2022

Ronald Reid '54 (GAP) Oct. 19, 2022

Carroll Wentz '54 (GAP) Nov. 2, 2022

### 1955

Anthony Acciari '55 (SCB) Nov. 7, 2022

Penelope (Timms) Coda '55 (SCB) Sept. 29, 2022

Charles Feinberg '55 (SCB) Oct. 22, 2022

### 1956

Roberta (Nagy) Batley '56 (COS) Dec. 5, 2022

Donald Elzinga '56 (GAP) Aug. 30, 2022

### 1957

John Dowd '57 (KGCOE) Sept. 1, 2022

### 1958

Richard Anderson '58 (KGCOE) Oct. 3, 2022

George W. Brown Jr. '58 (FAA) Aug. 21, 2022

Carol (Anderson) Jackson '58 (SCB) Nov. 9, 2022

Charles Timmons '58 (CCE) Sept. 13, 2022

### 1959

Arlene (Hudson) Durning '59 (CCE) Nov. 4, 2022

Carol (Verblaw) Garrett '59 (SCB) Sept. 18, 2022

Michael Molinari '59 (CCE) Nov. 27, 2022

H. Edmund Roberts Jr. '59 (CCE) Sept. 11, 2022

Robert Steidle '59 (CCE) Nov. 24, 2022

### 1960

Patricia (Riker) Branton '60 (SCB) Nov. 27, 2022

Sheila (McCann) Ebert '60 (COS) Sept. 6, 2022

### 1961

Kenneth Ihasz '61 (GAP) Nov. 29, 2022

Robert Smith '61 (CCE) Dec. 7, 2022

### 1962

Larry Matthews '62 (KGCOE) Oct. 31, 2022

Carole (Tanea) Vangelder '62 (SCB) Aug. 18, 2022

### 1963

Russell Flint '63 (GAP) Nov. 16, 2022

David Quadri '63 (KGCOE) Aug. 27, 2022

### 1964

Martin Cocca '64 (CCE) Nov. 1, 2022

Walter Piersol Jr. '64 MFA (FAA) Sept. 1, 2022

### 1965

Thomas Havens '65 (GAP) Oct. 28, 2022

Francis Kohlman '65 (CCE) Oct. 18, 2022

Richard Nicholson '65 (SCB) Sept. 17, 2022

Joseph Willard '65 (FAA) Oct. 5, 2022

### 1966

Robert Hotchkiss '66 (CCE) Nov. 30, 2022

John Masco '66 (CCE) Sept. 18, 2022

Norma Rotoli '66 (SCB) Aug. 21, 2022

### 1967

Bruce Gosson '67 (CCE) Sept. 29, 2022

David Spafford '67 (SCB) Sept. 22, 2022

Peter Tutino '67 (CCE) Nov. 7, 2022

John Wilcox '67 (CCE) Aug. 15, 2022

### 1968

Karl Klafehn '68 (CCE) Nov. 12, 2022

Virginia (Campion) Sage '68 (COS) Nov. 15, 2022

John Seibt '68 (GAP) Oct. 13, 2022

### 1969

Jon Bardagjy '69 (COS) Sept. 6, 2022

Richard Goslee '69 (GAP) Sept. 27, 2022

### 1970

Salvatore Guzzetta '70 MS (CCE) Nov. 28, 2022

Gerald Kleiman '70 (GAP) Nov. 7, 2022

Lawrence Kotowicz '70 MS (CCE) Nov. 26, 2022

Samuel Sanfratello '70 (SCB) Nov. 22, 2022

Daniel Starr '70 (SCB) Nov. 26, 2022

Carl Toth '70 (GAP) Aug. 20, 2022

Jon Yerger '70 (KGCOE) Nov. 1, 2022

### 1971

Celestin Lorenzo '71 (CCE) Nov. 13, 2022

J. William Meister '71 (CCE) Aug. 31, 2022

Richard Stevens '71 (CCE) Sept. 14, 2022

### 1972

Ronald Behl '72 (GAP) Nov. 22, 2022

Richard Kull '72 (CCE) Aug. 22, 2022

John Michaels '72 (SCB) Oct. 29, 2022

### 1973

Robert Boekhout '73 (CCE) Oct. 16, 2022

Timothy Cannon '73 (SCB) Nov. 19, 2022

Paul Cucchiara '73 (CCE) Nov. 28, 2022

Robert Frederick '73 (CCE) Nov. 4, 2022

James Harrison '73 (CCE) Aug. 22, 2022

Heinz Rueckmann '73 (CCE) Nov. 2, 2022

### 1974

William Bassett '74 (CCE) Nov. 9, 2022

Beth (Loehwing) Bystrycki '74 (NTID) Nov. 22, 2022

Kirt Compton '74 (CCE) Sept. 28, 2022

Henry Navas '74 MBA (SCB), '77 MS (SCB) Oct. 16, 2022

F. James Sanangelo '74 (CCE) Aug. 24, 2022

### 1975

Brian Alexander '75 (CCE) Nov. 23, 2022

Robert Coomber '75 (CCE) Nov. 19, 2022

Thomas Poole '75 (GAP) Nov. 15, 2022

### 1976

Barry Bedford '76 (SCB), '82 MS (CAST) Nov. 1, 2022

R. Robert Gobeli '76 MS (CAST) Nov. 1, 2022

Roger Hursh '76 MBA (SCB) Nov. 3, 2022

### 1977

Kathleen Falvo '77 MST (FAA) Nov. 16, 2022

Thomas Hally '77 (SCB) Sept. 11, 2022

David Lewis '77 (CCE) Nov. 12, 2022

Scott Peterman '77 (COS) Aug. 17, 2022

Stuart Richer '77 (GAP) Oct. 26, 2022

Bruce Riker '77 (CCE) Sept. 29, 2022

Theodore Rivera '77 (SCB), '81 MBA (SCB) Dec. 10, 2022

Eric St. John '77 (KGCOE) Sept. 20, 2022

Thomas Tompkins '77 ME (KGCOE) Oct. 4, 2022

Frank Westover '77 (GAP) Aug. 21, 2022

### 1978

Chester Colombino '78 (CCE) Oct. 27, 2022

Charles Coons '78 (SCB) Nov. 16, 2022

Kevin Kalagher '78 (GAP) Sept. 17, 2022

Mary Klein '78 (NTID) Nov. 6, 2022

Edward Thomas '78 (GAP) Aug. 28, 2022

### 1979

Marie Campbell '79 (NTID) Nov. 24, 2022

Julie Kenly '79 (FAA) Sept. 8, 2022

Richard Quadri '79 MBA (SCB) Dec. 8, 2022

Daniel Rice '79 (CCE) Sept. 6, 2022

Bruce Taylor '79 (GAP) Oct. 15, 2022

### 1980

David Dietch '80 (NTID) Aug. 24, 2022

David Enssle '80 (SCB) Sept. 1, 2022

Mary Knight '80 (CLA) Sept. 30, 2022



## 1981

**David Biegelsen '81 (GAP)**  
Oct. 21, 2022

**Robert Bonnett '81 (CCE)**  
Oct. 16, 2022

**Thomas Freeman '81 (CCE)**  
Aug. 28, 2022

**James Holzgartner '81 (CCE)** Sept. 25, 2022

**Glenn Howe '81 (CCE)**  
Dec. 4, 2022

**Barrie Nenno '81 MS (CCE)**  
Oct. 19, 2022

**Stanley Rosen '81 (GAP)**  
Oct. 19, 2022

**Catherine (Penko) Willard '81 (COS)** Nov. 30, 2022

## 1982

**Robert Armbruster '82 (CAST)** Nov. 26, 2022

**Steven Myers '82 (CAST)**  
Aug. 22, 2022

## 1983

**Robert Crum '83 (CCE), '84 (CCE)** Nov. 22, 2022

**Andrea Humphries '83 MS (CAST)** Oct. 29, 2022

## 1984

**Robert Cross Jr. '84 (CAST)**  
Dec. 1, 2022

**Rose Donnelly '84 (SCB)**  
Nov. 30, 2022

**William Howenstein '84 (CAST)** Oct. 23, 2022

**Joseph Melville '84 (CCE)**  
Dec. 18, 2022

**Carmen Vitali '84 (CAST)**  
Oct. 4, 2022

## 1985

**Lawrence Muscato '85 (CAST)** Oct. 28, 2022

**Alan Oelschlager '85 MS (CAST)** Nov. 8, 2022

**Jeffrey Sterly '85 (NTID)**  
Oct. 15, 2022

## 1986

**Bill Wallner '86 (KGCOE)**  
Aug. 23, 2022

**Walter Wolf '86 MS (CAST)**  
Sept. 9, 2022

## 1987

**Joan Horton '87 (CCE)**  
Aug. 29, 2022

**Anthony Markulis '87 (CCE)**  
Sept. 10, 2022

**Carol Sandt '87 (FAA)**  
Aug. 18, 2022

## 1990

**Scott Lee '90 (COS), '92 MS (COS)** Oct. 26, 2022

**David Steele '90 (CAST)**  
Oct. 21, 2022

## 1991

**Kenneth Davis '91 (CLA)**  
Dec. 4, 2022

## 1992

**Thomas Costanza '92 MS (CAST)** Oct. 9, 2022

## 1994

**Paul Dalle '94 (CIAS)**  
Sept. 12, 2022

## 1997

**John O'Connell '97 (CAST)**  
Nov. 4, 2022

## 1999

**Christopher Emerson '99 (NTID)** Oct. 9, 2022

## 2000

**Christopher Mancini '00 (CAST), '08 MBA (SCB)**  
Sept. 18, 2022

## 2003

**Elizabeth Barrett '03 MS (NTID)** Oct. 5, 2022

**Daniel Weglinski '03 (GCCIS), '04 MBA (SCB)**  
Aug. 21, 2022

## 2006

**Sara Haimowitz '06 (NTID)**  
Oct. 21, 2022

## 2008

**Brendan O'Connor '08 (NTID)** Aug. 26, 2022

**Amy Sellhorst '08 (CAST)**  
Sept. 28, 2022

## 2010

**Daniel Wisniewski '10 (CAST)** Sept. 12, 2022

## 2012

**Marc Schoone '12 MBA (SCB)** Aug. 28, 2022

## 2013

**Megan Kremer '13 (SCB)**  
Sept. 17, 2022

**Kevin Moose '13 (GCCIS)**  
Nov. 22, 2022

## 2014

**Joshua Dowling '14 MS (NTID)** Oct. 8, 2022

## 2015

**Tiffani Gatson '15 (CLA)**  
Nov. 16, 2022

## 2020

**Nicholas Biermann '20 (CHST), '20 MS (CHST)**  
Aug. 22, 2022

## 2021

**Anthony Trayner '21 (SCB)**  
Aug. 21, 2022

## Faculty and Staff

Professor Emeritus in the School of Math **Rebecca Hill**, March 7, 2023

Retired NTID faculty member and former chair of NTID Arts and Imaging Studies **Kenneth Hoffmann**, Oct. 5, 2022

Retired physics professor **Vern Lindberg**, Sept. 17, 2022

Retired director of University Publications **Colleen McGuinness-Clarke**, Feb. 25, 2023

Former trustee **Henry Navas** '74 (MBA), '77 MS (accounting), Oct. 16, 2022

Trustee and Chair Emeritus **William Whiteside**, Dec. 4, 2022

Former CIAS Assistant Dean **Mary "Betsy" Saxe**, Feb. 15, 2023

College of Liberal Arts Dean Emerita **Mary Sullivan**, March 22, 2023

## In memory of Barry Culhane



Carlos Ortiz

Barry Culhane at RIT's annual Veterans Day Breakfast last November.



**B**arry Culhane, who worked at RIT for 47 years, died on Nov. 13, 2022. He was 76.

Mr. Culhane began his career at RIT in 1974 as a research associate for the division of

integrated educational programs for the National Technical Institute for the Deaf. He later became department chair for general education programs and then associate dean. He became assistant vice president for RIT Campus Life and later returned to teach at NTID. In 1993, Mr. Culhane became RIT's first student ombudsman.

He was best known for serving as executive assistant to RIT Presidents Albert Simone, William Destler, and David Munson, providing counsel and support.

He helped establish the Veterans Day Breakfast at RIT and is also credited for helping create the Imagine RIT: Creativity and Innovation Festival, which has brought tens of thousands of visitors to campus each spring since 2008.

RIT President William Destler, right, unveils renderings of MAGIC Spell Studios in 2015. Cisco Systems representative Amy Edwards looks on. Cisco helped fund the project.



Mike Bradley

## Celebrating 10 years of MAGIC

RIT's MAGIC Center is a unique combination of research lab and commercial studio, and this year marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its creation.

And, to celebrate a double anniversary, five years ago the center found a new home and constructed MAGIC Spell Studios, which includes cutting-edge digital production facilities rivaling any in the region.

In 2013, the concept of RIT's Media, Arts, Games, Interaction and Creativity (MAGIC) Center was imagined to promote a broader range of research, development, education, and entrepreneurial activities in media, arts, games, social interaction, and digital creativity.

The idea for the center developed from the increasing impact of digital media across

many industries. With strong existing programs in the School of Film and Animation and the School of Interactive Games and Media, RIT already had talented students and faculty working with digital media.

Today, one of MAGIC's main features is its innovative inclusion of two components: a university-wide digital media research and development lab and a production studio for bringing digital media products to the marketplace.

To accommodate its tremendous growth, the MAGIC Center moved into a new state-of-the-art building and developed a new entity, MAGIC Spell Studios. Its doors opened in 2018.

Today, the 52,000-square-foot-building houses a 7,000-square-foot sound stage and a 180-seat movie theater

with 4K projection capabilities and Dolby Atmos sound. It also includes an audio-mixing room, color-correction room, game design and media development laboratories, 2D- and 3D-animation classrooms, and several lab spaces such as stop-motion and augmented reality/virtual reality.

Among many achievements, MAGIC has aided in the production of the award-winning game *Crazy Platez* by Aesthetician Labs, an artist-owned games collaborative in Rochester whose origin dates back to when they were RIT students. It has welcomed commercial and feature film production to its sound stage and it has hosted popular annual events such as Frameless Labs Symposia, ROC Game Fest, and Beyond Fashion.

The most ambitious, collabor-

ative, multidisciplinary research to date is in virtual production, which blurs the lines between film and games. MAGIC also plans to launch its latest full game, *That Damn Goat*, to the Nintendo Switch this year.

"RIT's MAGIC Center and MAGIC Spell Studios have grown exponentially over the past decade. But one thing remains the same: our dedication to providing RIT students with unique opportunities to work with industry professionals and publish their work to the marketplace," said MAGIC director David Long. "MAGIC will continue our pivotal role in the thriving network of game development studios, making our region a preeminent hub in digital media industries."

Jenna Warren '24

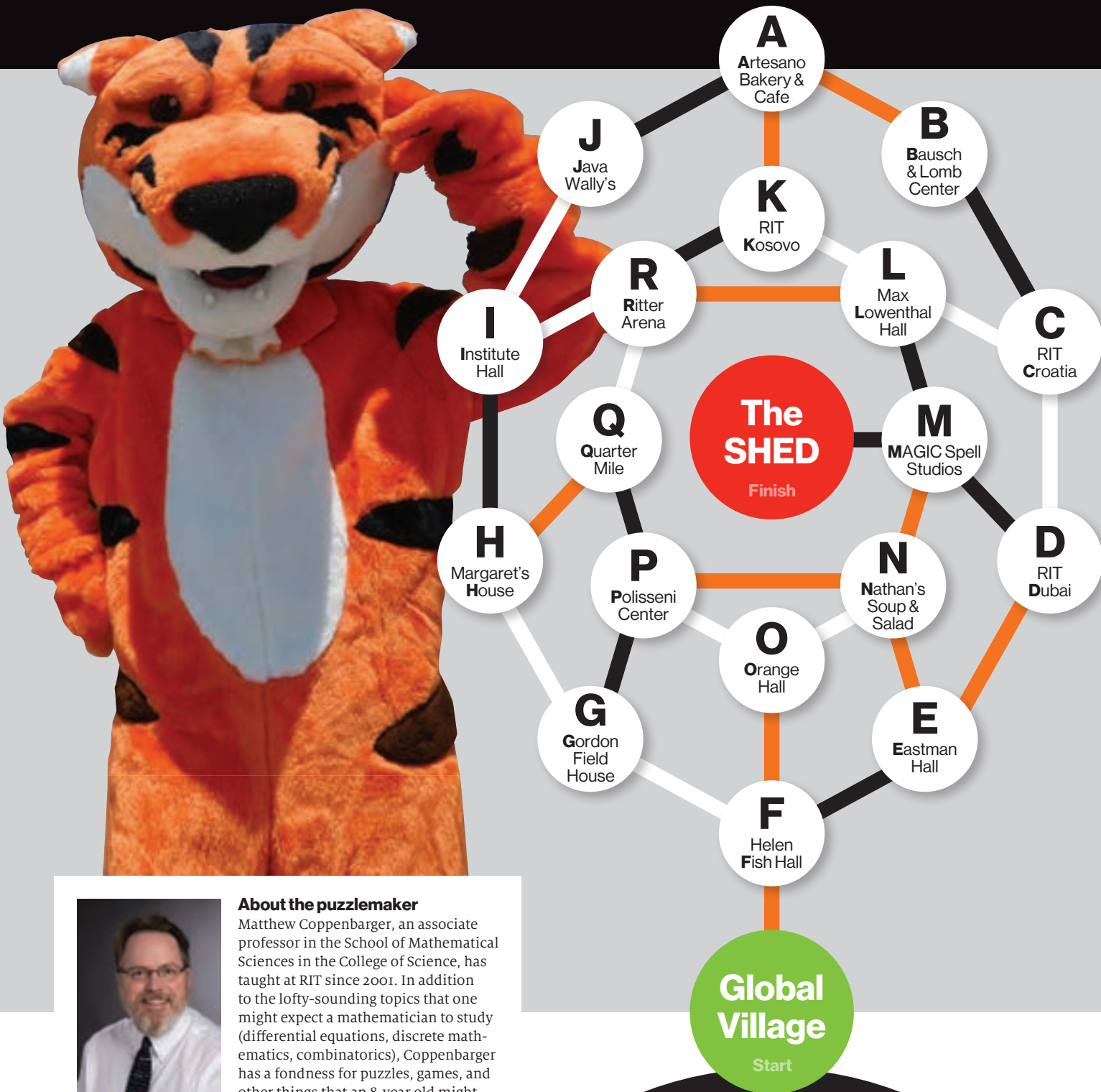


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# Can **you** solve this?

Help Ritchie get from Global Village to the Student Hall for Exploration and Development (SHED), which opens this fall. Travel along the colored paths from start to finish. At each intersection, change to a path of a different color from the color you were just on—any different color. U-turns are prohibited. **Find the least number of moves to the SHED.**



#### About the puzzlemaker

Matthew Coppenbarger, an associate professor in the School of Mathematical Sciences in the College of Science, has taught at RIT since 2001. In addition to the lofty-sounding topics that one might expect a mathematician to study (differential equations, discrete mathematics, combinatorics), Coppenbarger has a fondness for puzzles, games, and other things that an 8-year old might find of interest.

Find the answer at [rit.edu/magazine/solutions](http://rit.edu/magazine/solutions)  
Puzzle based on an original design by Robert Abbott.



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