

Northwestern | SCHOOL OF
COMMUNICATION

Dialogue

summer 2018



Calendar of events

Harold and the Purple Crayon

Adapted by Claire Gubiak
and Noah Lapook from the
books by Crockett Johnson
Directed by Noah Lapook
September 29–30
Upstairs Blackbox 201

Jane Eyre

Adapted by Polly Teale
from the novel by Charlotte Brontë
Directed by Katy Walsh
October 26–November 11
Josephine Louis Theater

You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown

Based on the comic strip *Peanuts*
by Charles M. Schulz
Music and lyrics by Clark M. Gesner
Directed by Stephen Schellhardt
November 2–18
Hal and Martha Hyer Wallis Theater

A Chorus Line

Book by James Kirkwood
and Nicholas Dante
Music by Marvin Hamlisch
Lyrics by Edward Kleban
Directed and choreographed by Kurt Domoney
November 9–December 2
Ethel M. Barber Theater

Information and tickets at
communication.northwestern.edu/wirtz

**Stage on Screen: National Theatre
Live's Encore Series**
Ethel M. Barber Theater

Julie

September 28

King Lear

November 11



Did you miss CommFest?

Binge-watch videos of weekend events,
browse dozens of photos, see exciting
recaps of "A Starry Night," and more at
commfest.northwestern.edu

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Sometimes it pays to be selfie-conscious. In the boisterous opening number of CommFest 2018's "A Starry Night," Ana Gasteyer (C89) and Stephanie D'Abruzzo (C93) sang "Comin' Together," an original song penned by Michael Mahler (Co4) and Alan Schmuckler (Co5), alongside School of Communication students and recent alumni. The choreography called for a staged selfie, which was handled by then sophomore theatre major Ryan Foreman (far right). What the Ryan Fieldhouse and Wilson Field audience that night might not have realized is that Foreman actually took a photo—and it went Wildcat viral. "I had people blowing up my phone," he says. "Having it featured in articles and Northwestern's social media platforms was just too cool, and I'm so lucky to have gotten that opportunity." Foreman contends the photo "isn't all that great," since it's a little blurry and unintentionally crops out D'Abruzzo. What is crystal clear, however, is the genuine enthusiasm and excitement captured in each person's face. "Most of what we hear about the entertainment industry is that it's cutthroat and every man for himself, but being with the team who put this whole event together showed me how they want others to succeed and they want the younger generation to go out and create more theatre to change the world," says Foreman. "Theatre truly is a collaborative process, and that was really demonstrated in putting on this show."

On the cover: Heather Headley (C96) in "A Starry Night" (photo by Justin Barbin)



In April over 2,800 students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends of the School of Communication came together in Evanston for CommFest 2018, and it was wonderful to see the connections within our community getting stronger and deeper. Especially heartening was seeing how much the visitors enjoyed meeting and interacting with the current faculty (and vice versa!) and how much our students benefited from working with the returning alumni. It was a great weekend, exceeding all expectations and achieving all our goals; but that only makes me wish our entire community could have been there!

To give you a report on CommFest 2018 and a taste of what it was like to attend, this issue of *Dialogue* describes the weekend in text and pictures. We filmed most of the festivities, and we have spent the summer making our photo and video archives available on the CommFest website (commfest.northwestern.edu); we will continue to add material into the fall. If you attended the festival, the website provides an album of your experiences; if you couldn't attend, it provides a "virtual CommFest" that gives you a sense of how the weekend unfolded.

The festival culminated in a gala performance, "A Starry Night," held in the Ryan Fieldhouse. Hosted by Stephen Colbert, this spectacular show featured a glittering cast of alumni as well as many student performers. We filmed the show as it happened, and the producers are working diligently to complete postproduction. As soon as their work is done, we will be sending information to the School of Communication community about how you can see the video.

One important outcome of the weekend was that we advanced the school's conversation about graduate education—especially about the growth of our professional programs in the arts, including a new master of fine arts program in acting. I am pleased to report that the new MFA program has been approved; and thanks in no small part to CommFest, we are progressing well in meeting our fundraising goals. Funds raised will allow us to create a downtown Chicago center where all the school's MFA programs can work together and where we can offer special opportunities to our new graduate acting students.

Even though it was just four months ago, a great deal has happened in the school since CommFest. This issue of *Dialogue* also gives you a first look at two exciting new developments led by faculty: our Black Arts Initiative, headed by E. Patrick Johnson, and a project organized by Ramón H. Rivera-Servera for building a network of funders and academic institutions to sustain Puerto Rico's arts institutions and artists as they recover from Hurricanes Maria and Irma.

We will be organizing a program of alumni events across the United States and around the world in the coming year, and we look forward to bringing the spirit and excitement of the festival to each of you.

A handwritten signature in purple ink, which appears to read "Barbara J. O'Keefe". The signature is stylized with a large, looped 'K' at the end.

Barbara J. O'Keefe

Dean, School of Communication

Start a dialogue: dialogue@northwestern.edu

COMIN'



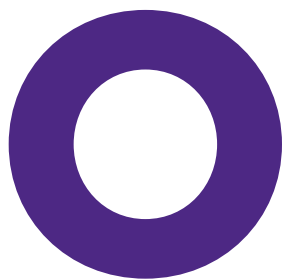
TOGETHER

DREAMS BECOME REALITY AS THE SCHOOL CELEBRATES COMM FEST





CommFest 2018, the School of Communication's learning, interaction, and entertainment festival, exceeded every goal—it inspired the community, promoted new projects, and elevated the school's brilliant faculty and students. But most notable of its achievements was the sheer joy that alumni and friends experienced in celebrating the school's successes. *Dialogue* offers a starry-eyed look back at those two banner days.



n April 20 CommFest 2018 kicked off with an auspicious sign: a brilliant blue, sunny sky.

The weekend of panel discussions, master classes, demonstrations, discussions, open houses, film festivals, and the culminating

"A Starry Night" show hosted by Stephen Colbert (C86, H11) attracted thousands of visitors to Evanston and was the first such comprehensive education-and-performance event the school has ever staged.

"The entire CommFest weekend was a fantastic success," says Lefkowitz. "It was exciting to see so many School of Communication alumni and other friends back on campus, reengaging with the school, celebrating the school's extraordinary accomplishments and looking forward with confidence to the school's bright future. We owe huge thanks to alumni Don Weiner and Dave Harding, who produced the dazzling gala show, and Elizabeth Clark Zoia and Amanda Silverman, who chaired the entire festival and brought the idea to reality with high impact and style. We also appreciate all the people who so generously provided

"The vision, engagement, and investment of our alumni and donor community have sustained us for the last 150 years; the goodwill generated by this spectacular weekend has forged the path for the next 150."

—Dean Barbara O'Keefe

"We set out to design an experience that would celebrate and promote the achievements of the school, energize our supporters, empower our students, and raise awareness for new goals and initiatives," says School of Communication Dean Barbara O'Keefe. "We did all of that and experienced the unequalled pleasure of knowing that when we call, our devoted alumni always answer."

These alumni were led by CommFest committee chairs David Lefkowitz (C82), Elizabeth Clark Zoia (C89), and Amanda Silverman (C93), who devoted years to the planning, implementation, and follow-up for all weekend events, most notably "A Starry Night" (see page 10).

substantial financial support through ticket purchases and sponsorships."

The future includes a new MFA program in acting set to launch in 2019 and the downtown Chicago media and performing arts center that will be built to support it. "We garnered a tremendous amount of support for the MFA and center through CommFest," says O'Keefe. "The vision, engagement, and investment of our alumni and donor community have sustained us for the last 150 years; the goodwill generated by this spectacular weekend has forged the path for the next 150."

The weekend provided opportunities for rediscovery, reengagement, and reunion.

REDISCOVER

The School of Communication leadership, faculty, and students have transformed the way we connect and create. To showcase the school's exciting and diverse community, nearly 50 independent events were staged in University classrooms, auditoriums, and common spaces. The schedule was carefully crafted to represent all facets of the school, including acting workshops, puppetry demonstrations, interactive performance art, health communication workshops, debates, branding seminars, communication health and disorders presentations, algorithmic analysis, and much more.

Rocky Wirtz on Rebuilding the Blackhawks

Chicago Blackhawks chairman and University trustee William Rockwell “Rocky” Wirtz (C75) is renowned for his strategic vision. When he took over the team in 2007, ticket sales were at an all-time low, the Blackhawks hadn't won a Stanley Cup championship in nearly 50 years, and management had gone to war with the fans, the media, and the players. “But other than that, we got along with everyone,” Wirtz joked. “We were very close to being out of business. ESPN called the Blackhawks the worst team in professional sports.” As part of his vision to revive the team, Wirtz made it clear that he wanted the Blackhawks to win a championship. He also insisted that all employees be treated equally, as part of the same team. He strengthened relationships with the community, fans, press, and players and began broadcasting Blackhawks games on TV to build the fan base. Soon afterward, the Blackhawks broke their five-decade drought with a 2010 Stanley Cup win, followed by repeats in 2013 and 2015. Wirtz's well-attended presentation was moderated by communication studies professor Michelle Shumate, faculty director of the master of science in communication program.



Deep Space Teamwork

“We think we're on the verge of humanity becoming an interplanetary species,” said communication studies professor Leslie DeChurch during the event she copresented with Noshir Contractor, the Jane S. and William J. White Professor of Behavioral Sciences in the McCormick School of Engineering



COMMFEST WORKSHOPS, LECTURES, AND OTHER EVENTS

- Acting the Northwestern Way (Cindy Gold)
- Algorithms Everywhere (Mike DeVito, Scott Cambo)
- American Music Theatre Project Showcase
- The Art of Puppetry: Discussion with a *War Horse* Puppeteer and More (Dassia Posner)
- Backstage Pass to Healthy Communication (clinical faculty and staff)
- Building Your Brand as a Communication Professional (Jeanne Sparrow)
- Children and Media: The Latest Findings (Ellen Wartella)
- Creative Entrepreneurship: How a Startup Mindset Can Help Artists Succeed
- Deep Space Teamwork (Leslie DeChurch, Noshir Contractor)
- Developing Innovative and Entrepreneurial Creative Sector Leaders
- The Healthy Voice (clinical faculty)
- How to Save Your Hearing (clinical faculty)
- “Lights, Camera, Wildcats!” (Kevin Leonard)
- Measuring and Treating Dysphagia (Bonnie Martin-Harris)
- Open Television Tonight: How Can Web Distribution Disrupt the Television Business? (Aymar Jean Christian)
- Oxford-Style Debate: Can We Deliver Universal Healthcare? (Debate Society)
- A Reading from *Sweet Tea* (E. Patrick Johnson)
- Rebuilding the Blackhawks (Rocky Wirtz, Michelle Shumate)
- Storytelling at the Heart of It All: Family Fun for Everyone (Rives Collins)
- Student Film Festival and Showcase: Skills, Bonds, Revelations
- Taking Northwestern Theatre Downtown (Anna Shapiro, Barbara O'Keefe)
- Toys to Talk About (clinical faculty)
- Trump and the Media: Understanding the Present and Future of the News and Social Media (Pablo Boczkowski)
- Waa-Mu Sneak Peek: *Manhattan Miracle* Open Rehearsal
- What Sound Processing in the Brain Can Reveal about Sports Concussion (Nina Kraus, Tory Lindley, Cynthia LaBella)
- When Words and Actions Matter Most: How to Talk to Patients and Families Who Have Been Harmed by Medical Care (Bruce Lambert)
- Why We Put Stories into the World (Rives Collins)
- You Are the Ocean: Interactive Art in Virtual Worlds (Ozge Samanci, Joel Valentin-Martinez)

“There are certain things all professional actors need to know that many professional actors don’t know. This is about putting more arrows in their quiver.”

—Anna Shapiro, artistic director of Chicago’s Steppenwolf Theatre Company

and Applied Science, the School of Communication, and the Kellogg School of Management. “This means we have to radically accelerate how we understand human collaboration,” DeChurch continued. “The only way a journey to Mars can be successful is if a very small team of people can work together in very small spaces impeccably.” As important as the hard science is—how humans could get there and live there—the social science behind the mission is imperative. She and Contractor are working with students on four NASA-funded research projects to determine how to best assemble a crew for the proposed mission, based on personality, skill set, and coping strategies.

Children and Media: Ellen Wartella on the Latest Findings

Department of Communication Studies chair, director of the Center on Media and Human Development, and the Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani Professor of Communication, Wartella has long been Northwestern’s go-to expert on human development and the media for the press, the entertainment industry, the research community, and the federal government. Her most recent work evaluates the impact of the show *13 Reasons Why* on its young, impressionable audience. Wartella and co-researchers conducted online interviews with nearly 5,000 teens, parents, and school counselors in the US, the UK, Australia, New Zealand, and Brazil. “One of the things we found in the study is that the kids who watched the show, particularly those who had high social anxiety ... and younger viewers, were greatly impacted by the show,” said Wartella. “But it also had an impact on their empathy and their behavior. ... They engaged in empathic behaviors. They went up to people they had not been nice to and apologized. ... The show raised that awareness.” In conjunction with talk moderator and research consultant Vicky Rideout, Wartella detailed additional effects of the series and challenges in communicating with the media about the study’s findings.



Taking Northwestern Theatre Downtown: A Conversation with Anna Shapiro and Barbara O’Keefe

School of Communication Dean O’Keefe and Tony Award-winning director Anna Shapiro discussed an exciting school initiative: the new MFA program in acting. “There are certain things all professional actors need to know that many professional actors don’t know,” said Shapiro, artistic director of Chicago’s Steppenwolf Theatre Company and Northwestern’s Marjorie Hoffman Hagan, Class of 1934, Chair of Theatre. “This is about putting more arrows in their quiver.” O’Keefe and Shapiro discussed how they had long regarded the MFA in acting as a priority but had postponed it because neither wanted to take resources—namely faculty and space—from the undergraduate acting program. The dean’s creative vision kicked in while visiting Abbott Hall on the University’s Chicago campus. “When I walked up to the second floor, it felt like walking into an old theater,” said O’Keefe. “It was this huge, beautiful, cavernous space, and I knew this was it.” Shapiro added that graduate acting students would be able to take advantage of being so close to some of Chicago’s most admired theatre companies, and she could also work on strengthening internships and other relationships with those institutions. The fully funded program will begin taking applicants this winter and will admit its first class in fall 2019.



Trump and the Media: Understanding the Present and Future of the News and Social Media

Scholars from around the world debated how the relationship between the media and President Donald Trump is changing politics. Communication studies professor Pablo Boczkowski moderated a panel of scholars who contributed essays to his



book *Trump and the Media*: Rod Benson (New York University), Gina Neff (University of Oxford), Sue Robinson (University of Wisconsin–Madison), and Michael Schudson (Columbia University). The discussion covered Trump’s dominance in the news cycle, his use of Twitter, whether the media are obligated to shadow his every move and tweet, and how to encourage responsible online behavior amid real and exaggerated claims of “fake news.” In Robinson’s words, “Trump is winning the journalism story, and it needs to be reclaimed.”

Open Television Tonight (OTV): How Can Web Distribution Disrupt the Television Business?

Television’s future might lie less with network executives and more with independent creators. This well-researched prediction comes courtesy of communication studies assistant professor Aymar Jean Christian, creator of OTV—an online content distributor that promotes intersectional programming. Moderating a panel exploring his research, Christian said, “In the past, networks have controlled content. But with the internet and with more ways for independent artists to show their work, there are more opportunities to reach different audiences. ... Intersectionality has value in this



new economy.” One of the first series he helped launch, *Brown Girls*, received a 2017 Emmy nomination and was picked up by HBO. Christian’s panel included OTV contributors Deja Harrell, who created, wrote, and stars in *Seeds*, a show about young black women and their friends; Karan Sunil, writer and director of *Code-Switched*, about a group of South Asian friends and relatives; and Daniel Kyri, who cocreated and wrote *The T*, which focuses on transgender issues. They discussed creativity, representation, and the necessity of making real, relatable characters. “When we see a black perspective on TV, it’s a very singular narrative,” said Harrell. “I’d never seen young black girls who talked like me. I wanted to create characters I know.”

REENGAGE

The CommFest weekend included opportunities for guests to reunite with friends, classmates, and affiliated departments. Buildings and offices were open throughout the weekend for drop-ins as well as guided tours. The weekend included dedicated reunions, not by class year but by affinity group: Waa-Mu, WNUR, Studio 22, Debate, MFA in Writing for Screen and Stage, and more. Each of these reunions took place on the Evanston campus on Friday, April 20. Groups affiliated with the theatre department were treated to a concurrent a cappella showcase featuring independent student singing groups. Earlier in the day, the school held a welcome reception in Norris University Center for all CommFest guests.



“If there is an atom at the top of my fingertip, that atom is billions of years old, traveling all of the world, and it has been in so many different places. It’s a little bit of an extension of that thought. We’re in the ocean—however we think, however we exist, it’s affecting the world around us, and the world around us is affecting us, so the piece [*You Are the Ocean*] is about that relationship.”

—Ozge Samanci, associate professor of radio/television/film

“Why mask? Well, when we put on a mask we say that by covering, the actor uncovers. What I’ve found in the last 20-some years here is that most of my job is getting my students out of their heads. They’re so cerebral. These students were brought up in front of the small screen—whether it’s the television or the iPad or the computer or the iPhone—and the idea of acting from the neck down is frightening. When we put on a mask, a little miracle happens and we feel freer to explore.”

—Cindy Gold, professor of theatre

“One of the most difficult parts about telling the truth to patients and families after unexpected harm has occurred is ... how poorly prepared most health professionals are to have these conversations. But now the culture is changing, and hospitals and health systems are more willing to talk to patients and families after unexpected harm has occurred. ... One of the challenges that we’ve faced is how can we find the right people in each health system to do these difficult, difficult conversations.”

—Bruce Lambert, professor of communication studies

STUDENTS ARE THE STARS



Theatre major Rory Schrobilgen is accustomed to performing alongside major talents, but sharing a stage with Ana Gasteyer and Stephanie D'Abruzzo for the night's opening number was a whole new experience for him.

"Being a part of 'A Starry Night' was pretty unreal—words don't quite do it justice," says the then sophomore. "It was really cool getting to meet so many successful Northwestern alumni who seemed genuinely excited to be back performing at their alma mater. It made me feel proud to be a student here."

Also a student in the music theatre certificate program, Schrobilgen learned a lot about what it takes to be a pro in his chosen business.

"The whole rehearsal process was a master class in poise and professionalism, on and off the stage," he says. "It was a treat getting to observe so many esteemed members of the entertainment industry so in their element."

Students weren't consigned to waiting in the wings but instead were given high-stakes leadership roles. June graduates Keebler Straz and Madeleine Kelly were the event's student cochairs, and Jake Daniels led Mee-Ow's student sketch-writing team. Daniel Bittker, a recent graduate of the master of science program in leadership for creative enterprises, served as the assistant to executive producer Don Weiner (C79) and coexecutive producer Dave Harding (C78, GJ79).

Bittker started in October 2017 by sitting in on conference calls; eventually he worked up to drafting scripts,

coordinating the 200 student volunteers, and serving as day-of point person for all the behind-the-scenes forces at play. The experience sealed the career deal for him.

"Watching Don Weiner, one of the preeminent producers and directors in Hollywood, especially for multicamera directing, showed me that's the pathway I'd like to follow postgraduation," he says. "He wanted consistently to make sure students were involved in every aspect of production. He really took me under his wing, and by the end we were joking how I'll take the next one in 38 years. The family reunion atmosphere and connections to Northwestern helped make this experience one to remember."



Undergraduate performers were a highly visible mainstay of the evening, singing backup for alumni, acting in Mee-Ow sketches, and even stealing the show in their own right, as senior Lucy Godinez (C18) did with her rendition of "Breathe" from Lin-Manuel Miranda's musical *In the Heights*.

The most overt display of student involvement came with the venue

itself. Four MFA candidates in the theatrical design program were tasked with designing the show's set, stage, and lights, a process that dovetailed with their studies in a new faculty-implemented collaborative approach.

"We wanted it to have a level of spectacle that really encapsulated the tremendous talent that has come out of this school over the years," says Anthony Forchielli, who with Joseph Franjoine, Woongjin Oh, and Scott Penner designed the space. "There's no program in the country that teaches you how to design something of this scale and lets you do it. I could work for 30 years and not come upon something like this. Northwestern gave me that opportunity."

Even with their imprint on the event's most high-profile elements, students were still starstruck. Rising senior Liza Alrutz volunteered to be a talent chaperone for the show and was assigned to actress Kathryn Hahn. "She was one of the loveliest women I've ever met," says Alrutz, "and I had so much fun hanging out with her that night."

When Hahn introduced a show segment about influential Northwestern alumni, she also gave a shout-out to Alrutz from the stage—inspiring loud cheers from students in the back of Ryan Fieldhouse. "I was crying in disbelief, and she just walked off stage giggling and asked, 'Did you hear people cheer for you?' I could barely even form words," says Alrutz. "We both said we almost feel like we'll meet again in life, but we'll see. It was a really fun night."



REUNITE

The CommFest finale brought the (field)house down.

“A Starry Night,” the culminating event of the weekend, was a rousing, raucous, purple-tinted party of a show—punctuated by the manifold talents of celebrated alumni and the incomparable wit of Stephen Colbert (C86, H11).

“The School of Communication, as you all know, was known as the Department of Elocution. And what better place to teach mellifluous speech than... Chicago,” he joked before affecting the city’s much-maligned accent.

Starring two dozen prominent stage and screen alumni, the show was held in the brand-new Ryan Fieldhouse and Wilson Field—an immense, turf-covered indoor football field transformed into a glittering theatrical venue to accommodate seating for the evening’s 2,800 guests.

The last time so many School of Communication celebrity alumni assembled onstage was in 1980 for “The Way They Were,” a gala show hosted by Charlton Heston (C45) and Ann-Margret (C63) to mark the completion of the Theatre and Interpretation Center, now the Virginia Wadsworth Wirtz Center for the Performing Arts.

This year’s show—produced by Don Weiner (C79), who

launched *So You Think You Can Dance* and *Are You Smarter Than a Fifth Grader*—helped raise funds and awareness for the forthcoming MFA program in acting and the downtown Chicago performing and media arts center that will support it.

The show opened with a taped vignette of Colbert and fellow alumnus Seth Meyers (C96, H16), host of NBC’s *Late Night with Seth Meyers*. The two traded barbs about everything from auditioning for the Mee-Ow Show to their late-night rivalry.

“Every graduate of the School of Communication gets their own talk show,” joked Colbert, who hosts CBS’s *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*.

Former *Saturday Night Live* cast member Ana Gasteyer (C89) performed the opening number, “Comin’ Together,” with Stephanie D’Abruzzo (C93), a Tony-nominated actress and *Sesame Street* puppeteer best known for her work in the original New York company of *Avenue Q*. The star-studded cast also included Brian d’Arcy James (C90), who sang “You’ll Be Back” from *Hamilton*, a highlight of his role as King George, which he originated off Broadway and reprised recently on Broadway. James, Gregg Edelman (C80), and Tony nominee Richard Kind (C78) together sang “I Wan’na Be Like You” from *The Jungle Book*.

Sharif Atkins (C97) who stars in *Seal Team* and is known for



playing Dr. Michael Gallant on the iconic television hit *ER*, introduced a sketch by Mee-Ow Show alumni that included performers from the group's 2018 cast. Adam Kantor (Co8), who took a night off from appearing in the Tony Award-winning musical *The Band's Visit* to come to campus, sang alongside current members of his former a cappella group, THUNK. Craig Bierko (C86), a Tony nominee for his leading role in the Broadway revival of *The Music Man*, sang "Trouble" and "Seventy-Six Trombones," the latter featuring the raise-the-roof accompaniment of members of the Wildcat Marching Band. Harry Lennix (C86) joined emeritus professor Frank Galati (C65, GC67, GC71) onstage to introduce a segment about the school's connections to the Chicago theatre community.

Emmy Award winner Nancy Dussault (BSM57), Tony Roberts (C61), and Kind performed bygone Waa-Mu songs with current cast members. "This just reminds me how much I loved being a student," Dussault told the audience. "There's so much talent onstage and offstage here at Northwestern."

Kimberly Williams-Paisley (C93), who starred as the radiant young bride in *Father of the Bride*, introduced a tribute to *Happy Days* creator and *Pretty Woman* director Garry Marshall (J56). Kathryn Hahn (C95), who starred in *Bad Moms*,

introduced a segment on influential Northwestern alumni, saying, "I'm so moved to be back here."

Other celebrity alumni contributing to the show were Paul Barrosse (C80), Daniele Gaither (C93), Kyle Heffner (C79), Rush Pearson (C80), Laura Innes (C79), Gary Kroeger (C81), J.P. Manoux (C91), Stephanie March (C96), Marg Helgenberger (C82), Dermot Mulroney (C85), and Dana Olsen (C80).

Heather Headley (C96), who has won both a Grammy and a Tony, sang twice. "If It Wasn't for Your Love" accompanied a video segment about School of Communication alumni all-stars across its spectrum of expertise; "Home" from *The Wiz* closed the show. The crowd rose to its feet as she held the last goosebump-inducing note, after which cast members joined her onstage for a rendition of the Waa-Mu Show standard "To the Memories."

Dean Barbara O'Keefe called the event and CommFest 2018 a smash hit. "I thank all our contributors for what we have accomplished," she says. "CommFest has written a new chapter in the history of the school and paved the way for many chapters to come."

For videos, additional photos, and press coverage of CommFest, go to commfest.northwestern.edu.

Directed by
ROBERT DUNMORE

Settings by
CLIVE RICKABAUGH

Box Office 35c ◀ Admission ▶ Advance Sale 25c

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Federal Negro Theatre
[PROJECT NUMBER THREE]

PRESENTS

"Romey and Julie"

A Romantic Comedy

by
Robert Dunmore, Ruth Chorpenning, James Norris
Musical Settings by Margaret Allison Bonds

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5538 INDIANA AVENUE
April 1, 2, 3
All Performances
Directed by
ROBERT DUNMORE
Box Office 35c ◀ Admission ▶ Advance Sale 25c



RIDGEWAY THEATRE
5538 INDIANA AVENUE
April 3, 4, 9, 10
All Performances begin at 8:30 p. m.
Settings by
CLIVE RICKABAUGH
Box Office 35c ◀ Admission ▶ Advance Sale 25c

Federal Negro Theatre
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"Romey and Julie"

BLACK ARTS INITIATIVE INCLUSIVITY, ART, AND COMMUNITY

by Cara Lockwood

Over the last two decades the School of Communication has identified and implemented a key strategic goal: nurturing innovation, computation, and global visibility among students and faculty. A large component of this plan is creating a more connected community, one that reflects the school's global reach and that values inclusivity and representation.

The School of Communication faculty is increasingly diverse—racially, ethnically, and in research focus—and the student body craves curricula that explore underrepresented stories. Providing opportunities for learning communities to collaborate, create, and celebrate art has been a hallmark of this key strategic goal's realization and is the seed from which many of the school's successful projects grow. The Black Arts Initiative is one such success story.

When E. Patrick Johnson first arrived at Northwestern in 2000, he found a number of faculty, students, and staff working in the black arts, but mostly in silos. As the University kicked off its *We Will* fundraising campaign in 2011, Johnson capitalized on an opportunity to unify these independent voices, submitting a proposal for what would later become the Black Arts Initiative (BAI).

"Because of my own interdisciplinary research and practice, I wanted to find a way to connect with other folks across campus," says Johnson, the Carlos Montezuma Professor of Performance Studies and African American Studies. "The Black Arts Initiative launched in spring 2012 to address several needs: the existence of a critical mass of faculty and students at Northwestern pursuing research and artistry within the black arts; the need for a productive way to bring these

scholars together; and a desire for cross-departmental and cross-school collaboration."

Since its inception, BAI has held three conferences, bringing together a multitude of artists, performers, and scholars to discuss black arts, trends, and the future of expression on film, stage, screen, and paper. BAI also offers special opportunities for students, scholars, and performers to connect—more so than is common for African American groups at other universities—and does so by reinforcing its four-pronged mission: research, pedagogy, practice, and civic engagement.

"The program has grown enormously in terms of its impact on campus and in the community," says Johnson. "We have also expanded programming to include more collaborations with students and student groups, including a student-curated film series that examines issues of race relations. We hope to expand BAI to add more collaborations with international institutions, including a summer institute and artist-in-residency program."

The group's 2018 sponsored events included a Black Arts in the City performance of *BLKS* at Steppenwolf Theatre Company; a lecture series featuring Brown University's Jasmine Johnson, an expert on black movement politics; "Reggaeton's Queer Turn," a brown-bag-lunch lecture by performance studies chair Ramón H. Rivera-Servera; and "South Africa on Stage," a cosponsored performance festival.



Last fall BAI hosted “Black Arts International: Temporalities and Territories,” its third biennial conference—sponsored by the Lambert Family Conference gift, which is funded by a generous donation from Bill and Sheila Lambert. The event drew a diverse mix of professionals and scholars (including Tarell Alvin McCraney, who penned the source material for the Academy Award–winning film *Moonlight*) to tell stories, share experiences, and tackle complicated questions: How has history shaped black artistic production outside the US? How do non-Western forms of black art disrupt concepts of time and space? How might we conceive of black diasporic artistic forms outside a US context? How does the valuation of black art change within a global context?

“Given the hostile political climate in which we currently live, art is one of the key sites for social change,” says Johnson. “Theatre, film, literature, visual art, and music are all forms that provide a platform for marginalized people to offer counter-narratives about what it means to be a citizen of the world. Given their particular history as a group of people, black artists around the world have been exemplary in proving this point. More than just creating art as a form of resistance, however, black artists also create art as a form of creative expression that exists on its own terms—as art.”

Steadfast leadership

Huey Copeland—associate professor of art history, faculty affiliate in the Department of African American Studies, and a BAI advisory board member who has played an active role in the organization—credits its success to Johnson’s peerless guidance.

“E. Patrick Johnson has been a phenomenal leader,” says Copeland. “He’s someone who has an amazing energy and passion, and he’s such a good advocate for the black arts. He’s not just a leader in the arts, but he’s also a professor in the African American studies department and has worked with gender studies as well. When we approach black arts, we can’t really

do it in a vacuum, and Patrick understands this, because he’s already engaging black arts in a holistic way.”

Ivy Wilson, associate professor of English with a joint appointment in communication studies, teaches courses on US literary studies and the comparative literatures of the black diaspora, with particular emphasis on African American culture. A BAI advisory board member since its inception, he says Johnson’s democratic leadership style helped the initiative grow.

“One of the hallmarks of Patrick’s leadership is how attentively he listens as a matter of transparency and democracy. He also has subtle ways of building buy-in from all of BAI’s advocates and participants,” says Wilson. “Patrick was the principal investor of BAI, yet he’s never said it’s been his vision alone; it’s a shared and collaborative process.”

Citing BAI’s significant impact in bringing together students, researchers, and professors from across the campus and community, Wilson says, “This initiative is so important because it’s given Northwestern the centrality of black artists across multiple schools, including the phenomenal work done in the Department of Performance Studies, and it’s given both scholars and practitioners a way to share a platform of conversation and dialogue. That platform extends from undergraduate teaching and experiential learning to faculty research.”

Such collaboration across disciplines and schools could lead to new discoveries. “A few of us have been talking about collaborative research and teaching modules, where faculty in literature, art theory and practice, and music may work with a poet or playwright,” he says. “We’re exploring ways the University can support not just joint teaching but also collaborative research.”

A strengthening force

Wilson sees BAI as bringing visibility to the University. “I’d love to see more collaborations on the city, national, and international levels, because what we already have here at



“Art is one of the key sites for social change. Theatre, film, literature, visual art, and music are all forms that provide a platform for marginalized people to offer counternarratives about what it means to be a citizen of the world.”

—E. Patrick Johnson, Carlos Montezuma Professor of Performance Studies and African American Studies

Northwestern is a fantastic center for the exploration and study of black arts,” he says. “We’re really helping to create the next generation of scholars, makers, and doers.”

In remarks preceding the fall BAI conference’s keynote address by Harvard professor Homi Bhabha, Northwestern provost Jonathan Holloway praised Johnson’s efforts to bring BAI to life. Having known Johnson professionally for 20 years, Holloway is especially happy to support BAI and its work.

“We do this because it’s the right thing to do,” he said. “I salute all of you for being here for this important work. ... Let’s look at the world with all of its complexity and through a lens that’s expansive and not limited. I’m a historian by training, but I’ve learned that being a historian is not enough. We have to ask questions that an artist would ask, that a sociologist would ask, that a film critic would ask. ... Teaching in new ways for a new future [is] the hope I have for this gathering. It’s a signpost for possibility.”

Miriam Petty, associate professor of radio/television/film and another BAI board member, said that BAI’s work to give voice to those who historically have been disenfranchised is essential collaborative activity that must continue. “When we don’t tell a full story of this country, then we get moments like the one we’re in right now, culturally,” she said. “By continuing to myth-make about what the country is or has been, we don’t do ourselves or anyone else any favors.

“Take the #MeToo movement that’s coming out of Hollywood and so many other quarters right now,” she continues. “Those stories about institutional gender discrimination and

abuse are incredibly old and are deeply rooted in uncomfortable truths about America. Stories about egregious imbalances of power—of race, of gender, of sexuality, of class—permeate not just Hollywood but the country in general. And ignoring those stories hasn’t made them go away. Telling them won’t necessarily make them go away either, but it can help us be more equipped to deal with them in a real and meaningful way when they do come out.”

Wilson hopes that other institutions will look to BAI as the blueprint for bringing groups together to tackle complicated issues. “I think the model that has been created by BAI can help other institutions in Chicago think about the arts,” he says. “It’s not just the Arts Circle on Northwestern’s campus, but how a group of practitioners and students and scholars curious about and invested in black arts can provide each other with different models for how other arts-based institutions can collaborate.”

Hoping that BAI continues to grow and connect more artists and scholars, Johnson believes it’s more important than ever that the University and other institutions invest in providing a platform for diverse voices. “In a time when funding for the arts is being curtailed and a relentless wave of cultural conservatism rules the day, it is vital that institutions like Northwestern double down on their values of creating a space for diverse expression as well as sharing the bounty of resources they have been afforded by supporting those who may not have the same kind of access,” he says. “Today more than ever, under-represented voices need a platform to be heard.”

THE BLACK STUDENT THEATRE EXPERIENCE

by Gabby Randle

Northwestern's history of black students in theatre is at once complicated, fascinating, and problematic. With the assistance of University Archives, second-year interdisciplinary theatre and drama PhD candidate Gabby Randle highlights notable students and the societal climates in which they studied and performed.

African American students and alumni have been a documented part of Northwestern's theatre community for nearly a century, and they have played a crucial role in the success of some of the University's most treasured traditions. From Waa-Mu to Winifred Ward's Children's Theatre of Evanston, black students in the School of Speech (now the School of Communication) helped shape the emerging culture of theatrical production at Northwestern and, in turn, the world.

Though black students were working on and in campus theatre productions from as early as 1927, an integrated stage was a complicated reality. The Northwestern University Archives show that the earliest black performers found success through their experiences at Northwestern—and sometimes in spite of it. Barred from much of campus social life (such as prom and other coed social functions), they made communities of their own, performing in Evanston, in Chicago's Loop, and eventually in New York City and Europe.

Robert Dunmore was one of the first African American graduates of the School of Speech's dramatics program. After the Chicago native earned his Northwestern degree in 1930, he went on to work as an actor, playwright, and director. Although as a recent alumnus Dunmore continued to appear on Northwestern stages, he also became involved in the Harlem Experimental Theatre and the Negro Little Theatre of Evanston.

Dunmore initially became involved in University theatre as a crew member on a 1927 production. He first appeared onstage on April 10, 1929, in the Town and Gown Playhouse production of *Quagmire* by School of Speech student Anne Frierson, who drew on her upbringing in South Carolina and the Gullah community living near her family. A narrative indicative of its time, the play tells the story of an archetypal "tragic mulatto," a young woman trapped between the civilized nature of her whiteness and the savagery of her blackness. The play employed over 30 black actors from Evanston and Chicago; Dunmore was cast in a principal role as "Black Boy Ben" (later billed "Big Boy Ben"). Although by coincidence *Quagmire* premiered the same night as the very first Waa-Mu Show, it sold out to capacity crowds for three nights in Annie May Swift Hall's theater.

At Northwestern, Dunmore played Brutus Jones—the title character in Eugene O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones*—no less than four times: twice in 1929, again in 1933, and once

more in 1939. In both 1929 productions, 25 School of Speech students made up the rest of the cast, with white students playing the roles of convicts, slaves, native revolutionaries, and planters.

In November 1929, Dunmore starred in a children's theatre version of *Aladdin*. The following March he finished first among all speech seniors in the school's dramatic poetry reading contest, and just before graduation in May he led a cast of almost 500 in celebrating the 75th anniversary of Garrett Seminary. In little over a year, his star power at Northwestern had soared; but after graduating, Dunmore had trouble finding acting work in the midst of the Great Depression. He then tried playwriting, cowriting *Romey & Julie*, an adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* centering on two Harlem families, one black and the other West Indian. It played in Hyde Park's Ridgeway Theatre as part of the Federal Negro Theater Project and featured Kelsey Pharr, a black School of Speech student from Miami whose



Robert Dunmore in the 1930 Syllabus photo of Delta Epsilon professional fraternity

father, Kelsey Pharr Sr., was a well-known civil rights leader.

Pharr entered the School of Speech as a 16-year-old in 1933, the same year as Mary Louise Foster (sometimes billed as Louise Foster). The two costarred in multiple campus productions with alumnus Dunmore, including a 1934 children's theatre production of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* directed by Winifred Ward.

In 1937 the three actors appeared onstage together again in graduate student Albert Randall Crews's master's thesis, *Let My People Go*. (Crews went on to a prolific career at NBC Radio.) The *Daily Northwestern* ran a review by Charles Nelson praising the show: "I never saw a better coordinated group of actors of any race." He was especially complimentary to one actor: "Robert Dunmore dominates the entire action, turning in the sincere, well-rounded performance that has come to be expected of him." Nelson goes on to give an interesting critique of Foster's performance, betraying the slippery nature of racial formation during that era: "Louise Foster as the ill-fated heroine does a great deal to adjust herself to a role to which she is not especially suited. La Foster belongs in no pedestrian role: she is an exotic, and as such is above race."

Pharr and Foster were the breakout stars of the 1937 Waa-Mu Show, *Don't Look Now*. Pharr also was a lead vocalist in the 1939 show *Guess Again!* Foster went on to a stage career in Chicago, and Kelsey Pharr became an international star as a member of a popular vocal group, the Delta Rhythm Boys.

Mirroring the conservative climate of the country, the number of black actors on Northwestern stages dropped significantly through the 1940s and '50s—with the notable exception of William Branch, later a producer, actor, screenwriter, and Guggenheim Award-winning playwright. Fittingly, worldwide student activism in the '60s extended to black students on Northwestern's campus, bringing diversity back to campus theatre. In 1967 dancer and School of Speech student Ernest Morgan appeared in the Waa-Mu Show

and as the only male dancer in Northwestern's Orchesis dance concert, where he danced the solo "Wounded Bird."

Black Folks Theatre (BFT), a satellite of the black student group For Members Only, was founded in 1970 to provide black students—especially those in theatre—with opportunities to produce, perform, and support black plays. From 1970 to 1975 most plays that the group produced were student written. In 1972 School of Speech first-year student Renee Ward led a group of 25 black students to Joliet Prison to perform for the inmates. In 1978 BFT was at risk of being absorbed into a larger student theatre group but successfully advocated for the importance of its specific role on campus. BFT also coproduced work with the Northwestern theatre department.

During the 1980s theatre professor Phyllis Griffin helped advocate for students of color, especially for expanded options in casting. In 1983 she directed Sam Shepard's *Buried Child*, casting a black woman and a Japanese American man in lead roles traditionally cast as white. Griffin also worked as a production supervisor for many student productions.

Harry Lennix (see page 11), a 1986 graduate now known for his work in Hollywood (including *The Blacklist* and *Batman vs. Superman*), was an active School of Speech student and the president of For Members Only. In collaboration with actor and student leader John Marshall Jones, who graduated in 1984, Lennix oversaw the name change of Black Folks Theatre to African American Theatre Ensemble. Jones also lobbied the University to produce Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*, and the production was a huge success. He has gone on to a career boasting nearly 100 high-profile film and television credits.

Today's black theatre students share many of the same experiences as their predecessors. There is warmth and community, but there are also struggles. Central concerns among students include limited access to roles and the perceived burden for those who are cast to represent black students well so that more will be cast in the future.



FACULTY AND ALUMNI AMPLIFY INTERSECTIONAL VOICES



Assistant professor of communication studies **Aymar Jean Christian** seeks to offer diverse voices to a wider audience through his OTV/Open Television platform. One of the first series he helped launch, *Brown Girls*, was nominated for an Emmy in 2017 and subsequently picked up by HBO (see page 8).

“When I was researching the web TV market, I saw tons of innovation, but there weren’t many independent distributors focused on intersectional voices,” says Christian, who turned that research into a book. “Intersectionality, rooted in black feminism, provides a way for people who have multiple identities to create a platform that values folks marginalized by race, class, sexuality, and on and on.”

Christian sees OTV as a way to overcome traditional barriers raised by TV and cable. “A lot of these institutions like TV and film weren’t built to be democratic and open; they were built to be restrictive,” he says. “Many people in Hollywood have sincere interest in diversifying programming, but to solidify the deal, to actually get shows sold, they have to go by these very traditional metrics of worth. For instance, they ask: Are you represented by a leading talent agency or management company? Do you have credits? Have you worked on shows beforehand? Played at festivals? All of those metrics are reliant on decades of discrimination. We live in a segregated society, and all of our systems are discriminatory.”



Friends and Northwestern graduates **Morgan Elise Johnson** (C11), **Tiffany Walden** (J11, GJ12), and **David Elutilo** (WCAS14) were similarly dismayed by this culture of creative discrimination. So, like Aymar Jean Christian, they did something about it.

“The TRiiBE is a platform and movement for black millennials to take back the narrative of Chicago,” says Johnson. “We realized that there is a void of creative content focused on stories depicting the Chicago that we’ve experienced as black women. We hoped to build a platform to help black millennials share stories, events, and ideas under one united entity, the TRiiBE.”

The TRiiBE began as a passion project that the creators self-funded before winning a 2017 Chicago Filmmakers Digital Production Fund grant last August. The project was officially launched the following February.

Johnson, who was a radio/television/film major, says now is the time to “share these stories about Chicago through a black lens,” lest history be lost—a legitimate fear in a volatile political climate. “Not only do we have to showcase traditionally underrepresented stories, but we have to own these stories so that they can’t be stolen or erased.”



As **Miriam Petty**, associate professor of radio/television/film, embarked on the project that resulted in her award-winning book *Stealing the Show: African American Performers and Audiences in 1930s Hollywood*, she found that she had to rely on nontraditional research methods to discover answers to her questions.

Petty was especially curious how Bill “Bojangles” Robinson was perceived by black children, but children of color were never a focus of the era’s social scientists. So she took a step back and read autobiographies and memoirs by African American adults who had consumed media in the 1930s as children. “It’s partially about creating knowledge where it might seem that there’s nothing to find,” she says. “And creating it out of trace elements, or trace deposits of information. It means researching around the edges of the known archive and bringing what you find into the center.”

Petty is currently working on a project about filmmaker Tyler Perry, star of the Madea franchise,

“Here, as in *Stealing the Show*, I’m really interested in the spectatorship of black audiences, especially because Perry is so polarizing. People either love him or hate him. At the same time, there are certain elements of African American history and culture that he always plays with and engages, and that’s a central part of his popularity. I’m also thoughtful about the extent to which he is affected by this burden of representation he ends up carrying.”



Tsehaye Geralyn Hébert (C86) has tackled representation through playwriting, touching both the black experience and the disabled community. In 2015 Hébert won the Alliance/Kendedad National Graduate Playwriting Award for *The C. A. Lyons Project*, about an African American choreographer from Chicago and the choices he must make after his AIDS diagnosis. As she was working on the play, which debuted at Atlanta's Alliance Theatre, Hébert fell gravely ill with critical organ failure that left her in a monthlong coma. She recovered but suffered from muscle atrophy, requiring a wheelchair, then a walker, and later a cane to help her move around. The experience enlightened her.

"I believe passionately that the American stage should look like America —19 percent of Americans are disabled, yet we don't see enough people with disabilities onstage," she says. "When we don't include these stories, we have a false narrative about our country."

As she returned to writing, she could barely hold a pencil. But as her healing progressed, she incorporated an advocate's sensibilities into the production: part of the play, for example, is told in sign language, which immediately expanded its audience to include the hearing impaired.

"We need to widen the narrative," adds Hébert. "It's not about competing narratives or one being dominant over the other. There's a place for everyone's story onstage."

BLACK STUDENT VOICES HIGHLIGHTED AT SECOND ANNUAL PLAYWRITING EVENT

BLACK LIVES BLACK WORDS

It began with a rousing call and response. "Black lives," called the presenter. "Black words," answered the audience. "Black lives," said the presenter. "Matter," the audience finished. Cheers and applause filled the room, setting the stage for a bevy of talented black artists to tell their stories.

Do black lives matter? The question was posed to black student playwrights last winter at a School of Communication workshop for the campus's second annual Black Lives, Black Words event. Students had a single month to write, edit, cast, and rehearse their original 10-minute plays for staged readings on February 26 in the Ethel M. Barber Theater. The playwriting was coordinated and mentored by senior lecturer Laura Schellhardt.

"I feel so honored to be a part of this production. I don't know where my writing would go if I weren't at Northwestern with this space to grow and have my work heard."

—Amira Danan, rising senior theatre major,
a writer and director for this year's show

"It's my favorite event of the year," said senior theatre major Allie Woodson (C18), who coproduced the show two years in a row in addition to writing, directing, and acting. "Last year it was so new, so we had fewer writers. It was still powerful but more specifically related to the question 'Do black lives matter?'"

This year the question was taken further, in a less literal way. Plays tackled microaggressions, colorism, interracial relationships, personal spiritual reckonings, toxic masculinity, and more, laced with pop culture references and startling moments of vulnerability. About a dozen student writers participated.

The event was a collaboration between the international Black Lives, Black Words organization, the School of Communication, and the Theta Alpha chapter of Delta Sigma Theta sorority. The BLBW organization releases anthologies of its affiliated works, including these Northwestern performances.

—Mira Wang (J18)

AFTER THE STORM

REBUILDING PUERTO RICO'S ARTS COMMUNITIES

by Kerry Trotter and Cara Lockwood



Performance studies professor and department chair Ramón H. Rivera-Servera has spearheaded an innovative outreach initiative to assist Puerto Rican artists in the aftermath of last fall's devastating hurricanes. Organized and deployed with ample University assistance and grant funding, this budding project mines beauty and empowerment amid a disaster.

When Hurricanes Maria and Irma hit Puerto Rico in September 2017, they left a massive humanitarian crisis in their wake. The Category 5 storms leveled towns, decimated businesses and natural landscapes, deprived thousands of their homes and jobs, and left the island and its 3.3 million residents without power for weeks and, in some areas, months—a cruel turn of events for a US territory that was already in an economic crisis. Ramón H. Rivera-Servera, chair of the Department of Performance Studies and interim chair of the Department of Theatre, waited in anguish at his home in Chicago for spotty dispatches from family on the island. When the calls came, they reported on the chaos, water shortages, and lack of medical help and electricity—reports that were unheeded by the federal government. With his mother and grandmother among his stranded relatives, Rivera-Servera departed Chicago for San Juan the first chance he got.

The disarray he found on the island broke his heart—but also inspired a movement.

With a personal and professional foundation in performance and creation, Rivera-Servera homed in on that population: art makers and scholars who because of the storm were displaced, no longer able to work, or suddenly without the financial support that once sustained them. He decided to establish a residency and mentorship program for Puerto Rican artists to create, teach, and research on both the island and the mainland, with Northwestern as one of the program's pedagogical nuclei. The artists could then return to Puerto Rico equipped with a project commission, a support structure, and a plan to activate spaces and energize communities affected by the storms and other calamities.

And so the Northwestern Puerto Rican Arts Development Project was born.

The plan and the partnerships

Wasting no time, Rivera-Servera got right to work. “My response was to fundraise inside the University,” he recalls. He quickly secured seed funding through School of Communication Dean Barbara O’Keefe and generous matching support from the Office of the Provost and the Office of the President, the dean of Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, the Departments of Performance Studies and African American Studies, the Black Arts Initiative (see page 12), and the Kaplan Institute for the Humanities—a total of \$100,000. The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation announced in May that it would contribute an additional \$500,000.

As the funding came in, Rivera-Servera and his doctoral candidates and collaborators, José Alvarez-Colón and Arnaldo Rodríguez-Bagué, identified two key San Juan partners for this initiative: La Espectacular, a highly regarded artist residency program, and the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Puerto Rico. Both institutions had created poststorm lifelines for artists—including MACPR’s Regeneration of the Arts Ecosystem, providing psychological support, orientation, practical skill building (such as grant writing), and economic assistance to those affected by the hurricanes. La Espectacular had a particularly strong mentorship program. As these two established institutions were knowledgeable about Puerto Rican artists and keenly aware of the challenges they faced working on the island, Rivera-Servera saw them as fruitful partners. Northwestern could provide financial support for key MACPR and La Espectacular programming; those organizations in turn could help vet the artists and mentors most appropriate for this initial cohort. Additionally, MACPR would serve as base camp for the first phase of the rollout.

On August 1, 10 early- to midcareer artists who work in performance and ephemeral arts (using the body as the primary creative tool) began what will be a two-year commission and



Mentors

Eduardo Alegría is a multi-disciplinary artist who since the 1990s has been working in experimental theatre and dance as well as musical projects that merge postpop music with electroacoustic sound.

Petra Brava is a Cuban choreographer and former dancer with the National Cuban Ballet (1960–68). In 1980 she became a founding member of Pisotón, Puerto Rico's first experimental dance and theatre group.

Teresa Hernández is a well-known Puerto Rican actress, dancer, and performer who writes, produces, and performs in works that are informed by her experiences as a Puerto Rican woman within the island's specific cultural context.

Karen Langevin teaches awareness through movement. She has worked as a movement artist for over 30 years and an Alexander Technique teacher for 23. Her passion for the mind-body continuum infuses her art as dance improvisation.

Nibia Pastrana-Santiago is the codirector of La Espectacular, an artist residency program, and a dancer and choreographer based in San Juan.

Chemi Rosado-Seijo is a painter and video, installation, construction, and performance artist, as well as a creator of interventions, the latest of which has tapped into skateboarding culture.

Gisela Rosario-Ramos is an award-winning filmmaker and musician who works and performs in Puerto Rico and New York.

Awilda Sterling-Duprey is a teacher, dancer, and choreographer who is an important figure in Puerto Rico's traditional cultural arts scene.

Bernat Tort is a philosopher and performance artist as well as a professor in the philosophy department and women and gender studies program at the University of Puerto Rico's Río Piedras campus.

Viveca Vázquez is a choreographer and dancer as well as a professor of humanities and experimental dance at the University of Puerto Rico.

professional development process. They collectively took part in an intensive monthlong professionalization training led by Rivera-Servera at MACPR. The artists worked on such tasks as writing artists' statements, presenting lectures, facilitating workshops, assembling grant and fellowship proposals, and communicating with audiences about their work. Each of these artists will come to Northwestern for weeklong residencies—three this fall, three this winter, and four next spring. On campus the artists will each present a talk, lead a workshop, and participate in a public conversation with the University community about their work, the project they workshoped at MACPR, and their experience as working artists in poststorm Puerto Rico. In addition, they will take part in networking events with Chicago arts stakeholders.



Following their residencies at Northwestern, the artists will spend another week at one of the universities that have expressed interest in the program; these include public and private institutions across the country. "The idea is to expand the set of resources and relationships that may in the long term further the outstanding creative practice and valuable contributions these artists are making to Puerto Rico and the specific communities they're engaged in," says Rivera-Servera.

The artists will then return to Puerto Rico, where they will work closely with 10 designated mentors over the following year to execute and present their respective artistic projects. The development initiative will wrap up in August 2020 with a retreat to reflect on the experience and share work. By this point, the artists will have built energy and momentum for arts creation in communities

“The idea is to expand the set of resources and relationships that may further the outstanding creative practice and valuable contributions these artists are making to Puerto Rico.”

—*Performance studies professor and department chair Ramón H. Rivera-Servera*

throughout the island. This is what the partners believe will drive Puerto Rico’s reconstruction—in identity and, by extension, in infrastructure.

“The initiative will provide much-needed exposure to Puerto Rican artists, established and emergent, as well as critical insight and professional training for them to make the most of available opportunities and tools,” says Marianne Ramírez-Aponte, MACPR executive director and chief curator. “Through active and continuous joint efforts involving the museum, artists, educators, and community residents, the MAC is working to further contribute to the recovery and socioeconomic development of communities via cultural and volunteer tourism, our ongoing art exhibitions and commissioned projects, the activation of businesses in the communities, and alliances with the business sector.”



The participants

Artists on the island have grown accustomed to working amid economic and financial turmoil, but the hurricanes brought entirely new challenges.

“In Puerto Rico there is a precarious infrastructure for artistic production, especially in the performance

Artists

Alajandra Martorell is an experimental dancer and performer who teaches dance improvisation, technique, and appreciation at undergraduate programs in Puerto Rico.

Mickey Negrón is an interdisciplinary actor-creator, performance artist, dancer, educator, arts event organizer, and curator who turns the real into the theatrical in search of freedom.

Kairiana Nuñez-Santalíz is an actress, teacher, and performer who won a Special Jury Award at the 2018 International Film Festival of Mar del Plata for her role in *Silence of the Wind*.

Pó Rodil is a Caribbean trans/multidisciplinary artist from Puerto Rico with training in body movement, body poetry, writing poetry, visual arts, and sound art training.

Edgardo Rodríguez is an actor, movement artist, theatre director, and teacher.

Awilda Rodríguez-Lora is a performer, choreographer, and cultural entrepreneur who works with movement, sound, and video as well as “economy of living” practices.

Felix Rodríguez-Rosa is a transdisciplinary artist who uses photography, video, and writing to document actions, performance interventions, and improvisations; his work occupies domestic abandoned and public spaces to explore ideas of habitat and memory in relation to the space’s intended purpose.

Llaima Suwani Sanfiorenzo is a humanist, filmmaker, and documentary show host for Puerto Rico’s public television network.

Noemi Segarra works collaboratively and cross-disciplinarily with movement improvisation, performance, public intervention, documentation, and the creation of online archives.

Lionel Villahermosa is a multidisciplinary artist and community activist working within the genres of visual and performing arts.

field,” says dancer and choreographer Nibia Pastrana Santiago, codirector of La Espectacular. “The few venues and innovative projects from recent years have either come to an end or continue to struggle for survival. And when I say survival, it is exactly that. To be an independent artist or collective on an island that is threatened by debt and budget cuts in its educational and healthcare systems is a huge challenge. This of course was made more visible posthurricanes, and like the rest of the Puerto Rican community, artists were and still are affected by the political disaster following the storms.”

José Alvarez-Colón, one of the Northwestern doctoral candidates working on the project, knows this all too well. Before moving to Chicago in 2016, he was a freelance artist in Puerto Rico, trying to eke out a living while reconciling the complicated relationship between the island and the mainland—something he sees as one of the bigger issues this cohort will tackle.

“I am convinced that this project will be helpful for asking broader questions regarding the role of performance with climate change, environmental crisis, and disaster capitalism,” he says. Additionally, it can help elevate Puerto Rico’s standing on the world stage, which would go beyond the US’s historical assessment of the island as a “colonial laboratory” for the pharmaceutical industry, military bases, and now, disaster recovery.

Each of the 10 participating artists, alongside their assigned mentors, will find unique ways to approach these issues. The project’s first cohort (see page 23) was assembled to represent the island’s demographic and geographic diversity, which is essential to permeating the culture and positioning the artists as key voices at a critical moment in Puerto Rican economic, political, and cultural history. The 10 mentors (see page 22) were selected in a similar fashion.

“Key to our strategy is an attempt to stabilize and strengthen networks of care and mentorship already central to sustaining the arts ecology in Puerto Rico, especially amongst artists whose primary instrument is their bodies,” says Rivera-Servera. “We have assembled a cohort of mentors, not selected by longevity necessarily but by their key roles sustaining the performance art scene, be it through their practice as teachers of embodied techniques, as scholars and critics, or as producers. All of these mentors are artists in their own right and equally struggling to sustain their practice.”

Implications

Although designed to be comprehensive, the two-year process is still a preliminary step toward self-sustainment and continued cultural ownership. These artists and mentors are accustomed to being nimble, resourceful creators. But with this development project, their work may sustain them and their peers.

“Support from the Mellon Foundation is allowing us to invest in artists whose work shares beauty and criticality with communities in great need of both pleasure and generous debate about how to intervene in this crisis,” says Rivera-Servera. “This is a kind of insistent utopianism that believes in what art can manifest as possible, not in a flight from the reality of this crisis but as a result of understanding the conditions upon which creative practice and life endure in contexts as challenging as this one.”



ART IN PUERTO RICO: RICH TRADITIONS, SIZABLE CHALLENGES

Puerto Rico's arts scene has always been a thriving one amidst limited institutional support, scarce arts criticism in media outlets, and the absence of graduate arts programs. The number of excellent artists actively working contrasts with a small market for their work marked by an ever-changing number of galleries and limited access to museum programming and other work opportunities to help them sustain careers as professional artists.

But it is important to state that crisis in Puerto Rico is not new to the culture sector and has not come about solely because of Hurricanes Maria and Irma, although they have certainly aggravated it. Trying circumstances and limited resources associated with the politics and economics of colonialism are a given on the island both for artists and for most cultural institutions. For artists, the multiple crises that Puerto Rico faces—political, financial, social, cultural—far from debilitating arts production, spur it and entice artists to look at other paths to self-sufficiency. These include undertaking graduate studies and participating in residency programs abroad, living and working between the island and abroad, and grouping themselves and establishing alternative exhibition spaces to carry out their projects.

The Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Puerto Rico is sensitive to these circumstances, which is why, in part, it is conceived as a hybrid institution: a space of production and creation as well as of research, exhibition, and conservation. The museum's leadership believes that an interdisciplinary focus is essential for a museum dedicated to contemporary art and that our audiences should participate directly in the process of art to consolidate their contemporary art education, as contemporary art is characterized by its emphasis on process and on the construction and exhibition of artworks and interventions.

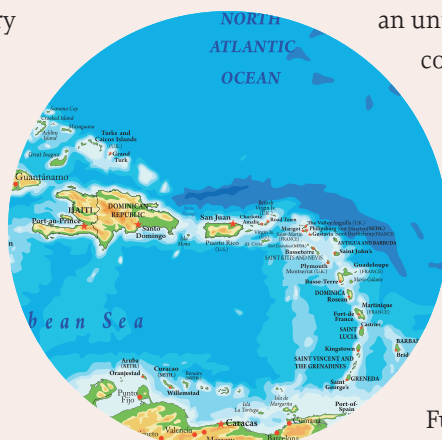
For these reasons the MACPR has been actively commissioning art since 2009. Through our intra- and

extramural residency programs such as Taller Vivo (Live Workshop) and El MAC en el Barrio (MAC in the Barrio), we have given continuity to our commitment to act as an observatory of new aesthetics and to encourage the systematic study and analysis of convergent artistic disciplines. Through both these programs as well as through our exhibition and education programs, we consistently (in spite of limited funding) provide work opportunities for artists through commissioned projects and by engaging them as workshop facilitators, speakers, and more.

For the MAC and the general community, the contribution made by Northwestern University will help us give continuity to MAC in the Barrio, Live Workshop, and other core programs. Through active and continuous joint efforts involving the museum, artists, educators, and community residents, the MAC is working to further contribute to the recovery and socioeconomic development of communities via cultural and volunteer tourism, our ongoing art exhibitions and commissioned projects, the activation of businesses in the communities, and alliances with the business sector.

In the weeks after Hurricane Maria, the MAC became aware that it had moved beyond the role of an unusual art institution with intensive community engagement programming or a storage location for important artworks and archives. It had become a home—a community center and major resource for those seeking aid after the storm. It was a center for relief distribution and a place where people gathered to fill out FEMA forms. It offered an Artist Emergency Fund providing financial assistance. It offered programming to students who had lost their academic routines because of power outages and destruction caused by the hurricane, as well as art therapy and other services for families and seniors. Further, the MAC opened its doors to arts organizations and performers slated to perform at venues that had been closed as a result of the storm.

—Marianne Ramírez-Aponte, executive director and chief curator, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Puerto Rico



Three professors have big impact at conference



From left: Darren Gergle, Anne Marie Piper, and Brent Hecht

Communication studies professor Darren Gergle and assistant professors Anne Marie Piper and Brent Hecht each won a Best Paper Award at the prestigious Human Factors in Computing Systems conference, held in Montreal in April. Hosted by SIGCHI, the special interest group on computer-human interaction (HCI), the annual conference is the premier publication venue for research in the field. Its best-paper awards are based on peer review and committee selection.

“What’s really special this year is that three papers from the School of Communication won best paper awards,” says Hecht. “That means that each of these papers was deemed to be in the top one percent of all submissions. Year after year, Northwestern places tons of papers at prestigious HCI venues and wins a disproportionate number of awards. This is just another sign that Northwestern is becoming a global leader in this large and growing subfield of computer science.”

Piper’s research focuses on technology-based solutions for people with disabilities and older adults. With colleagues Amanda Lazar, Jessica L. Fueston, and Caroline Edasis, she wrote “Making as Expression: Informing Design with People with Complex Communication Needs through Art Therapy.”

Gergle and colleagues Mark Díaz, Isaac Johnson, Lazar, and Piper wrote “Addressing Age-Related Bias in Sentiment Analysis,” which reveals significant biases in many commonly used language-based technologies and tools.

Hecht’s paper, “Examining Wikipedia with a Broader Lens: Quantifying the Value of Wikipedia’s Relationships with Other Large-Scale Online Communities,” is an extension of his previous work on how large tech companies often rely on the free information gathered and sorted through Wikipedia.

Filmmaker Todd Solondz delivers Van Zelst Lecture



“In my work, there’s this marriage of comedy and pathos,” said director, writer, and producer Todd Solondz, who delivered the 35th annual Van Zelst Lecture on May 3 in the Segal Visitors Center. His critically acclaimed, award-winning films include *Welcome to the Dollhouse*, winner of the Sundance Film Festival’s 1996 Grand Jury Prize; *Happiness*, winner of the Cannes Film Festival’s 1998 International Critics Prize; *Storytelling*, named one of 2001’s 10 best films of the year by the *New York Times*; and his latest feature, *Wiener Dog*, which premiered at Sundance in 2016. Solondz doesn’t shy away from controversy, often tackling such tough topics as rape, pedophilia, and suicide.

“All of my work in some sense reflects the divide between cruelty and kindness, which accounts for why some audiences have such a divided response,” he said. “Sometimes they may laugh, and the other half may be angry, saying, ‘Why are you laughing? This is sorrowful.’ And it is both concurrently. There is a comedy, without which life would be too hard to bear.”

The event was moderated by radio/television/film faculty members David Tolchinsky and Thomas Bradshaw and made possible by a generous endowment from Mr. and Mrs. Theodore W. Van Zelst.

Making Evanston more livable for special populations

For those living with dementia, every task becomes demanding. Angela Roberts, assistant professor in the Roxelyn and Richard Pepper Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, researches their communication challenges and interventions. A prime example is transportation; Roberts says that coordinating public and paratransit can “feel like a full-time job” to a caregiver, yet liability concerns often prevent for-hire services from transporting unattended dementia sufferers. As a result, access to helpful programs can be a real challenge.

Working with a volunteer task force that includes community leaders from Evanston, Roberts hopes to tackle these problems as part of the Dementia Friendly America and Dementia Friendly Illinois project under the umbrella of the World Health Organization’s Age Friendly initiative. Roberts and other committee members have held focus groups with community caregivers and people with dementia to help figure out the best way to make Evanston a more dementia-friendly city.

“One of our goals is to reduce the stigma of living with dementia for those in the local community,” she says. “One unique way we’re approaching this is recognizing that Evanston really is a microcosm of the greater Chicago area. Our focus will be to make sure we seek input from caregivers across a broad spectrum of communities, including those from African American and Hispanic households and from



more and less affluent communities, to address the needs of individuals from a more diverse perspective.”

Through these focus groups, Roberts has found that needs vary greatly along socioeconomic and racial lines. Affluent non-Hispanic whites, she said, tend to worry most about the support element: How can I continue doing what I like to do? How can I keep people from noticing? How will this affect my family? African American respondents across the socioeconomic board, however, tend to be more accepting of the diagnosis and instead seek practical coping mechanisms: How can I go grocery shopping? How do I find reliable, safe transportation? How can I juggle multigenerational caregiving?

Roberts hopes to assemble a cohort of community stakeholders by the end of summer to move forward with grant writing and implementing services for key areas of need. These include more unisex public restrooms to accommodate caregivers; more and better educational materials that reflect different populations’ culture and needs; dependable respite options for caregivers; reliable, affordable transportation; and assistance with such tasks as shopping and banking.

She hopes the committee can eventually loop in first responders, local businesses, and other service entities to give them firsthand accounts of the dementia community’s diverse needs. Says Roberts, “It’s very important that we optimize our research through both learning from the community and giving back to the community.”

Children take charge in bringing attention to stuttering

Imagine being a child and speaking in public before 50 adults. Now imagine being that child but with a fluency disorder. In March, lecturer and clinical instructor Meaghan Moriarty assembled seven children who receive clinical services at the Northwestern University Center for Audiology, Speech, Language, and Learning and coached them to speak about their communication challenges for the center’s “Increasing Stuttering Awareness” event. The children led presentations and a Q&A for attendees, who were primarily graduate students.

These impressive children identified a five-point hierarchy of speaking goals, starting with practicing in speech sessions and ending with speaking before a large group of unfamiliar people. “When given the proper communication tools and strategies to address their social-emotional aspects of stuttering, these children far exceeded their own expectations,” says Moriarty.

Ranging in age from 7 to 15, the children each had a chance to speak: one provided the welcome message, another demonstrated breathing techniques, and another performed a skit with her clinician. A 7-year-old spoke about the five characteristics of a competent communicator: attentive, assertive, confident, effective, proactive. The participants advanced the message that it was all about the speaker and not about the stutter.

Writing about the experience for the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, Moriarty was delighted with how—despite initial speech setbacks—the participants rose to the occasion: “This attitude is how these children will continue to face challenging speaking situations and continue to be amazing communicators.”



Kennedy Center connections

When professor Rives Collins and senior lecturer Laura Schellhardt participated in the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts' New Visions/New Voices play workshop in 2016, they were the first academic partnership to take part in the prestigious program. It went well, to say the least. The very play they honed two summers ago, *Ever in the Glades*, returned to Washington in June for a limited weekend run at the Kennedy Center's Family Theater—this time fully realized with an all-Northwestern cast and directing and design team.

"The New Visions/New Voices program has been at the vanguard of new play development for young audiences for more than 25 years," says Collins. "We were thrilled to be invited to bring the full production back to the place where it all began."

Penned by Schellhardt, *Ever in the Glades* centers on a group of teenagers living on a fictional Florida island and trying to survive the wildlife—and their own parents. *Glades* asks questions of its young audience about friendship, morality, and our obligations to future generations. The show was directed by Collins and codirected by Allie Woodson (C18).

"It was our chance to seize the day," adds Collin, "or as we like to say about this play from the swamp, 'Carpe Gator!'"



NU-Q visits Northwestern's Evanston campus



Northwestern University in Qatar sent a delegation to the home campus in May for its annual NU-Q in Evanston week. Qatari campus faculty, staff, and students shared experiences from the Middle East and showcased their creative work and research. NU-Q dean Everette E. Dennis provided a Doha campus update at a luncheon attended by the University president and provost along with faculty, staff, and students who have studied, taught, and worked at NU-Q.

"Although we are 7,000 miles away from our home campus, NU-Q is very much a part of the greater Northwestern community," said Dennis. "Our students are familiar with Northwestern traditions, and most have visited or spent time studying on campus; our faculty and staff are connected and work closely across continents to align their respective work."

Events also included a special "NU-Q Day—Celebrating the Student Experience" in Norris University Center, providing an opportunity for people from across the Evanston campus to learn about the Qatar campus's academic and extracurricular offerings.

Also featured was a screening of a documentary by School of Communication professors Marco Williams and Danielle Beverly, who hold joint appointments on both the Evanston and Doha campuses. *Lonnie Holley: The Truth of the Dirt* tells the story of a self-taught musician and visual artist from Birmingham, Alabama.

The school also showcased the Media Majlis at Northwestern University in Qatar, a museum opening this fall. The Media Majlis will be the first university museum in Qatar and the first in the region to address major themes and ideas in media, journalism, and communication across the Arab world.

—Larry Greenberg

Web series created in RTVF course

In a class where just about anything goes, *Snugglr* proved a standout.

Georgia Bernstein (C17) and Cemre Paksoy (C17) created the show last year for radio/television/film lecturer Kris Swanberg's course Writing Improvised Comedy Web Series. Swanberg puts few restrictions on her students—"Just make it good, which tends to mean shorter," she says—and then follows up with ample feedback and encouragement. *Snugglr*, which stars Paksoy, is a funny riff on "cuddlr" gigs in which people pay strangers to, well, cuddle. Swanberg found it nicely conceived and its creators particularly dedicated, so she's not surprised that it's garnering deserved attention. *Snugglr* premiered in April at Tribeca Film Festival's N.O.W. showcase and was previously reworked as a short film for Condé Nast Entertainment and Indigenous Media's incubator program Project: Her. As part of that program, Bernstein and Paksoy are developing *Snugglr* into a full series.

"Everything we did in the second half of our senior year, in and outside of class, was dedicated toward making *Snugglr*," recalls Bernstein. "Creating three episodes of an original web series is a lot of content to tackle in 10 weeks, but Kris structured the class so the entirety of our time was spent on making the series. She just got it and really challenged us to make the project the best it could be."

Bernstein and Paksoy worked with actors of various ages and filmed in a number of locations to make the project feel less like a student film. Evaluating logistical barriers became a big part of crafting the storyline, as the two learned through Swanberg's mentorship.

"The class was an opportunity to experiment without any real expectations," says Paksoy. "And we think that's a really special part about making things in school." Although Swanberg sees the web-series medium becoming saturated, she still considers it *the* best way for a creator to start working and, potentially, get noticed. "There is no barrier to entry," she says. "For a film student, it's a really great way to get going on your career—not as a student, but as a filmmaker." She adds, "Studios are so risk-averse—if they see something working that's already a proven concept, they are more excited to pick it up. If you have talent, you can rise to the top."

To view *Snugglr*, go to snugglrwebseries.com.



A scene from *Snugglr*, a web series created by Georgia Bernstein and Cemre Paksoy (left)

Emmy nominees

The 70th annual Primetime Emmy Award nominations were announced July 12, and the list includes lots of purple.

Stephen Colbert (C86, H11), *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, outstanding variety talk series

Colbert and Jen Spyra (GC12), *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, outstanding writing for a variety series (Colbert's Emmy nominations now total 32; he's won 9)

Megan Mullally (C81), *Will & Grace*, outstanding supporting actress in a comedy series (her eighth nomination; she's won one)

Seth Meyers (C96, H16), **Jenny Hagel** (GC09), and **Allison Hord** (C05), *Late Night with Seth Meyers*, outstanding writing for a variety series (the 19th nomination for Meyers, who has won one)

Ashley Nicole Black (GC08) and **Nicole Silverberg** (C13), *Full Frontal with Samantha Bee*, outstanding variety talk series, outstanding writing for a variety series, and outstanding writing for a variety special for "The Great American* Puerto Rico (*It's Complicated)"

In addition, **Richard J. Lewis** (C83) is an executive producer of HBO's *Westworld*, nominated for outstanding drama, and **Jill Leiderman** (C93) is an executive producer of ABC's *Jimmy Kimmel Live!*, nominated for outstanding variety talk series. Awards will be presented at the ceremony on September 17.



From left: alumna Jessie Pinnick in Stephen Cone's *Princess Cyd*; a scene from Kyle Henry's *Rogers Park*



Zina Camblin (MFA, University of California, San Diego) was selected by *Variety* magazine as one of 2018's 10 best film school professors. The feature "Entertainment Education: Top Teachers in Film, TV, and More" quoted Camblin as saying, "The most inspiring part of my work is when I see students step outside of themselves and take risks that reinforce to them that they are capable of doing the very thing that scares them most."



Aymar Jean Christian (PhD, University of Pennsylvania), creator of OTV/Open Television, kicked off its third cycle of original programming in

March at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. An independent distributor of web series amplifying intersectional voices, OTV debuted *The T* and *Code-Switched* as well as *Seeds*, a currently streaming experimental comedy about the misadventures of four black female friends living in Chicago.

Princess Cyd, a film written and directed by **Stephen Cone** (BA, University of South Carolina), was selected by the *Hollywood Reporter* as one of 2017's best LGBT films. Ranked no. 8 on *Vanity Fair*'s 2017 best films list, the feature received rave reviews from media, including the *Los Angeles Times* and *Indiewire*, and won the Chicago International Film Festival's Chicago Award last fall. *Princess Cyd* stars Jessie Pinnick (CI6) and was produced by Grace Hahn (CI6) and Madison Ginsburg (CI6).



Noshir Contractor (PhD, University of Southern California) received a Distinguished Alumnus Award from the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, where he earned his undergraduate degree in electrical engineering in 1983. The award was presented during IITM's 59th Institute Day ceremonies on April 26.

Tracy Davis (PhD, University of Warwick) coedited *Uncle Tom's Cabins: The Transnational History of America's Most Mutable Book*, published in March by University of Michigan Press. Her coeditor was Stefka Mihaylova (GCo8), an assistant professor at the University of Washington and an alumna of the School of Communication's interdisciplinary program in theatre and drama.

Amanda Dehnert (Illinois Wesleyan) last fall directed a funny, spirited take on *Pride and Prejudice* at Primary Stages

in New York City. This summer and fall she is directing *Love's Labor's Lost* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival's Allen Elizabethan Theatre.



Zayd Dohrn (MFA, NYU) has become a member of the Helena Group's Brain Trust, a global assemblage of artists, leaders, scholars, and activists who inform the think tank's work in executing projects to improve the world. Dohrn's Horton Foote Prize-winning play *The Profane* received its world premiere off-Broadway at Playwrights Horizons, where it enjoyed a sold-out extended run and was recorded for Lincoln Center's Theatre on Film & Tape Archive. A *New York Times* Critic's Pick, *The Profane* won the Edgerton Foundation New Play Award, was featured in the Guggenheim Museum's "Works & Process" series, and was published by Dramatists Play Service and in Turkish translation by the Onk Agency.



Marcus Doshi (MFA, Yale) designed the lighting for *Pass Over*, a new play by Antoinette Nwandu, for New York's Lincoln Center Theater.

Chaz Evans (MFA, University of Illinois at Chicago) gave a keynote presentation in June at the Digital Humanities Alliance of India conference. His talk, "Fidelities of Context in Global Video Game Production," explored cultural identity embedded into globally distributed video games produced at different scales of industry. Evans and fellow radio/television/film faculty members **Stephan Moore** and **Eric Patrick** recently returned from Northwestern's Qatar campus, where in five-week shifts they taught courses covering such topics as VJ software, projection mapping, live sound mixing, creative coding, and depth sensors.



Melissa Foster (MM, Northwestern) served as the vocal consultant for Lyric Opera of Chicago's *Empower*, an original work that premiered May 31. Depicting a group of young South Side Chicagoans who fight against negative media representation and work to define what the city means to

them, the show was the culmination of Empower Youth! Igniting Creativity through the Arts, a partnership between Lyric Opera and the Chicago Urban League to introduce high school students to opera creation and performance.



Linda Gates (MA, NYU) directed *Much Ado about Nothing* this summer at the Prague Summer Shakespeare Intensive for the Prague Shakespeare Company. The performances took place at the Theatre of the Estates, where Mozart premiered and conducted *Don Giovanni*. Her forthcoming book *Speaking in Shakespeare's Voice: A Guide for the American Actor* will be published by Northwestern University Press.



Liz Gerber (PhD, Stanford University) and three Northwestern students launched Design for America in 2009 to tackle challenges and social issues using innovative approaches to the design of products, communication tools, businesses, and networks. The national network of innovators working to improve community through design now partners with more than 4,000 students, educators, and design professionals across the country.

Kaplan Institute Fellowships



Two School of Communication faculty members are among the coming year's cohort of Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities fellows. Performance studies assistant professor **Shayna Silverstein** (PhD, University of Chicago) will develop her project *Fragments of Belonging: The Politics of Syrian Performance in the 21st Century*, which explores how performance has been shaped by a brutal civil war. "Not only a humanitarian disaster nor a destabilizing force with global impact," she says, "Syria today is constituted through and deeply embedded in the spatial, temporal, and affective dynamics of body, performance, and culture." Radio/television/film associate professor **Eric Patrick** (MFA, California Institute of the Arts) received a Kaplan Institute fellowship for *The Acoustics of Roux*, which dives into Cajun country, where the sonic qualities of recorded voices are translated into Patrick's inventive animation. The film explores memory, ethnography, bigotry, migration patterns, economic mobility, and the criminalization of language.

Design for America won the prestigious 2018 Cooper Hewitt Award for Corporate and Institutional Achievement. Past winners include Apple and Nike.

Henry Godinez (MFA, Professional Theatre Training Program, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee) directed the world premiere of the new musical *Last Stop on Market Street* at Chicago Children's Theatre and is directing a fall production at the Children's Theatre Company in Minneapolis. The show is adapted from an award-winning children's book with music by Motown songwriter Lamont Dozier and his son Paris Ray Dozier.



Cindy Gold (MFA, Professional Actor Training Program, Alabama Shakespeare Festival) appeared this summer in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, directed by Marcia Milgrom Dodge at Drury Lane Oakbrook. This fall she can be seen in *Indecent*, directed by Gary Griffin at Victory Gardens in a production featuring a number of School of Communication alumni who are Gold's former students.



Ana Kuzmanic costuming Ken Clark and Alexandra Silber in *Camelot*



Kyle Henry (MFA, University of Texas at Austin) has won widespread acclaim for his feature film *Rogers Park*, about two interracial couples navigating midlife crisis. A *New York Times* Critic's Pick, the film finished a theatrical tour of North America with a rare 100 percent fresh rating on Rotten Tomatoes and garnered rave reviews in *Variety* and the *Los Angeles Times*. It is now available on iTunes, Amazon, and other platforms.

Ana Kuzmanic (MFA, Northwestern) designed the costumes for *Camelot* at the Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington, DC. The spring-summer production was directed by Alan Paul (Co6) and received positive press—both for the costumes (“dazzling,” according to the *Washington Post*) and for becoming a favorite attraction of such prominent government figures as Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Viorica Marian (PhD, Cornell University) coauthored a study published in May by the journal *Brain Sciences* about how bilingual speakers are better at integrating sight and hearing to make sense of speech. Hearing one speech sound but seeing it written out differently will often lead the speaker to

perceive a new sound altogether (known as the “McGurk effect”); this breadth of language fluency affects how these speakers perceive the world.



Daniel O'Keefe (PhD, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) was elected a fellow of the International Communication Association at the recent ICA conference in Prague. Fellow status recognizes distinguished scholarly contributions to the field of communication.

Spencer Parsons (MFA, University of Texas at Austin) served on the short film jury for the Cinepocalypse Film Festival at Chicago's Music Box Theatre in June. Also that month, his new film *Alpha Waved* ran at the Chicago Underground Film Festival.



Miriam Petty (PhD, Emory University) was one of five recipients of Northwestern's Charles Deering McCormick Professor of Teaching Excellence Award, given annually



Dassia Posner at the opening of the Moscow museum exhibit dedicated to her great-grandfather Feodor Chaliapin

Son shines

In June, **Elizabeth Son** (PhD, Yale University) won the Undergraduate Research Office's Karl Rosengren Faculty Mentoring Award. Son advised theatre and cognitive science double major Madeleine Rostami (Cr8), who won the Fletcher Undergraduate Research Award for the academic year's most outstanding grant-funded research project with her senior honors thesis project, "Arts for All: Working towards a More Inclusive Model of Regional Theatre." Overall, 96 students received 2017–18 undergraduate research grants, and 10 of those were nominated for the award; Rostami was the first theatre student to receive it. Also in June, Son won a Clarence Simon Award for Outstanding Teaching and Mentoring, one of the School of Communication's four annual faculty awards. Her book *Embodied Reckonings: "Comfort Women," Performance, and Transpacific Redress* was published this spring by University of Michigan Press; she also published two op-eds and gave keynote talks at the Art Institute of Chicago and Ottawa's Carleton University.



From left: Neil Blair, professor and chair of the Undergraduate Research Grant review committee, and Lynn Kelso, theatre lecturer and thesis co-committee member, with Rostami and Son

to University faculty who demonstrate outstanding performance and remarkable dedication to undergraduate education. Petty is an associate professor in the Department of Radio/Television/Film whose research focuses on race, gender, representation, and power hierarchies in media and beyond. Her classes are safe, nurturing, eye-opening spaces for her students, who resoundingly praise Petty's work.

Dassia N. Posner (PhD, Tufts University) was awarded an American Council of Learned Societies Fellowship for 2018–19 to support the development of her new book on the artistic and political history of the Moscow Kamerny Theatre, 1914–1950. This spring she traveled to Moscow on a Northwestern Faculty Research Grant to conduct archival research. While in Russia, she gave introductory remarks for an exhibit opening at the Moscow museum dedicated to her great-grandfather, opera singer Feodor Chaliapin.

Linda Roethke (MFA, University of Iowa) designed the costumes for *Oklahoma!*, currently running at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. For the 2018–19 season she is costume designer for a coproduction of *Indecent* to be seen at Arena Stage, Kansas City Repertory, and Baltimore Center Stage.



Ozge Samanci (PhD, Georgia Institute of Technology) was invited to exhibit her interactive art installation *You Are the Ocean* at three major media art exhibitions: Siggraph Art Gallery in Vancouver (August 12–16); Currents New Media at El Museo Cultural de Santa Fe (June 8–24); and the FILE (Electronic Language

International) SESI Gallery in São Paulo, Brazil (July 3–August 12).

Stephen Schellhardt (BFA, Carnegie Mellon University) has been named the artistic director of Chicago's BoHo Theatre as of the 2018–19 season.

Billy Siegenfeld (MA, NYU) took his newest Jump Rhythm Jazz Project piece—*What Do You Want to Be When You Give Up?*—to Barcelona's Luthier School of the Musical Arts and the University of Rome this summer. A one-act, two-character play with music and dance, it travels this fall to Boston University's College of Fine Arts. Siegenfeld wrote, arranged, and choreographed the show and performs it alongside collaborator Jordan Batta (Co4). He has also written the title essay for *Democracy's Energy*, a forthcoming text on Jump Rhythm's creative and pedagogical approach, to be published by the University of Florida Press.



El Mar La Mar, a film by **J.P. Sniadecki** (PhD, Harvard University) about the unforgiving landscape of the US border crossing in the Sonoran Desert, won a Special Mention Jury Award at the Taiwan International Film Festival in May. The following month, *Paste* magazine named the film one of the 10 best documentaries of 2018 so far. Earlier in the year, it enjoyed a weeklong theatrical opening at New York's Museum of Modern Art and was named a *New York Times* Critic's Pick.

Honors for communication sciences and disorders faculty



Two faculty members in the Roxelyn and Richard Pepper Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders were recognized for their outstanding contributions by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, the country's leading certification and advocacy organization for speech-language pathologists and audiologists.

Bonnie Martin-Harris (PhD, Northwestern) received Honors of the Association, recognizing scholars whose work has enhanced or altered the course of the profession. A leading researcher in swallowing disorders, Martin-Harris is the associate dean for faculty affairs and the Alice Gabrielle Twight Professor.

Sumit Dhar (PhD, Purdue University) was awarded a Fellowship of the Association, honoring outstanding researchers who have made significant contributions to the field. Dhar is department chair, professor, and a fellow of the Hugh Knowles Center. His work focuses on understanding the sounds created in the inner ear and improving access to hearing health care.

David Tolchinsky (MFA, USC) coproduced *Creature Companion*, a film about Austrian psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich that won a Special Mention of the International Jury at the Internationale Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen, a short-film festival in Germany. The film premiered at the Brooklyn Academy of Music's BAMcine-Fest on June 30. Tolchinsky's full-length play about Reich, *An Attempt to Heal the Contemporary World*, was accepted by the New York International Fringe Festival and will run in October with the playwright as director. Tolchinsky spoke last spring at Claremont McKenna College about the importance of movie endings. *Coming of Age*, a film he wrote and produced, was screened in July at the Windy City International Film Festival. His play *Where's the Rest of Me?* was selected for the Road Theatre's Summer Playwrights Festival in Los Angeles.

Neal Verma (PhD, University of Chicago) was awarded a Digital Humanities Advancement Grant by the National Endowment for the Humanities in December. The grant funds his work in developing and disseminating tools to study archival recordings of speech by tracking measurable elements such as pitch, speaking rate, and dynamics.

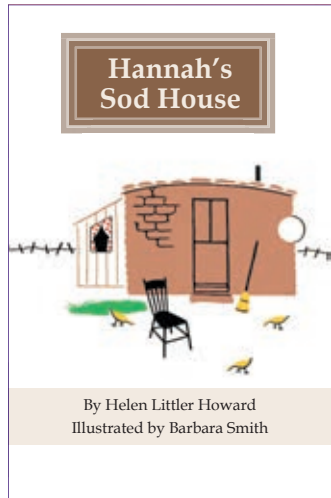


Ellen Wartella (PhD, University of Minnesota), the Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani Professor in Communication, chair of the communication studies department, and director of the Center on Media and Human Development, was one of two recipients of Northwestern's 13th annual Dorothy Ann and Clarence L. Ver Steeg Distinguished Research Fellowship Award. The fellowship supports the research and scholarship of tenured faculty who are advancing the University's standing in this country and abroad. Additionally, Wartella was tapped by Netflix to conduct a broad study of the impact and efficacy of its series *13 Reasons Why*. Wartella and her colleagues polled around 5,000 teenagers, parents, and school counselors in five countries to gauge reactions to the show's tough topics, including teen suicide, bullying, and sexual assault. Their findings show that the series was generally received well, with the majority of respondents saying it triggered more conversations about its content with loved ones, more understanding of the ripple effect caused by suicide, and more empathetic behavior. To maintain the study's integrity, Wartella and the University insisted that it be conducted without any input from Netflix or its marketing company.

Alumni achievements

Class notes are selected from stories of alumni featured in the media as identified by the University's Office of Alumni Relations and Development and updates sent to Dialogue by mail or by email at dialogue@northwestern.edu.

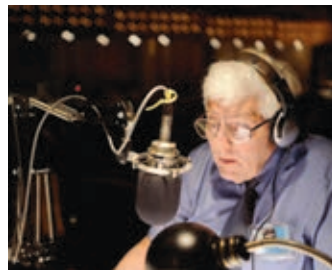
1930s



The family of **Helen Littler Howard (C31)** recently republished a semiautobiographical children's book she wrote more than 70 years ago. *Hannah's Sod House*, originally printed in 1947, details Howard's childhood on a dryland farm in rural Colorado. The book is available on Amazon in ebook and paperback editions. Howard passed away in 1999.

1950s

J. Robert Geiman (C53), a retired trial attorney formerly with Peterson and Ross in Chicago, received the Albert Nelson Marquis Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of outstanding contributions to his profession.



Robert Conrad (C55) narrated John Gillespie Magee's poem *High Flight* with the Blossom Festival Band in a summer 2018 concert for an estimated audience of 10,000 at the Blossom Music Center, the summer home of the Cleveland Orchestra. President and cofounder of WCLV, Cleveland's classical radio station, Conrad has been producer and commentator for the Cleveland Orchestra radio broadcasts since the beginning of the series in 1965.

Jack Anderson (C57) is a poet and critic. His 11th book of poetry, *Backyards of the Universe*, was published by Hanging Loose Press. The third edition of his textbook *Ballet and Modern Dance: A Concise History* (Princeton Book Company) was also released last year.

1960s

Marcia Quale Chellis Kay (C61) wrote *Love Letters in the Sand*, released last summer by Page Publishing.

Kathryn Stream (GC61) was named one of three recipients of the 2018 Woodrow B. Seals Laity Award. The award is presented annually by Southern Methodist University's Perkins School of Theology to laypersons who embody the Christian faith. Stream is the retired senior vice president of the Texas Medical Center.

Sherry Lansing (C66) was named to the board of directors at the Scripps Research Institute. Previously Lansing was president of 20th Century Fox and chair and CEO of Paramount Pictures.

1970s

Michael Adamle (C71) and his wife, Kim, partnered with Boston University's CTE Center and the Concussion Legacy Foundation early this year to launch the Mike Adamle Project: Rise Above, a national support network for suspected victims of chronic traumatic encephalopathy and their families. A former Chicago Bears running back, Adamle has been diagnosed with CTE.

Teri Bayer (C71) retired from her position as chief operating officer at Molina Healthcare. She was with Molina for 13 years.

Jeff Ravitz (C72), a lighting designer, gave a guest lecture on lighting for television and live entertainment at Beijing's Chinese Academy of Drama as part of the Thousands Plan, organized and hosted by the Chinese Ministry of Culture to advance the study of theatre arts.

Molly Regan (C73) starred in her self-penned solo show *The Accidental Curator* at Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre in January. The show featured stories about her Midwestern Irish-Catholic family as pieced together through cross-country trips, interviews, oral histories, and shuffling through old family photographs.

Patrick Lamb (C78) has cofounded ElevateNext, a new law firm partnering with Elevate, a global law company, and the legal team of Univar to manage a full spectrum of services.

Michele Perkins (C78)

was elected to the board for the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities. She is the president of New England College.

Andrew F. Brenner (C79)

joined Hanweck as head of clearing products and strategy. Hanweck is a risk analytics company that focuses on global derivatives markets.

1980s

Laura Bailet (GC81, GC85)

is now the chief academic officer of Kaplan Early Learning Company. Bailet most recently was operational vice president of Nemours BrightStart! with Nemours Children's Health System.

Jean R. Callum (C81)

was appointed chief operating officer of Outer Cape Health Services, based in Harwich, Massachusetts. She most recently served as Outer Cape's chief information officer and director of ancillary services.

Marc Aronoff (C82)

won Georgia College's Arts and Letters Prize in the drama category for his one-act play *The Lantern Bearers*. Based on an essay of the same title by Robert Louis Stevenson, the play was produced at the college this past spring.

Jody Gerson (C83), chair and CEO of Universal Music Publishing Group, now handles all publishing rights of Bruce Springsteen. The company represents a collection of more than 3 million songs by Adele, the Beach Boys, Justin Bieber, Coldplay, Elvis Costello, and many others.

Julia Louis-Dreyfus (C83, H07) will be awarded the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts' prestigious Mark Twain Prize for American Humor in an October 21 ceremony. The seventh and final season of the hit HBO comedy *Veep*, with Louis-Dreyfus as star and executive producer, will air in 2019.

Mary Karsten Surridge (C84) is North Park University's 10th president, effective at the start of the 2018–19 academic year. Surridge was previously the university's vice president for advancement.

Audu John Paden (C85) was a judge for the 2017 World Animation Celebration, hosted by Sony in Culver City, California. Paden's animation and production credits include *Monster High*, *Rugrats*, and *The Simpsons*. He has won two Daytime Emmy Awards.

Douglas P. Seserman (C85, KSM86) has been appointed CEO of American Associates, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, beginning in October.

Maria G. Bradford (C86) joined the St. Louis Community Foundation as director of community engagement. The foundation encompasses more than 600 charitable funds with total assets of about \$375 million.



Joe Chappelle (C86), an executive producer for *Chicago Fire*, wrote and directed the political thriller *The Pages*, produced by Colleen M. Griffen (C88). Currently in postproduction, the film was shot in Chicago, on the North Shore, and on the Northwestern campus.



Harry Lennix (C86) was awarded the 2017 Speak Up! Award at Northlight Theatre's main fundraising event last November in Skokie, Illinois. The award recognizes those connected with Northlight who speak up about important issues affecting society. Lennix's credits include *Man of Steel*, *Billions*, the *Matrix* sequels, and *Ray*. He currently appears in the NBC-TV series *The Blacklist*.

Katherine Tynus (C86) was inaugurated president of the Illinois State Medical Society. Tynus practices internal medicine with Northwestern Medical Group in Chicago.

Michele Ganeless (C87) was named to the board of directors for Comic Relief USA, the charity behind the Red Nose Day campaign to end childhood poverty. She was most recently president of Comedy Central and previously was executive



Julia Louis-Dreyfus on the set of *Veep*

vice president and general manager at USA Networks. Ganeless is also an independent film producer who serves on the Posse Foundation board and the School of Communication's National Advisory Council.

David Schwimmer (C88) teamed with director and screenwriter Sigal Avin to make #ThatsHarassment, a series of short videos on sexual harassment. Designed to name unacceptable behavior, offer support for victims, and call employers to action, the series has run on screens in New York City taxis. Avin initially made a version of the videos in Israel. Schwimmer then took the initiative to Chicago, where he teamed with Mayor **Rahm Emanuel (GC85)** to get the video messaging in cabs and on city-run digital billboards. Schwimmer was a guest on the mayor's podcasts series last winter.

Daniel Fish (C89) is a New York-based director whose reimagining of the musical *Oklahoma!* will be performed in a limited run at St. Ann's Warehouse in New York beginning in September. The production was first seen at Bard College's Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts in July 2015.



Audrey Skwierawski (C89) was named a Milwaukee County Circuit Court judge. Previously an assistant attorney general with the state justice department in Madison, Wisconsin, she serves on the Attorney



Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel and David Schwimmer at City Hall in February

General's Statewide Sexual Assault Response Team and the State of Wisconsin Violence Against Women Act Advisory Committee.

1990s

Amy Gilman (C91), previously deputy director of the Toledo Museum of Art, became director of the Chazen Museum of Art at the University of Wisconsin–Madison in September 2017.

Stacy Schulman (C91) was promoted to chief marketing officer of Katz Media Group, a media sales organization. She was previously executive vice president of strategy, analytics, and research.



Radha Subramanyam (GC92, GC96) assumed a new position last fall as executive vice president and chief research and analytics officer for the CBS network in New York.

David Carlyon (GC93) served on the Scholar's Advisory Panel for the Smithsonian Circus Folklife Festival and participated in a National Endowment for the Arts panel on the future of circus. His book *The Education of a Circus Clown: Mentors, Audiences, Mistakes*, which won the Circus Historical Society's award for best circus book of 2016, was named a finalist for the Theatre Library Association's Freedley Award for exemplary writing about live performance.

Dean Carpenter (C93), a New York City–based producer and general manager, was appointed to the board of directors of the Off-Broadway League, a membership-based representative body for individuals, productions, and theatres working off-Broadway.



Jason Moore (C93) (left) is directing *The Cher Show*, about the eponymous performer's life and career. The show's associate director is **Travis Greisler (C07)** (right). It opens on Broadway in December after a summertime preview run in Chicago.



Teal Wicks, Stephanie J. Block, and Micaela Diamond, each playing the singer at a different age, in a scene from *The Cher Show*



Greg Berlanti (C94) set a television producing record in May—he and his Berlanti Productions have 14 live-action scripted series on the air concurrently, 10 of them in broadcast. Last year he had tied the previous record, set by Jerry Bruckheimer and Aaron Spelling. Berlanti's third feature film as a director, *Love, Simon*, came out on March 16—the first gay teen romantic comedy produced by a major studio.

Marketing consultant **Michelle Lavallee (C94, KSM01)** is running for lieutenant governor of South Dakota alongside Democratic gubernatorial hopeful Billie Sutton.

Cheryl Silver (C94, GM95) was hired as editor of CivicStory, a nonprofit news site and producer of short videos highlighting sustainability and creative change in New Jersey cities and beyond.



Jeb Brody (C95) was named copresident of Amblin Partners, where he oversees the company's creative executives and works with films produced by Amblin Entertainment and DreamWorks Pictures.

Attica Locke (C95) was honored by the *Financial Times*, which listed her novel *Bluebird*, *Bluebird* as one of the best fiction books of 2017.

Michael Goldrich (GC96) was appointed vice president of marketing at Denihan Hospitality, a premier operator of upscale luxury boutique and lifestyle hotels. Previously Goldrich served in a senior marketing position for Wyndham Hotel Group and Dolce Hotels & Resorts.

Tara Widholm Duhay (C97) was elected to the board of Florida's Mounts Botanical Garden. She specializes in water use, land use, and the environment as chair of the land-use law practice area with the firm Lewis, Longman & Walker in West Palm Beach.

Jessica Provenz (C97) was named director of development at Barrington Stage Company in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. She was previously director of the annual fund and special events at Berkshire Country Day School.

Kimberly Heiting (C98) was promoted to senior vice president of operations with NW Natural. Previously she was the company's vice president of communications and chief marketing officer.

Jennifer Barclay (C99) won the National New Play Network's 2016 Prize for Political Theater for her play *Ripe Frenzy*, about the aftermath of a school shooting. The play was one of a handful selected for the National New Play Network's Rolling World Premiere, which helps hone new plays by taking them to multiple cities within a 12-month period to extend their runs and engage new audiences. As a result, *Ripe Frenzy* ran last winter and spring at New Repertory Theatre outside

'Cats in Crowns

The world—alongside the Northwestern community—watched with royal glee as **Meghan Markle (C03)** married Great Britain's Prince Harry on May 19 at Windsor Castle outside London. Attracting 29 million US viewers, the televised wedding was a source of great fascination largely because of Markle, a biracial American actress. A pride of purple-clad Northwestern alumni made the trip to Windsor and were seen on television waving University flags and banners as the newly married couple rode past in a horse-drawn carriage. In assuming the title Duchess of Sussex, Markle received her own coat of arms, which she assisted in designing. Notable is her inclusion of a songbird with an open beak and a quill, which "represents the power of communication," according to a statement released by Kensington Palace.



Boston, Synchronicity Theatre in Atlanta, and Greenway Court in Los Angeles.

Michelle Racine Berardelli (C99) was named to the board of directors for the apparel chain New York & Company. She has served as CEO of Kidbox, a digital-commerce children's apparel business.

Justin Donne (C99) was named event facilitator and public policy community liaison for Project Aspie, a UK advocacy, employment, and counseling service for those living with Asperger's syndrome. He also chairs the Round Table in the East Midlands, a social and service organization, and is vice chairman of the Federation of Small Businesses in Nottingham, England.

districts with pivotal races to mobilize potential voters. In June he interviewed former vice president Al Gore for the *Teen Vogue* Summit in New York City. Eichner cocreated the new animated comedy series *Time Travelin' Jerk*, currently in development with FX, and will voice the main male character.



Damona Hoffman (C00) was the host, consulting producer, and resident relationship expert on *A Question of Love*, seen in a 10-episode series run on FYI Television, a division of A&E Networks. She also hosts the podcast *Dates & Mates with Damona Hoffman* and appears as love expert on BET.com.

Nina Auslander Meehan (C00), director of the Bay Area Children's Theatre, developed *Beautiful Oops!*, a new musical for families that opened in March in San Francisco.

Ryan R. Sparacino (C00) is the managing partner of the law firm Sparacino & Anderson.

Anjalee Deshpande Hutchinson (GC01), associate professor of theatre and dance and department chair at Bucknell University, wrote the textbook *Acting Exercises for Nontraditional Staging: Michael Chekhov Reimagined*. She is a National Michael Chekhov Association certified teacher.

Sabrina Sloan (C01) played Angelica Schuyler in the Arizona State University Gammage production of Lin-Manuel Miranda's *Hamilton*.

Melissa Center (C02) cowrote, produced, and starred in the independent dramatic comedy

All I Want, released last spring on Amazon Prime and theatrically in Los Angeles.

Beth Grabowski (C02, KSM09), marketing director for the Chicago White Sox, was named one of 2017's "40 Under 40" local influencers by *Crain's Chicago Business*.

Ron Holsey (C03), a writer for *Sesame Street*, was a 2018 Daytime Emmy Award winner for outstanding writing for children's, preschool children's, or family viewing programs.

Kenneth Ferrone (C04) is the associate director of the musical *SpongeBob SquarePants*, which was nominated for multiple Tony Awards, including best musical.

2000s

Billy Eichner (C00) teamed up with Funny or Die to launch the initiative "Glam Up the Midterms," which aims to raise awareness and register voters ahead of the 2018 midterm elections. An actor and host of TruTV's *Billy on the Street*, Eichner will travel to US





Director Michel Gondry and Dave Holstein on the set of *Kidding*

Lindsay A. Pavlik-Lawrence (C04) was promoted to executive vice president and chief operating officer of First Foundation Bank. She was previously executive vice president and chief banking officer.



Rebecca Zoshak (C04) had a memorable run on the game show *Jeopardy!* last winter. Her first appearance in January ended with a loss, but because of a dubiously phrased Final Jeopardy question, she was invited back in the spring. Zoshak won in her first reappearance but lost on the second day. Her winning Final Jeopardy category was “Films of the 1960s”—a lucky break for the onetime radio/television/film major, who correctly identified *Psycho* as the 1960 film scored exclusively for strings by Bernard Herrmann. Zoshak is a language specialist at Penn State Law.



Alan Schmuckler (C05) was named one of three distinguished winners of the Kleban Prize, and one of two in the lyricist category. Each winner receives \$100,000, payable over two years. The prize was established in the will of Edward Kleban, Tony Award-winning lyricist of *A Chorus Line*.

Howard Warren Buffett (C06) joined the board of directors for the Robert B. Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute at the University of Nebraska.

2010s

Dave Holstein (C10) created the series *Kidding*, wrote the pilot, and will be its showrunner when it debuts on Showtime this year. *Kidding* stars Jim Carrey and is directed by Michel Gondry.

Alex Weisman (C10) is appearing in the Broadway cast of *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*, which opened in April at New York’s Lyric Theatre.

Marisha Mukerjee (GC11) is the writer for *Again*, a female-led detective series set in New Delhi that has been greenlighted by Netflix.

Kendall Sherwood (GC11) was a finalist for the 2018 Project Playwright festival for his play *The Record Breakers*. Sponsored and organized by New York’s Sanguine Theatre Company, Project Playwright promotes the discovery of new and unheard voices in theatre.



Hillary Bachelder (C12), with colleague Brent McDonald, produced *The Rise of Body Cameras*, a short documentary series that won the national 2018 Edward R. Murrow Award for Hard News in the large digital news organization category. Their winning four-part film and accompanying story ran in the *New York Times* in January 2017. Bachelder majored in radio/television/film at Northwestern and is now a Chicago-based freelance documentary filmmaker. The award celebrates the standard of excellence set by the eponymous journalist and is presented by the Radio Television Digital News Association.



Sam Radutzky (C12) and Josh Freund (J12) codirected *Do U Want It?*, a documentary about the New Orleans band Papa Grows Funk. *Do U Want It?* won the New Orleans Film Festival’s 2017 Audience Award for Louisiana Feature and was named one of the festival’s top films by the *Times-Picayune*. The film also screened at the Chicago International Film Festival, San Francisco IndieFest, and NewFilmmakers Los Angeles.



Emma LeBlanc (GC14) and **Lauren Pasquesi (GC14)** traveled to Doha, Qatar, last spring to teach courses in amplification and vestibular assessment and treatment at Hamad Medical Corporation. LeBlanc is a lecturer at the University of Toronto’s Department of Otolaryngology–Head and Neck Surgery; Pasquesi is a senior audiologist at the University of California, San Francisco, and an adjunct professor at the University of the Pacific. As part of a program placing

clinical instructors in international outposts of medical need, the two doctor of audiology classmates reunited in Doha. “There were a lot of unknowns, but we enjoyed the challenge of teaching two dynamic topics to two very different audiences: practicing audiologists for the vestibular course and students with essentially no background for the hearing aid course,” says LeBlanc. “It also gave us some perspective on global audiology.”

Jessica Ann McLeod (GC14) directed the drama *Hang Man*, which played March through April at Chicago’s Gift Theatre.

Madeline Weinstein (C14) is appearing in the Broadway cast of *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*, which opened in April at New York’s Lyric Theatre.

Kaitlyn Cerisegeraldine Andrews (C15) was featured in the Neo-Futurists production *Tangles and Plaques*, which ran last fall at the Neo-Futurarium in Chicago’s Ravenswood neighborhood.

Chamblee Smith (C15) wrote her first television episode. A script coordinator for the CBS series *Bull*, she wrote “Justified,” an episode that aired on April 17.

Hasan Demirtas (GC17) won the 2017 West Nordic International Film Festival’s Best Documentary prize for *Carry My Voice*, his graduate thesis documentary short. The film was also an official selection at the 71st Cannes Film Festival in May and the Atlanta Film Festival in April.

Iyabo Kwayana (GC17) filmed *Practice* near China’s Shaolin Temple as her graduate thesis. The film was chosen to premiere at Switzerland’s Visions du Réel in spring 2019.

Andrew Peterson (GC17) was hired by Sony Pictures Animation as a creative content coordinator.

Sam Shankman (C17) played the Professor in Drury Lane Oakbrook Terrace’s spring production of *South Pacific*.

Chip Potter (GC18) was selected for United Talent Agency’s agent training program.



Sam Shankman, second from right, in Drury Lane Theatre’s production of *South Pacific*



From left, “Firsts: A Storytelling Event” performers Jackie Laine, Emma Horn, Bryan Holdman, Kevin Selden, Dorothy Dillingham Blue, Lisa Kaminir, Rati Gupta, Adele Kuforiji, Jenny Schuster, Marcus Folmer, and Liz Kenny

NUEA West

On May 17 NUEA West hosted “Firsts: A Storytelling Event,” featuring a host of Northwestern alumni performers: Dorothy Dillingham Blue, Marcus Folmar, Bryan Holdman, Emma Horn, Lisa Kaminir, Liz Kenny, Adele Kuforiji, Jenny Schuster, and Kevin Selden. It was produced by Jackie Laine and Rati Gupta. Additionally, the organization held an Oscars watch party on March 4 with an Oscars pool and Northwestern goody bags for all attendees.

NUEA East

The highlight of NUEA East’s programming this past year was the creation of East Arts, a showcase for film, visual art, music, theatre, and comedy. More than 50 alumni participated in the first year’s event. The second annual East Arts took place June 3 at New York City’s Drift Studios. NUEA East has also continued its quarterly “writeathon” volunteer partnership with Story Pirates and its monthly “First Friday” bar nights.

Last fall NUEA East hosted “NYC 101” to welcome new alumni to the city. Speed-dating-style, participants circulated around different stations staffed by older alumni to discuss topics ranging from theatre and TV careers to how to find an apartment and navigate the city. Last spring NUEA East cohosted a networking party at Hurley’s Saloon in Midtown when the theatre department’s undergraduate students were in town for their New York Showcase. It was an opportunity for showcase participants and Northwestern theatre alumni to mix and mingle. NUEA East is excited to announce Max Heald (C17) as its new president; he will bring in a new board this fall.

Alumna

Joann Torretta Guagliardo (C53)—known professionally as Joann Torretta—died on July 8, 2017, at age 85 in Longboat Key, Florida. A pioneer for women in the television industry, she was also a local icon for fashion and female empowerment and a dedicated philanthropist. After graduating from Northwestern in 1953, she launched her media career as a writer for a radio show in New Orleans. She soon returned to her native Tampa and, after a couple of years teaching high school English, landed her own television show, *Fashions for You*, on WFLA, an NBC affiliate. She married Joseph Guagliardo in 1959 and left television when she became pregnant with her son, **Paul Guagliardo (Guyardo) (C83, GJ84)**. Resuming her career as the fashion director for Sears and then Montgomery Ward in Tampa, she also served as the lead instructor for the latter store's popular Wendy Ward Charm School, building self-confidence in thousands of young women. When charm schools became a thing of the past in the 1980s, Torretta launched Tampa's first image development studio, working with prominent politicians, executives, aspiring models, and on-air personalities. She was a sought-after speaker on health and self-esteem topics and helped motivate breast cancer survivors like herself by creating the American Cancer Society's "Look Good, Feel Better" program. Her survivors include son Paul; daughter Gayle Guagliardo-Pichowski; daughter-in-law Victoria Perla; son-in-law Mark Pichowski; and six grandchildren: Paul J. Greyson (C20), Kathryn Dolly Boushall, Lindsay Ann Boushall, Julia Guagliardo, Alena Pichowski, and Gabriella Pichowski. Joann Torretta was predeceased by her husband. In her memory her son and daughter-in-law created the School of Communication's Joann Torretta Award, given annually to an exceptional radio/television/film student showing great promise in filmmaking.



Faculty

Annette Barbier died on June 5, 2017, at age 66 in Chicago. A video and digital artist, Barbier served as an associate professor in the Department of Radio/Television/Film from 1982 to 2005. She left to chair the interactive arts and media department at Columbia College Chicago. Barbier's innovative work centered on female identity, social issues, and the environment and introduced the radio/television/film department to the precursors of video game design. She served as department chair for two years and began the Center for Art and Technology, which has since evolved into other programs and initiatives. In 1988 a Fulbright lectureship took her to India both to teach women to use video and to create new work of her own. A Chicago native, Barbier received her bachelor's degree from the University of Illinois at Chicago and her MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She is survived by her husband and frequent collaborator, Drew Browning; her daughter, Celine Browning; and her sister, Joyce McClellan.

Charles Nelson "Chuck" Kleinhans died on December 14 at age 75 in Eugene, Oregon. As a longtime faculty member in the School of Communication's Department of Radio/Television/Film, Kleinhans shared with students his expertise in independent video and filmmaking (including radical, black, and feminist work), documentary filmmaking, subculture and its reception of popular culture, sexual representation in experimental film and video, digital media, the early iterations of computer graphics, and so much more. He taught at Northwestern for more than 30 years and advised more than four dozen doctoral students. In 2007 he received the Pedagogy Award from the Society for Cinema and Media Studies. After retiring from the University as associate professor emeritus, he and his wife, Julia Lesage, moved to Oregon, where they coedited the online film magazine *Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media*. Kleinhans is remembered within the radio/television/film department as a supportive mentor, an academic rebel, a kind and generous colleague, and the bearer of a warm, infectious laugh. He is survived by Lesage.

Vivien S. Grant (C35) on October 21, 2017, at age 104 in St. Petersburg, Florida

Flora E. Snowdon (C38) on August 7, 2017, at age 100 in Columbus, Nebraska

Mary Jo Davis (C40) on April 1 at age 99 in Gainesville, Florida

C. Jeanne Griest (C40) on January 20 at age 100 in Alexandria, Virginia

Guinevere W. Nash Seammen (C42) on April 14 at age 95 in Houston

Betty W. Nemec (C43) on April 9 at age 96 in Madison, Wisconsin

Patricia Rink (C43, GC67) on September 11, 2017, at age 96 in Naperville, Illinois

Nathalie Thompson (C44) on September 15, 2017, at age 95 in Vero Beach, Florida

Patricia Westbrook Ware (C44) on March 6 at age 95 in Appleton, Wisconsin

Lucilla Boyd (GC45) on February 15 at age 98 in Kokomo, Indiana

Florence Dewitt (C45) on December 24, 2017, at age 94 in Kansas City, Kansas

Lois W. Lipnik (C45) on August 24, 2017, at age 93 in Bonita Springs, Florida

Mary Lois Williams (C45) on March 17 at age 95 in Washington, DC

Lorraine B. Gatewood (C46) on April 12 at age 94 in Chesapeake, Virginia

Florence S. Greenburg (C46) on September 15, 2017, at age 91 in New York City

June Johnson (C46) on March 8 at age 98 in St. Petersburg, Florida

Edward S. Strother (GC46, GC51) on May 20 at age 96 in Greenwood, Indiana

Betty Kirk Riley Waite (C46) on May 16 at age 92 in Raymore, Missouri

Howard B. Fisher (C47) on May 18 at age 92 in Dallas

Jacqueline Goodnow (C47) on October 3, 2017, at age 92 in Hagerstown, Maryland

Maryette P. McLaren (C47) on May 17 at age 92 in Roanoke, Virginia

Shirley (Kim) Badger (C48) on June 3 at age 96 in Owen Sound, Ontario, Canada

Barbara Edyth Park (GC48) on October 4, 2017, at age 97 in Plano, Texas

Patricia L. Buxton (C49) on January 31 at age 89 in Jefferson City, Missouri

Patricia Jones Handtmann (C49) on November 3, 2017, at age 90 in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida

Paul J. Labenz (C49) on January 13 at age 90 in Bozeman, Montana

Carol Beaton (C50) on February 12 at age 89 in Oro Valley, Arizona

John P. Culver Jr. (C50) on April 8 at age 92 in Austell, Georgia

William T. Dikeman (C50, GJ51) on June 12 at age 91 in Philadelphia

Rosemary Duncan (C50) on November 4, 2017, at age 90 in Pasadena, California

William Lytle (C50) on June 8 at age 89 in Kansas City, Missouri

Lois D. Lee Madsen (C50) on May 26

Joan McKoane (C50) on April 25 at age 90 in Sarasota, Florida

Georgann Tenner (GC50) on June 4 at age 91 in Los Angeles

Yvonne J. Branom (C51) on December 9, 2017, at age 86 in Belvidere, Illinois

David Brenner (C51) on February 3 at age 88 in Evanston

Phyllis C. Coffield (C51) on March 24 at age 89 in Huntsville, Alabama

Joan Cook (C51) on March 6 at age 89 in Lake Forest, Illinois

Ann F. Howlett (C51) on March 12 at age 88 in Pasadena, California.

Beverly Jean Thompson (GC51) on August 29, 2017, at age 89 in Nashville

Betty Howard Bergstrom (C52) on February 24 at age 86 in Chicago

James O. Reese (GC52) on September 15, 2017, at age 88 in Odessa, Texas

Betty B. Scott (C52) on April 5 at age 87 in San Diego

Hope Arthur (C53) on July 29, 2017, at age 86 in New York City

Jesse Barton Jr. (GC53) on March 3 at age 94 in Charlotte, North Carolina

Helen A. Kent (C53) on September 6, 2017, at age 85 in Jacksonville, Florida

Robert E. Martin (C53) on March 11 at age 91 in Las Vegas

Anita Mae Blake (GC54) on March 18 at age 86 in Tucson

John C. Feirich (C54) on January 14 at age 85 in Spokane, Washington

Norman L. Larsen (C54) on April 23 at age 85 in Williamsburg, Virginia

Darrel L. Peters (C54) on October 17, 2017, at age 84 in Barrington, Illinois

Jacqueline Rudman (C54, GC69) on May 7 in Highland Park, Illinois

Beverly R. Verket (C54) on January 25 at age 85 in Montgomery, Ohio

William E. Zeiler (C54) on January 10 at age 86 in Concord, New Hampshire

Eugene M. Pinter (C55) on May 22 at age 87 in Warren, Ohio

Betty K. Johnson (GC56) on May 2 at age 88 in Oak Park, Illinois

Margaret Brazones (C57) on July 31, 2017, at age 81 in Atlanta

Ronald C. Harding (C57) on February 16 at age 82 in Kingston, Missouri

Robert N. Hiatt (C57) on February 11 at age 81 in Mill Valley, California

Ilene Saul Israel (C57) on June 13 at age 83 in Delray Beach, Florida

Robert M. Nelson (GC57) on April 23 at age 86 in Easton, Maryland

Adrienne Rosen (C57) on June 15

E. Hart Schuette (C57) on March 7 at age 83 in Estero, Florida

Susan Elizabeth Aitken (C59, GC64) on August 30, 2017, at age 80 in Vero Beach, Florida

Charles E. Arends (C59) on March 23 at age 84 in River Forest, Illinois

Jacqueline M. Cawley (C59) on August 20, 2017, at age 90 in Daytona Beach, Florida

Marjorie M. Setzer (C59) on June 11 at age 80 in Peoria, Arizona

Joseph A. Hopfensperger (GC60) on July 12, 2017, at age 89 in Appleton, Wisconsin

Roberta F. Klumb (C60) on October 2, 2017, at age 80 in Shorewood, Wisconsin

Phillip Boyd Stevens (GC61, GC70) on July 21, 2017, at age 82 in Evanston

Kay Barr (GC63) on September 7, 2017, at age 80 in Rolla, Missouri

Susan Briggs (C63) on January 4 at age 76 in Winona, Minnesota

Robert L. Hobbs (GC64) on July 24, 2017, at age 88 in Maine

Susan G. Dragisic (C65, GC66) on May 14 at age 74 in Delray Beach, Florida

A. Richard Tinapp (GC66) on April 14 at age 83 in La Crosse, Wisconsin

Lydia Ann Gibson (C67) on January 1 at age 72 in Memphis

Arthur R. Lauson (C67) on February 7 at age 72 in Phoenix

Thomas Leahy (C68) on May 21 at age 73 in Mettawa, Illinois

Jeanne T. Barone (C69) on January 10

Ruthann Chadwick (GC69) on June 4 at age 72 in Salt Lake City

Jeanne M. Tessier (C69) on January 10 at age 71 in Louisville, Kentucky

Sally S. Wright (C69) on June 15 at age 71 in Bowling Green, Ohio

Richard D. Nirenberg (C70) on December 6, 2017, at age 80 in Reno, Nevada

Lucille M. Pressnell (GC70) on January 12 at age 91 in Belleville, Illinois

Daniel M. Einbender (C72) on May 29

Randall W. Easterbrook (C73) on October 18, 2017, at age 67 in Huntersville, Ohio

James C. McFarland (GC73) on March 13

Elizabeth Frances Wood (C74) on May 6 at age 64 in Winter Park, Florida

Sylvia Z. Schmitt (GC75) on May 8 at age 93 in Evanston

Marilyn C. Wang (GC75) on January 11 at age 85 in Niles, Illinois

Rick Scott Leed (C76) on August 31, 2017, at age 62 in Los Angeles

Michele M. Marsh (C76) on October 17, 2017, at age 63 in South Kent, Connecticut

Nancy K. Matchus (C78) on April 27 at age 62 in Austin, Texas

Claudia Harrington (C79) on January 2 at age 60 in Los Angeles

Richard Heimler (C82) on September 23, 2017, at age 57 in Stamford, Connecticut

Mary Jane Kane (C84) on April 30 at age 75 in Chicago

Mark J. Rodgers (GC84) on November 28, 2017, at age 63 in New Brunswick, New Jersey

Mark Whitney Allen (GC90, GC92) on March 27 at age 55 in Evanston

Arnold Madsen (GC94) on September 5, 2017, at age 59 in Waterloo, Iowa

Raja S. Gaddipati (C03) on January 1 at age 36 in Skokie, Illinois

Kenneth Dion Hutchinson (GC16) on October 18, 2017, at age 35 in Chicago

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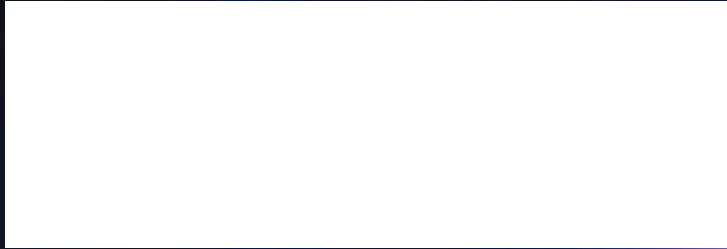


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