

Northwestern | SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

# Dialogue

winter 2020





Calendar of events

**Legally Blonde: The Musical**  
Music and lyrics by Laurence O’Keefe  
and Nell Benjamin  
Book by Heather Hatch  
*Directed and choreographed by Chris Carter*  
February 14–March 1  
Ethel M. Barber Theater

**Danceworks 2020**  
*Artistic direction by Joel Valentín-Martínez*  
March 4–8  
Josephine Louis Theater

**Peter and the Starcatcher**  
by Rick Elice  
*Directed by Nate Cohen*  
April 24–May 3  
Ethel M. Barber Theater

**89th Annual Waa-Mu Show:  
State of the Art**  
May 1–10  
Cahn Auditorium

**Peerless**  
by Jiehae Park  
*Directed by Sarah Gitenstein*  
May 15–24  
Josephine Louis Theater

Information and tickets at  
[communication.northwestern.edu/wirtz](http://communication.northwestern.edu/wirtz)

**National Theatre Live**  
Ethel M. Barber Theater

**Present Laughter** by Noël Coward  
March 14

**Fleabag**  
Written and performed  
by Phoebe Waller-Bridge  
April 3

**All My Sons** by Arthur Miller  
April 4–5

On the cover: Summer 2019 Cherubs in the National High School Institute’s theatre arts division perform Gao Xingjian’s play *The Other Shore* in the Josephine Louis Theater of the Virginia Wadsworth Wirtz Center for the Performing Arts. To learn more about and to apply to NHSI, visit [nhsi.northwestern.edu](http://nhsi.northwestern.edu).

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From left: Zayd Dohrn, Brad Hall, Julia Louis-Dreyfus, and David Tolchinsky

School of Communication alumni are not only exceptionally talented and accomplished; they’re also engaged and often willing to swing by to say hello. On October 27 faculty and students in the MFA program in writing for screen and stage hosted Julia Louis-Dreyfus (C83, Ho7), Brad Hall (C8o), and their son Charlie Hall (C19) for an informal chat about comedy, authentic characters, creating a productive writers room, and more. The three were in town to participate in the annual Chicago Humanities Festival.

“Brad and Julia broke down an episode of *Veep*—what was difficult about it, what was successful, the role of improv versus planning in how the episode eventually came together,” says David Tolchinsky, codirector of the MFA program and professor of radio/television/film. “They talked about the role of failure and how certain failures led to other successes.”

The wide-ranging conversation included both technical details and career advice. “The students were thrilled to talk to such generous and knowledgeable alumni,” says Zayd Dohrn, program codirector and department chair. “It’s great to bring together these amazing writers, directors, and performers with our talented young writers, who will be making the film and TV of the future. And of course, so many of these top-rated artists are Northwestern alumni who are happy to give back.”

Louis-Dreyfus most recently starred as Selina Meyer on HBO’s smash-hit comedy *Veep*, also serving as executive producer; the series wrapped last spring after seven seasons. For *Veep* she won a record-setting six consecutive lead-comedy-actress Emmy Awards, tying her with Cloris Leachman (C48, H14) for the most acting Emmys overall at eight apiece.

Message from the dean



I first learned about Northwestern’s summer National High School Institute (NHSI)—nicknamed the “Cherub” program—when I was a high school junior, listening to friends on the debate team who longed to attend. It was well known as one of the most intensive and effective programs for students who were very serious about improving their debate skills. I was intrigued but didn’t apply.

However, my future husband, Daniel O’Keefe, did attend NHSI’s debate camp and thoroughly enjoyed being a Cherub. Declining an offer of admission to Northwestern (too close to home in the Chicago suburbs), he went to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with the intention of competing in college and becoming a debate coach. He and I met the first day of freshman year, even before classes began, when we ran into each other in the debate squad

room. We remained at Illinois, each earning three degrees in communication and becoming experts in different aspects of argumentation theory.

And coming full circle, after long careers as scholars in communication studies, Dan and I will end our careers at Northwestern, mine as dean of the School of Communication and his as the Owen L. Coon Professor of Argumentation and Debate. During my 20 years as dean, we have met so many Cherub alumni—some who subsequently attended Northwestern for undergraduate study but also many who, like Dan, chose to study elsewhere. Yet whether they were theatre, film, or debate Cherubs and regardless of where they earned their degrees, they all see themselves as Northwestern alumni and are grateful for the way NHSI launched them toward success.

We have never before devoted an issue of *Dialogue* to the faculty, students, and alumni of the Cherub program, but this is the right time to acknowledge their contributions and devotion to Northwestern. As you will learn in this issue, NHSI has been the School of Communication’s most potent recruiting tool, bringing extraordinary people from all the communication arts to study and perform in Evanston.

Because of the program’s powerful appeal, five years ago we began developing a new Cherub format to bring new kinds of students into our community. Adam Joyce, the assistant dean who oversees NHSI, has worked with his staff to develop an after-school version of the program. For several years this new initiative has been offered in Chicago high schools that serve minority and low-income students, and last year we piloted the program in Los Angeles as well. The format’s success in bringing the Cherub experience—and the appeal of Northwestern—to entirely new communities has convinced us to make a long-term commitment to expanding our presence in Los Angeles.

This issue of *Dialogue* pays homage to the long history of Cherubs—including many of our most notable Cherub alumni—and lays out our plans for expanding this wonderful part of the School of Communication. We hope that the 21st-century version of Cherubs will help us become an even better 21st-century communication school. Stay tuned!

A handwritten signature in purple ink, which appears to read "Barbara J. O'Keefe".

Barbara J. O’Keefe  
Dean, School of Communication  
Start a dialogue: [dialogue@northwestern.edu](mailto:dialogue@northwestern.edu)



# WESTWARD BOUND

## EXPANDING THE SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION'S PRECOLLEGE PROGRAM

*by Cara Lockwood and Kerry Trotter*

Each summer the School of Communication's National High School Institute (also known as the Cherub program) draws high-achieving high school students to Northwestern's renowned precollege programs in theatre, film, debate, and now neuroscience. NHSI has been one of the University's most successful initiatives in its impact on the development of secondary school students. As a result, it has become one of Northwestern's most successful marketing and recruiting tools.

Assistant dean Adam Joyce has found a way to reach even more gifted students and bring them into the Wildcat fold. After decades as a summer program, NHSI recently expanded to meet students where they are, giving them an opportunity to become part of the Cherub program in their own high school classrooms. The expansion started in Chicago-area schools and has extended to Los Angeles, in a strategic move to recruit new students to Northwestern and bring more purple power to the Golden State.





T

he rave reviews are in, and the School of Communication's number-one recruitment tool may soon be at a high school near you.

Alyssa Schwartz was among the select students at her Los Angeles high school to participate in NHSI's new in-school playwriting

intensive, and it completely changed her perspective about writing. "I was never good at writing essays," she admits, "but when our theatre class had this playwriting intensive, we all had to write a 10-minute play, and I had a lot of fun with it. It helped me explore all parts of my mind instead of just a small part of it." Because of her success in that program, Schwartz came to Evanston last summer to take part in NHSI's film and video division; this fall she will enroll at Northwestern.

Part of a large, diverse, and vocal group of teens who are introduced to the University through NHSI, Schwartz was among the first group of students to participate in the program's LA expansion, which opens doors to new populations at a crucial point in a high schooler's college-choice decision-making. It also aims to capitalize on Northwestern's robust network of alumni and connections in the creative industries.

NHSI director Jennifer Avery says the plan is working. "Every school we've worked in has wanted us back year after year. And word is getting out—other schools in LA have heard about the program and asked to participate. We're only going to continue to grow."

### Expanding the Northwestern footprint

The summertime NHSI program—which welcomed its first cohort to Evanston in 1931 and has educated future Oscar, Emmy, Tony, and Pulitzer Prize winners as well as politicians, high-court appointees, CEOs, and leading researchers—continues to be a massive draw. Approximately 2,500 students come to Evanston annually for one- to seven-week sessions of college-caliber classes. They live in campus residence halls, eat in the dining facilities, and squeeze in a little fun amid the high curricular demands. (See pages 6 and 7.)

In 2016 NHSI launched a Chicago-area pilot program with Evanston Township, New Trier, and Senn High Schools and Chicago High School for the Arts (ChiArts) to offer an



academic-year playwriting intensive. The students take in-school courses, receive out-of-class assistance, and draft a 10-minute play. NHSI instructor and writer John Corwin teaches the program, now in 10 area schools.

"Playwriting will make every other type of writing better. The structure and form we talk about is the form of every other writing," Corwin says. "It just makes you become a better communicator, and that skill will serve you in any number of ways. I think these sorts of expressions are needed in the world."

ChiArts junior Daniela Morales participated in the playwriting intensive and then came to Evanston last summer for the five-week film and video division. "Without a doubt, I can say this past summer was one of the best I've had so far," says Morales, whose script was produced as part of the Cherubs final

"I was never good at writing essays, but when our theatre class had this playwriting intensive ... I had a lot of fun with it. It helped me explore all parts of my mind instead of just a small part of it."

—Alyssa Schwartz, class of 2024

projects. "I learned more about film and what goes on during production by being a part of it. The experience also made me want to get a camera and start writing and producing my own films."

The success of the Chicago expansion prompted the strategic westward move. In 2018–19 the School of Communication launched the playwriting intensive in three Los Angeles-area schools, and this year it's at eight: Alliance Leichtman-Levine, Beverly Hills High, Long Beach Polytechnic, Hollywood High, Carson High School, Windward, Alliance Judy Ivy Burton, and Alliance Gertz-Ressler. The goal is to create new partnerships, establish a physical presence for Northwestern in LA, and introduce the innovative curriculum to a younger, broader audience—and to recruit a wider array of students to both NHSI's summer programs and the University.

"The city of Los Angeles is an artistic and cultural hub, home to an incredibly diverse array of people," says Ian



## WHAT DOES NHSI TEACH?

The Evanston-based summer programming comprises four divisions: theatre arts, film and video, debate, and neuroscience.

Students taking part in theatre arts must be rising high school seniors in the top third of their class with a demonstrated interest and evidence of experience in theatre—whether in acting, music theatre performance, design, or writing. Core classes include voice and movement; electives can cover design, tech, and much more. The five-week program offers an optional two-week musical theatre extension.

The film and video division has similar academic demands but also welcomes rising high school juniors. Students choose to concentrate in acting on camera, production, or screenwriting; this determines the classes they are eligible to take. Although separate tracks, the concentrations are highly collaborative, as the actors star in the production students' final projects, which are sometimes based on screenwriters' work. The film and video division includes the two-week summer playwriting intensive, an extension of the Chicago and Los Angeles in-school program.

The debate division demands high academic achievement and experience or interest in policy debate and is open to rising high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Debaters can participate in one-, four-, or six-week sessions in which they take classes, research the annual debate topic, and attend lectures. Smaller labs give students extra attention and address specific needs; the Chicago Scholars program offers its own lab in this format. Success is measured by a marked improvement in students' skill sets and a noticeable uptick in motivation and preparedness.

The neuroscience division, new in 2019, invited seven Chicago students to campus for a one-week intensive (*see page 11*).

Merrigan, who manages NHSI in LA and teaches playwriting in the 10-week program at participating high schools. "As a high school student here, you grow up surrounded by the entertainment industry. By programming arts classes in Los Angeles, NHSI can connect its rich network of artists and educators, many of them Northwestern alumni, to students in their own communities. By providing a clearer pathway between Evanston and Los Angeles, we open the door for students and faculty from Northwestern and high school students in Los Angeles to take advantage of both locations' wealth of resources." This year NHSI is piloting a documentary media program in LA, training select students to use camera and audio equipment to film a short documentary on a topic of their choosing.

"This program is especially important because so much of the arts has been stripped away from some schools," says Northwestern University Entertainment Alliance West copresident Marcus Folmar (C96)—a regular performer with the Upright Citizens Brigade who has appeared in dozens of TV shows and wrote 2018's *I Hate LA* as well as the web series *Alley Way*, which premiered in 2016. An NHSI teacher in two schools, he says the program gives students "an introduction to the arts. That might be something they consider doing professionally or maybe something they just use as a creative outlet. But either way, they can take it with them for life." Folmar says that students who may never have thought they

could write now suddenly realize that, with a little effort, they can—and someday that might lead to a career.

"The future of the entertainment industry relies on content producers," says assistant dean for planning and engagement Adam Joyce, who oversees NHSI. "Empowering these young people to develop a voice and a viewpoint will be so beneficial down the road—not just when it comes to bringing new, intelligent students to Northwestern, but also in sending them out into the creative industries with a strong skill set and the confidence to match."

A flourishing program on the left coast will extend ripples far beyond the Cherubs. NHSI-LA has taken up residence in Burbank's Garry Marshall Theater—co-run by former Cherub Kathleen Marshall LaGambina (C90). The long-term plan is to build a Los Angeles presence to also support undergraduate and graduate program expansion. In Evanston the Cherub program uses the facilities developed to support the regular School of Communication curriculum; in Los Angeles the facilities to be developed for the precollege program will also serve as teaching and meeting space for students and faculty from Evanston.

"We are very excited about these potential opportunities for expanding our professional educational programs," says Professor Madhu Reddy, the school's associate dean for graduate programs. "Programs such as our master of science in leadership for creative enterprises would be of great interest to professionals working on the West Coast. Northwestern is already so well known among West Coast industry leaders that expanding our physical presence there is a thrilling possible next step."



## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A CHERUB

**Harrison High School senior Aidan Wohl of New York got his first taste of college life when he came to Northwestern's Evanston campus as a Cherub last summer. He quickly learned that sleep and free time were in short supply.**

"That first week, it's a little bit of a smack in the face, because we all found ourselves working harder and longer hours than most of us did during the school year," says Wohl, who spent five weeks in the film and video division. "But every Cherub is so passionate about filmmaking, and the instructors are just so talented, you don't really want to have free time. You want to soak up all the knowledge from the instructors and all the creativity from your fellow Cherubs."

Wohl would begin his day waking up in Allison Hall at 7:30 a.m. After a quick breakfast at Hinman Dining

Hall, he would head to his first core class at 8:30. Since Wohl chose screenwriting as his concentration, his first two classes of the day centered on that topic. In the afternoon, he'd be off to an elective, such as Personal Cinema.

"That class was all about taking personal experiences from your background—where you grew up, who your family is—and learning how you can use it to form a unique perspective in your filmmaking," Wohl says. "The big takeaway is that filmmaking is a personal art form, and if you can't be vulnerable in your piece, you might not be ready to make a film. When we analyzed the work of great directors and writers, we learned that in making a film, they really leave a part of themselves on the screen."

Evenings would often include screenings of instructors' projects

and other activities. The long day wouldn't end until the RA meeting at 10:30 p.m. "I wouldn't get back to my dorm until 11," he says. "And by then, I was usually pretty conked out."

In the final two weeks, students worked on producing their five-minute films. Wohl's Cherub screenplay, *Stag*, is about a boy who exiles himself in the woods to learn more about himself but gets more than he bargained for.

"I think it took us 10 hours to film a

five-minute production, and that's not even counting the many hours it took to plan—for me to write and for the director and cinematographer

to make the shot list," says Wohl, who also had the opportunity to act in fellow Cherubs' projects. "It really is such a group effort. It's all about time, patience, and dedication. We all left understanding how much goes into so little."

In the end, Wohl's hard work paid off. "On the final day, the parents come to campus, and there's a six-hour screening of all the films, and you can see what you made," he says. "Seeing my work up there on that giant screen and watching it affect an audience was one of the best feelings I've ever had. I think it's almost as special for the parents. My parents were so happy that I was happy."

Wohl says he'd do it all again—lack of downtime and all. "It is a magical, transformative experience for anyone who's passionate enough and driven enough to take it on." He will enroll at Northwestern this fall.





### A wider, smarter, more supportive net

Geographical expansion is part of the School of Communication's determined efforts to widen the Cherub recruitment pool. The program hopes to increase student diversity, welcome new perspectives, and advance programs in a way that reflects societal and University values. But in recent years, NHSI has been doing this closer to home through strategic partnerships with Evanston Scholars, Northwestern Academy, and the Urban Debate League, which have lent fresh voices to University arts and rhetoric traditions. These relationships have helped identify talented students of color and facilitated their inclusion in the campus community through outreach and scholarship funding.

The Chicago Scholars program helps cultivate debate talent by sponsoring 12 talented Chicago-area students recommended by the Urban Debate League. Those students attend a four-week summer lab at Northwestern to sharpen their debate skills.

"Part of our mission is attracting a student body that reflects the larger demographics of the country," says Daniel

**"Empowering these young people to develop a voice and a viewpoint will be so beneficial down the road."**

—Assistant dean Adam Joyce

Fitzmier, director of Northwestern's and NHSI's debate programs. "Programs like this—that break down a lot of the wealth and access barriers to high school students for participation in the University—help do that." Fitzmier has taken teams to the National Debate Tournament finals 10 times and has coached Northwestern to five NDT victories—in 2002, 2003, 2005, 2011, and 2015.

He says the NHSI program helps him identify potentially talented debaters and helps students prepare for college, whether they choose Northwestern or a different school. "We've found that we're impacting a group of students who are sharpening a set of characteristics that will help them succeed," says Fitzmier. "I don't think there's enough data to say that we're a causal factor in getting students into higher education, but there's certainly a continuity there for participation in debate. In my qualitative judgment, the students are better prepared to succeed when they get to college because of this program."

One significant net benefit of NHSI is harder to quantify: the sense of belonging that it engenders. Regardless of the location of the participating schools or the demographics of the students, Cherubs wind up being successful because they find themselves in a like-minded group of artists and thinkers. They support one another and find a safe haven amid a turbulent time in most teens' lives.

"These are creative students who are incredibly sensitive, but they're exploring their passions with students who feel like them, who are equally sensitive, or who are equally 'other' in their high schools," says NHSI director Avery. "I love watching them, because they're the cool kids here."

### The Northwestern pipeline

Founded to expand recruitment for the School of Communication (see page 14), NHSI remains a pipeline for high school students who discover the Northwestern experience through its precollege programs. Cherub alumni are regularly accepted

### CHERUBIC FACULTY

Zayd Dohrn attended the NHSI film and video division and is now associate professor and chair of the Department of Radio/Television/Film. Assistant professor of theatre Halena Kays was a Cherub and returned to Northwestern as an undergraduate; theatre senior lecturer Laura Schellhardt taught in the program. Senior lecturer Mary Poole was director of the theatre arts division for years, and professor emeritus and former School of Communication dean David Zarefsky directed the debate division for more than a decade. Daniel O'Keefe, the Owen L. Coon Professor of Argumentation and Debate, began his forensic ascent back in 1967 as a rising high school senior.

"I remember the wonderful feeling of complete immersion in debate activities—time in Northwestern's libraries, strategy sessions, practice debates, and so on," O'Keefe recalls. "Of course, the schedule included nondebate activities that (predictably) we dismissed as 'compulsory fun.' But one of those activities remains an especially vivid and happy memory: a trip to the Ravinia Festival, where we heard the Chicago Symphony Orchestra perform Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* under the direction of Seiji Ozawa. Compulsory fun indeed!"





into the country's best universities, including Harvard, Brown, Yale, and of course Northwestern. Roughly three-quarters of the students who attended the 2018 Cherubs theatre program applied to Northwestern; about a third of those students enrolled in 2019–20. The acceptance rate of former Cherubs far outpaces the University's overall acceptance rate of 8 to 9 percent.

Does Cherub participation give students an admissions boost? More likely, it allows the students to better articulate why they want to attend Northwestern. The experience stays with them.

Anushka Agarwala will be part of Northwestern's class of 2024 and saw her NHSI summer as a "dress rehearsal" for college. "I went in nervous that I wouldn't fit in because this would be my first experience with people just as dedicated as I am to creating good theatre," she says. "When I left, not only was I eager to continue my career as a stage manager, but I also was certain that this was my calling in life."

"I knew I wanted to attend a place just like Cherubs that taught me that my education is about more than just being an actor."

—Nolan Robinson, class of 2021

Her father, Dhruv Agarwala (McC93), saw her experience as a new way to engage with his alma mater. "I was well aware of the rigor and intensity of the program and knew that if Anushka came out after seven weeks still excited and motivated, then she truly was meant to be in theatre," he says. "As I saw it, it was a defining moment for her, because on day one Anushka felt completely at home as a Cherub."

Northwestern junior Nolan Robinson, who grew up in Evanston and attended Evanston Township High School, was a theatre and music theatre Cherub. When he arrived, he had no intention of applying to the University, as he initially thought he wanted to go far away to a conservatory. The experience, and the exposure to Northwestern's curriculum, changed his mind.

"I realized that for a Northwestern student, submerged in everything on campus, Evanston would feel like an entirely different world, and it does," says Robinson, who recently produced the comedy web series *Where's Noah?* He also created the podcast *Of All Trades with Nolan Robinson*, for which he has interviewed Northwestern president Morton Schapiro and



provost Jonathan Holloway and plans to interview celebrity alumni. His successful Northwestern career, he says, all began with that first summer on campus.

"The actors in Northwestern's theatre program receive efficient training, but we are also educated in the arts and sciences and are taught *how* to have something to say, not only how to say something," Robinson says. "I knew I wanted to attend a place just like Cherubs that taught me that my education is about more than just being an actor."

Finding students like Robinson—those with passion, drive, and an affinity for the Northwestern experience—is key to NHSI's continued expansion. And with sights set on talented students of all backgrounds, the program will open the doors to the University's even brighter future. "The wider the net we cast for these programs," says Avery, "the better it is for Northwestern."



## NHSI INTRODUCES NEW NEUROSCIENCE INTENSIVE

Last summer the School of Communication's communication sciences and disorders department launched a new collaboration with the National High School Institute to bring seven Chicago-area high schoolers to campus for a free weeklong deep dive into neuroscience and communication.

"This was our attempt to steer these students toward speech-language and hearing sciences so that at least they're aware of these great fields," says then department chair Sumit Dhar, associate dean for research. And, he adds, the department hopes to bring more diversity to what has traditionally been a white, female-dominated area. "Often, you model your career choice on someone you see; if you don't see anyone who looks like you, you might think you can't do this work."

The seven students—five males and two females, nearly all people of color—hailed from Mather, Lake View, and Evanston Township High Schools. They spent a late-July week living like Northwestern students—bunking in the residence halls, eating in the dining halls, and steeping themselves in a challenging area of study. Each day started with a lecture, followed by lab work, a lunch with current School of Communication undergraduate or graduate students, more lectures, clinical work or case studies, faculty fireside chats, and recreational time before lights out.

The neuroscience Cherubs took a hands-on approach to conducting a swallowing assessment, watching an EEG language study, learning about the latest technological advancements, and observing how conditions affecting speech, hearing, and language are diagnosed. They heard from faculty on what a clinician's work entails, how research careers can pan out, and why exposing more people from more backgrounds is so critical to these fields' success. The week ended with each Cherub delivering a brief presentation on a topic that intrigued them from the week's sessions. These included explanations of ear structure, the need for bilingual speech-language pathologists, and what's at stake for health outcomes when patients don't see medical professionals who share their race or ethnicity.

"We hope to build ambassadors through this experience," says Adam Joyce, who oversees NHSI as assistant dean for planning and engagement. "They go back to their schools and tell their friends about what they've discovered is possible, and they see all the opportunities to create relationships and craft a possible career in these exploding fields."

NHSI and the department plan to offer the program again in 2020.



# CHERUB MEMORIES



## Lucas Hedges

Academy Award–nominated actor Lucas Hedges says that he struggled as a teenager, feeling like an outsider. But his summer as a Cherub changed that.

“I felt very lost and self-destructive in high school, and Cherubs was the first five weeks coming off of a low point in my life, when I was just injected with movement and play and light,” says Hedges, who earned an Oscar nod for 2016’s *Manchester by the Sea* and has starred in *Boy Erased*, *Ben Is Back*, and *Three Billboards outside Ebbing, Missouri*. “It felt like I was injected with hope.”

For the first time, Hedges began to understand that the limitations he’d placed on himself “were more mental than anything else.” And he instantly bonded with his fellow Cherubs.

“The first night, we all did presentations in front of each other, and I was just in awe of so many kids my age who had come from all over the country to perform,” he says. “I felt like they were superheroes. I’ve always felt that way about actors, and I found myself in the company of kids who were fearless and confident to show themselves in front of strangers—something that didn’t come easily for me.”



## Sharif Atkins

For TV and movie star Sharif Atkins (C97), his experience as a 1992 theatre Cherub totally clarified his course in life. “I didn’t realize it till after the five weeks were over, but I had made two decisions based on my time there: I wanted to be an actor, and I wanted to begin the journey at Northwestern University,” says Atkins, who would go on to graduate from the School of Communication as a theatre major.

“The passion of [senior lecturer and then director of the Cherubs theatre division] Mary Poole and the encouragement and praise of the teachers began nurturing gifts that at that point I didn’t know I had,” he recalls. “If my four years at Northwestern were my foundation, then the Cherub program was the excavation needed to provide clarity for where my life was headed.”

Atkins would go on to star as Dr. Michael Gallant in the hit NBC drama *ER*. He has also played special agent Clinton Jones in *White Collar*, telepath Gary Navarro in *The 4400*, assistant US attorney Harrison Rivers in the CBS drama *The Good Wife*, and a Nova Corps pilot in 2014’s *Guardians of the Galaxy*.

Atkins says, “Participating in the Cherub program was a life-changing experience for me.”



## Brad Weinstock

When future Broadway star Brad Weinstock (Co6) arrived on campus as a theatre Cherub in 2001, he immediately felt at home.

“The best thing about going to this program is you really do find your tribe, you find your people,” says Weinstock, who toured nationally in *Jersey Boys* and *Wicked* and currently stars as Aladdin’s sidekick, Omar, in the Broadway production of *Aladdin*. “A lot of people had participated in their high school theatre programs, but this was the next level—people who are super interested in this, people who want to pursue it down the line for their careers, people just as passionate if not more so than you. As a Cherub, for the first time I met people who knew every word to some of the cast recordings that I’d been poring over for years.”

Weinstock says he made great friendships, some lasting. “I still work with and audition for people who were in the Cherubs program, even though that was the early 2000s,” he says. “There’s a natural bond that you’ve both been through this, even if you attended in different years.” He adds that NHSI helped him focus on his career and really visualize what he might do as an adult.

“You get a real sampler platter of what life in theatre could be,” he says. “You do one play, but there are also nine other plays going on. I took a creative

writing class, I did a class where you write monologues, I did a daily movement and voice class. It gave a great overview of what theatre could be, and all the things you could do in theatre that weren’t necessarily on stage.”



## Michael Gottlieb

Michael Gottlieb (WCAS99), a lawyer based in Washington, DC, often finds himself in the thick of cases involving precedent-setting legal and national security issues. He has represented clients involved in crisis management, sensitive government investigations, congressional hearings, constitutional and antitrust disputes, and more, some even before the US Supreme Court. Before entering private practice, he served as associate White House counsel for President Barack Obama and helped start and manage an international civil-military task force devoted to rule-of-law issues in Afghanistan. Prior to being named one of Washington’s top 40 lawyers under 40, a rising star by the *National Law Journal*, and a legal trailblazer by *Law 360*, he was a two-time Cherub exploring his early passion for debate.

NHSI “was widely thought of as one of the best summer programs in the country,” says Gottlieb, who attended the Cherub debate division after his sophomore and junior years of high school. “And of course summer on the lake was an added benefit.”

The substance and style of policy debate—where teams of two argue for and against a topic, often in sped-up delivery—lends itself well to a future in law. And Northwestern, with its ample resources and rich history as a leader in policy debate, offers an opportunity for high schoolers to see debate as a pathway to a rewarding future.

“We had outstanding instruction from some of the best teachers from college and high school debate and an extraordinary group of Cherubs to learn from and compete against,” he recalls. “Having access to Northwestern’s library, one of the best in the country, also enhanced the research aspect of policy debate.”

The lessons and connections linger. “On one of my first days at Harvard Law School,” he says, “an NHSI alum came up to me, and in conversation we realized we had lived in the same dorm as Cherubs.”



## Jayne Atkinson

Tony-nominated actress Jayne Atkinson (C81) remembers that soon after coming to Northwestern as a theatre Cherub in 1976, she sat down at the piano in her dorm.

“I didn’t really play, but I’d plunk around a bit, and I decided to play ‘Corner of the Sky’ from *Pippin*. I’d seen the musical and I’d taught myself the song,” says Atkinson, a Tony nominee for

*The Rainmaker* and *Enchanted April* who’s also known for her roles in *24* and *House of Cards*. “People began gathering around the piano and singing, and it was just this beautiful moment. I love actors and artists so much, because we just burst out singing when we feel like it.”

Atkinson says the Cherub program challenged her in ways she didn’t expect. “It was interesting to work in a place where I wasn’t very well known,” she says. “In high school I got the leads, and now here I was with the crème de la crème of actors from other schools. That was very good for me—to be pushed, to be part of the ensemble, to have a smaller part. That influenced my work ethic and desire to work harder.”

She also fell in love with the Evanston campus. “I went home and only applied to Northwestern, because I knew that’s where I wanted to go,” she says. “The teachers were so amazing. They really pushed us to our limits. I remember watching one instructor; we were soaking up every word, because of course she was a working actor, and that’s what we all wanted to be. She talked about engaging your emotions. This is one of the biggest things for actors; we have to laugh and cry on cue. It’s one of the things that’s the most challenging. I remember she showed us she could cry at the drop of a hat, and we were all mesmerized.”

Atkinson’s Cherub experience made such an impression that her son Jeremy even followed in her footsteps. “The program should go on forever,” she says, “because it really is such a wonderful way for young actors to ground themselves.”



# A SHORT HISTORY OF THE CHERUBS



In 1931, just as the Great Depression was picking up steam, School of Speech theatre professor Garrett Leverton and Dean Ralph Dennis launched an exciting new plan: inviting high school students to campus for an early but immersive college-curriculum experience. As Dennis stated, the summer program would “bring together gifted young people and superior teachers in an atmosphere of affection, knowledge, and trust”—a mission still embraced by today’s National High School Institute (NHSI), fondly known as the Cherub program.

From the onset, Dennis saw this as an opportunity to introduce the School of Speech and its fields to impressionable high schoolers who might then apply to the University. The current economic climate was another factor; Northwestern had implemented two across-the-board salary cuts in the wake of the October 1929 stock market crash, and morale was low. A summer program would keep the faculty working and earning.

Actually, the seeds for NHSI had been planted more than a decade earlier by an enterprising high school junior. After taking elocution lessons for eight years in Chillicothe, Missouri, Alda Blanche Moorman sought opportunities beyond those in her hometown. Her teacher recommended that she attend a speech school, reportedly telling Moorman’s mother, “There’s a fine one called the Cumnock School of Oratory at Northwestern University.” Moorman reached out to acting director Clarion Hardy about taking private lessons between her junior and senior years of high school. Hardy encouraged her to “not waste” her parents’ money but instead to take actual college courses for which she could get credit. Moorman heeded his advice that summer, and after completing high school the following



According to one bit of lore, one of the institute’s directors had called the students cherubs ironically “because they acted like little devils.”

spring, she enrolled in the School of Speech, graduating in 1921.

The program that Dennis and Leverton created for the first official cohort in 1931 (initially called the High School Institute in Speech) recruited outstanding students from 16 schools to take part in four weeks of immersion in every aspect of speech and drama. Courses included acting, play production, shop, and makeup, culminating in a series of one-act plays produced by and starring the participants. Also including courses in debate and public speaking, the jam-packed days started at 7:30 a.m. and lasted until rehearsals finished at 10 p.m.

By 1934 the program had swelled to 90 students from 30 states. They had the option of taking part in four- to eight-week



sessions; tuition for the five-week session was \$60, and room and board in a University dormitory was \$60.50. That year, Northwestern’s Medill School of Journalism launched its own program, and by 1940 the two had merged to offer tracks in dramatics, debate and public speaking, and journalism.

Eventually Northwestern’s Schools of Music, Education, Business, and Engineering offered NHSI programs of their own, but today only the communication and journalism programs continue. They remain close campus partners, although a decade ago the journalism program officially withdrew from the National High School Institute to become the Medill-Northwestern Journalism Institute.

Once NHSI started, it wasn’t long before the students came to be known as Cherubs. But when and how did that term arise? A 1936 *Summer Northwestern* story was headlined “Cherubs Attend Play at Glencoe Tonight,” with no reference to how or why they acquired that name. According to one bit of lore,



one of the institute’s directors had called the students cherubs ironically “because they acted like little devils.” And in another old story, Dean Dennis allegedly spotted an amorous couple in the bushes near Annie May Swift Hall and said, “They certainly don’t look like cherubs.” There was no going back after that.

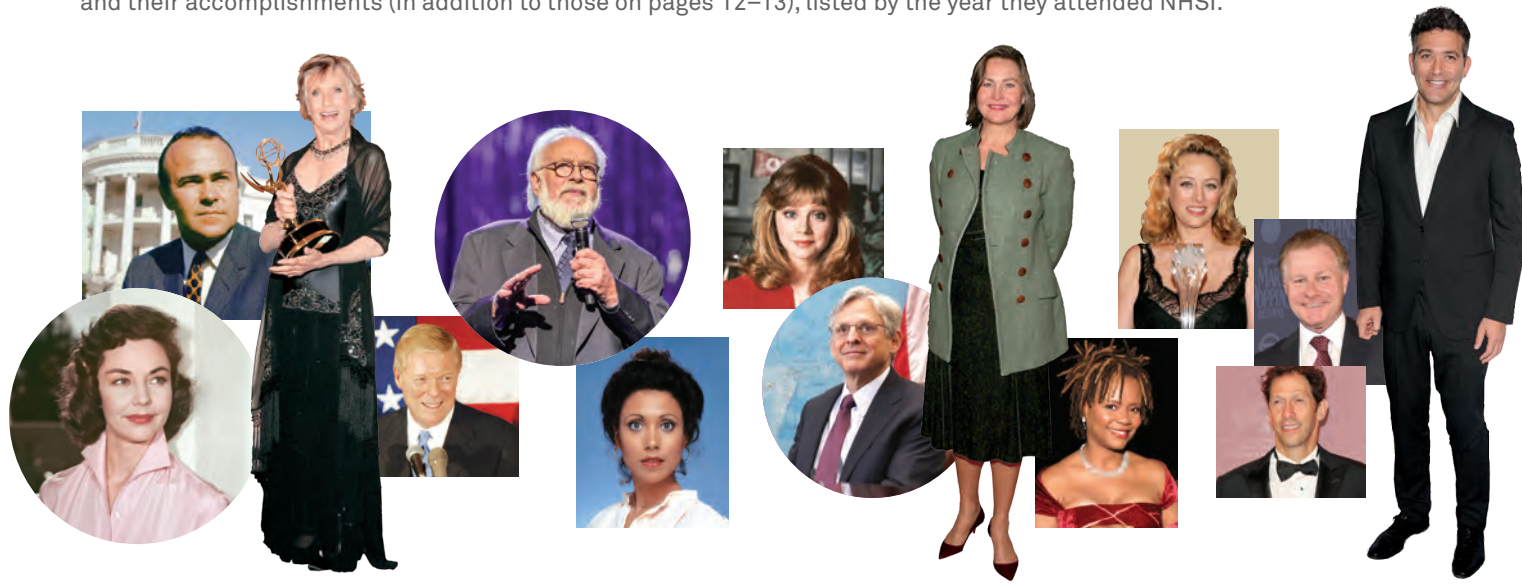
The program was an immediate and lasting success, and the curriculum has continued to evolve and grow. Today NHSI comprises the divisions of theatre arts, film and video, debate, and neuroscience, with playwriting intensives offered in select Chicago- and Los Angeles-area high schools. Future plans may include a documentary media curriculum and additional participating high schools.

**Sources**  
*Northwestern University School of Speech: A History* by Lynn Miller Rein  
 Northwestern University Archives  
 Roger Boye, director, Medill-Northwestern Journalism Institute



# CHERUBS THROUGH THE YEARS

Since 1931, thousands of talented students have passed through the National High School Institute. Not surprisingly, many went on to extraordinary careers and achievements—with quite a few also earning Northwestern degrees. Take a spin through just a sampling of the School of Communication's Cherub alumni and their accomplishments (in addition to those on pages 12–13), listed by the year they attended NHSI.



**1935**  
**Jennifer Jones (C35)** won both an Academy Award and a Golden Globe for *The Song of Bernadette*, released in 1943. She was also acclaimed for her performances in *Since You Went Away* (1944), *Love Letters* (1945), and *Duel in the Sun* (1946), among dozens of other films.

**1942–43**  
**Cloris Leachman (C48, H14)** shares the record (with fellow alumna Julia Louis-Dreyfus) for winning the most acting Emmys. She also won an Oscar for *The Last Picture Show* in a career spanning seven decades and counting.

**1945**  
**Sander Vanocur (C50)** was a national correspondent for NBC and ABC News. One of four panelists for the first televised Kennedy-Nixon presidential debate in 1960, he went on to cover the Kennedy administration as a White House correspondent. (See page 30.)

**1957**  
**Richard Gephardt (C62, H92)** represented Missouri's Third Congressional District in the US House of Representatives for 28 years, from 1976 to 2004, also serving as the House's Democratic majority leader from 1989 to 1995 and minority leader from 1995 to 2003. He ran for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1988 and 2004.

**1960**  
**Frank Galati (C65, GC67, GC71)** discovered an abiding love for Northwestern while a Cherub, returning as an undergraduate, graduate student, and, from 1970 to 2005, professor in the Department of Performance Studies. Now professor emeritus, he has won two Tony Awards for adapting and directing Steppenwolf Theatre Company's *The Grapes of Wrath*, in addition to a Tony nomination for directing the musical *Ragtime* and an Oscar nomination for the screenplay of *The Accidental Tourist*. Winner of 10 Joseph Jefferson Awards for his work in Chicago theatre, he has also directed productions at Lyric Opera of Chicago and the Metropolitan Opera.

**Denise Nicholas** was a three-time Golden Globe nominee for playing Liz McIntyre on the ABC comedy-drama *Room 222*. She won two 1976 Image Awards—outstanding actress in a motion picture for *Let's Do It Again* and outstanding actress in a drama series for *Police Story*. She also starred in and wrote episodes for the TV series *In the Heat of the Night*. Her 2005 novel *Freshwater Road* was named one of the year's best books by the *Washington Post*, *Detroit Free Press*, *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, *Chicago Tribune*, and *Newsday* and won two 2006 prizes for debut fiction—the Zora Neale Hurston/Richard Wright Award and the American Library Association's Black Caucus Award.

**1966**  
**Shelley Long (C71)** won an Emmy and two Golden Globes for playing the iconic role of Diane Chambers on NBC's hit comedy *Cheers*.

**1969**  
**Merrick Garland** is the chief circuit judge of the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia. After receiving highest honors as an NHSI debater, Garland went on to Harvard University and Harvard Law School before embarking on a brilliant career that included high-profile investigations, government appointments, and a nomination from President Barack Obama to serve on the US Supreme Court.

**1973**  
**Cherry Jones** has received five Tony nominations, with two wins: for the 1995 revival of *The Heiress* and the original 2005 production of *Doubt*. She also received a 2009 Emmy for outstanding supporting actress in a drama series for playing Allison Taylor on Fox's *24*. She appears in the second season of *Succession*.

**1978**  
**Tonya Pinkins** won a Tony Award for best featured actress in a musical for *Jelly's Last Jam*. She also received Tony nominations for *Play On!* and *Caroline, or Change*, winning a 2005 Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award for the latter. On television, Pinkins starred in *Madam Secretary* and *All My Children*.

**1979**  
**Virginia Madsen** boasts numerous television and film credits, including the hit indie film *Sideways* (for which she received 2004 Oscar and Golden Globe nominations) and her starring role on ABC's *Designated Survivor*.

**David Magee** was nominated for an Oscar and Golden Globe for his screenplay for 2004's *Finding Neverland* and for an Oscar for his adaptation of *Life of Pi*, winner of the 2012 Satellite Award for best adapted screenplay. His screenplay for *Mary Poppins Returns* won the Humanitas Prize.

**1981**  
**Craig Bierko (C86)** was nominated for a Tony Award for his portrayal of Professor Harold Hill in the critically acclaimed Broadway revival of *The Music Man*. Bierko's many television and film credits include Lifetime's *UnReal*, Christopher Guest's *For Your Consideration*, and Universal's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* as well as memorable guest appearances in *The Good Wife*, *Boston Legal*, and *Sex and the City*.

**Tim Blake Nelson** is known for his dozens of high-profile film roles, including memorable turns in *Holes*, *The Incredible Hulk*, *Lincoln*, *The Ballad of Buster Scruggs*, and *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* On television he can be seen in HBO's *Watchmen*.



**1983**  
**David Schwimmer (C88)** played Ross Geller on the smash-hit NBC sitcom *Friends*, which ran for 10 seasons and netted him a 1995 Emmy nomination for outstanding supporting actor in a comedy series. In 2016 he received a second Emmy nomination, for outstanding supporting actor in a limited series or movie, for playing Robert Kardashian in *The People v. O.J. Simpson: American Crime Story*. Right out of Northwestern, he cofounded Chicago's Lookingglass Theatre Company with seven other Northwestern graduates, including several fellow 1983 Cherubs.

**1986**  
**Charmaine Craig** achieved success with her very first novel, *The Good Men*, a national bestseller that was translated into six languages. Her second novel, *Miss Burma*, was longlisted for the 2017 National Book Award for Fiction and the 2018 Women's Prize for Fiction. Unrelated to her writing, Craig was the live-action reference for Disney's animated film *Pocahontas*.

**Lindsay Jones** composed the scores for HBO Films' Oscar-winning short documentary *A Note of Triumph: The Golden Age of Norman Corwin* and Sony Pictures/Lifetime Television's pilot *Family Practice*. Jones has received five Joseph Jefferson Awards and fifteen nominations, two ASCAP Plus Awards, an Ovation Award and three nominations, a Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award, a San Diego Drama Critics Circle Award, a Ticket Holder Award, and a Chicago Stage Talk Award, among many others. His scores have been featured at Cannes, SXSW, Slamdance, the Middle East International Film Festival, and more.

**Baakari Wilder** arrived in Evanston already a star. At age 12, the award-winning tap dancer appeared with legendary performers Brenda Bufalino, Sandman Simms, Harold Nicholas, and Savion Glover in a star-studded revue at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. After his Cherubs summer, he went on to win a Bessie Award for his starring role in the Broadway musical *Bring in Da Noise, Bring in Da Funk*.

**1987**  
**Thomas Lennon**—actor, comedian, screenwriter, producer, director, and novelist—has appeared or voiced roles in dozens of hit shows, but he is especially remembered for MTV's *The State* and for playing Lieutenant Jim Dangle on Comedy Central's *Reno 911!* He also starred as Felix Unger in the CBS reboot of *The Odd Couple*.

**1988**  
**Noah Wyle** won acclaim as Dr. John Carter in NBC's *ER* and Tom Mason in TNT's *Falling Skies*. He has also appeared in the film *Donnie Darko* and TNT's *The Librarian* franchise.

**1992**  
**David Harbour** plays fan-favorite Jim Hopper in the Netflix sci-fi horror hit *Stranger Things*, for which he has received Emmy and Critics' Choice Television Awards and a Golden Globe nomination.

**1996**  
**Christopher Rice** made the *New York Times* bestseller list with his first novel, published at the age of 22. By age 30 he added three more books to the *Times* bestseller list. Son of bestselling author Anne Rice, he has won a Lambda Literary Award and was named one of *People* magazine's sexiest men alive. His supernatural suspense novels *The Heavens Rise* and *The Vines* were both finalists for the Bram Stoker Award.

**2001**  
**America Ferrera** won Golden Globe, Emmy, and Screen Actors Guild Awards for her starring role as Betty Suarez in the ABC series *Ugly Betty*. Currently starring in NBC's *Superstore*, she has also appeared in several films, including *Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*.

**2002**  
**Sara Kramer** won a Hollywood Makeup Artist and Hair Stylist Guild Award for her work on BBC Two's *King Lear*, starring Anthony Hopkins. Her many other makeup credits include *1917*, *Overlord*, *Fast and Furious: Hobbs and Shaw*, and the hit HBO series *Succession*.

**2010**  
**Hari Nef** became the first openly transgender woman signed by the IMG Worldwide talent management group and was named to the *Business of Fashion's* BoF 500, an index of people shaping the fashion industry. Nef made her runway debut at 2015's New York Fashion Week, walking for Eckhaus Latta, Hood by Air, and Adam Selman. Nominated for Models.com's 2016 Model of the Year Award, she became the face of the Gucci Bloom fragrance and has appeared in advertising campaigns for L'Oréal and Hugo Boss.



## Berlanti endows professorship

A new dramatic writing professorship at the School of Communication will significantly expand course offerings and teaching opportunities, thanks to a \$2 million gift from the Berlanti Family Foundation. The new Barbara Berlanti Professorship in Writing for the Screen and Stage marks the foundation's largest philanthropic commitment to any organization to date.

Greg Berlanti (C94) is a writer, producer, and director of television and film. He and his husband, Robbie Rogers, established the Berlanti Family Foundation to improve the lives of all LGBTQIA people and their straight allies through education, the arts, medicine, and other social services. In addition to the professorship, the foundation has supported such efforts as GLSEN, which creates safe education environments for LGBTQIA youth; F\*ck Cancer, dedicated to cancer prevention and early detection and to providing emotional support and guidance to those affected by the disease; and the National Immigration Law Center, whose mission is to defend and advance the rights and opportunities of low-income immigrants and their families.

The gift to the School of Communication will create the Barbara Berlanti Professorship in Writing for the Screen and Stage, named in honor of Berlanti's mother, who passed away in 2017. The gift also commemorates Berlanti's 25th reunion year and counts toward *We Will. The Campaign for Northwestern*.

"My mom, Barbara Berlanti, was a lifelong champion of the arts and my greatest advocate and patron," says Berlanti. "She placed an old typewriter in front of me at 10 years old and told me to start writing all the stories that were in my head—instead of just talking her ear off—and I haven't stopped since. Our family is so proud to have a professorship in her name dedicated to helping Northwestern continue its great legacy of fostering the next generation of humane, diverse, courageous, and bold storytellers."

The endowed professorship will build on the success of the school's signature writing programs by increasing teaching capacity and bolstering a curriculum that prepares students to work across media and genres—and encourages them to engage and create work by and for diverse, global audiences. The professorship will be housed in the school's Department of Radio/Television/Film, which offers robust writing curricula for graduate (MFA in writing for screen and stage) and undergraduate (modules in creative writing for the media, playwriting, comedy arts, and more) students. Berlanti previously endowed Northwestern's playwriting program. The new professorship will result in further expansion of this programming and its screen-writing counterpart.

"Northwestern is determined to be at the forefront in finding and developing new voices and helping them tell their stories," says Dean Barbara O'Keefe. "To do that, we must build a faculty that reflects and respects diversity. Thanks to Greg, Robbie, and the Berlanti Family



From left: Theatre professor emeritus David Downs, Dean Barbara O'Keefe, and Greg Berlanti

Foundation, the new Barbara Berlanti Professorship will play a major role in helping us attract leading artist-educators to our faculty who can, in turn, recruit and nurture students from underrepresented and undersupported groups and help transform the creative industries."

The professorship was supported in part by alumni Patrick G. (EB59, H09) and Shirley W. (WCAS61, H19) Ryan through the Ryan Family Chair Challenge, which matches gifts made by other Northwestern supporters to establish new endowed professorships or chairs.

Los Angeles-based Berlanti made Hollywood history last May when a record 18 television shows of his were ordered for the 2019 calendar year. Through Berlanti Productions, he is the force behind such series as *The Flash*, *Riverdale*, *Brothers & Sisters*, *Dawson's Creek*, and *Black Lightning*. His multiple film credits include directing 2018's *Love, Simon*, the first gay teen romance backed by a major Hollywood studio.

The School of Communication welcomed Berlanti back to campus in June as the 2019 graduation convocation speaker. In a heartfelt and funny address, Berlanti detailed his wishes for the students and shared with them the story of his transformational college experience.

"Northwestern was the first period in my life I would repeat," he told the group. "I would do it all over again."

A large part of that experience, Berlanti explained, involved examining and identifying his homosexuality, an agonizing process made better by Northwestern friends and faculty who supported him, a high-achieving interdisciplinary studies major from Rye, New York. His coming out, followed by marriage and fatherhood, informed the mission of the Berlanti Family Foundation and its tenets of inclusion and empowerment of intersectional scholars and artists.

## Hearing researchers honored

Ralph and Jean Sundin Endowed Professor of Communication Sciences and Disorders Viorica Marian and associate dean for research, professor, and Hugh Knowles Center fellow Sumit Dhar received the 2019 Editor's Award from the *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research* for their paper on top-down effects in the auditory network. They were assisted in their work by postdoctoral fellows Sayuri Hayakawa and Tuan Lam.

The team found that hearing speech with or without seeing corresponding lip movements changes how the human ear processes sound. Before auditory signals reach the brain, sound waves in the ear are amplified through the movement of specialized hair cells—a process that itself generates sounds known as otoacoustic emissions (OAEs).



"By measuring the level of OAEs, we discovered that speech sounds are amplified less when the listener can rely on visual information to help determine what is said," Marian explains. "This finding suggests that the brain exerts top-down control over the mechanical functions of the ear in order to efficiently distribute the labor across modalities."

Dhar sees his partnership with Marian as integral to success. "It is quite satisfying for our work to be recognized by the editors of the top topical journal of our field," says Dhar. "However, it was even more stimulating to be able to collaborate with my colleague Viorica Marian on this project. We had often discussed possible connections to the brain at work and how it would be advantageous to be able to control the input going to the brain while it was busy. This work provides exciting evidence that indeed the brain does modulate incoming sensations selectively to focus on tasks. The fact that this seems to be happening by essentially controlling the gain applied at the very first stage of hearing is quite extraordinary."

## First acting MFA class



Front row (from left): Concetta Russo, Anna Shapiro, Mi Kang, Alexandria Crawford, Sandra Marquez. Back row (from left): Halena Kays, Zack Dittami, Stan Brown, Mickey Jordan, Maya Abram, Emiley Kiser, Al'Jaleel McGhee.

In September the School of Communication welcomed its inaugural class of students in the MFA program in acting. The eight talented actors from across the country join graduate artists in a suite of complementary MFA programs—design, directing, writing, and documentary media. All these programs will be housed in the performing and media arts center currently taking shape in Abbott Hall on Northwestern's downtown Chicago campus.

The two-year program is fully funded, so the MFA candidates pay no tuition and receive an annual stipend. The students will analyze text, learn techniques for interpretation and rehearsal, and gain mastery of movement, voice, and speech through production experience. The curriculum was designed to prepare these nimble performers for the rigors and demands of the rapidly evolving creative economy.

"I was actually preparing to head to another program when I learned that Northwestern was kicking off the inaugural acting MFA class," says Chicago-based actor Al'Jaleel McGhee, one of the new MFA candidates. "A few weeks later, I'm sitting with *the* Anna Shapiro at Steppenwolf talking about the world-class faculty, the brand-new facilities, and the opportunity to join the 'Northwestern mafia' and make history with the inaugural MFA acting ensemble."

Chicago, he argues, is the best place in the world for theatre—"and I'm more than happy to fight about this. Equity, non-Equity, storefront, huge house—if you're an artist with something to say, an artist who wants to 'shake the table,' an artist who wants to create something beautiful and ugly, uplifting and tragic, something visceral, something real, honest, then Chicago is where you should be," he says. "And we get to learn, live, and create in the heart of it." Joining McGhee in the first class are Maya Abram, Alexandria Crawford, Zack Dittami, Mickey Jordan, Mi Kang, Emiley Kiser, and Concetta Russo.

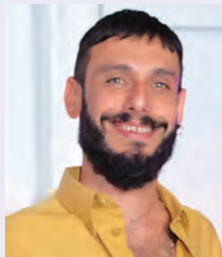
The program is led by Stan Brown, the inaugural W. Rockwell Wirtz Professor, who joined the faculty this winter after previously teaching at the University of South Carolina.



## Performance studies awards and honors

*Faculty and alumni of the Department of Performance Studies received numerous honors and distinctions in 2019.*

Northwestern's Puerto Rican Arts Development Initiative was recognized at the September 19 annual gala for Chicago's National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Cultures. Performance studies doctoral candidate Pepe Alvarez (right) presented the inaugural Resiliency in the Arts Award on behalf of professor, department chair, and initiative founder Ramón Rivera-Servera to La Espectacular artist residency founders Nibia Pastrana and Gisela Rosario, who received a grant through the Flamboyant Arts Fund and the NMPRAC to support their work. The initiative helps preserve and recover the island's artists and art by supporting select Puerto Rican artists in developing their work in contemporary performance.

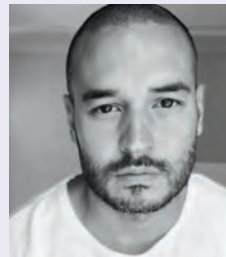


Carlos Montezuma Professor of Performance Studies and African American Studies E. Patrick Johnson was awarded a \$225,000 Sawyer Seminar grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to lead the seminar series "The Black Arts Archive: The Challenge of Transition." The 2020–21 series will comprise three transnational seminars and a summer institute. The grant will additionally fund fellowships for two graduate students and one postdoctoral student. "The Black Arts Archive" Sawyer Seminars will explore challenges in documenting black art production and will seek to create models to improve archival access and translation. Johnson is the founder of the Black Arts Initiative, an interdisciplinary effort to engage and involve artists, scholars, practitioners, and community members to strengthen Northwestern's involvement in black arts. Joining Johnson as Sawyer Seminars conveners are performance studies department chair Ramón Rivera-Servera; art history associate professor Huey Copeland, the Arthur Andersen Teaching and Research Professor in the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences; Krista Thompson, the Mary Jane Crowe Professor in Art History at Weinberg College; and Aymar Jean Christian, associate professor of communication studies and radio/television/film.



E. Patrick Johnson—along with his husband, School of Communication video producer Stephen Lewis—received the AARP Silver Circle Award for their work on *Making Sweet Tea*, the companion documentary to Johnson's seminal book *Sweet Tea: Black Gay Men of the South—An Oral History*. The award honors artists who advance positive representation of LGBTQ people over age 50. AARP presented the award on September 23 at Reeling: The Chicago LGBTQ+ International Film Festival, where *Making Sweet Tea* premiered.

In November, associate professor Joshua Chambers-Letson's book *After the Party: A Manifesto for Queer of Color Life* (NYU Press, 2018) won the American Society for Theatre Research's Errol Hill Award, which recognizes a work of outstanding scholarship in African American theatre, drama, and/or performance studies. In September, *After the Party* won the Association for Theatre in Higher Education's Outstanding Book Award, which honors a work showing the potential to interrupt, change, or challenge theatrical practice and teaching. For the author, *After the Party* was a labor of love and grief. In 2014 he lost two close friends—both queer men of color—to AIDS, and this stark reminder of mortality prompted a dialogue. "I began to write this book to them, as if I could write them back into existence by writing about all these millions of different ways that queers and women of color have used performance to sustain their dead and to make a different world in which their dearly departed *might have* lived on," he says. "The book is done now, and their ghosts still cling to me. But I hope that the people who find it will find it useful as they continue the everyday work of making a dying world more livable." This was Chambers-Letson's second Outstanding Book Award; the first was in 2014 for *A Race So Different: Law and Performance in Asian America* (NYU Press, 2013). He is the only scholar to have won the award twice.



Associate professor Marcela A. Fuentes convened the Summer Institute in Performance Studies, "Bring It In: Transnational Feminisms in Practice," which received applications from graduate students worldwide and featured scholars and artists from Argentina and Puerto Rico. Her book *Performance Constellations: Networks of Protest and Activism in Latin America* was published in October by University of Michigan Press. Also in October, she delivered the keynote address "The Light You Gave Us: Performing Constellations" for the University of Southern California's First Forum 2019 graduate student conference, "Constellations: Connections, Disruptions, and Imaginations in Cinema and Beyond."



## Fun Home actress comes home

The compelling campus performance of *Fun Home* at the Ethel M. Barber Theater on November 22 brought audience members to their feet—but they promptly returned to their seats to enjoy a postshow Q&A with Actors' Equity Association president Kate Shindle (C99), who starred in the Tony Award-winning musical's national tour. Chatting with faculty and the cast on stage, she discussed the value of a Northwestern education, her appreciation of the production's student actors, why *Fun Home* spoke to her, and artists' traits that the industry needs most.

An acclaimed Broadway actress, Shindle returned to campus as the School of Communication's 2019–20 Hope Abelson Artist in Residence in a visit coinciding with the Wirtz Center's *Fun Home* production. Based on the graphic novel by Alison Bechdel, the musical depicts the artist's childhood in a small Pennsylvania town, her coming out to her parents as a college student, and her discovery of the long-held secret that her father was also gay but remained in the closet his entire life.

"There's something to be said for being part of a show that's just good," said Shindle of her time playing Alison. "What makes *Fun Home* so special and made me want to do it so badly is that I really felt compelled to be telling this particular story across America at that particular moment."

Shindle was crowned Miss America in 1998 and wrote about her experience in the memoir *Being Miss America: Behind the Rhinestone Curtain*.

"In terms of what experiences served me well at Northwestern, they all did, including the stuff I didn't get, including learning that I shouldn't be a costume designer or that producing isn't for me," said Shindle. "I fundamentally believe that when you are in a place that makes you study not just theatre but all kinds of other humanities and sciences, that makes you a better artist. You cannot convince me, no matter how hard you try, that taking a sociology class doesn't directly relate to your work on stage."

Shindle offered students a few key words of advice about acting: continuously work on technique, work harder than anyone else (because someone has to get that role), and be a good teammate. "There's this myth of a tempestuous leading actor who throws everything into chaos but when opening night comes, they're brilliant. But nobody wants to work with that person," she said. "So be the person people want in the room."



## Communication studies professor earns prestigious honors

Noshir Contractor—professor of communication studies, the Jane S. and William J. White Professor of Behavioral Sciences in the McCormick School of Engineering, and professor in the Kellogg School of Management—was elected a 2019 fellow of the Association for Computing Machinery, the world's largest educational and scientific computing society, and the American Academy for the Advancement of Science, the world's largest multidisciplinary science society.

Contractor was one of five Northwestern faculty members named to AAAS last year and was the University's only 2019 ACM fellow. He is a leading researcher in the formation, maintenance, and dissolution of social-knowledge networks, including those in business, science, public health, and virtual communities. Head of Northwestern's Science of Networks in Communities (SONIC) lab, he has published hundreds of scholarly articles, earned numerous awards and fellowships, and received research funding from NASA, the Air Force Research Lab, the Army Research Institute, the National Science Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation, and more.



One noteworthy effect of Contractor's scholarship is how it has lent credence to the field of communication as a scientific discipline. His work often straddles computer and social sciences, examining how society affects technology and vice versa. By incorporating communication into what is often the domain of the traditional sciences, he has contributed to opening up the field—and is earning honors for doing so.

"AAAS is what I would call pandisciplinary recognition—it's not restricted to a single discipline," Contractor says. "The people who are making the decision about this are saying that my scholarship or my engagement is something that is not restricted to a single discipline but is being recognized for impacting people across disciplines. It also has the component of outreach built into it; that to me is significant."

Contractor and the other 2019 AAAS fellows—including Northwestern faculty members Jennifer Cole, Vicky Kalogera, Michael Miksis, and Farhad Yusef-Zadeh—were inducted at a February 15 ceremony in Seattle. ACM will recognize Contractor at its annual awards banquet on June 20 in San Francisco.



## New “Aesthetic Emergency” series explores intersection of art and politics

A dramaturg and opera stage director from Croatia. A scholar who explores the relationship between theatre, immigration, and national identity in Turkey. A filmmaker who captures New Yorkers’ fears of a future threatened by climate change. These distinguished artists and scholars are just a few of the dozen featured speakers presenting their work on campus this academic year as part of a new School of Communication initiative, Humanities on the MAP (Media, Arts, Performance).



The initiative aims to examine current issues of urgency and importance; the theme for the inaugural series is “Aesthetic Emergency.” School of Communication faculty are curating events for each quarter of the 2019–20 academic year and expect to present a new theme annually. This year’s series began October 25 at the Block Museum of Art with perspectives on horror by scholar Robin Means Coleman, author of *Horror Noire: Blacks in American Horror Films from the 1890s to Present*. “These events range from talks to artist residencies, lectures, panels, and more, bringing in really interesting people from the US and abroad,” says Tracy C. Davis, Barber Professor of Performing Arts and professor of theatre, English, and performance studies.

The program arose through the School of Communication’s new humanities council, which seeks to encourage cooperation among the doctoral programs in performance studies, screen cultures, and theatre and drama. Although the 12 events slated for this academic year are of special interest to those programs’ students and faculty, the series is open to the entire community, and admission is free.

“I hope the close connections between the practices of making art and the practices of analyzing and studying art in various ways will be clear through this series,” says Davis. “I would like to see it become one of the celebrated hallmarks of the school, something that people look forward to and privilege in their calendars.”  
—Katie Fretland



Nina Kraus with former Northwestern football player Chad Hanaoka (WCAS18, SPS19)

## Research breakthroughs in communication sciences

Two recent studies by communication sciences and disorders faculty are making waves well beyond the scientific community.

Hugh Knowles Chair Nina Kraus, professor of neurobiology and otolaryngology, and her colleagues have found that playing sports can give an athlete a quieter brain. The study showed that athletes’ brains have less neural static, allowing them to tune out background noise better than nonathletes. Working with nearly 500 Northwestern student athletes and 500 nonathletes, Kraus and her BrainVolts lab measured and compared brain waves in response to the sound syllable “da.” Suggesting that individuals struggling with sensory processing may benefit from playing sports, the findings also bolster Kraus’s ongoing efforts to detect and manage concussion through sound processing. “Making sense of sound is one of the hardest jobs we ask our brains to do,” she says, “because sound ingredients move in time, requiring the brain to make computations on the order of fractions of milliseconds.”

Assistant professor Elizabeth Norton, in collaboration with her LEARN lab and with partners in the Institute for Innovations in Developmental Sciences and the Feinberg School of Medicine, found a significant link between children’s severe temper tantrums and language delays. Tantrums and language delays are both early risk factors for later-in-life mental health problems such as anxiety and depression. The study looked at more than 2,000 parents and their children between 12 and 38 months old. “We knew from many other studies in older children that language problems and mental health problems occur together more frequently than would be expected, but we didn’t know how early this relationship began,” Norton told Northwestern Now. This research helps Norton and colleagues assemble guidelines for parents and caregivers on “when to worry” about language development and irritability.

## Alumni receive Emmy nominations

School of Communication alumni were well represented among the 2019 Emmy Award nominees at the 71st annual ceremony on September 22.

- CBS’s *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, hosted by **Stephen Colbert (C86, H11)**, was nominated for outstanding variety talk series, outstanding directing for a variety series, and outstanding interactive program. In addition, frequent on-camera performer **Jen Spyra (GC12)**, stand-up comedian **Emmy Blotnick (C10)**, and Colbert were among the program’s nominees for outstanding writing for a variety series.
- **Ashley Nicole Black (GC08)** and **Nicole Silverberg (C13)** were nominated for outstanding writing for a variety series for their work on *Full Frontal with Samantha Bee*, which was also nominated for outstanding variety talk series. Black is now a writer on NBC’s *Bless This Mess* and a writer and cast member on the HBO comedy series *A Black Lady Sketch Show*, created by Robin Thede (Medill01).
- The TruTV series *Billy on the Street*, starring **Billy Eichner (C00)**, was nominated for outstanding short form variety series. This was Eichner’s fourth nomination. Beyond the show, he enjoys a thriving career in TV and film, including his recent appearance as Timon in Disney’s live-action *The Lion King*.
- Fox’s *Rent*, produced by **Kenneth Ferrone (C04)** and directed by **Michael Greif (C81)**, was nominated for five awards, including outstanding variety special (live) and outstanding production design for a variety special. Greif won acclaim and a Tony nomination for directing *Rent* on Broadway.
- **Jill Leiderman (C93)** is the executive producer of *Jimmy Kimmel Live!*, a nominee for outstanding variety talk series.
- NBC’s *American Ninja Warrior*, with **David Markus (C95)** as coexecutive producer and **Anthony Storm (C92)** as executive producer, was nominated for the fourth straight year in the outstanding competition program category.
- *RuPaul’s Drag Race*, with **Bruce McCoy (C92)** as coexecutive producer, was nominated in several categories, including outstanding competition program and outstanding directing for a reality program.
- **Seth Meyers (C96, H16)** and frequent on-camera contributors **Jenny Hagel (GC09)** and **Ally Hord (C05)** were nominated for outstanding writing for a variety series for *Late Night with Seth Meyers*. He was nominated in the same category for *Documentary Now!*, also a nominee for outstanding variety sketch series with Meyers as an executive producer. In addition, Meyers and **Eli Bolin (C00)** were nominated for outstanding original music and lyrics for *Documentary Now!*
- NBC’s *This Is Us*, with **KJ Steinberg (C95)** as coexecutive producer, was nominated for the third consecutive year for outstanding drama series.



## Joseph Jefferson Awards honor alumni and faculty

Winners at Chicago’s 2019 Equity Joseph Jefferson Awards included faculty member Amanda Dehnert (with Andre Pluess) for *The Steadfast Tin Soldier* (original music in a play) and alumni Lili-Anne Brown (C95) for *Caroline, or Change* (director, mid-size musical), Michael Mahler (C04) for *Miracle* (new work–musical), Bruce Norris (C82) for *Downstate* (new work–play), and Arnel Sancianco (GC17) for *Photograph 51* (scenic design–large). Other Jeff nominees included faculty members David Catlin (C88), Halena Kays (C96), Ana Kuzmanic (GCo4), Todd Rosenthal, and Mary Zimmerman (C82, GC85, GC94) as well as alumni William Boles (GC15), Dara Cameron (C06), Amber Mak (C03), Jess McLeod (GC14), Jordan Ross (C79), Joe Schermoly (C07), Scott Weinstein (C10), and Jonathan Wilson (GC83). Victory Gardens Theater received three nominations for *Indecent*, which featured the work of faculty member Cindy Gold and alumni Mara Blumenfeld (C92), Matt Deitchman (C12), Noah LaPook (C18), Catherine LeFrere (Co8), and Andrew White (C87).





**Masi Asare** (PhD, New York University) wrote *Mirror of Most Value: A Ms. Marvel Play* for Marvel Spotlight, a new series of one-act plays aimed at teens. An exciting expansion of the Marvel Universe, Asare's play centers on Kamala Khan, a Muslim teenager in Jersey City who is contending with identity, tradition, and the fight for justice—and homework.



**Clayton Brown** (MFA, Northwestern), with Monica Long Ross (GC03), codirected the documentary film *We Believe in Dinosaurs*, which will receive its broadcast premiere as part of PBS's *Independent Lens* series on February 17. The film depicts the building of the \$120 million Noah's Ark at rural Kentucky's Creation Museum, designed to prove the Bible's scientific and historical veracity. In November the film won the St. Louis Film Critics' Joe Williams Award for best documentary at the St. Louis Film Festival. Slated for international distribution by Tel Aviv-based Cinephil, the film is available on iTunes, Amazon, Google Play, Xbox, Playstation, FandangoNOW,

iNDemand Movies EST, Dish, iNDemand Movies VOD, VUDU, and Vubiquity Movies.



**Larissa Buchholz** (PhD, Columbia University) is spending 2019–20 on Northwestern's Qatar campus, where she is teaching communication courses. Also at NU-Q is assistant professor **João Queiroga** (GC16), an MFA documentary media graduate teaching courses in documentary media production.

**David Catlin** (BS, Northwestern) directed his adaptation *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* at Chicago's Lookingglass Theatre. The spring-summer production featured scenic design by Daniel Ostling (GC96), costume design by Sully Ratke (GC16), lighting design by William C. Kirkham (GC12), stage management by Mary Hungerford (C11), dialect coaching by senior lecturer **Linda Gates**, and a cast that included Cordelia Dewdney (C16) as Mary Shelley.



**Leora Cherney** (PhD, Northwestern), the Coleman Foundation Chair, professor of physical medicine and rehabilitation, and professor of communication sciences and disorders, received the Honors of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association at



A scene from David Catlin's adaptation of *Frankenstein*

its annual convention in Orlando in November. ASHA's highest distinction, the Honors recognizes members for distinguished contributions to communication sciences and disorders. Representing Illinois, Cherney was additionally recognized by the ASHFoundation's clinical achievement awards, whereby state speech-language-hearing associations may honor one individual from their respective states. Cherney founded and directs the Shirley Ryan AbilityLab's Center for Aphasia Research and Treatment, which offers the specialized Intensive Comprehensive Aphasia program and weekly aphasia community groups. Her credits include 5 published books, 14 book chapters, 75 peer-reviewed scholarly articles, 3 aphasia treatment software programs, and a self-report aphasia assessment. Since 2000 she has given more than 85 invited presentations and 127 peer-reviewed presentations around the world.

**Aymar Jean Christian** (PhD, University of Pennsylvania), associate professor in the Departments of Communication Studies and Radio/Television/Film, was awarded a \$50,000

Field Foundation of Illinois grant by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, honoring him as one of 14 inaugural Leaders for a New Chicago. Announced in June, the no-strings-attached award recognizes leaders and organizations in the fields of justice, art, and media and storytelling. Christian shares the prize with OTV | Open Television, the Chicago-based distribution platform he founded to generate web series by emerging intersectional artists.

**Stephen Cone** (BA, University of South Carolina) wrote two episodes for the second season of the Sundance series *This Close*, the first television series created by and starring deaf actors. Cone's 2017 film *Princess Cyd*, starring Jessie Pinnick (C16), was named to *Vanity Fair's* "The 10 Best Movies of the 2010s: Richard Lawson's List."

The play *Reborn* by **Zayd Dohrn** (MFA, New York University) played a limited run last summer at New York City's SoHo Playhouse on the 10th anniversary of its off-Broadway debut at the Public Theater's Summer Play Festival.



**Tracy Davis** (PhD, University of Warwick) organized a spectacular welcome for 99 first-year Northwestern theatre majors last October. "They enjoyed a backstage tour of one of Chicago's largest and most complex theatres, the Lyric Opera House," Davis explains. "Tours of the grid—located in the 12-story fly tower—costume department, musicians' pit, and dressing rooms gave insights into how the spectacles are supported and coordinated."

**Roger Ellis** (MFA, San Diego State University) is the 2019 recipient of the Earle Gister Fellowship through the National Alliance of Acting Teachers. The fellowship is awarded annually to support the advancement of one exceptional acting teacher at an early career stage. In Chicago, Ellis directed *Get Out Alive*, the final show of Steppenwolf Theatre Company's LookOut 2019–20 series, after workshoping it on campus last May as part of the school's American Music Theatre Project. Ellis was also the movement director for last fall's Atlanta premiere of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, a coproduction with Horizon Theatre Company and Aurora Theatre Company.

**Melissa Foster** (MM, Northwestern) presented lectures and master classes on "Healthy Singing of Contemporary Musical Theatre: Legit, Mix, and Belt" last summer in Hong Kong and Guangzhou, China. The presentations were filmed for a televised documentary.

Foster then headed to the West Coast as keynote speaker for a National Association of Teachers of Singing conference on "Singing Pop for the Musical Theatre." In August, hosted by Broadway Evolved, she gave a master class with Broadway performer Betsy Wolfe. Foster has continued her work with Lyric Opera of Chicago, presenting the workshop "Vocal Pedagogy for Contemporary Musical Theatre and Pop Musicals" and preparing for the Lyric-sponsored Empower outreach project.

**Cindy Gold** (MFA, Professional Actor Training Program, Alabama Shakespeare Festival) acted last summer in radio/television/film adjunct faculty Kris Swanberg's feature film *I Used to Go Here*, slated for a 2020 release. Gold also did voice-over work for **David Tolchinsky's** horror short *Cassandra* and professor Spencer Parson's short *Dream Police*. She played Bunny in Peninsula Players' summer production of *A Murder Is Announced*, performing with one of her former acting

students, Will Skrip (C11). Gold will be seen in season four of FX's *Fargo*.



**Kyle Henry** (MFA, University of Texas, Austin) won the Fiction Feature Gold Award for *Rogers Park* at the University Film and Video Association's 2019 conference in Minneapolis last summer.

**Bonnie Martin-Harris** (PhD, Northwestern) received the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association's Media Outreach Champion Award for her efforts to foster media coverage of communication disorders and the professionals working to prevent and treat them.



**Stephan Moore** (PhD, Brown University) again curated the annual sound art exhibition *Sonic Innovations*, which reopened on June 15 at the Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts in Katonah, New York. Last spring his band, Evidence, released its fifth full-length album, *Go Where Light Is*, as a cassette and digital download on the Philadelphia-based label Dead Definition. An installation version of the album was created for the Katonah Museum of Art. Moore participated in an intense two-week summer residency at Amherst College with the group A Canary Torsi to prepare the performance piece *Last Audience* for its mid-October premiere at Manhattan's New York Live Arts. Also, he put together HearRing, a Chicago-centric version of Unpopular Music, and presented it through the Chicago Park District's Night Out in the Parks program; the final showing was September 21. In November he performed a set with Sonic Youth guitarist Lee Ranaldo and noise-cellist Leila Bordreuil at Brooklyn's Issue Project Room.

The new installation *Fiber Optic Ocean in Virtual Reality* by **Ozge Samanci** (PhD, Georgia Institute of Technology) opened last summer at SIGGRAPH Art Gallery in Los Angeles. Her earlier installation *You Are the Ocean* was seen in the ACM Creativity and Cognition Art Exhibition *Ecologies of Transformation* last June at the University of California, San Diego.



**Anna Shapiro** (MFA, Yale School of Drama) will direct the Chicago run of the new Elton John musical *The Devil Wears Prada* before taking the show to Broadway for the 2020–21 season.



A paper by **Michelle Shumate** (PhD, University of Southern California) (above) was accepted by *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*. Among other findings, Shumate and her colleagues' research concluded that Chinese and US NGOs have very similar levels of capacity—a surprise in light of the supposed lack of capacity in the Chinese civil society sector. Additionally, Shumate continues to work on a study of 26 cross-sector (i.e., business, government, and non-profit) networks—ranging in size from 10 to over 300 organizations—that seek to make a difference in their communities' educational outcomes. This is the largest study of community networks and their outcomes ever conducted; some of the research was published in the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. With Katherine Cooper of DePaul University, Shumate is working on a book, *Networks for Social Impact*, detailing how nonprofits, businesses, and government agencies work together to tackle social issues and the strategies that most often result in social impact.



**Elizabeth Son** (PhD, Yale University) won the 2019 Outstanding Book Award from the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language, and Gender for *Embodied Reckonings: "Comfort Women," Performance, and Transpacific Redress*. In addition, the book was a finalist for the Theatre Library Association's George Freedley Memorial Award.

**David Tolchinsky** (MFA, Yale University) was named best director of a crime short at Greece's Anatomy: Crime & Horror International Film Festival in Athens for his film *Cassandra*. The film also screened at Nightmares Film Festival in Columbus, Ohio, garnering a best-actress nomination for 13-year-old Ruby Dalton; Tolchinsky was interviewed about *Cassandra* and teaching horror for the podcast *Candy Coated Razor Blades*. Tolchinsky's script for the in-development TV series *Heal* won the best TV pilot grand prize at the Rhode Island International Film Festival and was nominated for best short sitcom at the Houston Comedy Film Festival.

**Debra Tolchinsky** (MFA, School of the Art Institute of Chicago) produced and directed the short *Contaminated Memories* as part of her forthcoming Kartemquin Films documentary *True Memories and Other Falsehoods*. The short was featured last June in the *New York Times* Op-Docs series, prompting coverage in *Newsweek*, *Latin Times*, *Metro UK*, and other international publications. On August 27, Kelly Richmond Pope and Bill Kresse spotlighted Tolchinsky and *Contaminated Memories* on their WGN radio show. The short screened last fall at the 2019 Chicago International Film Festival.

## Speech, swallowing, and Parkinson's disease

Angela Roberts (PhD, University of Western Ontario) authored the revised Parkinson's Foundation *Speech and Swallowing* patient education booklet, published in 2019. Available to family members, those living with Parkinson's disease, and healthcare professionals, this internationally distributed publication serves as the primary education source to guide care choices and symptom self-management for the speech and swallowing issues affecting 90 percent of those living with Parkinson's disease.

Last fall, Roberts was the leadoff speaker for the Parkinson's Foundation Expert Series, the webinars for which are broadcast around the world. The previous fall at the first Parkinson's Foundation Caregiver Summit, she delivered a live keynote that was broadcast in Spanish and English across seven countries and is now available on DVD in both languages through the foundation.

Roberts is collaborating with Alice Gabrielle Twight Professor Bonnie Martin-Harris and engineering professor John Rogers on developing and piloting a wearable sensor for recording speech, social interaction, and swallowing behaviors in the Northwestern University Center for Speech, Language, and Learning and in home environments.

Last summer, four of Roberts's student lab participants attended the 2019 world congress of the International Association of Parkinsonism and Related Disorders in Montreal—the largest student contingent of any lab represented at the conference. Two won travel awards, and one won a poster award.

Roberts and Northwestern clinical faculty Kristen Larsen, in partnership with Pamela Palmentera and Linda Egan of the Parkinson's Disease and Movement Disorders Center at Northwestern Medicine as well as with Chicago's Second City, are launching a speech and communication intervention for those with Parkinson's disease that uses improvisational theatre techniques to teach speech and communication strategies. The program for people with Parkinson's and their partners may help foster increased voice volume, improved conversation interactions, and better quality of life.

*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](mailto:dialogue@northwestern.edu).*

### 1950s



**Robert Conrad (C55)** received the Early Settlers Association of the Western Reserve's annual Herrick Memorial Award in July in recognition of his work promoting the city of Cleveland. Conrad is the president and cofounder of northeast Ohio classical music station WCLV, on the air since 1962. He has been the producer and commentator of the Cleveland Orchestra radio broadcasts since 1965, likely making him the longest-serving national classical music commentator in the history of American radio. In 2013 he and his stockholders donated WCLV to Cleveland's public broadcaster Ideastream to preserve classical music radio in northeast Ohio.

### 1960s

**Judi Sheppard Missett (C66)**, founder and CEO of Jazzercise, authored the book *Building a Business with a Beat* (McGraw-Hill Education, 2019), offering insights into how she pioneered the aerobic fitness movement.

### 1970s



**Stuart N. Brotman (C74)** is a 2019–20 fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, DC. He is based in the center's science and technology innovation program, focusing on digital privacy policy issues.

**Felicia Shaw (C77)** chairs the board of directors of FOCUS St. Louis, an area leadership organization. She is the executive director of the Regional Arts Commission of St. Louis.

**Matt Hamblen (C78)** is the editorial lead at FierceElectronics, the latest addition to the FierceMarkets brands, which focus on websites and webinars in telecom, IT, and finance.

### 1980s

**Tricia Guggenheim (C82)** joined the board of directors of the American Traditions Vocal Competition. She has taught in elementary and middle schools for 31 years.

**Dwayne A. Gab (C83)** is associate judge of the Seventh Judicial Circuit in Illinois. Previously he was with the Sangamon County state's attorney's office in Springfield.

**Peter Baskin (C84, KSM93)** was named chief product officer of the newly merged Montage, a solution to engaging, interviewing, and hiring candidates, and Shaker International, a provider of predictive talent assessment.

**Kim Kelley (C84)** is the company manager for the musical *Hades-town*, playing at Broadway's Walter Kerr Theatre. At the 2019 Tony Awards ceremony, the show won eight Tonys, including the award for best musical.



**Scott Tyree (C84)** became the world's 257th master sommelier and the first from Maine. A wine consultant, Tyree began his career at Chicago's Shaw's Crab House, then was the wine director at Tru, and later moved to Michelin-starred Sepia. His industry honors include *Wine Spectator's* grand award and an unprecedented three Jean Banchet Awards as best sommelier. He was also a James Beard Award semifinalist for outstanding wine service.



Actress and producer **Allyson Rice (C86)** directed and starred in a music video for her comedic "revenge rap" song "Fine, I'll Write My Own Damn Song"—aimed at her rap-artist son, Zane Taylor, when he invited other family members to perform in some of his songs but excluded her. The video's festival appearances include the Hollywood Reel Independent Film Festival, which will also feature her son's video for "Get Away."

**Kevin Gore (C88)**, who heads Warner Music Group's Arts Music division, has partnered with Warner Chappell Music and Build-A-Bear Workshop to launch Build-A-Bear Records.

**Todd Hartman (C89)** was elected to the board of the Retail Litigation Center, the legal arm of the Retail Industry Leaders Association. He is general counsel and chief risk and compliance officer at Best Buy.

**Mike Sands (C89, KSM96)** is chief investment officer at Alpine Consolidated, a Washington-based investment firm. He most recently cofounded and served as CEO of Signal, a software-as-a-service technology company.

### 1990s

**Rebecca O'Grady (C90)** serves on the board of La-Z-Boy as a member of the audit and the nominating and governance committees. She has held senior leadership roles at General Mills, Global Haagen-Dazs, and Yoplait USA.





From left: Curtis Moore, *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*’s “Silver Belles,” Leroy McClain, and Thomas Mizer

**Chuck Carey (C92)** launched Compadre, a creative marketing agency. Previously Carey was executive vice president and managing director at the marketing agency mOcean.

**Thomas Mizer (C93)** and writing partner Curtis Moore (BSM95) wrote five original songs for season three of Amazon’s award-winning series *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*. Three of the five songs are featured on the third-season soundtrack, available on Amazon, iTunes, and more.

**Kiva Allgood (C95, KSM07)** was appointed to the board of directors of Synaptics, a developer of human interface solutions. She serves as a global business unit head for Ericsson.



**Attica Locke (C95)** has won critical acclaim for her latest novel, *Heaven, My Home* (A Highway 59 Novel), published in September. The *New York Times* praised its “bewitching story and

luscious language,” and the *Wall Street Journal* called it “atmospheric.” Locke previously wrote *Blue Bird, Blue Bird*, a 2018 Edgar Award winner; *Pleasantville*, winner of the 2016 Harper Lee Prize for Legal Fiction; Edgar Award nominee *Black Water Rising*; and the national bestseller *The Cutting Season*, recipient of the Ernest J. Gaines Award for Literary Excellence. The former radio/television/film major’s screenwriting and producing credits include Netflix’s *When They See Us* and the upcoming Hulu adaptation of *Little Fires Everywhere*. Additionally, Locke will serve as showrunner and executive producer for the forthcoming Netflix limited series *From Scratch*, adapted from her sister Tembi Locke’s memoir.

**Marcus Folmar (C96)** has debuted the second season of his award-winning web series *Alley Way*. The series follows Bernie (played by Folmar), a down-on-his-luck TV writer who seeks inspiration in the alley adjacent to his apartment. Winner of a 2017 Los Angeles Web Series Festival award, *Alley Way* features **John Marshall Jones (C84)** and Emmy nominee **Naomi Grossman (C97)**; **Sharif Atkins (C97)** directed two second-season episodes. “I didn’t do any auditions for *Alley Way*,” says Folmar, who founded the

Booking Room in 2009 to offer audition coaching. “Between working with people, attending friends’ shows, and my clients at the Booking Room, I’ve already got some of the best talent I could ever hope to find right in my personal contacts. *Alley Way* affords me an outlet to let them shine.” Folmar is copresident of the Northwestern University Entertainment Alliance West and performs regularly with the Upright Citizens Brigade.

**Tina Ventura (C98)**, senior vice president for investor relations at Horizon Therapeutics, was honored last May as a 2019 Healthcare Businesswomen’s Association Luminary at the 30th annual HBA Woman of the Year event in New York.

2000s

**Lin Classon (GC01)** was named to *Crain’s Chicago Business*’s 2019 Tech 50 list, which highlights emerging Chicago tech stars. Classon is the head of public cloud product at Ensono, a computer services firm.

**Russell Heller (C01)** joined the Burr & Forman law firm as an associate in its creditors’ rights and bankruptcy practice group in Wilmington, Delaware.



Marcus Folmar, John Marshall Jones, and Naomi Grossman in a scene from *Alley Way*

**Jordan Horowitz (C02)**, the Academy Award–nominated producer of *La La Land*, is set to produce an untitled election comedy for Amazon Studios starring Ike Barinholtz, who cowrote the script with David Stassen. Horowitz is also producing *I’m Your Woman*, starring Rachel Brosnahan.

**Ryan A. Swift (C02)** was sworn in as an associate judge of the Seventeenth Judicial Circuit in Illinois. He was previously affiliated with Altamore & Associates in Rockford.

**Jeff Deutchman (C05)** is executive vice president of acquisitions and production for NEON and previously held senior positions at IFC Films and Paramount Pictures. Over the course of his career, he has championed and acquired such films as the Oscar-winning *I, Tonya*, the Oscar-nominated *The Lobster*, Palme d’Or winners *Parasite* and *Blue Is the Warmest Color*, and documentary hits *Three Identical Strangers*, *Cave of Forgotten Dreams*, and *Apollo 11*. Every eight years he moonlights as creator-producer of the ongoing Election Day Series of feature documentaries shot all over the United States on presidential election days.

**Cassy Osterkamp (C05)** was appointed director of the personnel division for the State of Missouri. She was recommended by Governor Mike Parson and confirmed by the State Senate.

**Kelly O’Sullivan (C06)** wrote, executive-produced, and starred in *Saint Francis*, an independent film directed by her partner, Alex Thompson. Winner of the 2019 SXSW Narrative Feature Audience Award, *Saint Francis* is due for a 2020 theatrical release. O’Sullivan and Thompson were featured among *Filmmaker* magazine’s 25 New Faces of Independent Film 2019.



**Ebony Utley (GC06)** (above) is the author of the 2019 book *He Cheated, She Cheated, We Cheated: Women Speak about Infidelity* (McFarland). Drawing on over 50 interviews with US women of various ages, racial backgrounds, educational attainments, and

sexual orientations, the book is the most comprehensive and diverse published study of women and infidelity to date.

**Lamis Eli (C07)** joined the Taft Stettinius & Hollister law firm as an attorney in its intellectual property litigation practice.

**Blake Spence (C07)** is the director of musical theatre at Madison (New Jersey) High School. The school’s 2019 spring musical, *Bright Star*, received 11 nominations for the 2019 Paper Mill Playhouse Rising Star Awards, which honor achievement in high school musical theatre throughout New Jersey. *Bright Star* won six awards, including outstanding production of a high school musical and Spence’s win for outstanding achievement by a teacher or outside director. Paper Mill Playhouse’s producing artistic director is **Mark Hoebee (C82)**.

**Karen Attiah (C08)**, the global opinions editor for the *Washington Post*, was named 2019 Journalist of the Year by the National Association of Black Journalists at its annual conference in Miami in August. She was praised for her “bold,



The Great Purple Way

Playbill.com released its annual list of the 10 Most Represented Colleges on Broadway, and Northwestern again made the list, this year at number eight. The cited alumni actors for the 2018–19 season are **Fred Applegate (C77)** and **Brian d’Arcy James (C90)** (above) (*The Ferryman*), **Kate Baldwin (C97)** (*Hello, Dolly!*), **Antonette Cohen (C06)** (*Wicked*), **Jeremy Cohen (C04)** (*Ain’t Too Proud*), **Anna Eilinsfeld (C08)** and Brian Ogilvie (BSM03) (*Pretty Woman*), **Ben Estus (C13)** (*The Book of Mormon*), **Penny Fuller (C59)** and Mary Beth Peil (BSM62) (*Anastasia*), **Adam Kantor (C08)** and Katrina Lenk (BSM97) (*The Band’s Visit*), **Erik Lochtefeld (C96)** (*King Kong*), **Scott Mikita (C88)**, Carrington Vilmont (BSM00), and **Jim Weitzer (C96)** (*The Phantom of the Opera*), **Kristine Nielsen (C77)** (*Gary*), **Ned Noyes (C00)** (*The Play That Goes Wrong*), **Amber Owens (C02)** and **Brad Weinstock (C06)** (*Aladdin*), **Shona Tucker (C85)** (*To Kill a Mockingbird*), **Jonathan Wagner (C01)** (*School of Rock*), and **Will Carlyon (C13)**, **Madeline Weinstein (C14)**, and **Alex Weisman (C10)** (*Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*).

fearless, and timely work.” In addition, longtime CBS Chicago reporter **Dorothy Tucker (C78)** was named the new NABJ president, a post she will hold until at least 2021.

**Tyler Beattie (C08)** cowrote the book, music, and lyrics for the new musical *Bliss*, which premiered in January at Seattle’s 5th Avenue Theatre.

**Ashley Nicole Black (GC08)** costars in HBO’s *A Black Lady Sketch Show*, created by fellow alumna Robin Thede (Medillo1). The show premiered August 2 to critical and viewer raves and was promptly picked up for a second season.

2010s

**Morgan Elise Johnson (C11)** was named one of *Newcity Chicago*’s 2019 Chicago Screen Gems. With Tiffany Walden (Medill11),

Johnson cofounded the TRiiBE, a Chicago-based media outlet with a mission of amplifying young African American voices.

**Luis Sotelo (C11)** was promoted to vice president for diversity, equity, and inclusion at Doane University. Previously he was its chief diversity officer.

**Jennifer Grace (GC12)** was promoted to clinical director of the Newport-Mesa Audiology Balance & Ear Institute, where she has served on the staff for eight years.

**Scott Kozak (GC12)** was appointed director of investor and media relations at Assure Holdings, a Colorado-based company providing intraoperative neuromonitoring services. He previously served in management roles at Children’s Hospital Colorado and FTI Consulting.



## Alumni achievements



**Katie Marovitch (C12)** is the creator, writer, executive producer, and star of *Kingpin Katie*, a new series that premiered in June on Dropout, CollegeHumor's subscription comedy platform. The dark comedy follows the hapless, inexperienced Katie as she accidentally stumbles her way up the drug cartel ladder. The series concept arose from a throwaway joke in a 2016 CollegeHumor sketch that caught on among the channel's fans and continued as a running gag in subsequent sketches featuring Marovitch.

**Kimberly Nelson (C12)** is president of the Kemin Textile Auxiliaries business unit of Kemin Industries, a global ingredient manufacturer. Based in San Marino, California, Nelson was previously general manager of Kemin Textile Auxiliaries in India.

*Heroes of the Fourth Turning*, a play by **Will Arbery (GC15)** that ran last fall at New York's Playwrights Horizons, was selected in October as a *New York Times* Critics' Pick. The play focuses on four alumni of a conservative Christian college grappling with current events and how to reconcile their education with the broader culture.

*This Party Sucks*, a play by **Sofya Levitsky-Weitz (GC15)**, was named to the Kilroys List of 2019 most-recommended plays by female writers.

**Nick Lehmann (C16)** wrote *Like Son, Like Father*, a gay father-son comedy that is being developed by NBC. The story centers on an out and proud young man who must mentor (and live with) his newly out father. Lehmann will executive-produce the show alongside Matt Hubbard.

*Seeds*, a film by **Brittany Shyne (GC16)**, was one of 25 nonfiction films awarded a Sundance Institute Stories for Change grant.



The short documentary *Stay Close*, which premiered at the 2019 Sundance Film Festival, was selected for inclusion in the *New York Times* Op-Docs series and was one of 10 films shortlisted for an Academy Award nomination in the documentary short subject category. Written and directed by **Shuhan Fan (GC16)** and **Luther Clement (GC17)**, produced by **Nevo Shinaar (GC17)**, and coproduced by **Ashley Brandon (GC17)** with music by **Xiameng Summer Lin (GC17)** and sound mixing by **Lianna Squillance (GC19)**, the film tells the story of Brooklyn fencer Keeth Smart's against-the-odds journey to a silver medal at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. *Stay Close* was funded in part by the Tribeca Film Institute and is featured in PBS's *POV Shorts*.

**Jesseca Ynez Simmons (GC16)** won the Documentary Short Silver Award for her program thesis documentary *Emerald Ice*.

**Max Freeman (GC18)** began a tenure-track faculty position in communication sciences and disorders at St. John's University. He conducts research on bilingualism and typical and atypical child language development.

The play *They Could Give No Name* by **Exal Iraheta (GC19)** will be produced as part of the 2019 Ignition Festival at Chicago's Victory Gardens Theater.

*Correction: The summer 2019 issue of Dialogue misidentified the actress pictured on page 35 as Charlotte Booker. We regret the error.*

## In memory



**Roy V. Wood**, the School of Communication's dean from 1972 to 1988, died on October 1 at age 80. Wood grew up in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and earned his undergraduate, master's, and doctoral degrees in communication studies at the University of Denver. At a retreat shortly after earning his PhD, Wood met—and impressed—James McBurney, then dean of Northwestern's

School of Speech. McBurney invited Wood to join the Northwestern faculty and in 1968 named him assistant dean. Upon McBurney's retirement in 1972, 32-year-old Roy Wood became Northwestern's youngest dean. As dean he expanded faculty recruitment, addressed imbalances in faculty compensation between the School of Speech and other University schools, and championed a more robust strategy to engage alumni. But he is best remembered for a dramatic addition to the school's facilities.

Shortly after becoming dean, Wood spearheaded a campaign to fund what would become the Theatre and Interpretation Center, now the Virginia Wadsworth Wirtz Center for the Performing Arts. This sprawling, beautifully equipped facility fundamentally changed the school's theatre education. To celebrate the center's opening, Wood rallied faculty, trustees, administrators, and alumni to produce the 1980 televised gala *The Way They Were*. Cohosted by Charlton Heston and Ann-Margret and featuring many other celebrated alumni, it was syndicated nationally and seen in three prime-time broadcasts. Northwestern's eminence as a dramatic-arts powerhouse was beamed into countless American living rooms, and the impact was immeasurable.

Wood left Northwestern to become the provost of the University of Denver, where he retired at age 75. He also served on Colorado's Independent Ethics Commission and the Denver Board of Ethics, among many other affiliations. Survivors include his wife, Consuelo Bennett; daughters (with first wife Mary Alice Tudor) Angela (GC98) and Shelley Wood; stepdaughters Alicia, Carolyn, Jennifer, Monica, Courtney, and Meredith; sister Shirley Lohse and her family; grandchildren Eliot Wood, Elizabeth Parker, Willoughby DeLisle, and Luca, Elsa, and Nico Rodriguez; and great-grandchildren River and Henry.



Atlanta's Ebenezer Baptist Church, and conducting one of the last

**Sander Vanocur (C50)**, longtime television journalist and NBC's White House correspondent during the Kennedy administration, died on September 16 at age 91. As a TV newsman, Vanocur was especially prominent during the turbulent 1960s—reporting from the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago, interviewing Martin Luther King Jr. at

interviews with Robert Kennedy before his assassination. Vanocur may be best remembered as one of four panelists for the first general-election presidential debate—the first of the four televised 1960 Kennedy-Nixon debates.

Vanocur was born in Cleveland and raised in Peoria, Illinois. After graduating from Northwestern, he served in the US Army and attended the London School of Economics before beginning his journalism career covering city news for the *New York Times*. He then made the leap to TV, spending more than a decade at NBC. After news positions at PBS and the *Washington Post*, he served as a correspondent for ABC News until 1991.

Vanocur was married to writer and fashion designer Edith Pick until her death in 1975. He later married Virginia Backus Vanocur, who survives him, along with his two sons, Chris and Nicholas, and his stepdaughter, Daphne Wood Hicks.



**Robert M. Rechnitz (C54)**, founder and executive director of Two River Theater, died on October 12 at age 89. After receiving his bachelor's degree in communication from Northwestern, where he studied speech and theatre under Alvina Krause, the Colorado native earned a master's degree in English literature at Columbia University, enrolled in the famed

Actors Studio as a student of Lee Strasberg, and earned a doctoral degree in American literature at the University of Colorado Boulder. He then joined the faculty of New Jersey's Monmouth College (now University), where he taught for 35 years, eventually rising to full professor. With his wife, Joan, he founded Two River Theater in Red Bank, New Jersey, in 1994. The company was itinerant until opening its permanent home in 2005; Rechnitz directed the two-theater complex's debut production and cowrote *Lives of Reason*, produced by Two River in 2016. He is survived by his wife, Joan; their children, Adam (Elizabeth Fordi), Joshua, and former Cherub Emily (John Paladino); and their grandchildren, Max and Flora Paladino and Esme Rechnitz.



**Andrea Gronvall (C76)**, a film critic for the *Chicago Reader*, died on September 4 in Chicago at age 67. Gronvall wrote for the *Reader* for 15 years, filing her last review shortly before her death. A Chicago film fixture, Gronvall previously served for 17 years as a producer (often mediating between battling critics) for *At the Movies*, the syndicated Tribune

Entertainment show that originally starred film critics Gene Siskel and Roger Ebert. She left the show in 2003 and joined the *Reader* as a critic in her own right the following year. A native Chicagoan, Gronvall (above at lower right) majored in radio/television/film at Northwestern before embarking on a career in public relations. She is survived by her brother, Jeffrey.

## NUEA West

On August 27 **NUEA West** members enjoyed meeting top-tier entertainment industry professionals at the New Hollywood Mentorship Event, a one-of-a-kind opportunity to join like-minded content creators in a small group setting and seek advice from professionals on career-advancing strategies. Director **Richie Keen (C96)** (*It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*, *Fist Fight*) was the event's NUEA West liaison and one of the keynote mentors.

On October 1 NUEA West was one of the main hosts of Hollywood Now, a mixer that gathered alumni from top entertainment schools. Industry professionals from NYU, USC, Emerson, UCLA, AFI, and Chapman joined Northwestern alumni at Hollywood's exclusive No Vacancy bar for an evening of drinks and socializing.

In an October 18 NUEA West theater outing, Hollywood's Hudson Guild Theater presented a benefit performance of the new musical *Good Fishermen Know a Lot about Sex*, cowritten by **Alexa Karas (C11)** and featuring NUEA West member **Dorothy Dillingham Blue (C96)** in a lead role. Proceeds went toward opioid abuse prevention efforts in Los Angeles and Chicago.

On November 7 NUEA West presented the 14th installment of its successful Storytelling Event series. Ten brave Wildcats shared true autobiographical stories live on stage, each story relating to the central theme "Scares!" Produced by Joe Hauler, this edition of the biannual series featured performances by **Jake Daniels (C19)**, **Terry Franklin (C84)**, **Zack Hall (C03)**, **Bryan Holdman (C94)**, **Lisa Kaminir (C82)**, **Max Kliman (C19)**, Tim Smight (Medill75), and **Chamblee Smith (C15)** as well as stories by the show's directors, Rati Gupta (WCAS06) and **Jackie Laine (C08, KSM17)**. The 90-minute show was followed by a reception where the storytellers mingled with approximately 80 attendees, many of them NUEA West members.



In memory

**Constance Ratcliffe (C41, GC45)** on June 13 at age 100 in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida

**Mary Jean Waddell (C41)** on June 8 at age 99 in Grand Rapids, Michigan

**Virginia Boyd (C44)** on May 31 at age 95 in Chicago

**Mary Frances (Larsen) King Meer (C44)** on July 6 at age 96 in Bellevue, Washington

**Lyla M. Anderegg (GC47)** on September 17 at age 96 in Minnesota

**Mary J. Baumer (C47)** on September 16 at age 94 in Arlington Heights, Illinois

**Al Burton (C48)** on October 22 at age 91 in San Mateo, California

**Roger C. Hill (C48, GC50)** on October 13 at age 93 in Asheville, North Carolina

**William B. Branch (C49)** on November 3 at age 92 in New Rochelle, New York

**Jack D. Clay (C50, GC54)** on September 2 at age 92 in Seattle

**Anne Crane (C51)** on September 29 at age 90 in Des Moines, Iowa

**Joan Sorgel (C51)** on July 10 at age 89 in Brentwood, Tennessee

**Beverly I. Klein-Simon (C53)** on June 1 at age 88 in Chicago

**Ann Kronick Lebed (C55)** on August 15 at age 85 in Scottsdale, Arizona

**Robert I. Maurais (C55)** on July 6 at age 88 in Mount Dora, Florida

**Gilbert E. Erickson (GC56)** on June 23 in Wisconsin

**Diana D. Norlander (C56)** on July 14 at age 86 in Hilton Head Island, South Carolina

**Louise Fidel Pongetti (C56)** on May 30 at age 84 in Albuquerque

**Janet M. Eason (C57)** on October 23 at age 84 in Zionsville, Indiana

**Valda H. Carter (C59)** on July 10 in California

**Carol Mikedes (C59)** on May 28 at age 81 in Morristown, New Jersey

**Susan Maria Vardon (C62)** on July 29 at age 78 in Auburn, California

**Marjory H. Catoire (GC63)** on July 7 at age 90 in Overland Park, Kansas

**Clifford M. Hunter (C63)** on October 24 at age 78 in Santa Maria, California

**Scott L. Lange (C68)** on August 1 at age 73 in Cincinnati

**Sally O. Robinson (C69)** on August 14 at age 72 in Columbus, Ohio

**Mary (Casey) Pastore (GC70)** on July 28 at age 71 in Loves Park, Illinois

**Celeste Canham Jr. (GC81)** on June 23 at age 61 in Warwick, Rhode Island

**Mark E. Leipold (C82)** on October 12 at age 59 in Oak Park, Illinois

**George C. Nelson (GC00)** on September 1 at age 60 in Evanston

Communicating gratitude

A Cherub legacy

Robert Hiatt never forgot his first summer at Northwestern.

“The Cherubs program launched him,” says his widow, Kaye Hiatt (WCAS57). “The opportunity that afforded him made all the difference.”

Bob Hiatt (C57) grew up a middle-class kid in Evanston, where Northwestern loomed large but wasn’t a viable option for him financially. Then he spent a summer as a Cherub, winning an Edgar Bergen Scholarship to attend the University, where he studied radio/television/film and served as president of his fraternity and a member of the student governing board.

Right after graduating, Bob was hired by Procter & Gamble. “They said they really never hired undergraduates who didn’t have business degrees,” Kaye recalls. “That was the beginning of his career, and he attributed so much of it to his time at Northwestern.” He moved up the marketing ladder to positions at Playtex, Kentucky Fried Chicken, American Cyanamid, and Maybelline Cosmetics, where he served as CEO until his retirement. Bob went on to share his expertise as a member of the School of Communication’s National Advisory Council.



He reconnected with Kaye Karlan Chapman at a 1993 Northwestern reunion. The following year they were married in Northwestern’s Shakespeare Garden. They moved to Mill Valley, California, in 2002 and traveled extensively until his death in 2018.

Kaye earned a JD at National University in 1994 and previously ran a small San Diego–based manufacturing company. Passionate about philanthropy, she has devoted time to women’s and children’s causes as well as the California Historical Society, the Marin Community Foundation, and the Marin Theatre Company, where she served on the board of directors.

In 2017 the couple established the Robert N. and Kaye Karlan Hiatt Endowed Cherub Scholarship Fund to support students enrolled at Evanston Township High School and/or residing in Evanston. The gift was made in honor of their 60th class reunion.

“We think about having an impact, and we want this to make an impact on the right students so that this may make a difference in the rest of their lives,” says Kaye. “Cherubs, for Bob, was extremely meaningful, and I hope this would be equally so for future recipients.”

In addition to the Cherubs fund, in 2007 the couple instituted the school’s Robert and Kaye Hiatt Fund for Research on Media, Technology, and Society. More recently, Kaye established a comedy-arts bequest in her name and that of her late daughter, Cynthia Maryl Chapman, who was known for her quick wit and one-liners. For students interested in comedy, the fund will help provide the kind of transformative experiences the Hiatts enjoyed on campus.

“Northwestern,” she says, “is a place we hold dear.”



Cherubs in the 1944 dramatics division on the steps of Annie May Swift Hall





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