

UB Knightlines



Ignore Him at Your Peril

In 1966, a young theologian named Richard Rubenstein wrote a book called *After Auschwitz* and promptly caused an uproar by asserting that God wasn't the choreographer of history after all. Fifty years later, Rubenstein, now President Emeritus of UB, explains why.

President's Line



Neil Albert Salonen

As you'll read in this issue, the UB renaissance is continuing to build momentum! University Hall officially opened in September. The much-anticipated residence hall will help to accommodate our growing enrollment, which this year reached almost 5,700 students. From rising freshmen to doctoral candidates, students are coming to UB to enroll in an increasing array of academic and professional degree programs in computer science and engineering, the health sciences, business, and other academic disciplines. Our mission is more important than ever: we are dedicated to offering students skills that will enable them to become leaders who will make significant, positive contributions in a variety of professional fields.

That's why each fall I look forward to the Distinguished Alumni Dinner with great anticipation. During this special event, the UB Alumni Association confers its highest honor, the Distinguished Alumni Award, on alumni who have leveraged their education, passion, and expertise to become game changers. I think you'll be impressed to read about year's inductees ("Honoring Four," page 4).

Supporting excellence begins before students arrive on campus. Retention remains a critically important issue to everyone at UB. We continue to increase resources into programs ensuring that every student who applies to UB achieves his or her goal of graduating. Under the guidance of Jeff Johnson, our new assistant provost for student success, the innovative Bridge Program launched this summer. Over the course of several weeks, our staff equipped incoming freshmen with practical academic and life skills they need to successfully transition to university life. Read about these exciting initiatives in the pages that follow.

Alumni help UB enrich students' experience. As I meet those UB graduates who support our work on campus, I'm struck with how personally committed they are in providing their gifts. In "Why They Give" (page 8), UB alumni explain how they feel connected to their alma mater, and how that bond grows stronger over time. This year over a thousand alumni and their guests came on campus for Homecoming Weekend. They reconnected with old friends and got to know current students at several events, ranging from a technology carnival to fun runs and a jazz jam session. If you didn't have the opportunity to join Homecoming this year, please remember the doors are always open. All of us on campus would love to show you University Hall and all that is happening to make UB better than ever.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Neil Albert Salonen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Neil" being the most prominent.

Neil Albert Salonen
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President
Neil Albert Salonen

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Editor's Note

Walking through campus sometimes feels like a trip through an Instagram feed. Blink, and images change. Heading to the library, I find the concrete path outside my office has been enhanced as an inviting brick pathway, meandering past flower beds that, thanks to dedicated grounds crews, always seems to be in bloom. Bulldozers from a construction site, here one day, are gone the next, replaced by a new residence hall that not only accommodates students but enhances the beauty of the entire neighborhood. There are new faces, too. Groups of freshmen, eager and young, appear on campus to participate in summer programs just weeks after members from the Class of 2016 received their degrees.

The results of UB's evolution are visible, but the work required is all too often done behind the scenes. Months before students geared up for the fall semester, for instance, staffers like Assistant Dean of Students Craig Lennon and Assistant Provost for Student Success Jeff Johnson worked to create a new Bridge Program, featured on page 29, to make it easier for incoming freshmen to succeed academically. Vice President for Facilities George Estrada shepherded the completion of University Hall (read about it on page 22) and is focusing on a new Master Plan that will, in coming years, further develop the campus as a premier center for teaching, research, and entrepreneurship. University Relations staff and student workers dedicated months to plan Homecoming Weekend, which this October was attended by more than 1,000 alumni.

Still, there is always room for help. The Annual Fund helps to underwrite several critical projects, and with your participation, will enable UB to continue its efforts on behalf of students. To find out more or to contribute, you can visit www.bridgeport.edu/giving or call (203) 576-4696. Your gift to the Annual Fund will enable UB to offer a high-quality, affordable education to students for years to come. I think you'll agree, that's one thing we don't want to change.



Leslie Geary
Founding Editor



Pipelines

Kudos!

Dear Editor,

As an alumnus of the University and a former educator for 41 years, I would like to extend my congratulations to Jahana Hayes for her achievement of the 2016 National Teacher of the Year ("She Did It!", Summer 2016).

Obviously, this speaks volumes for the University's programs of studies and for the professors who taught her, along with her diligent application to her academic work.

Kudos to all. I am very proud of my Alma Mater and, of course, of Ms. Hayes.

Edward J. Rowe '64, '66
Calabash, NC

Homecoming

Dear Editor,

My daughter and I were given a personal tour of the newly restored Bates Hall during Homecoming Weekend. The restoration, headed by [Vice President of Facilities] George Estrada, is mind-blowing! Every little detail of the Victorian mansion has been restored to its original look. It's a real treasure.

The rest of the campus looks phenomenal! Our tour continued with a visit to the majority of buildings on campus, including the brand new University Hall. What a palace for upper class-men!

Larry Santora '69, '81
Fairfield, CT



Dear Editor,

I can't thank staffer Kelly Champion-Socol and student workers in University Relations, along with the Music Department, enough for their work in helping to make our tribute concert to former music faculty member Neil Slater such a success over Homecoming.

I just returned from dropping the Slaters off at the airport; they enjoyed their time with us in a major way. Conversely, the alumni were thrilled to have an opportunity to reconnect with Neil as he impacted so many of our lives, what career paths we chose, how we blossomed as musicians—I could go on! Everyone appreciated the brunch and the opportunity to play some music together while reconnecting with their fellow alumni and former professor. I know I had a blast, and from what I've seen on Facebook, it's apparent that anyone who came for the event did, too.

Mark Vickers '79
Cromwell, Connecticut

Ed. Note: Dr. Vickers is a professor of music at UB.

Have an opinion?

We'd love to hear from you! Please send Letters to the Editor to knightlines@bridgeport.edu or to Knightlines, Cortright Hall, University of Bridgeport, 219 Park Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06604. Please be sure to include your full name, contact information, and UB class year if applicable. Letters may be edited for length, clarity, style, or accuracy.





Honoring Four

Award winners are recognized by the Alumni Association.

By Leslie Geary

The University of Bridgeport Alumni Association honored four with its greatest prize, the Distinguished Alumni Award, on September 14.

“Each year, the UB Alumni Association awards an annual scholarship to an undergraduate whose academic achievements and community involvement exemplify our greatest hopes for today’s students. At the same time, we look forward to honoring individuals whose exceptional success and contributions to their communities are nothing less than awe-inspiring,” said Alumni Association President Dennis Brotherton ’86. “Our 2016 award winners are extraordinary ambassadors for the University of Bridgeport, and we are thrilled to honor them.”

Above, from left, Distinguished Alumni Jahana Hayes ’14, Jim Forde ’14, Judy Thompson ’76, and Bill Manning ’87, ’89

Jim Forde ’14
School of Education

Jim Forde’s breathtaking career in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) began as boy, when he spent countless hours with his father building radios, televisions, and other contraptions.

For more than 20 years teaching science and computing, Forde’s enthusiasm for playing with gadgets, coupled with his steadfast determination to make STEM education accessible to all children, has made him immensely popular with students. The Stamford, Connecticut, school district—where Forde is currently an administrative intern and science teacher at Scofield Magnet Middle School—named him its 1995 District Teacher of the Year.

In early 2016, Forde was honored at the White House as a Champion of Change for Computer Science Education.

“Our 2016 award winners are extraordinary ambassadors for the University of Bridgeport, and we are thrilled to honor them.”

Forde earned his Certificate of Advanced Study (Six-Year Degree) from UB's School of Education.

Jahana Hayes '14 School of Education

Jahana Hayes earned her Certificate of Advanced Study from the School of Education in 2014. At one point in her life, this academic goal seemed nearly impossible.

Hayes, a Waterbury, Connecticut, native, was a teenage mother. No one in her family had attended college and therefore didn't know how to help her apply to schools. Her grandmother wasn't able to get to parent-teacher conferences on her behalf.

Yet Hayes was determined to teach. Encouraged by her community, including teachers who once loaned her books, Hayes graduated from Crosby High School, worked her way through college, earned several degrees, and became, quite literally, America's Best Teacher.

This May, President Obama handed Hayes a crystal apple and named her the 2016 National Teacher of the Year. She also is the 2016 Connecticut Teacher of the Year.

As America's Top Teacher, Hayes has vowed to promote an agenda that put students and service first. “We need to graduate citizens. We need to graduate people who care about their neighbors, who will be conscientious, productive members of society,” she said. “This is the nation I want to see.”

Bill Manning '87, '89 Ernest C. Trefz School of Business

As a sophomore at UB, alumnus Bill Manning helped the men's soccer team clinch a NCAA quarterfinal berth. His off-the-field accomplishments span a 23-year career in executive positions in the National Football League with the Philadelphia Eagles and the National Basketball Association's Houston Rockets, where he was credited for tripling season tickets and sponsorships for the franchise. A former Major League Soccer Executive of the Year, Manning, 50, currently oversees all team and business

operations for Toronto FC, where he was most recently appointed president in the fall of 2015.

A native of Massapequa, New York, Manning continued his playing career after college and won a U.S. Open Cup with the Brooklyn Italians in 1991, and played professionally in the United Soccer League with the Penn-Jersey Spirit, Valley Golden Eagles, and New York Fever. Manning also holds a U.S. Soccer National “A” Coaching License.

He earned a Bachelor of Science in Management and a MBA from UB, where he was previously inducted into the Athletics Hall of Fame in 2006.

Judy Thompson '76 School of Nursing

Judy Thompson was well into a seven-year career as a lab scientist when she enrolled at the University's School of Nursing to earn her Associates Degree. “It was the best decision I could have ever made,” said Thomson. “UB was my stepping stone to a career I love and still practice to this day.”

A registered CRNA (Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist) and widely recognized expert in anesthesia, Thompson served as director for the Hospital of St Raphael School of Nurse Anesthesia from 1985 to 2013. During her tenure, the school graduated over 300 nurse anesthetists.

In 2013, Thompson left St. Raphael's to help start a new doctoral program in nursing with a specialty in anesthesia at Quinnipiac University, where she currently serves as an assistant clinical professor of nursing. She has been appointed as a faculty member at the Frank Netter School of Medicine at Quinnipiac as well.

In addition to her teaching, Thompson also gives anesthesia at Hartford Hospital and volunteers doing per diem work at many hospitals throughout Connecticut.

In 2014, she was awarded Program Director of the Year by the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists; it is the highest honor a CRNA program director can receive in their career. ■

Business major Mendel Murray's quest to work in professional sports gets a big assist from the UB Alumni Association.

Hoop Dreams



The future looks bright for Mendel Murray, with Alumni Association President Dennis Brotherton '86.

By Leslie Geary

Long before he clicked open the e-mail notifying him that he had won this year's \$10,000 UB Alumni Association Scholarship, Mendel Murray used to get very different kinds of academic notices. There were the high school report cards, littered in Fs, which he hid from his parents, and later, a blizzard of rejection letters from various colleges and universities.

"It was an experience I never want to have again. That feeling—"

Murray, now a junior at the Trefz School of Business, shakes his head, then continues. "—I didn't know who I was, but I knew who I *wasn't*. I used the experience to motivate myself."

When the University accepted Murray as a freshman in 2014, he seized the opportunity to change his life.

His stellar academic record has landed him on the President's List every semester he's been at UB—and was just one reason the Alumni Association awarded him its scholarship at the Distinguished Alumni Dinner on September 14. Given for two consecutive semesters in \$5,000 increments each, the Alumni Association Scholarship recognizes undergraduate students who demonstrate financial need, have a GPA of at least 3.0, and who are actively engaged on campus or in the community.

"We only wish we could do more, and we are working on trying to increase our capacity to help. I would hope that all potential donors to the University would truly understand the money that is given to the scholarship fund does go

100 percent to that fund and to the next bright young hope here at UB," says Alumni Board President Dennis Brotherton '86.

Since his arrival at UB, Murray has worked to become the person he wants to be—a team manager in the NBA, a husband who can provide for his family, and a role model in his community.

Just days into his freshman year, for instance, Murray introduced himself to UB men's basketball coaches Mike Ruane, Kranthi "Crunch" Senadhi, and Will Logan, asking if he could volunteer as team manager. "I just kept showing up, and they kept giving me bigger and bigger responsibilities."

For the past two years, Murray has spent approximately 12 hours a week attending to a multitude of tasks: getting players' jerseys from the laundry, running the clock, videotaping games, helping players if they need a rebound partner, mopping sweat from the floor—the kind of jobs "other people might think are beneath them," says Murray.

"But I don't think that way. You got to start somewhere."

It's not just about pushing a mop. The daily exposure to players and coaching staff has helped him to develop interpersonal skills required of any leader, be it a manager in the NBA, marketing chief, or CEO, he adds. "Every year we get new players. I talk a lot of smack to them. We play one-on-one and develop a relationship. They've gained a lot of trust in me, but when practice starts, it's serious game face.

I have to divide work and playtime, friendship and being a boss.”

His efforts have not gone unnoticed. “One of Mendel’s greatest assets is not only being accepted by coaching staff but also being accepted by the players,” says Senadhi, who is associate head coach. “He’s there every day, showing the kids that they can be part of something bigger. He’s reiterating our message. He has a presence, and one thing we know about Mendel, if we ask him to do something like clean the sweat off the floor, he gives 100 percent. He has initiative.”

School of Business Assistant Dean Tim Raynor agrees. “Mendel’s very coachable. He’ll come into my office three or four times a month. ‘Can I ask you a question?’ And we talk about the right step to develop himself. That’s what I love about him. He has great people skills. No matter where he ends up, he’ll be very successful.”

That seriousness of purpose is a far cry from high school, when Murray says he was too busy trying to handle bullies and social pressures to think about academics.

It’s different at UB, he says. Business school professors like Raynor welcome him into their offices to discuss his future, and the guys on the basketball team are driven, too.

“One of the reasons I wanted to get into sports is the work ethic for athletes is crazy,” he said. “To be able to love what you do and perfect your craft—I think that’s incredible.” ■

“To be able to love what you do and perfect your craft—I think that’s incredible.”



Why They Give



“Since I went to college on scholarships, and Andre went with the help of the GI Bill, we both appreciate the value of monetary assistance. And since we met at the University of Bridgeport, it has always been special to us. Therefore, we have been donating to the UB Alumni Association Scholarship fund for over ten years. Also, Andre’s company has had a matching gift program, which helped to make our donation even more valuable.”

—Deanna '58 and Andre Guilbert '60

“In 2007, my wife worked on the movie *Revolutionary Road* on the UB campus and told me the school had revitalized. She put my name on the mailing list, and I was so thrilled to see that UB was making a go of it! I got myself up there for Welcome Back Weekend. That’s when I saw what was going on at UB and met some of the kids. The more I saw, the more I thought, ‘These kids are doing something good here.’ I give every year so someone, without the wherewithal of my wife and I, can benefit from our donation. I give because I want the school to keep improving—to keep things moving forward.”

—Roland Brooks '78



“When I was a student, I benefitted from scholarships so I know the importance of every dollar you get. For every dollar you give, you’re taking a dollar off of someone’s student loan or tuition. That’s why I choose to donate to the scholarship. It’s going directly to the students, and you’re helping someone who really needs it. When you give a scholarship, you’re giving someone an opportunity to achieve their goals and their dreams. That’s what you’re gifting, whether it’s \$10 or \$10,000.”

—Gabriella Marinaccio '10

For more information about giving to the Alumni Association Scholarship, contact alumni@bridgeport.edu or (203) 576-4696.

UB's computer science faculty teach the next generation of aspiring pros.

Big Data Big Future

By Christine Hempowicz and Leslie Geary

In the 1999 film *The Matrix*, electronic monitors displayed images of iridescent green symbols that cascaded like water droplets down a massive screen. Movie viewers couldn't make sense of the ceaseless stream of digital symbols, but the movie's characters could. After all, it was sci-fi, not the real world.

That's changing, thanks to big data analytics, a field that's quickly turning yesterday's sci-fi fantasies into today's reality, according to UB computer science and engineering professor, Dr. Jeongkyu Lee.

"Today's natural resource is data, and like the Gold Rush, raw, natural resources are only as valuable as they are accessible and usable," said Lee. "A skilled workforce of data miners and big data analysts are indispensable in this data-drive era. In fact, data mining provides the foundation to further develop artificial intelligence and machine learning, other hot commodities of this era."

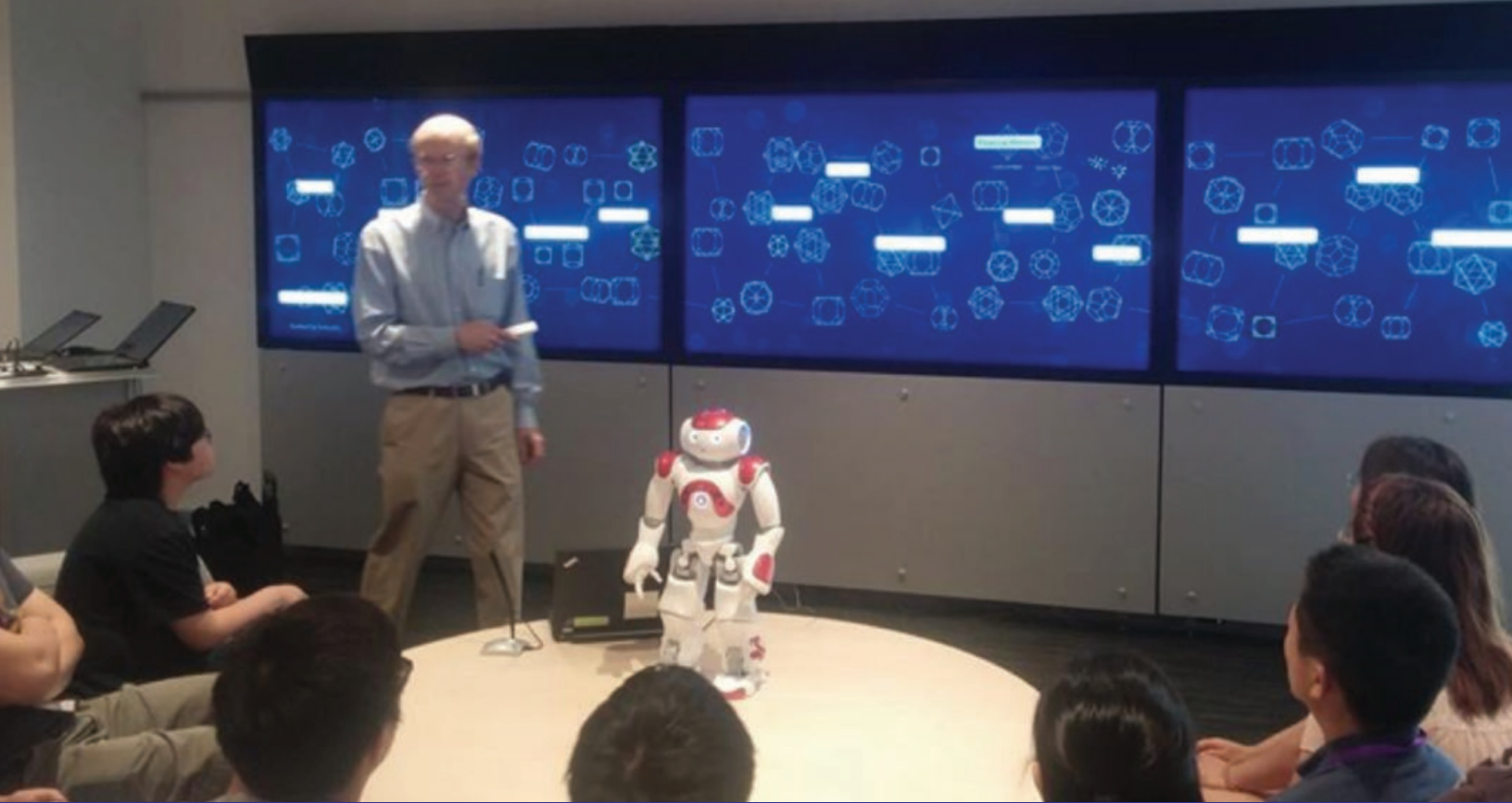
Lee speaks from experience. He regularly teaches courses in big data analytics at UB and mentors a solid cadre of graduate students in thesis topics under the umbrella of his Multimedia Information Group (MIG) Lab. The lab was recently moved to the newly renovated engineering labs in UB's South Hall, and is

commonly filled with graduate students being mentored by Lee and fellow faculty.

At the same time, Lee, who is very active in local community outreach, is sought after by parents who want their children to receive important, foundational educational opportunities in computer science—offerings that aren't typically offered at most high schools—*before* they start college.

So this summer, Lee launched a camp called Young Data Science (YDS) for High School Students. One of just a few computer science summer programs for high school students offered by university faculty in the U.S., the YDS curriculum content is akin to an AP computer science high school course or an undergraduate introductory course.

"I was getting calls from parents. 'My son is very interested in computer science. He's taken courses [online] through Kahn Academy, but he wants more. Who can help?'" said Lee. "I believe it's our responsibility to reach out with our experience and knowledge to the community. With YDS, I am trying to give students the opportunity to meet researchers and professors they can keep in touch with. I want them to get to know about data science."



The camp exposed high school students to Java, an object-based programming language; a data-driven programming language known as Python; and the field of analytics in which data is examined and used for a variety of purposes, from making companies run more efficiently to tracking diseases or anticipating markets. Luncheon lectures were delivered by UB faculty and visiting professors from CUNY, and this year's campus also featured a field trip to the IBM Thomas J. Watson Research Center in Yorktown Heights, New York, to confer with scientists about their work.

These behind-the-scenes visits helped students to think more clearly about their future.

"The IBM visit was pretty amazing," said Eddie Li, a high school senior from Fairfield, Connecticut. "We got to see the super computer, which was pretty cool, and we had lunch with the scientists and talked to them about what they do, what they studied in college."

Students also applied newly acquired Python programming skills to research projects.

(continued on page 12)



UB professor Jeongkyu Lee (bottom) and other pros taught students about data analytics this summer at UB. They also toured IBM's research center in New York (top).





“I was getting calls from parents. ‘My son is very interested in computer science. He’s taken courses [online] through Kahn Academy, but he wants more. Who can help?’”

For Lee, it was all hands on deck as he engaged UB faculty, students, and professors from other universities to mentor these budding computer scientists. The core of the camp was the hands-on research, which was carefully packaged and presented in such a way to challenge camp participants within a structured framework.

“We took university-level problems that had already been researched, and modified them for the high school level,” Lee explained. “Each research package was comprised of a modified project description, sample data set, and a solution that wasn’t released to camp teams until they had completed their projects.”

The inaugural group of nine participants was assigned to four research projects primarily focused on what teens know best: social media.

High schoolers Eunji Lee and Danny Jeong searched for malicious phrases, such as “you have won,” using Python to identify spam and other aggressive social media messaging.

“We also looked at other factors, like

accounts that follow and unfollow users in a short amount of time, status updates that are links, not actual information. We’re also looking to see if there’s a big discrepancy between the number of accounts being followed and not being followed,” said Jeong as he and Lee presented their findings. “For example, this Twitter account has 200 followers, but it’s following 1,000.”

Of course, computer languages and data analytics have a multitude of applications, and those applications may be what drives the interest of younger students. YDS participant Samuel Kim, an 18-year-old Stamford teenager, explained that he wants to make movies—great 3-D blockbusters, to be exact. but in order to do that, Kim said he needs to learn a lot more about maximizing the power of computer-based animation programs used to make films like *Zootopia* or *The Secret Life of Pets*.

“I need to learn to extend their capabilities of what normal people can’t do,” said Kim. “I read when they were making *Zootopia*, they had



issues making the animals' hair smoother. They had to call in programmers to help."

As students like Kim seek skills and answers, Lee remains ready to lead the way. He plans to continue to divide his time between teaching and conducting research through his MIG Lab and mentoring future generations of data analysts at the high school and university levels. Along with the collaboration of key engineering colleagues, he is eyeing several grants to help fund his growing enterprise.

"Right now, YDS is a small program, but I believe it can be expanded," he said.

Stay tuned. ■



High school student Eunji Lee harnessed data to mine for malicious social media.

In 1966, a young theologian named Richard Rubenstein wrote a book called *After Auschwitz* and promptly caused an uproar by asserting that God wasn't the choreographer of history after all. Fifty years later, Rubenstein, now President Emeritus of UB, explains why the book continues to cause a stir.

Ignore Him at Your Peril

By Leslie Geary

"It began with a walk in Düsseldorf."

Richard Rubenstein, ordained rabbi, Harvard-educated theologian, internationally acclaimed scholar, author, and president emeritus of the University of Bridgeport, has been asked what inspired him to write *After Auschwitz*.

After 50 years, it's still in print—a miracle for *any* book, much less one about religion. Only *After Auschwitz* isn't any old book about religion. With its publication in 1966, Rubenstein took a long, hard look at the Holocaust, squared it against God's covenant with the Jews, and concluded that the evil inflicted upon 6 million souls could not possibly be part of some divine plan. In doing so, Rubenstein delivered one of the most shattering and controversial blows to Judeo-Christian beliefs about divine will, and in process, found himself thrust in the middle of a phenomenon called the Death of God movement, which in those days was kicking up a frenzy of heat and noise.

"Do you really want to know?" Rubenstein asks.

Well, then, fine. He'll tell you. First, a sip of Earl Grey from a Sèvres tea cup. Then, as he peers into the sunlight slicing bright through the windows of his Fairfield, Connecticut, home, Rubenstein begins to tell his story.

(continued on page 16)



Clockwise from upper left: Lutheran priest Heinrich Gruber, who got Rubenstein thinking about God's role in history; "I regard the conversation I had with him one of the most important in my career," says Rubenstein. Rubenstein with one of his biggest fans, the American novelist William Styron. Rubenstein was in West Berlin when the Berlin Wall was erected. The American tanks and armed forces "were not going to abandon West Berlin," he remembers. WWII veterans, many injured, in Berlin in 1961.



Rubenstein in Italy, where he lived with his wife Betty in the 1970s.

The walk

It was 1960. Rubenstein had just earned his PhD in theology from Harvard and was vacationing in Europe with his family. One day, he decided to tour Düsseldorf, and off he went. As he walked about the city, he passed the offices of a Jewish newspaper. Curious and eager to talk, he introduced himself to its editors and settled in for a good chat. One thing led to another, and when the editors invited him to an upcoming conference in Berlin, Rubenstein said, “Sure!”

He was invited back to Berlin the following August, just as the Berlin Wall was being erected. Careful to stay on the Western side of the construction, amid tanks and electro-charged uncertainty, he forged a friendship with Heinrich Gruber—yes, *that* Heinrich Gruber—the Lutheran priest and Nazi opponent who had survived Dachau concentration camp.

“We started to talk, and we got into the subject of God and the Holocaust,” Rubenstein recalls. “At one point, Dean Gruber said to me, ‘You know Dr. Rubenstein, it was God’s will to punish the Jews at Auschwitz.’”

“Gruber was not a Nazi,” Rubenstein clarifies. “He spent three years in concentration camps for helping the Jews, but he believed in the idea that you find in Judaism and Christianity that God is the lord of history. Whatever happens is the reflection of his will. But I told him, ‘I’m sorry. I can’t buy that.’”

It was an interesting conversation, and when Rubenstein returned to the University of Pittsburgh, where he served as its chaplain, he wrote a small article for a scholarly paper about the exchange with Gruber.

“I thought, ‘That’s the end of it.’”

The talk

Rubenstein adjusts his suited-and-tied frame in a wingback chair.

“Let me tell you about that,” he says, picking up an unexpected strand and gesturing to an oil

painting hanging on the wall next to him. It’s a picture of young woman and a cherub emerging from the shadows of a dark woods, where they dance gaily between Bacchus and another god. The girl’s dress, goldenrod satin, complements the wingback’s pale yellow damask. But the naked cherub, the soft flesh of the girl’s exposed thigh juxtaposed against the gods’ twisted, muscular torsos—the delirious sensuality of the scene—well, it’s not what you’d expect to find in a theologian’s home—or most academics’ homes, for that matter.

Then again, Rubenstein has a fondness for challenging assumptions. He’s pleased to tell you that he found the painting in a used-furniture shop in Italy, when he and his wife Betty, an art historian, lived across the Arno from the Uffizi.

“I didn’t realize what it was until I called Betty and described it to her,” he says.

Turns out, the painting’s a 16th-century study of Titian’s *Bacchus and Ariadne* which hangs in the National Gallery in London.

Value, it seems, is only recognizable to few.

Which leads him back to the matter of *After Auschwitz*. That tiny article he wrote about his

“At one point, Dean Gruber said to me, ‘You know, Dr. Rubenstein, it was God’s will to punish the Jews at Auschwitz . . . I told him, ‘I’m sorry. I can’t buy that.’”

conversation with Gruber? It may have seemed inconsequential, but it immediately caught the attention of William Hamilton, one of the most important Death of God theologians in the 1960s. Well, when Hamilton saw Rubenstein’s article, he pounced. Calling it an “example of Death of God theology,” he cited it in one of his own articles.

“When you write something, you never know who is going to read it,” says Rubenstein “Suddenly, I’m going from somebody who is barely noticed to someone who’s being invited to the important conferences . . . To be a rabbi and identified as a Death of God theologian! The whole thing was wild.”

Rubenstein wound up being invited to a conference at Emory University to respond to Thom-

as J. Altizer, who with Hamilton was among the most vocal proponents of death-of-God theology.

When Altizer got up and proclaimed the death of God was a “happy event,” Rubenstein’s response was immediate and crushing.

“I got up and said, ‘The death of God is a cultural event, not something that happens to God, and it’s a *tragic event*,’” he recalls.

When session was over, it was clear not everyone agreed with me, but they took me seriously.”

He left Emory with a deal for his first book: *After Auschwitz*.

“It seemed too good to turn away,” Rubenstein recalls. “So I did it. I was convinced the book wouldn’t sell.”

The kid from New York

It was a startling miscalculation for someone whose own fascination with religion began early. Rubenstein was 15, in fact, when he contemplated becoming a minister at All Souls Church, a bastion of Unitarian liberalism on Manhattan’s Upper East Side. (When a friend warned him he would have to change his name, Rubenstein backed off. “I couldn’t rat on my religion,” he says.)

Nonetheless, All Souls—and religion in particular—enticed a teenage Rubenstein. Perched on Lexington Avenue at 79th Street, All Souls was a short walk from the brownstone apartment where Rubenstein lived with his family. They could have afforded a more capacious home in the Bronx or Brooklyn like other Jewish families, but the Bronx and Brooklyn didn’t have P.S. 6, one of the best public schools in the city.

So at the insistence of Rubenstein’s mother, Sara, the family stayed, negotiating flights of stairs in a tiny walk-up nestled among high-rises whose occupants, and rarefied lives, were zealously guarded by phalanxes of uniformed doormen.

“For a long time, I wondered why my mother preferred to live in an old rickety brownstone walk-up,” Rubenstein says. “Eventually, I figured it out. In New York, your school was determined by the location of your home, and what my mother wanted was the best possible education for her children.”

Sara Rubenstein was an indomitable force, and by Rubenstein’s account, one of his most pivotal influences. The daughter of Lithuanian Jews, she leveraged her determined intelligence to earn a college degree from New York,



“She was trying to be as American and up-to-date as possible,” Rubenstein says. “She didn’t want us to have what she thought of as ‘Jewish

Rubenstein, at home in September. A few days before he appeared at a commemoration event for *After Auschwitz* that was held at UB.

The naked cherub, the soft flesh of the girl’s exposed thigh juxtaposed against the gods’ twisted, muscular torsos—the delirious sensuality of the scene—well, it’s not what you’d expect to find in a theologian’s home.

neuroses.”

That meant Rubenstein didn’t have a bar mitzvah. He didn’t learn to read Hebrew until he was 18. He was served bacon.

“It all had the wrong effect,” says Rubenstein.

While he ultimately abandoned the notion of becoming a Unitarian pastor, Rubenstein nonetheless decided to devote his life to the study of religion. “I’ve never regretted it,” he says.

Rubenstein received his B.A. from the University of Cincinnati and a M.A. and PhD in theology from Harvard, where he studied existentialism with Paul Tillich and devoted his thesis to “Psychoanalysis and the Image of Evil in Rabbinic Literature.”

“I adopted a scientific approach,” he says of his sweeping interests. “I didn’t want to take sides.”

The message

Others were decidedly more partisan. It wasn’t just a matter of religion. As Rubenstein had asserted at Emory, a cultural phenomenon was beginning to roil the status quo.

“If Richard had written *After Auschwitz* in 2016 instead of 1966 it wouldn’t have had the

(continued on page 18)



Rubenstein at work in his Fairfield home. He continues to teach at UB.

same kind of impact,” says John Roth, Edward J. Sexton Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at Claremont McKenna College. “He was at the forefront of a kind of change of consciousness in European and American culture.”

Roth, who was a philosophy student at Yale in 1966, read *After Auschwitz* soon after it was published. People recall student sit-ins and the counter-culture of the mid-1960s, Roth says, but “church-going was at a high level. Mainstream Protestantism was in its heyday, ”

“If you ignore what Richard is saying, you do so at your peril. He has an insightful voice that you can’t afford to overlook.”

Attendance at synagogues and Jewish faith ran high, too. Today, 20 percent of Americans say they have no religion at all. Among Jews of all generations, the figure is 22 percent, according to Pew Research. Pare it down by generation, though, and results reveal a shifting, Ninety-three percent of Jews born between 1914 and 1927, leaders in their communities back in the 1960s, identify as Jewish on the basis of religion. But among Millennials born after 1980, only 68 percent identify as Jews by religion, and 32 percent say they have “no religion” at all.

Books like *After Auschwitz* and the Death of God movement both ushered in and were possible because of this cultural and religious shift.

The results were seismic.

On Good Friday in April 1966, for instance, *Time* published a cover story, “Is God Dead?” The question—printed with blood-red letters on a pitch-black cover—mentioned Rubenstein and catapulted a previously abstruse discussion from the halls of academia into the incendiary mainstream. (The issue of *Time* made a cameo appearance in *Rosemary’s Baby*.) Meanwhile, CBS anchorman Walter Cronkite devoted two nights to Death of God theology on his show. *Newsweek*, the *New York Times*, *U.S. News and World Report*, and other media followed suit.

A few months later, *After Auschwitz* appeared

in bookstores. In it, Rubenstein once again rejected the notion that God was some master of history. But that didn’t mean he agreed that God was dead. As he wrote:

[B]elief in the sovereign God of covenant and election requires interpreting events such as the extermination of European Jewry and the bitter strife of our times as God’s providential way of leading humanity to its final redemption. Many thoughtful men and women find this idea too great a strain on their credulity. Their experience of the death of God rests upon their loss of faith in the transcendent God of History, but not necessarily in the loss of the sense of the sacred.

Explains Roth: “Richard’s book calls into question the idea of the God of History, the notion that God is involved in the way things unfold, that there is a providential quality, that everything happens for a reason—that’s what he was calling into question—that God would have a plan for Jewish people.

It’s controversial, to be sure, Roth concedes, but “if you ignore what Richard is saying, you do so at your peril. He has an insightful voice that you can’t afford to overlook.”

Overlooked wasn’t the issue. Misunderstood was. *After Auschwitz* got plenty of attention. Rubenstein was profiled by *Time* and *Playboy*. If he wanted to distinguish himself from the Death-of-God camp, the media coverage didn’t help. (*Time* ran his photo under the caption “Holy Nothingness.”)

Criticism among the Jews (“the only ones who didn’t want to talk to me.” Rubenstein says dryly) was infused with angry incredulity.

“A lot of people found that they really couldn’t understand me,” Rubenstein says. “‘How can a rabbi be a Death of God theologian?’ Well, if they *read* me, they would see I wasn’t a death of God theologian.”

But he understands them.

“If you’re brought up in a Jewish home or a Christian home and you think God is a master of history and he’s responsible for history, then what Dean Gruber said to me in Düsseldorf is what you’re *supposed* to believe,” he states. “The trouble is, a lot of people have a hard time with that.”

A sip of tea, now cool, and then a last, withering blow.

“Often they suppress it.”



Rubenstein (right) was named the Robert O. Lawton Distinguished Professor of the Year at Florida State University prior to coming to UB in 1995 to serve as president.

The final word

The son of Sara Rubenstein always stood firm. So while controversy didn't bother him, Rubenstein realized that, practically speaking, "it wasn't going to work" for him to remain at the University of Pittsburgh as its chaplain.

"I don't care if you're Methodist or Catholic or Jewish, part of the money that goes to sustain your institute comes from lay sources, and laymen didn't understand what I did."

When Florida State University called with a job offer in 1970, Rubenstein took it.

"I was there for 25 years," says Rubenstein, who left to become president of the University of Bridgeport in 1995. "They gave me very intellectual freedom I wanted."

Eventually, the Death of God movement cooled, but interest in *After Auschwitz* remained. Johns Hopkins University Press republished it in 1992. And this year, several institutions, including UB, have hosted events celebrating the book.

Meanwhile, Rubenstein continued to write about the Holocaust. One of his books, *The Cunning of History*, was published in 1975 and generated remarkably little attention considering all the earlier fuss.

Then, as things tend to happen to Rubenstein, this seemingly forgettable volume was noticed by someone who could spot value: William Styron.

When Styron read *The Cunning of History*, he called Rubenstein to inform him that he was going to quote passages of it in a novel he was working on called *Sophie's Choice*.

Rubenstein was fine with that. "But I told him, 'You'll be quoting a dead book. Nobody's touching it.'"

It's debatable whether the appetite for Holocaust books was diminishing by the mid-1970s or whether Rubenstein, who says he was "frozen out," was being shunned as a persona non grata by people who couldn't forgive *After Auschwitz*. Either way, Styron made a few calls, wrote an introduction to the book, and got *The Cunning of History* republished as a paperback. The *New York Times* promptly reviewed it, but just in case there were any doubts about Rubenstein, Styron set them straight.

"As an analyst of evil," he wrote, "Rubenstein is serene—and Olympian." ■

News Lines

Grant Update

NIH grant will expand research at UB.

By Leslie Geary

The University has won a \$447,252 five-year grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to expand research capacities through faculty engagement and enhanced administrative support.

The project will be led by Christine Hempowicz, director of the Office of Sponsored Research and Programs, and Ruba Deeb, director of Biomedical Research Development and research associate professor of bioengineering.

“The mission of the grant is to strengthen the teacher/scholar culture and research capacity through reducing research-related administrative burdens for faculty to the extent feasible,

empowering the faculty to conduct research, and facilitating continuous improvement in service delivery processes,” said Tarek Sobh, senior vice president for graduate studies and research.

“Through this program, we expect to better prepare faculty to write, submit, and garner an increased number of competitive research proposals while also providing opportunities for underrepresented student participation in research,” he added.

The grant was provided by NIH’s Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health & Human Development of the NIH. ■





Winning Color

Students from Marsha Matto's Color Theory class win third place at Sherwin-Williams STIR® Design Challenge.

What's the next hot color?

Just ask Allison Antosh, Daniela Valera, and Sarah Lafitte, a team of Interior Design majors from the Shintaro Akatsu School of Design (SASD) who won big at the sixth annual Sherwin-Williams STIR® Student Design Challenge. The national competition recognizes excellence in residential and commercial design.

The trio took third place and a \$500 prize in the highly competitive national competition after submitting proposed designs in the residential design category.

Their work is now being featured in the 2016 edition of *STIR*, a print magazine for design professionals, the Sherwin-Williams Facebook page, and in the *STIR Extra* e-newsletter.

The team was advised by SASD Visiting Assistant Professor Marsha Matto, who encouraged the students to enter the competition as part of

her Color Theory class.

"This is the first time a class from UB has ever won, so this is huge!" said Matto. "They worked incredibly hard to create a color palette that is contemporary, fresh, and livable. I'm proud of their vision and hard work."

Contestants were required to submit four renderings of the same space at different angles. Renderings were done using SketchUp, a 3D computer-modeling system used for architecture and interior design, and featured Sherwin-Williams colors and a description of why the colors were inspiring.

The UB team submitted a design they had previously completed in a Studio 2 class but reworked, using a color combination done in their Color Theory course during the spring semester, Matto said. ■ - L.G.

News Lines

It's Open!

UB opens its newest residence hall in 40 years.



Board of Trustees Co-Chairmen Frank N. Zullo Esq. and Thomas Walsh (center) officially open University Hall.

After months of anticipation, University officials opened the newest residence hall on campus in over four decades, celebrating the milestone with a ribbon-cutting and the installation of a time capsule filled with mementos selected to tell the current chapter in the unfolding history of the 89-year-old school.

"This is a really a step forward for UB," said Board of Trustees Co-Chairman Frank Zullo at the September 16 ceremony. "We've put over \$65 million into this campus [in recent years] and it's beginning to show it. So we're all excited."

The approximately 60,000-square-foot residence, known as University Hall, accommodates 231 students in dorm rooms and suite apartments.



KBE Construction began work on the \$17-million building in May 2015. The project included the demolition of Schine Hall, a towering 10-story dorm that was open from 1971 to 1992 on land that is across the street from University Hall. As they dismantled Schine, crews found a time capsule in Schine's cornerstone.

The discovery inspired students to assemble a time capsule for University Hall. Among other items, the capsule contains UB women's soccer team T-shirts, a 2016 course catalog, a current invoice for tuition, and "a very special book filled with hand-written messages and thoughts from current students, staff, and faculty," said Dean of Students Edina Oestreicher.

"It's not every day you can send a message years into the future, and the community was incredibly thoughtful about their messages," said Oestreicher.

UB English Department faculty member Amy Nawrocki, an award-winning poet, and Eric Lehman, an author specializing in Connecticut history, wrote a poem that was inscribed on the front of the time capsule. Inspired by UB's logo, which includes the lamp of learning, tree of knowledge, the Perry Arch at Seaside Park, and waves of Long Island Sound, it reads:

*On this day, September 16, 2016
We close this case to honor the present;
you open this gift to harvest the past.
Together, we are trees that bloom in Spring,
the sea that returns to the sunlit shore;
we are the arches that hold up the sky,
the flame that lights the future - pass the torch.*

Lifting as He Climbs

Business school student Michael Asmerom is awarded by the National Association of Black Accountants.

Trefz School of Business student Michael Asmerom, a ubiquitous force of energy on campus and a driver of social change, has won a National Association of Black Accountants (NABA) scholarship.

He received the \$1000 prize at NABA's 2016 Night of Stars Scholarship and Awards Celebration on September 7.

Asmerom, 22, is a senior honors student majoring in business management with a minor in communications. He chose the fields of study while running his first company, a clothing line he founded from his dorm room as a freshman. His second business, Superior Ebooks, is an online text book subscription service that he is launching with guidance from advisers at the University's new Student Entrepreneur Center.

Asmerom also devotes much of his time to community and campus service. He was overwhelmingly elected by his peers to serve as vice president of the Student Government Association for the 2016-2017 academic year and works as a resident advisor.

In January 2016, Asmerom teamed up with Sodexo Dining Services, the University's meals vendor, to create the student Food Recovery Network Club to donate meals to those in need.

Michael Asmerom (right) and UB friends prepare food for the needy.



Within five months, the Food Recovery Network Club collected over 1300 pounds of surplus food to feed homeless and financially vulnerable individuals who are served by the United Church of Christ in Bridgeport.

“Your work exemplifies NAMA's mantra of Lifting as We Climb and serves as an inspiration to everyone.”

In the spring of 2016, Asmerom won the Dean's Award for Exceptional Junior Student for his significant positive impact on student life.

“Your work exemplifies NABA's mantra of Lifting as We Climb and serves as an inspiration to everyone,” NABA Greater Hartford Chapter President Troy Woolery wrote to Asmerom informing him of the scholarship award.

“My motivation is my family,” said Asmerom, who moved to Harlem from Ethiopia with his mother and sister when he was seven. The transition to a new culture was initially difficult, he said, but his mother encouraged him to pursue his dreams to become the CEO of his own company.

Through her example—she earned her nursing degree while working at a hotel—“she taught me the importance of education early on in life,” Asmerom wrote in his NABA scholarship application. ■ - L.G.

News Lines

Summer House

Marsha Matto and SASD students make a couple's dream house come true.

From right: Student Katy Chevalier, client Sue Crocco, SASD professor Marsha Matto, and student Madelyn Hopkins



When Sue and Will Crocco became parents, they knew they wanted to spend summers with their children, building sand castles, splashing in the water, collecting sea shells. The catch: beach front property isn't cheap, so the couple had to find ways to maximize their budget.

After a search, they bought a ramshackle building just blocks away from Fairfield Beach. They would demolish it and build a house that was suitable to rent to college students in the fall, winter, and spring.

"This way, we can cover costs and we'd have a nice place to go to in the summer as a family," said Sue Crocco.

Hiring an architect made sense, but Will Crocco said he and his wife also knew that "universities can be great places to find talent" for free, so they went to UB's Shintaro Akatsu School of Design (SASD) in search of students who could help their dream house become a reality.

That led them to Marsha Matto, chairperson of SASD's Interior Design Program and owner of Point of View Interiors in Bridgeport. When Matto met the couple, she quickly accepted the invitation to have four interior design majors devote the 2015-2016 academic year to the project.

They decided the Croccos would hire an engineering firm to build the shell of a building, but four interior design students working under Matto's guidance, would do "everything else," she said.

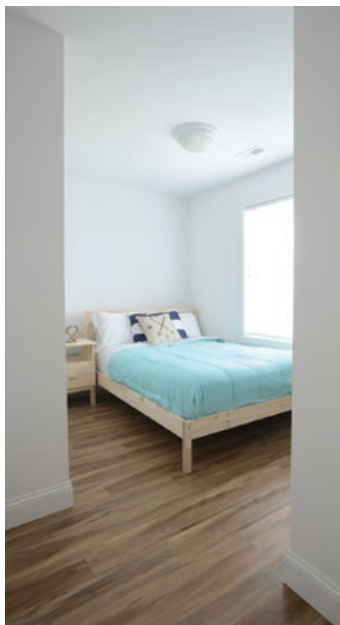
Everything else turned out to be considerable, as students Katy Chevalier, Madelyn Hopkins, Jillian Allen, and Kimberly McLeod quickly learned. The four began by choosing siding and roofing materials. Then they space planned the interior of the 1800 square-foot, three-story home, working with the engineer, contractors, and tradesmen to determine the location of walls, rooms, lights, and windows. In the spring of 2016, they curated hundreds of choices to recommend doors, sinks, paint colors, tiling, and every fixture down to the last light switch and doorknob. They also included a rooftop deck.

"It was kind of overwhelming. We had to do a lot of research, but it was a good learning experience. We'd never picked out siding for a house or roofing before," said Allen '16.

As clients, the Croccos made it easy, Allen added. "They knew we were students but they seemed happy with what we gave them. It was also helpful to them because they were on a budget. It was a win-win."

Allen benefitted, too. When she interviewed for a job at DC Design, a Hamden, Connecticut-based interior design firm "it helped that I had real experience," she said. Just before Allen graduated in May, she was offered the full-time job. Chevalier and McLeod, who graduated in May, too, also found design jobs.

Before the school year ended, the Croccos hosted an open house to celebrate the comple-

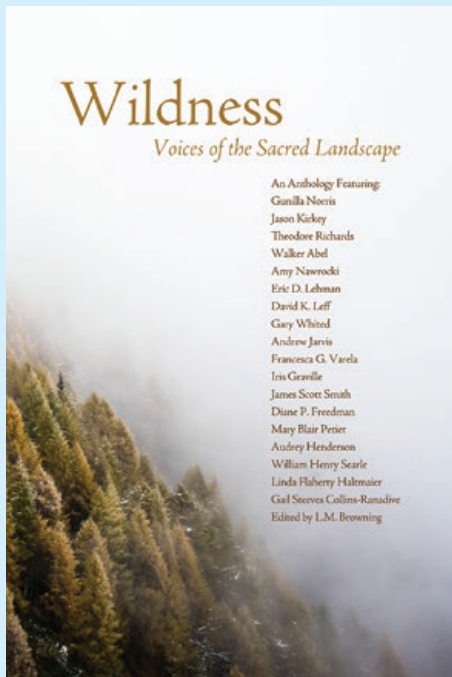


From shingles to sheets: SASD students spent a year designing and perfecting every detail for Will and Sue Crocco's summer house.

tion of their summer home. As they enjoyed nautical-inspired cupcakes, they toured the home and admired the view of Long Island Sound and the beach from the new rooftop deck.

"I love working with students," said Will Crocco. "They were part of every decision." ■ - L.G.

Book Lines

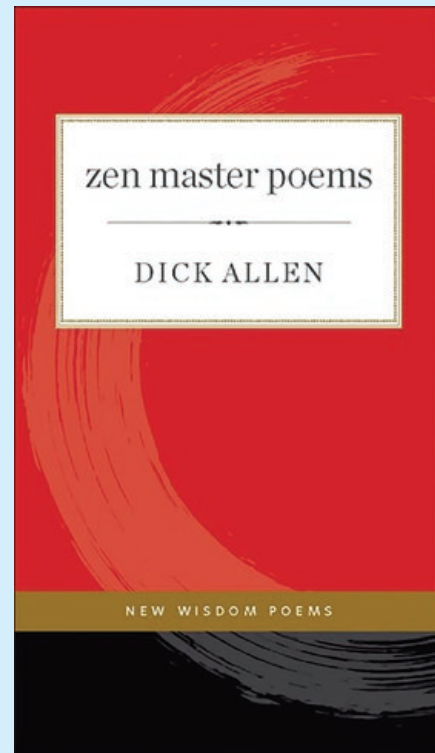
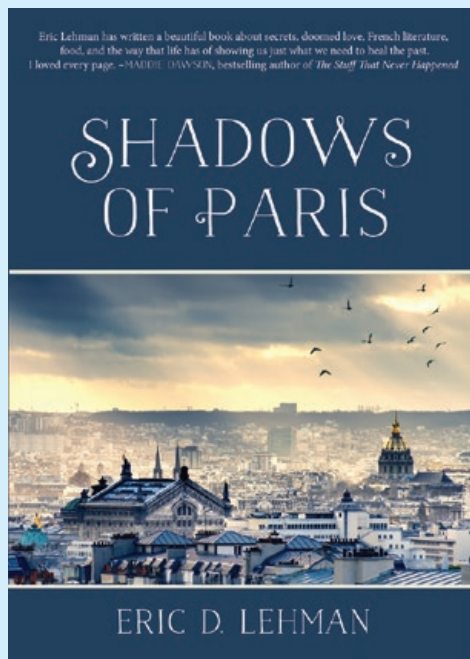


Lehman, also among the Department of English faculty, contributed a memoir of survival school entitled "The Way the Earth Feels About Your Feet." Two out of Lehman's 11 books have been published by Homebound, including his latest work of fiction, *Shadows of Paris*. Released in August, the novella has been called "beautifully written" and "heart touching."

"I wrote most of the book on my honeymoon in Paris," said Lehman. "So, it's a love story, but it's also filled with sin and death, literature and art, and maybe the possibility of redemption."

In celebration of its fifth anniversary, Homebound Publications asked 19 of its most popular authors to contribute to *Wildness*, a collection of writing about the outdoors. Among its contributors: UB's **Amy Nawrocki** and **Eric Lehman**.

Nawrocki, one of New England's most well-regarded poets and a professor in the Department of English, contributed "Choosing Peregrine," a creative nonfiction piece about making sense of the natural world.

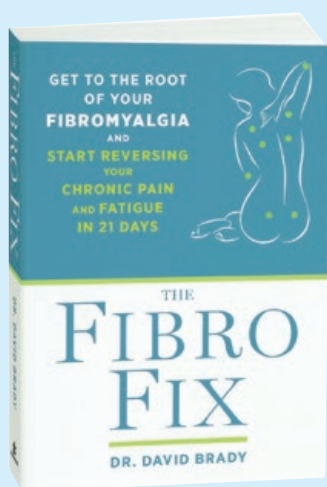


Fans of former Connecticut Poet Laureate and Professor Emeritus **Dick Allen** have a new treat: *zen master poems*, published in August by Simon and Schuster.

Inspired by Allen's longtime passion for Buddhism, the collection—filled with poems, Buddhist advice, and koans—is nonetheless accessible for general readers and experts alike.

"It's unlike anything I've had published before," said Allen, whose one-page poems are imbued with equal measures of humor and wisdom. "It's a work of many years."

Poems from the book have previously appeared in *Hudson Review*, *American Poetry Review*, *Poetry*, *Buddhist Poetry Review*, *Rattle*, *Tricycle*, *On Barcelona*, and *The New Criterion*.



Chronic fatigue and grinding pain affect more than 100 million Americans diagnosed with fibromyalgia. Yet for most, the cause of their pain may be misdiagnosed, according to **Dr. David M. Brady, ND**, in his new book, *The Fibro Fix* (Rodale Press).

In *The Fibro Fix*, Brady offers long-term solutions for living a healthy, comfortable life, whether patients are suffering from ailments triggered by fibromyalgia or other causes.

“Sufferers may share similar symptoms, including achiness, pain, sleep deprivation, depression, and intestinal distress, but they may not share the same condition, which is where the confusion begins. Research reveals that over two-thirds of patients have received a misdiagnosis . . . without any hopes for a pain-free future,” said Brady.

The Fibro Fix helps patients to identify underlying causes of their pain, then lays out lifestyle changes that can provide safe, non-addictive long-term cures.

There are people who notice marketing. Then there are people like SASD professor and author **Alex White** who *really* notice. In his latest book, *Listening to Type: Making Language Visible* (Allworth Press), White shows aspiring designers how to cultivate their vision and skills to create distinctive type design used in marketing, branding, and other communications.

“There are so many parts—space, image, type—and if they aren’t in perfect balance, you get a mess,” he said. “I’m very conscious of how logos and typography work with design. They create identity. I’m always looking for something new.”

Confused? Don’t be. White says good design is like good cooking, where masters can take “a few common ingredients” and turn them into something “special and unique.”

In addition to directing the Master of Professional Studies in Design at SASD, White serves as president of the Type Directors Club. His previous books include *The Elements of Graphic Design* and *Advertising Design and Typography*.

—Leslie Geary



Faculty Lines

Leader for Student Success

Jeffrey Johnson has joined the Office of the Provost as assistant provost for student success. Johnson has served the University for the past 18 years as chairman of the Music Program and has also been involved as a teacher and chairman of the First-Year Seminar and the Capstone Seminar.

“Jeff brings innovative ideas for undergraduate-pathway management for new students and will be working with deans, faculty, and staff to consider new forms of collaboration to promote student success and achievement,” said Provost **Stephen Healey**.

In his new role, Johnson will develop new programs for peer collaboration and professional development for faculty. ■ - **Leslie Geary**



New Faces

Theresa V. Horvath has been appointed as the program director of the Physician Assistant Institute. In this role, she will provide overall leadership, administration and management of the PAI program to promote quality education for the students in accordance with the University’s mission and with ARC-PA accreditation standards.

Horvath has 18 years of experience in PA education at the program director level, serving most recently as the assistant dean and program director at the Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education at the City College of New York. Previously, she held academic appointments at Hofstra University, Mercy College, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia

University, and the State University of New York Health Science Center. Her professional appointments include roles as an HRSA grant reviewer; an AAPA appointed member at the National Advisory Council on the National Health Service Corps; a Director-at-Large for the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA); and a site visitor for the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc.

She has earned an MPH in Community Health Education from CUNY-Hunter College, a B.S. in Physician Assistant from CCNY-Harlem Hospital Physician Assistant Program, and a B.A. in Sociology from Ramapo College. ■ - **L.G.**



Building Bridges

It was late August, but Assistant Dean of Students **Craig Lennon** was still marveling over the day he spent at the Adventure Park, a zip line and ropes course in Bridgeport, with 27 incoming freshmen a few weeks earlier.

The daylong adventure, Lennon explained, had culminated the Bridge Program that UB launched this summer under his direction. The aim: to help freshmen acclimate to university life. Students applied to the three-week program, and costs were covered by UB.

From July 31 to August 19, Bridge students took an English 100 course as well as workshops on time management, study skills, and personal finance. They met various advisers on campus, and obtained skills that help build confidence and success.

Hence the day at Adventure Park. “It’s a metaphor for academics, when you can feel alone, but in reality you have people to support you physically and mentally,” said Lennon.

That leads him back to the story about hanging out in the trees with one of his students, a young man who is legally blind. He was willing to be guided high above ground through bridges, ropes, zip lines, and other apparatus. “I’d call out, ‘In a foot there’s a hook in front of your right hand. Grab it!’ And he did! He trusted me!” said Lennon.

The work in classrooms and the trees seems to have paid off, Lennon added. After completing the Bridge program, 80 percent of the students said they felt “significantly more prepared” and 20 percent said they were “more prepared” for university life than kids who didn’t participate in Bridge. ■ - L.G.



Trust exercises and team building at the Adventure Park in Bridgeport echoed the themes of UB’s new Bridge Program, which prepares freshmen for college.



Focus on: Daniel Leeson '54



“A degree in mathematics was the most important subject in the world during those first ten years of computing.”

Background: It was the very best time to be studying mathematics, says Daniel Leeson, of his days at UB in the 1950s. He took one mathematics course with Simon Mowshowitz, and soon he was taking as many as he could, calling him “the very best teacher I ever had.” The Computer Age was just beginning to unfold and, after attaining his master’s degree at the University of Arizona, Tucson, and serving in the army, Leeson would go on to play an integral part in shaping that age, in a career with IBM that spanned 30 years, taking him to France where he was responsible for IBM’s software support throughout Europe.

Leeson co-wrote one of the earliest books on computer programming, *Basic Programming Concepts and the IBM 1620*, which became part of the curricula at colleges and high schools around the country, a textbook that would wind up in the hands of one Steve Jobs.

Accomplishments: From the time he was a little boy, Leeson’s life blended mathematics and music. He played clarinet for UB’s symphony orchestra and the Connecticut Symphony and, after his retirement, he played for 25 years with the San Jose Symphony. He’s an internationally recognized expert

on Mozart, writing for prominent music journals and penning a best-selling novel, *The Mozart Forgeries*. He dived into teaching too, retiring on a Friday from IBM and stopping in to De Anza College in Cupertino, California, that Monday to inquire about teaching mathematics. He taught there for 15 years and also developed a multimedia lecture on “Mozart and Mathematics” that he gave at universities, including Harvard and Notre Dame. Leeson, who lives with his wife Rosanne in California, traces much of his success back to the University of Bridgeport, a place he says inspired him academically and musically and where he made lifelong friends.

He fondly recalls how he and his friends would head to the many food stands that lined the end of the UB campus back in the '50s, stopping often at a favorite where they'd eat "delicious chow mein sandwiches for 35 cents."

"My time at the University of Bridgeport was one of the purest pleasures of my life," he said.

What was it you loved about the University of Bridgeport? I had never been away from my home, and here I was among wonderful people, friendly people, a fine faculty, and I just soaked it up like a sponge.

Did you find math courses helped launch you in your career at IBM?

Absolutely. I was lucky to study under Professor Mowshowitz, the finest teacher I ever met. When I went into teaching myself after retiring, I tried my best to teach the way he taught. He was a spectacular teacher. He was so precise, and mathematics is about precision. Years later, my friend Jim Halsey and I went to visit his grave. That was the great respect we had for him.

You were involved in the computer industry in its infancy. What was that like?

After I got my master's degree, computers were just coming on, and boy did they need people who knew mathematics! If I'd studied baroque tubas I would not have been able to make a living, but a degree in mathematics was the most important subject in the world during those first ten years of computing. We needed to solve problems with 30 or 35 variables—problems of enormous size. It was very challenging, and I loved it. The computers were huge; they took up an entire room.

When you were working in the field at that time, did you ever think we'd be walking around with these tiny computers/phones in our pockets today?

That idea never occurred to me. It took a searching mind like the guy who ran Apple, Steve Jobs. I have a story about him. When my son entered high school in California, he took a computer course. The instructor gave him a book and my son said, "That's my father's book." His teacher said, "Come on, you're kidding," and my son showed him my name. I found out later that Steve Jobs had been in that same high school and used my book in that course a few years earlier. I like to say I taught Steve Jobs how to work the computer!

You've also written a number of books and scholarly articles about Mozart.

How did that come about? I've always been interested in Mozart. I started writing in my retirement and I never realized how much I'd enjoy it. When a German firm was putting together the *Neue Mozart Ausgabe*, 120 volumes of Mozart's music, they required specialists to prepare the editions, and I was asked to do one of the volumes.

What prompted you to delve so deeply into Mozart?

Of all the music I've played and studied, his is the music I am most attached to. I am still studying Mozart. I'm at work on articles now. I also got another great benefit from it. I was invited to a wedding in 1955 and was seated next to a very lovely woman. We were chatting and I asked her, "Who's your favorite composer?" and she said Mozart. We've been married 57 years. ■

— Interview by Jackie Hennessey

“I like to say I taught Steve Jobs how to work the computer!”

Alumni Lines

Would you like to share news of your own or nominate an alumnus to be interviewed for a "Focus On" interview? We're interested in what you're doing, and so are your classmates! Contact: Knightlines, Cortright Hall, 219 Park Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06604 or knightlines@bridgeport.edu. Be sure to include your full name, contact information, and class year.

1959

We were delighted to hear from **Sandra Torgovnick Solomon**, who writes from Casselberry, Florida. She and her late husband, **Stephen Morris Solomon '59**, were married the day they both began classes at UB. "We were the only married couple around at the time," she recalls. "I have very fond memories of the PT Barnum campus and buildings where we had our classes."

Dedicated to public service, Solomon taught in the Seminole Country, Florida, school system for 35 years and in the past decade, the citizens of Casselberry, a suburb of Orlando, have elected Mrs. Solomon three times as their Vice-Mayor and City Commissioner.

1971

Kenneth A. Graham, Esq. retired assistant attorney general for the State of Connecticut, was reappointed by the chief justice of the Supreme Court of Connecticut to his sixth term of office as Connecticut Superior Court trial referee. He was also reappointed as Connecticut Superior Court arbitrator and fact finder.

1973

UB alumni stick together, so friends of **Richard Ward** have written to ask for help. Ward has been diagnosed with renal kidney disease. While he is undergoing dialysis treatments, he needs help regarding a kidney donation. Those who wish to reach out to him can email rickwin98@aol.com or alumnus **Fred Burgerhoff** at fred_burgerhoff@hotmail.com.

2003

When Dr. **Norman Eng** was earning his doctorate degree at the University of Bridgeport's College of Chiropractic, he enhanced his studies by caring for runners at area races. This summer, the UB alumnus put his training to use as the team chiropractor for the U.S. Track and Field Team at the 2016 Olympics. "It was an honor and a privilege to serve on the sports medicine staff for the United States Olympic Committee in the Rio Olympic Games," writes Eng. "The job required long hours of work, team work, and strong communication skills, and I have UBCC thank for shaping me into the chiropractor that I am today."



2004

Soon after she earned her master's degree from UB, School of Education alumna **Ajumoke "Jumi" Nathan Saingbe** began teaching at New Beginnings Family Academy, a pre-K-8 charter school in Bridgeport. After ten years in the classroom, she was promoted as its Chief Academic Officer. Under her leadership, New Beginnings has transformed into a progressive school where students learn through hands-on, immersive, and experiential learning.

"The knowledge gained from my engagement at U.B has empowered me in understanding what challenges teaching and leading in an inner-city may present, and how to overcome those challenges so that student achievement is not jeopardized," writes Saingbe, who also completed academic leadership training at UB in 2010.

Nathan also serves on the board of directors for Horizons at Greens Farms Academy in Greens Farms, CT. The highly acclaimed program enrolls under served students from Bridgeport at the GFA campus during the summer for six-weeks to work in small classes with the goal of equipping them with rigorous academic, social, and emotional skills.

Remembering Leland Miles

Former UB president dies at 92

President Emeritus Leland W. Miles, who guided the University of Bridgeport from 1974 to 1987, passed away on August 5.

Miles joined the University in 1963, when he was hired as dean for the College of Arts and Sciences. He left in 1967 to become president of Alfred University, returning to UB in 1974 as its president.

Under his leadership, the University strengthened its engineering and business schools and became licensed to offer a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership. As a frequent representative of the International Association of University Presidents at the United Nations, he strongly encouraged universities to establish peace studies programs, just as he did at UB.

He is survived by his wife of 69 years, Virginia Miles, of Sarasota, FL; son Gregory (Susan Brady) Miles of New York; and daughter Christine Miles Kelleher of Albany, NY.



Side Lines

Superstition

When you believe in things that you don't understand

By Michele Meehan

"It's only weird if it doesn't work," has become synonymous with crazy sports fan superstitions, thanks to a catchy tune by Stevie Wonder and a successful marketing campaign by Bud Light. While fans do their part to support their favorite teams by wearing a lucky shirt or growing random facial hair, players and coaches—the ones who are actually involved in the games—also have superstitions of their own. From the route they drive to games to the way they wear their hair, some coaches at UB are known to count on a little bit more than just hard work on game day.

"Have you talked to Magnus yet?" joked UB's Director of Athletics, Anthony Vitti '03. While Vitti doesn't have any personal superstitions, he is more than happy to help out friends with theirs. "I always have to shake Magnus's hand before



his games," he said, referring to Magnus Nilerud '99, head coach for UB's women's soccer team. "I missed one game because I was in the hospital, so I texted him a high-five emoji." It must have worked; the Purple Knights won their game. "Superstitions are fun and coincidental," Vitti added. "You keep doing something until it doesn't work any longer, then you try something else."

Jen Carleton, head coach for women's basketball and cross country, feels some superstitions can help build confidence and instill team bonding. "Superstitions help players feel in control of an unpredictable situation," she said. Carleton had her own superstitions while playing basketball for Caldwell College, "I always had to do my roommate's hair before the games," she said, "and if we lost, I had to change my hairstyle before the next game."

A ritual that works

UB baseball team member Ben Torres doesn't think of himself as superstitious. "It's more quirky," he said. Nonetheless, Torres, an outfielder, admits he has "two rituals that have worked over time" so he sticks with them. Before each game he goes to Captain's restaurant near the UB campus to buy a breakfast sandwich, sour cream-and-onion potato chips, an orange Gatorade, and a Red Bull energy drink. He rounds out his pre-game meal with a handful of gummy worms.

He also makes sure he's tucked his baseball card of Roberto Clemente into the back pocket of his baseball uniform. Torres got the card a few years ago after his high school baseball head coach instructed the team to carry a card of their favorite player. Torres's dad thought the coach's advice was worth a try, so he got his son the Clemente card from eBay. "I started putting it in my back pocket and playing really well," Torres admitted. "Now I play with it every game."





“It’s
only
weird
if it
doesn’t
work.”

Sometimes superstitions can get expensive. Carleton recalled a lunch at Ruby Tuesday where she told her players they could get whatever they wanted to eat. They were facing a tough opponent that night, so she figured a team lunch would get them in a good frame of mind. Some of the girls ordered steak, and that must have been what they needed because they won that game when no one thought they could. After that, they always tried to find a Ruby Tuesday, however, the dining budget didn’t always allow for steak lunches.

Going to extremes

Paying for some steaks seems reasonable, but what about a new outfit? Nilerud is so superstitious about his clothing that he picks one outfit at the beginning of the soccer season, and while he will thankfully wash it, he will wear that same outfit for every game until his team loses. This particular superstition has had him wearing dark wool trousers during a tournament in the hot Texan sun, so more care is now given to wardrobe selection at the beginning of each season. So what happens if they lose? The whole outfit—clothes, shoes, watch, everything—goes into the garbage bin. “My wife is not a fan of that ritual,” he added with a laugh.

Not all superstitions make the cut from season to season, according to Nilerud. Some,

like shaking the referees’ hands at a certain time, entering the field a little late, and driving by the church where he got married before each home game, will stay. Others may have to make way for new ones. “We got new turf this summer,” Nilerud said. “Our record was one hundred wins, four losses, and five ties on that old turf.” To keep that winning vibe alive, he saved a square of the discarded turf and is having it framed to hang in the locker room. “Our new tradition will be to touch our old turf before going out onto the field,” he said.

Dr. Jessica Nelson is an assistant professor and counselor at UB whose expertise is in the field of sports psychology. Having worked with retired NFL and MLB players, she has seen what athletes will do in order to be successful. “In the media, we see what works; we don’t typically see the ones that fail,” she said. “Superstitions are an attempt to control the uncontrollable. Sometimes they can be a positive; sometimes they can be a negative.”

The bottom line is that superstition and sports will always go hand in hand. Even the best of athletes and coaches may believe that they need a little extra luck, but in the end, one team of playoff beards versus another team of playoff beards will eventually prove that one of those sets of beards didn’t quite work, and is doomed to just be considered weird. ■

Jen Carleton’s basketball team posts wins whenever they eat at Ruby Tuesday.

Side Lines

A Target on Their Backs

The women's soccer team starts 2016 ranked fourth in nation.

By Mike Patrick



Women's soccer Head Coach Magnus Nilerud and his team are fighting to stay on top.

One early Saturday morning in late August, as the dark cumulus clouds of a storm front pushed its way over University Avenue, Magnus Nilerud, head coach of the women's soccer team, eyed the horizon cautiously.

There was to be a preseason game at Yale later that afternoon, and the last thing he wanted was a rainout. The team needed its practice.

That's because his team was now just as much a storm to look out for—a thunder-and-lightning combination of American athleticism and international gameplay savvy that led the Purple Knights to a number-four national ranking the previous season.

"We got a target on our back now," Nilerud said. "Everyone knows what the University of Bridgeport is now. You can play the worst team in the league or in the region, and to them it's their biggest game."

This is the highest ranked that the team has ever been. It's welcome, but unfamiliar terri-

tory, especially considering that at one time, an opposing team might not have even needed to break a sweat to steamroll right over UB's.

A standout soccer player for the Purple Knights, Nilerud was invited to take over coaching duties for the women's team after he graduated in 1999.

That year, the team went 0 and 15, and most of those losses were absolute trouncings at around 17- or 18-to-0. The team scored just five goals the entire season.

"When you go 0 and 15, that's not the legacy that you want to leave behind," Nilerud said. "So I went back in to the [athletic director] and I said, 'Give me one more year.'"

That next year, Nilerud led the team to a 7 and 12 season. The following year the team broke .500 by going 10 and 8.

"Going from that bad to OK, it's not hard; it's just putting the time in, calling kids nonstop," Nilerud said. "What was really hard was getting



**Goalkeeper
Melanie Ziegner
at practice**

over that hump and going from .500 to all of a sudden becoming a threat on the regional and national levels. That's hard."

Early days

Nilerud grants much of the credit for the latter to those players who joined the team in those early days, as he worked to rebuild the program.

"That group that kind of turned everything around and stuck with me then," he said. "That's a special group, that class that came in 2000 that was part of the whole turnover and building the program."

The program was still growing when Sarah Hodge Hoelzen joined the team in 2005.

"He was tough, he honestly was. Practices were hard. He expected you to always bring your 'A' game, always pushing you to be a better player, pushing you to be a better teammate," she said. "But I think most of all he pushed you to be a better person. He built character and high integrity. He taught you to be the best in these key moments, and put you in these situations where you had to rise to the occasion."

When Hoelzen later became Nilerud's first graduate assistant coach, she said, she would look for those qualities when recruiting new players.

"It was character and integrity more than your actual skill," she said. "Magnus could teach you how to dribble a ball or to shoot, but he couldn't teach you that inner will, so that's what we were looking for."

Nilerud still looks for those qualities.

"We've had some great success over the past couple of years here, so we're at a point now where we can actually look beyond the talent on the field," he said. "We can be very selective now about who we go after; and if it's a great player and a great student that doesn't fit the bill in terms of personality, we have the opportunity now to say no to that kid. And we didn't 10 years ago."

Nicola Worthington, 23, plays center midfield for the Purple Knights.

"Everyone's been selected to be here for the same reason," she said after a recent practice. "I think we all bring something different from our cultures and our backgrounds, and that's what makes us so special."

Mixing it up

That mix is intentional. Traditionally, Nilerud said, a European player has grown up with the sport as an important part of her culture, and is usually knowledgeable about the game.

"They'll be able to be a little more creative, and they can problem-solve a little better," Nilerud said. "The American player is a lot fitter, more athletic. So you have that blend of athleticism and soccer savviness."

Nilerud likened the strategy to a game of chess.

"I think its part and parcel to why we've been so successful, the blend between the domestic and international kids that we've had," he said.

(continued on page 38)

Side Lines

“And it’s amazing, when you walk into that locker room, how close they are to each other. With all the different cultures and religions and backgrounds that they come from, how close of a group that becomes after they spend two weeks in here.”

Center midfielder Ariana Weingrad agreed.

“Sometimes it gets a little crazy because we’re all feeling the same emotions, physically and mentally, so you have to not think about it and get away from each other sometimes,” the 19-year-old dental hygiene major from Long Island, N.Y., said. “But when we’re all together, it’s like a family.”

A family, that is, with a common, solitary focus.

“To be honest, and it may sound as if it’s a little arrogant, we now know what our goal is, and we know what we need every year to try to achieve that goal,” Nilerud said. “The goal is to win a national championship, and that will be the goal every single year.”

Some teams, he said, won’t have the skill; others may not have the financial resources to devote to a winning team.

But few, he’s sure, have his team’s drive.

“When everyone else does maybe one or two practice sessions a week, we do four. Or we do other stuff, team bonding things,” he said. “There hasn’t been one complaint. They all look at the end of the tunnel to see that we want to win a national championship and this is what you need



to do to win a national championship.”

Nilerud grew the Purple Knights into national prominence over the past 18 seasons. Eight out of the last nine years the team made the NCAA tournament, and has been ranked in the top 20 seven out of the last nine years.

And he knows the team’s success relies on the players he recruits and trains.

“We have very good, good kids now. We have good students, we have good players and they’re good human beings,” he said. “They’re good people that want to go the extra mile, that want to do stuff for the program, so that the program and the team and the institution are more important than them individually.”

At the time of writing, the women’s soccer team had won three of the first four games of the 2016 season. ■



Nilerud and players like Gliddel Zapanta remain focused on another great season.

Preseason Pasta

At UB, it's tradition for teams to dine with the President.

By Leslie Geary



UB President Neil Salonen and the men's soccer team toast the upcoming season.

It's not uncommon for athletes to carbo-load before competitions. But the Purple Knights do it in style, thanks to UB President and Mrs. Neil Salonen.

The couple began inviting the teams to preseason dinners 15 years ago to recognize the hard work that student-athletes and their coaches do on behalf of UB.

"I have enormous respect for what our athletes do. They have to keep up with their academic and practice schedules to play. They learn discipline that will serve them for the rest of their lives; they're incredibly mature," says President Salonen. "We want them to know how much we appreciate everything they do. They're great ambassadors for the University."

On August 24, the men's soccer team joined the Salonens and UB senior administrators for an Italian dinner at Testo's Restaurant in Bridgeport. (The women's soccer and volleyball team banquets followed later in the month, and resident advisers were also feted at a special dinner hosted by the Salonens.)



Says men's soccer Head Coach Pete Doneit, "It's really the highlight of the preseason, and what President and Mrs. Salonen do is really different. You don't see the president at other schools taking the time from their busy schedules to show that they care. Also, it's always such a great dinner with great food and great company." ■

Closing Thought:

A Child's Game, a Little Flag, and Healing

By Mike Lohle

I'm a New York Mets fan, so I was thrilled when just before my birthday in the first days of September 2001, my wife Sue gave me two tickets to a game, lined up a babysitter, and made plans to spend the weekend in New York. Then 9/11 happened.

That Mets game would be the first major sporting event in New York after the attacks. Concerned the venue would be the terrorists' next target, my father-in-law implored us to stay home. We didn't heed his concerns, and stayed in the city ten days after the worst attack on American soil since Pearl Harbor.

That Friday afternoon, we lunched at a usually packed, now mostly empty restaurant on Pier 39 as National Guardsmen brandishing assault rifles walked by. We saw the mammoth pile of rubble at Ground Zero and paused for a while at a store window where a display of fine shoes was covered in thick, gray soot. Later, when we boarded the subway to Shea Stadium, we were surprised. The train was full of smiling, collegial Mets fans. As the subway clanked toward the game, I felt a defiant electricity among the crowd that became more pronounced as we entered the stadium amid high security. When ushers gave every fan who entered the stadium a little American flag, I felt unbridled patriotism. Maybe my father-in-law was right. Maybe we were goners. There were worse ways to go than watching a baseball game.

I have always agreed with those who say walking into a ballpark feels like walking into a cathedral. That night, with Ground Zero still smoldering nearby, this feeling felt especially acute. The sights that stay with me, aside from

the U.S. marines' twenty-one gun salute and the celebrities on hand to sing *The Star-Spangled Banner* and *God Bless America*.

This was no ordinary baseball game, and after it began the fans seemed to hold their collective breath, wound tight. The Mets were down a run in the eighth inning as Hall of Fame catcher Mike Piazza strode to the batter's box. Piazza, a man in whose hands a baseball bat resembled a toothpick, primed for an effortless swing, dug in, and 41,235 fans willed something to happen.

First pitch.

Strike one.

Second pitch.

A thunder clap off Piazza's bat. The ball rocketed toward deep left center field.

As I watched that white ball bolt past the lights of the stadium into the night sky, there was no question: this was a monumental home run.

Piazza's homer triggered an explosion of raw emotion. I threw my hands up so high I thought they would separate from my body and shrieked a visceral, banshee scream as he rounded the bases. A deafening roar of cheers and an insistent, building chant of "U-S-A!, U-S-A!, U-S-A!" erupted from all corners of the stadium, almost lifting the place off of its foundation. I hopped up and down and waved my little American flag furiously until I almost collapsed.

We all did.

The Mets won, but even if they lost, the game would still be a victory. I had never experienced a collective release like that and probably never will again.

Returning to our hotel after the game we happened upon a firehouse in midtown's Hell's Kitchen. Engine 54, Ladder 4, Battalion 9 had lost fifteen Bravest on 9/11, and I later learned this firehouse was the hardest hit in the city. A makeshift memorial was erected in front of the building with many flowers, candles, pictures, and handwritten notes. The survivors stood among all this in numbing quiet as we thanked the firemen for their bravery. Sue handed one of them her little American flag from the Mets game. He gave her a long bear hug.

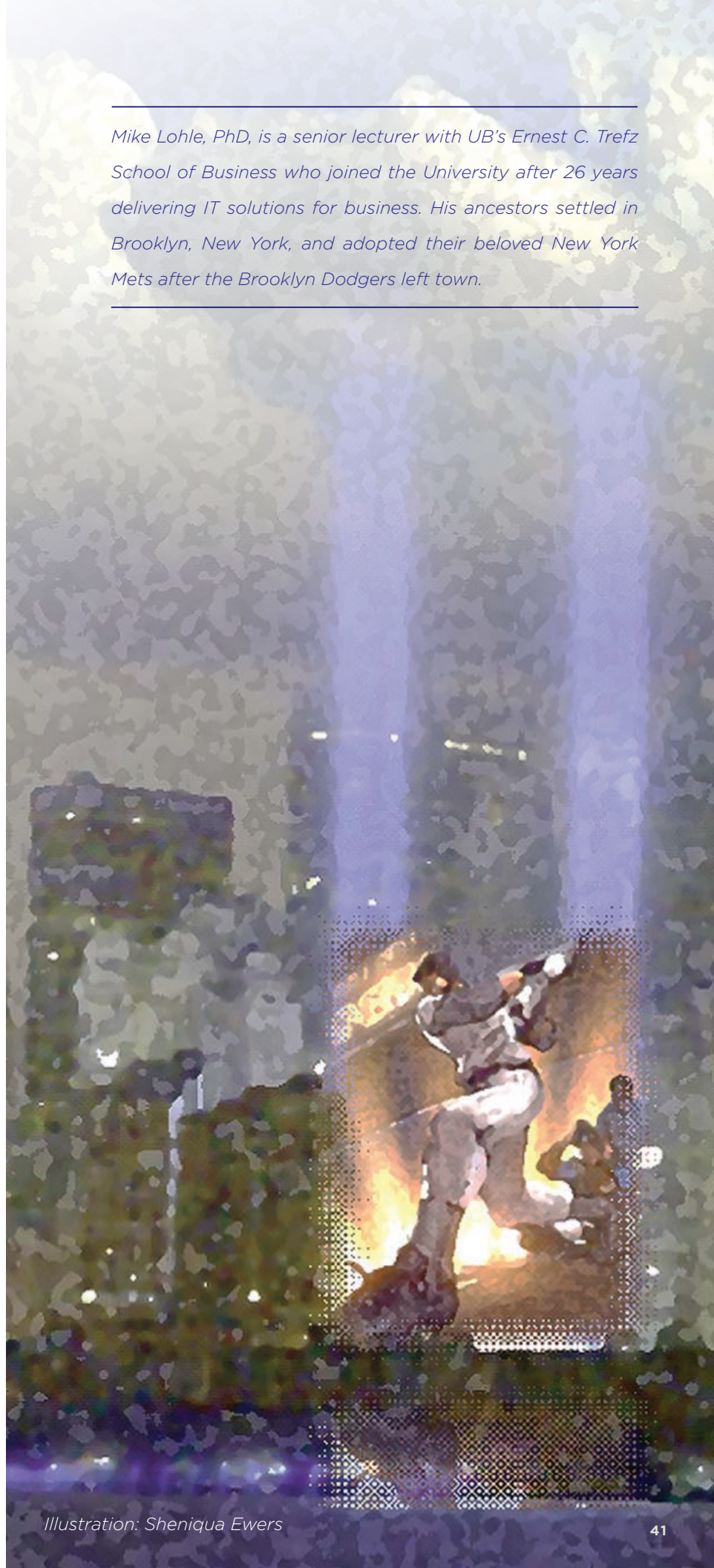
To my father-in-law's relief we emerged unscathed. Like our nation, we also emerged

Piazza, a man in whose hands
a baseball bat resembled
a toothpick, primed for
an effortless swing,
dug in, and 41,235 fans
willed something to happen.

changed. Mike Piazza put a wounded city on his back and armed with nothing more than guts and a powerful bat, said, "follow me" with one swing. We needed that. As his homer left the park, we felt joy again. Our American pastime proved as resilient as our resolve. Exercising our freedom to enjoy a baseball game in the face of immeasurable atrocity was a small gesture of defiance, one of the thousands New Yorkers, and all Americans, exhibited in the ensuing days and months after 9/11.

That night, the simple act of coming together to enjoy a baseball game proved evil had lost. I'll never look at a ball game the same way again. ■

Mike Lohle, PhD, is a senior lecturer with UB's Ernest C. Trefz School of Business who joined the University after 26 years delivering IT solutions for business. His ancestors settled in Brooklyn, New York, and adopted their beloved New York Mets after the Brooklyn Dodgers left town.





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