

SKIDMORE

# SCOPE

A SHOWCASE OF SKIDMORE COLLEGE PEOPLE AND PROGRAMS

SPRING 2024

## TRUE BELONGING

Rediscovering the values that matter  
in college admissions

**PLUS:**

What is a teaching museum?

*Social (In)Justice at the U.S.-Mexico Border*

MDOCS: A decade of documentary

Skidmore students RISE in a  
social work partnership



## DOING BOTH

*Ruizhe Hao '26, a Davis United World College scholar from Ningxia-Hui, China, is pursuing an education studies degree on campus while continuing his passion for rescue work as a volunteer firefighter.*

*See the full story on Page 4.*



**22 COVER STORY**

**True Belonging**

How Skidmore is navigating uncertain times in the world of admissions while staying true to its values, including long-standing commitments to diversity and inclusivity.

**2 President's Message**

**3 Community Review**

A changing campus, student stories, the generational divide, faculty books and highlights, and more.

**8 Creating new memories through AI**

**10 Giving creatively**

**11 A decade of MDOCS**

**14 Skidmore students RISE to meet a need**

**17 'The Unhealed Wound' in America**

**18 Social (In)Justice at the U.S. - Mexico Border**

**28 S<sup>3</sup>M Scholarships Changing Lives**

**32 What is a teaching museum?**

**38 Class Notes**

**50 USCG Cmdr. Michael Cavanagh '03**

**52 In Memoriam**

Scope is published biannually by Skidmore's Office of Communications and Marketing.

**Vice President for Communications & Marketing**  
Elizabeth Stauderman

**Senior Director of External Relations and Strategic Communications**  
Sara Miga '08

**Managing Editor**  
James Helicke

**Editor**  
Angela Valden

**Class Notes Editor**  
Jodi Frank

**Director of Creative Services**  
Mike Sylvia

**Contributors**  
Michael Janairo  
Peter MacDonald  
Tory Abbott '23  
Katie Rocque  
Maitreya Ravenstar '25  
Charlotte Mahn '25  
Catherine (Catie) Hamilton '25

**Photography**  
Sarah Condon-Meyers

**On the cover:** Members of the Skidmore community gathered in the Billie Tisch Center for Integrated Sciences to celebrate first-generation students. The event was an example of how the admissions landscape continues to change and of ways the Skidmore community is supporting students from diverse backgrounds and identities.



815 North Broadway  
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866  
518-580-5000  
scope@skidmore.edu

## From the editor:

The late anti-apartheid activist and South African leader Nelson Mandela called education “the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” It’s a sentiment that goes to the very heart of Skidmore’s mission as a liberal arts college, even as institutions of higher learning face difficult challenges ranging from questions about admissions processes and values to national debates about academic freedom and free speech on college campuses.

We discuss some of those challenges on the pages of this magazine, but — even more importantly — we highlight why the education and experiences that Skidmore provides are more vital than ever. You’ll read about the creative ways in which Skidmore community members are involved in matters ranging from national education policy to the U.S.-Mexico border.

You’ll also learn more about how the Tang Teaching Museum, John B. Moore Documentary Studies Collaborative (MDOCS), and Skidmore Scholars in Science and Mathematics (S<sup>3</sup>M) have impacted student experiences and the careers of alumni. And you’ll read about how our alumni who have benefited from a Skidmore education are now giving back to support the next generation.

If there’s a theme to this issue of *Scope*, it’s that a Skidmore education is making change possible — on our campus, in our communities, and in our world.

— James Helicke



Marc C. Conner  
President

## What a fascinating, troubling time we are in —

particularly in our field of higher education. This year, as we seemed to finally emerge from the COVID pandemic, many anticipated a more “normal” academic year — a year without the sense of crisis that has marked the first three years of my own presidency at Skidmore. And indeed the year got off to that sort of hopeful start — the energy and enthusiasm on our campus was palpable, and the sense of possibility strong.

Then, on Oct. 7, the terrorist group Hamas launched a horrific attack on Israel. A terrible war has ensued, resulting in the deaths of tens of thousands — Palestinians, Israelis, combatants, innocent victims — and unspeakable violence and suffering for so many throughout that entire region. The pressures that the conflict has put on college campuses have been profound, particularly around the issues of freedom of expression, academic freedom, political demonstration, and especially the climate and sense of community that a campus seeks to provide.

Here at Skidmore, we have dedicated ourselves to the support of our students during this challenging time. Over the past four months, we have held numerous meetings, gatherings, information sessions, teach-ins, and discussions. Our faculty have led educational panels on the history, geography, and politics of the Middle East; created new courses so our students can study the nuances of this region; and invited guest speakers and experts to campus. We have worked with our students as they engaged in political activity such as demonstrations and vigils, guiding them through their efforts to make sense of a conflict that has certainly eluded the wisest among us to resolve. And we have explained to many constituencies our strong commitment to freedom of expression and the exchange of ideas and perspectives that is so essential to a college, while constantly reaffirming our categorical rejection of antisemitism, Islamophobia, and all expressions of hatred.

That point is vital to emphasize. We firmly support the principles of freedom of thought and expression, and we affirm that speech that does not directly advocate hatred or violence, and that does not interfere with the educational process through intimidation or harassment, is legitimate expression that must not be silenced or censored. This is true even when the speech is offensive, insulting, or unwelcome to some — as I have said repeatedly, the speech that one hates is not therefore hate speech. And some of the most challenging expressions we have heard are in fact *contested speech* — phrases, slogans, and symbols that can mean multiple things, depending on who says them, what the intent is, and what the surrounding community is like. Contested speech requires interpretation; it requires challenge, debate, and discussion; in short, it requires exactly the kind of educational practice that a college like Skidmore is dedicated to providing.

Such practice is especially important because that kind of openness to argument and contrary perspectives and the ability to engage in dialogue across difference is the skill I find most imperiled in our democracy today. Do we see this in the political sphere? In the media? In our public institutions and initiatives? The polarization and closed-mindedness of our current society is the most potent threat to the civic democracy that constitutes the great foundation of the United States.

I continue to believe in that foundation, flawed though our efforts may often be — for as the preamble to the Constitution states, the effort is always “to form a more perfect Union,” understanding this work to be always ongoing. Preparing our students to engage in civic democracy — “to make the choices required of informed, responsible citizens” — is at the heart of the Skidmore mission statement.

That is why Skidmore has recently joined the College Presidents for Civic Preparedness initiative, an effort of the Citizens and Scholars Institute that focuses on preparing and educating our students for the work of democratic citizenship. Colleges and universities are among the few places in America where people from remarkably different backgrounds, cultures, and ideologies come together to wrestle with the complexity of what it means to be a democratic community — an awesome and challenging responsibility that has never been more important. I am eager to advance such efforts at Skidmore and strengthen our campus’s commitments to freedom and the spirit of democracy. I frankly think this is the highest goal of a college campus today.

I am extremely proud of how well Skidmore has endeavored in that work throughout this season of turmoil in our nation and the world. I am thankful to the remarkably dedicated staff and faculty who have done so much to move that mission forward. And I am especially proud of our students, who continue to show such moral courage; such tenacity and endurance; and such a commitment to finding a moral pathway forward in a confused and ever-challenging world. It is indeed my privilege and my blessing to be in the service of that effort at Skidmore.

## A CHANGING CAMPUS



### Scribner Library's new Creative Corridor

Last summer, Skidmore's Lucy Scribner Library embarked on the creation of its Creative Corridor, a redesign of the central space of the library's first floor. The project prioritizes student use of the library, both as a location for study and as a place where connections between peers are strengthened. The renovations include new furniture and layout that will provide more spaces for students to gather in a social setting that values communication and collaboration.



### A transformed entrance to campus

As part of a renovation project that includes new pedestrian crossings, a roundabout at the end of North Broadway, and other improvements, Skidmore College has installed new signage at its North Broadway entrance. The renovations were supported by Alan and Marlene Gilbert, parents of Jessica Strasser '14. The planting of 64 large native sycamore trees as part of the project earned the 2023 Landscape Initiative Award from the Saratoga Springs Preservation Foundation.



### Prioritizing physical and mental wellness

September saw the opening of Skidmore's new outdoor tennis courts, courtesy of a foundational gift from Susan Kettering Williamson '59. The project was completed on the grounds of McCaffery-Wagman Tennis and Wellness Center, which is set for completion later this year. The center will bring Skidmore's physical and mental health resources together in a single space, open doors for everyone to pursue athletics and fitness, and create a welcoming and inclusive space for all centered on health and wellness. The new facility is supported by a lead gift from former student-athletes Kim Wachenheim Wagman '88 P'15 and Amy Wachenheim McCaffery '01 and their families.



### Men's ice hockey rink expansion

Skidmore's men's ice hockey team kicked off their 2023-24 season with a newly completed locker room at Saratoga Springs City Rink. The 3,200-foot expansion saw the erection of a new changing room, training room, and coaches' office for the team, the result of a partnership between Skidmore and the city of Saratoga Springs that allows the College to build a new locker room complex while enabling the city to make other planned improvements to its ice rink facilities.

## SKIDMANIA '73

*In November, students, alumni, faculty, staff, and community members packed into Arthur Zankel Music Center for two sold-out performances of Skidmania, a tribute to the diverse music of 50 years ago, a celebration of students' talent, and a beloved Skidmore tradition.*





**Ruizhe Hao '26**  
*International student, local hero*

When Ruizhe Hao '26, a Davis United World College scholar from Ningxia-Hui, China, isn't busy studying for his education studies major, you may find him rushing off campus to respond to an emergency as a volunteer firefighter in the nearby town of Greenfield.

Hao is no stranger to rescue work. Back in his hometown of Yinchuan, he is a volunteer member of Blue Sky Rescue Team, China's largest nonprofit civil rescue organization. At Blue Sky, Hao assists as logistic support and in training the local community. In the past, he has participated in various rescue efforts, at other times teaching safety and basic first-aid skills to students at regional schools.

When Hao started at Skidmore, he imagined that his rescue work would be put on hold for the semester, but this was quick to change when Lecturer of English Brenda Pashley-Rabbitt mentioned during her writing seminar that the Greenfield Center Fire Department was accepting volunteers. Hao seized the opportunity to get involved.

He was recently featured on a billboard standing proudly beside his team at the fire department, continuing his advocacy for community involvement; "We want you: Join us," the sign invites in large, red type.

"As a volunteer firefighter actively involved in protecting and serving the community, it gives me a strong sense of purpose and community attachment," Hao reflected. "I don't want to be a hero, I just want to help the people around me."



**Vicky Grijalva '24**  
*Accepted into prestigious fellowship program*

Vicky Grijalva '24, a self-determined multimedia communication major from Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and president of the Class of 2024, received exciting news last fall that she was accepted into the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators Undergraduate Fellows Program (NUFP).

The fellowship aims to increase the number of historically disenfranchised and underrepresented professionals in student affairs and higher education. The fellowship features programming, including institutes, paid summer internships, and on-campus mentoring.

Grijalva wears many hats around campus: In addition to senior class president, she is chair of the Residential Life Commission, a Thoroughbred Ambassador for Admissions, and social media marketing assistant in the Office of Communications and Marketing.

As part of the fellowship, Grijalva meets monthly with her NUFP mentor, Director of Leadership Activities Carlos Navarro, to discuss her career and higher education goals, which include completing a master's degree in higher education. Ángel B. Pérez '98, CEO of the National Association for College Admission Counseling (see p. 22), also met with Grijalva as part of the fellowship.

"Being a part of the NUFP fellowship has been an amazing opportunity for me. I have been able to learn a lot from my mentor, Carlos Navarro, about the student affairs world. I've also had the opportunity to meet other NUFP fellows from all over the U.S.," Grijalva reflected.

After graduation, Grijalva wants to continue her involvement in student affairs work and make a difference in the world of education.



**Willa Flink '25**  
*Winner of Voyager Scholarship for Public Service*

Willa Flink '25, a history major and arts administration minor from Minneapolis, Minnesota, is the first Skidmore student to receive the Obama-Chesky Scholarship for Public Service.

The award was created by Barack and Michelle Obama and Airbnb co-founder and CEO Brian Chesky. It aims to help shape future leaders eager to take on some of the world's biggest challenges. Flink intends to work toward decolonizing museums and repatriating stolen and displaced artifacts.

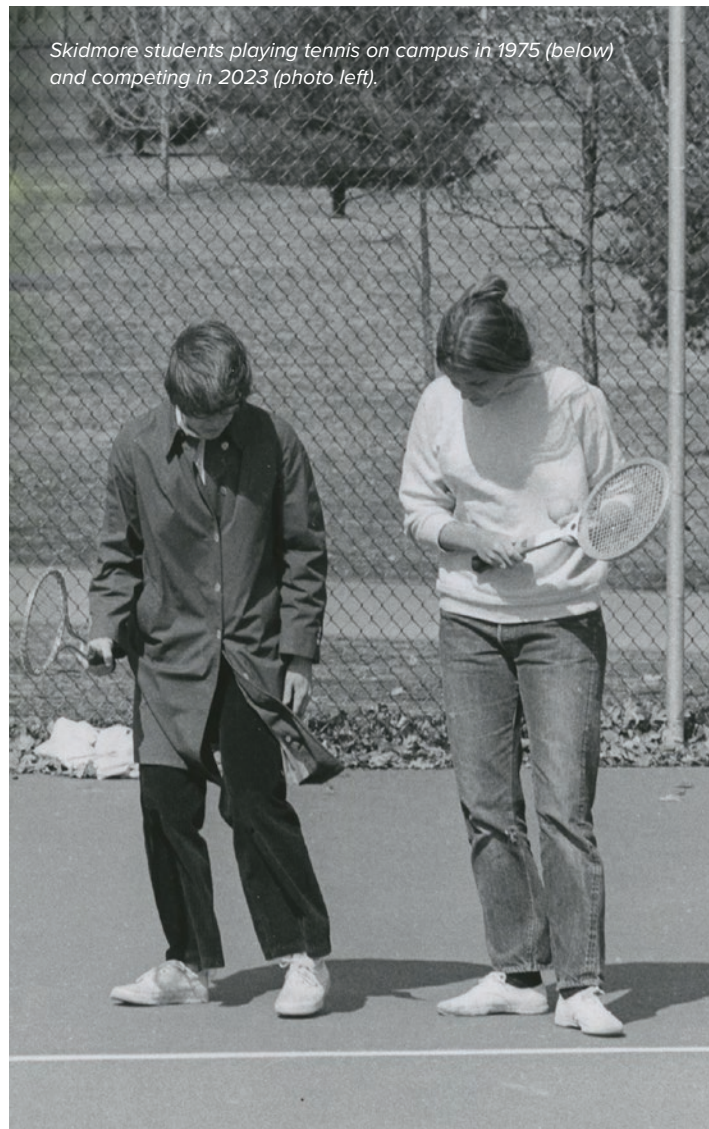
"I feel so grateful that the Obama Foundation appreciated my eclectic combination of service work contributing to art repatriation efforts, queer activism, border activism exhibits, and more," Flink said. "The scholarship will help alleviate the financial burden of college and support my hopes to work in the nonprofit social justice/arts world post-grad!"

Flink spent last summer as an archival research and graphic design intern at North Star Underground Railroad Museum in Ausable Chasm, New York, through Skidmore's Summer Experience Fund.

As part of the scholarship, Flink will receive up to \$50,000 toward school expenses, as well as a \$10,000 stipend and free Airbnb housing to pursue a summer work-travel experience between their junior and senior year of college.

# OK BOOMER?

By Tory Abbott '23



Skidmore students playing tennis on campus in 1975 (below) and competing in 2023 (photo left).

**Research by Andrew Lindner '03 with Skidmore students tells us why the generational divide, on campus and off, may not be so meaningful after all.**

You've probably run into the derisive posts on social media — a 20-something castigating someone their elder on some hot-button issue with the dismissive refrain "OK boomer."

But how effective are broad generational labels like Gen Z, millennial, Gen X, or baby boomer in defining the essential characteristics of those around us? Skidmore alumnus and Professor of Sociology Andrew Lindner '03 sought to find out with Skidmore students Sophie Stelboun '23 and Azizul Hakim '26.

The research team, who surveyed 1,478 Americans on their generational self-identification, noted that debates around generations tend to be highly politicized. They predicted that people would be more likely to identify with a generational label when its corresponding stereotype aligned with their core beliefs. Instead, they found that while 70% of people identified with one of the big four generational groups (Gen Z, millennial, Gen X, or baby boomer), the biggest factor of their identification was their birth year — not their political alignments.

"It seems like lots of people have a general awareness of what group they're 'supposed' to be in but aren't emotionally attached to it," Stelboun explained. "It's easy to throw these labels around when looking to point fingers and write a buzzy article because they create heat and turn groups against each other."

In other words, the cultural significance of these labels may not lie in the accuracy of their ability to classify a section of the population based on identifiable traits, but rather on their ability to create division and efficacy in casting blame.

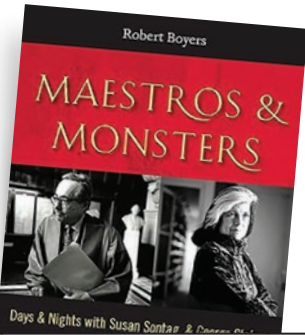
The study, "Embracing Generational Labels: An Analysis of Self-Identification and Sociopolitical Alignment," was born of an upper-level seminar, Generations, taught by Lindner in the spring of 2022, in which students were able to participate in the creation, approval process, and eventual launch of the survey.

The cross-generational nature of the study also highlights what can come from incorporating a wide array of perspectives and experiences.

"As an alum, I think one of the things that historically has made Skidmore such a special place is the closeness between faculty and students," Lindner said. "One of my favorite parts of the College, both when I was a student and now as a professor, is the intellectual exchange that occurs when you're conducting collaborative research."

That sense of connection is also something that cuts across all generations at Skidmore.

ASSIGNED READING — Excerpts from faculty authors



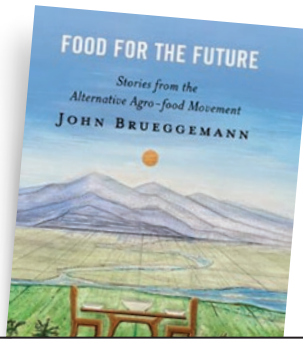
**Maestros & Monsters: Days & Nights with Susan Sontag & George Steiner**

By Robert Boyers, professor of English

This memoir by the *Salmagundi* editor and New York State Writers Institute founder offers a personal perspective on two leading Western intellectuals.

Though both George and Susan had often felt the sting of rebuke, and done what they could to provoke it, they never quite settled into the role of beloved dissidents or contrarians. ... Their enthusiasts were sometimes described as dazzled, awe-struck, and thus not properly disposed to resist them. ... I was always one of those dazzled enthusiasts. I knew of the weaknesses in both characters, and tried not to ignore what was disappointing or dubious in their work. But both George and Susan were persons of extraordinary brilliance, and the best of their writing had an unclassifiable originality. Both of them were, in my sometimes dazzled eyes, emblems of the NOT-ME. I was somewhat less avid, less original, less provocative, less relentless. ... I understood that both thought me oddly equable, balanced, less than thrilling, however much I passed for electric and dangerous in conformist, politically correct academic circles.

Of course both Susan and George represented a standing affront to certain decorums and assumptions favored by the established cultural-academic order .... Neither was willing to join the collective mood of a culture inclined to self-censorship, populated by citizens more and more apt to think that any speech worth uttering will be approved by their community. Though neither George nor Susan went against the grain merely for the pleasure of inciting controversy, they didn't regard their primary obligation, as writers or thinkers, as the creation of "a society for the promotion of virtue." They did not think of themselves as incorrigibly benign or comforting, and in this I learned a great deal from their example and their independence.



**Food for the Future: Stories from the Alternative Agro-food Movement**

By John Brueggemann, professor of sociology

This book is about different foods, the stories they contain, and the people in those stories.

The alternative agro-food movement provides evidence that expansive market culture is under pressure from a small but rapidly growing current flowing in a different direction. We see in the work of engaged sustainers alternative patterns that support viable moral foundations.

Engaged sustainers who are neighborly model deep care. Loving an acre of land, growing nutrient-rich crops, treating animals humanely, and cooking tasty, nutritious foods are acts of care.

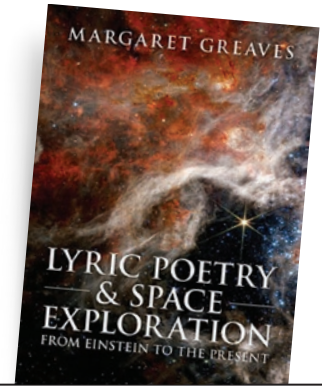
The culture of sharing, reciprocity, and collaboration among engaged sustainers is all about fairness. Trying to remove the rapacious intermediaries in our food system, and bringing more transparency to food production all serve the ideal of fairness.

Understanding that every person has a right to good food, culturally resonant food, and influence over how they get it represents a commitment to liberty. Freedom from hunger has rippling implications. Any alternatives to the dominant food system this movement can help generate (e.g., farming techniques, food distribution choices, nourishing foods) advances the goal of freedom, too. Every such alternative weakens the mainstream system — including taxpayer-funded subsidies to Big Ag.

Those who take care of the land and their neighbors evince loyalty — not to some backstabbing adversary or to narrow self-interest, but to a broader concern. ...

Comprehending the elemental meaning of nature, being humble before it, and finding joy in it, is to feel sanctity. ...

Just as expansive market culture partly explains why our mainstream food system is failing, an alternative sort of culture can account for the countertrend.



**Lyric Poetry and Space Exploration: From Einstein to the Present**

By Margaret Greaves, associate professor of English

This cultural history highlights the surprising impact of space science on poetry of the postwar era.

Launching lyric poetry into space is almost a type of space burial, the practice of sending human remains into orbit.

*Star Trek* creator Gene Roddenberry's went up twice in the 1990s, and SpaceX has begun offering "funeral flights." When William Shatner lifted off on Jeff Bezos's Blue Origin rocket in 2021, he relayed the experience as a kind of self-elegy. Tanner Stening records the elegiac nature of Shatner's trip in his occasional poem on the event: "What you see is black, he said. Is that death?" Reminding us that "Captain Kirk had died three times," Stening suggests something of Shatner's near immortality, contrasting the black void of space to the lively Blue Planet that mesmerized Shatner below.

And there is, perhaps, something fundamentally elegiac in the way space exploration fails to make us eternal. "We came in peace for all mankind," the Apollo 11 lunar plaque reads, immortalizing humanity in an American image even while recording in the past tense the species' and empire's impermanence. Apollo 11's commemorative lunar artifacts are now relics of a declining empire. The flag the mission left on the moon is no longer visible to telescopes, having toppled over in the engine blast from Apollo 11's ascent. Assuming it is still there, it has lost its colors and distinctive stars and stripes that wrote its destiny into the cosmos.

Against the impermanence of America's cosmic footprint, the lyric, as it is culturally imagined, might seem a way to outlive "the gilded monuments."



## SARAH DELANEY VERO NAMED INAUGURAL GENERAL COUNSEL, VICE PRESIDENT FOR HUMAN RESOURCES

Sarah Delaney Vero, an experienced attorney and human resources professional and longtime member of the Skidmore community, is Skidmore's inaugural general counsel and vice president for human resources.

Vero began her work with the College in 2008 and most recently held the role of strategic human resources advisor. Throughout her time at Skidmore, Vero has demonstrated collaborative and inclusive leadership and adeptly guided the College through important transitions and challenges. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she served on and co-chaired the COVID-19 Logistics Working Group. Her service on the Committee on Intercultural and Global Understanding and the Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct Advisory Council reflects her deep commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion at Skidmore.

A longtime advocate of the liberal arts education model, she holds a Bachelor of Arts in history from Union College and a Juris Doctor from Albany Law School.



## FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

**Peter von Allmen**, professor of economics and David H. Porter Chair, published the seventh edition of the textbook *The Economics of Sports* (Routledge) with co-authors Michael Leeds and Victor Matheson.

**David Howson**, senior teaching professor and Arthur Zankel Executive Director of Arts Administration, has been named a board member for the Charles R. Wood Foundation.

**Rebecca Johnson**, professor and chair of the Psychology Department, published "The Relationship Between Personality Traits and the Processing of Emotion Words: Evidence from Eye-Movements in Sentence Reading" in the *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research* with Megan Wootten '20, Abby Spear '23, and Ashley Smolensky '23.

**Vojtech (Vojta) Kejzlar**, assistant professor of statistics, published "Variational inference with vine copulas: an efficient approach for Bayesian computer model calibration" in the journal *Statistics and Computing*.

**Jill Linz**, senior instructor of physics, published "The Sounds of Atoms" in *Physics Magazine*, highlighting the audible periodic table she produced as part of her Atom Music project.

**Evan Mack**, senior teaching professor of music, was featured in an NPR story about his work with We Are Instrumental, an organization that has collected, fixed, and donated hundreds of instruments to schools in northern New York.

**Tammy C. Owens**, professor of American studies, delivered her talk "Telling Her-Stories in the Dark: Transgressing Fear, Race, and Place to Be Women in the American South" at Texas State University.

**Robert ParkeHarrison**, professor of art, displayed constructed photographs at the Open Your Eyes: Transforming Our World festival in Zurich, Switzerland, with Shana ParkeHarrison.

**Aarathi Prasad**, associate professor of computer science, published "Anxiously attached: Personality predictors of privacy attitudes, trust, and willingness to share information on the internet" in the *International Journal of Personality Psychology*.

**Laurie Rabinowitz**, assistant professor of education studies, co-authored "The Intersection of Dysconscious Ableism and Niceness in Teachers' Critical Readings of Characters with Disabilities in Picturebooks" in the International Literacy Association's children's literature journal, *The Dragon Lode*.

**Maryuri Roca**, senior teaching professor of chemistry, published "Color transferability from solution to solid using silica coated silver nanoparticles" in the journal *Langmuir* with co-authors Julia Danischewski '21, Destiny Donelson '21, Maleeha Farzansyed '22, Erin Jacoski '22, Haru Kato '23, and Quincy Lucin '21.

**Rodrigo Schneider**, assistant professor of economics, co-authored "Does Legal Change Induce Behavioral Change in Domestic Violence Against Women?" in the *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*.

**Jeff Segrave**, professor of health and human physiological sciences, published "Bravo Segrave! Sir Henry Segrave and the Meaning of the World Land Speed Record" in the *Journal of Sport History*.

**Michael Swellander**, visiting assistant professor of German, won the Max Kade Prize for Best Article in *The German Quarterly* for his article "Alloyed Truth: The Historiographical and Political Importance of Error in Ludwig Börne's Journalism."

**Murat C. Yildiz**, assistant professor of Middle Eastern history, delivered the Harold Seymour Lecture in Sports History at Cornell University: "Biceps and Balls on the Bosphorus: The Ottoman World of Sports."

## CELEBRATING THE LEGACY OF MARY LOU BATES

For generations of alumni, their official welcome to Skidmore College was an acceptance letter signed by Mary Lou Bates. Skidmore's longtime vice president and dean of admissions and financial aid — a pioneer and leader among women in higher education — retired in June 2023. During 49 transformative years at the College, Bates played essential roles in transforming Skidmore's admissions process and student body, and by helping Skidmore meet — and often exceed — admissions targets year after year.

Scores of colleagues, friends, family, and community leaders gathered at a campus event in her honor to celebrate Bates' unwavering commitment to Skidmore and the transformations she helped to usher in. Skidmore bestowed Bates with the Denis B. Kembal-Cook Award, the highest award given to a member of the Skidmore community.

"Mary Lou, you came to Skidmore at a time of great change — the need to increase enrollment and student quality and the move to co-education," said Judith Pick Eissner '64, a former chair of Skidmore's Board of Trustees for whom the Eissner Admissions Center is named. "You have ridden a comet and have been tireless in your dedication to the school's upward trajectory."





# Resurrecting a voice and creating new memories through AI

Associate Professor Sarah Sweeney speaks to her late father through her work *Conversations with My Deepfake Dad*

By Angela Valden

What does it mean to be in possession of your voice, and what would it mean for someone else to possess it? How do you reconstruct someone who is no longer here, and how real would that version of them be? Would it matter how real they are?

These are some of the many philosophical, ethical, and technological questions that artificial intelligence (AI) has brought to the fore and that Sarah Sweeney, associate professor and chair of art, is contending with through her long-term project *Conversations with My Deepfake Dad*.

Sweeney's father, a screenwriter who documented his work and life in tape recordings, died at the age of 44, when Sweeney was 17.

"When I turned 44, I had all these thoughts about what it was like to be the same age he was when he died," Sweeney says. "Was I at the same place in my life?"

Around that time, she also began to take an interest in deepfakes — media generated using AI to replace someone's likeness — and the implications of such capabilities.

"As I was looking through flash drives and found old movies of my dad when he was very young, I had this thought: What would happen if you could make new memories with someone who had died?"

Sweeney contacted a company called Resemble AI and began working with the firm to create a clone of her father's voice using its speech-to-speech software. "It takes someone's speech — we've been calling them 'the puppeteer,' the person who's speaking — and maps my dad's voice onto it," she explains.

Over the next several months, she found six hours of her father's recordings and worked with Resemble AI and her mother to think through the ethical and technological challenges of generating new conversations using her father's voice. "I think a big question in this project is, 'Who has the right to say that someone who is no longer with us can be used in a deepfake?' I had to produce a death certificate and a letter of consent from my mother."

As Sweeney moved forward with the project, she considered what the conversations with her father would look like. "I started thinking about, when someone dies, where might those answers come from?" she recalls. "One of the things I became really interested in is how we hold someone after they die and how we imagine they're the only version of that person. But in fact, there are maybe 60 versions of that person in the world held by different people."



She decided she would generate six audio conversations, each based on different archival materials, interviews, and research. Sweeney writes both sides of each 20-minute-long conversation. She then speaks her side and her dad's deepfake voice speaks his.

"The first dad is based on interviews with my mom and my sisters. All his answers are written from what they think he would have said. So I got to meet my mom's version of my dad and my sisters' version of my dad. And I'm learning a lot about him through that."

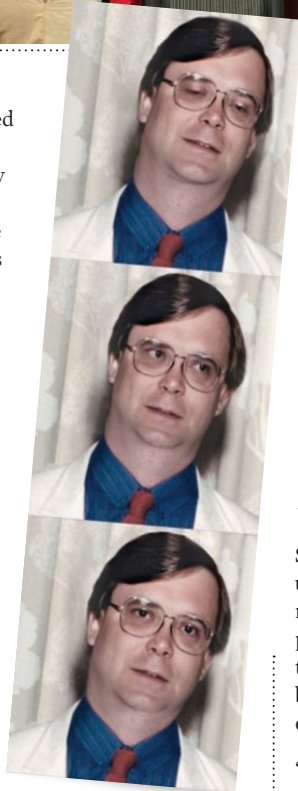
"The second one is just him, so that one is really interesting. It's only words that he used in his letters and his tapes."

"The third one is therapy sessions. They're called empty chair therapy sessions. The fourth is a medium. The fifth is a chatbot. And the sixth is just voice memos to myself that I've been recording in the car."

The audio recordings, along with photographs, will constitute an online presence for her father.

Sweeney has taken the audio component to several classes at Skidmore, including psychology, English, media and film studies, and First-Year Experience classes. "I listen to this file with them and then we have a conversation."

Sweeney is keenly aware of the complex range of issues that her project raises, and she is one of a number of Skidmore faculty members — from Associate Professor of



Top: From left, Science Machine Shop Supervisor/Technician Jeff Britton, Senior Teaching Professor of Physics Evan Halstead, Zoë Bilodeau '23, Omar Gomez '23, and Associate Professor of Art Sarah Sweeney work together to install the phone booth in Scribner Library.

Above: Candid photos of Sweeney's father.

Psychology Jess Sullivan, who taught the course Artificial Self last spring, to Professor of English Mason Stokes, who taught the course Writing with AI in the fall — who are grappling with the complexity of AI through their research and teaching. Skidmore's Center for Leadership, Teaching, and Learning and the College's Learning Experience Design and Digital Scholarship Support (LEDS) teams even organized a semester-long AI Think Tank devoted to exploring some of those issues this past fall.

Sweeney's project continues to unfold, and rapidly evolving technologies continue to raise ethical, philosophical, legal, and other questions. Sweeney hopes her project will be thought-provoking in a multitude of ways, to many different audiences.

"If you look at the news, the worry right now is that our world is changing such that we can't figure out what's real and not real. This piece is a little bit about saying, 'Is there something interesting in something that's both real and not real?' And I think that's what I really want us to consider about these technologies that work with our memories. They're kind of incredible but also really scary. And I think that's what this piece is really about — is this incredible possibility of this strange conversation I'm having with my dad."

"One of the things people often ask me is, 'Does it matter that it's real or not real?' And I don't think it does. At some points it really doesn't matter. It feels like my dad."

The *Conversations with My Deepfake Dad* audio recordings that Associate Professor and Chair of Art Sarah Sweeney creates are being shared online as well as through physical exhibitions.

The first conversation was presented through a phone booth, which debuted in October 2022 at CultureHub in New York City. A parallel piece — a rotary phone — was sent to Los Angeles, and the phone booth installation was brought to Scribner Library for the spring and summer of 2023.

A number of collaborators at Skidmore have helped to bring the installation to life. The Art Department's shop supervisor and building safety coordinator, Paul Davis, constructed the phone booth. Andrea Casey, art technology support coordinator and program coordinator, created the prints for inside.

Senior Teaching Professor Evan Halstead and Science Machine Shop Supervisor/Technician Jeff Britton from the Physics Department, along with three of Halstead's independent study students — Omar Gomez '23, Zoë Bilodeau '23, and David O'Connell '23 — assembled the electrical components that allow the conversation to start and stop with the opening of the phone booth's doors.

"What I've learned is that by partnering with people who have this incredible expertise — students, faculty, staff — the piece is so much richer, and I could never have made this thing by myself," Sweeney says.

To listen to the conversations, visit [www.mydeepfakedad.com](http://www.mydeepfakedad.com)

Katie and Erich Sternberg (center) with their children, Hallie (left), and Jake, (right).

Learn more about creative ways to support Skidmore at [skidmore.edu/advancement](https://skidmore.edu/advancement)

JEANNIE FREY RHODES PHOTOGRAPHY

## Giving Creatively

### Katie Riker Sternberg '90 is applying creative thought to philanthropy, supporting experiential learning for Skidmore students and another cause dear to her family — opportunities for individuals with autism. *By Katie Rocque*

**H**ow do you think *creatively* to support the communities and causes you care most about?

For Katie Riker Sternberg '90, an executive leadership coach and loyal Skidmore Fund donor for many years, creative thought has meant thinking about how she can continue to make a lasting impact on student learning experiences at Skidmore while also supporting individuals with autism — a cause that transformed her family's life.

Sternberg and husband Erich, an insurance executive, grew up actively participating in the religious and educational communities their families were part of. Contributing time, talent, and treasure is a commitment that remains important to their family; today, much of their focus is on making a meaningful difference in the autistic community.

In 2001, their then 3-year-old son, Jake, was diagnosed with autism; their daughter, Hallie, was a newborn. At the time of Jake's diagnosis, the family was living in Louisiana, where few support services were available. In true Skidmore fashion, Sternberg took action, learning about different treatment options and therapy services so she and Erich could begin building a support network of their own.

As Jake grew older and the Sternbergs discovered what it took to help him succeed, one thing became clear: Talented, passionate, and qualified support and medical professionals are essential. Today, the Sternbergs' relationship with Skidmore draws on the family's deep commitment to supporting the autistic community.

In 2021, the Sternbergs created the Katherine Riker Sternberg '90 and Erich Sternberg Fund for Clinical Field Experience and Community Engagement at Skidmore. The fund supports experiential learning opportunities for psychology students who want to work directly within the autistic and developmentally disabled communities. Students can apply for funds to assist them in a range of areas, including clinical field placement and community engagement opportunities, transportation, academic support materials, summer housing, and internship stipends.

"The generosity of the Sternbergs has been a game-changer for providing greater opportunities for students interested in gaining practical clinical experience who might not have been able to participate in the past," says Senior Teaching Professor of Psychology Rachel Mann-Rosan '94, whose work with the autistic and developmentally disabled communities inspired the family's gift.

In its first two years, the Sternberg Fund has helped 14 students gain clinical field experiences through the Psychology Department. Those opportunities range from supporting individuals and their families in their home to working with a group of individuals at a summer camp specifically dedicated to assisting children on the autism spectrum.

"Having a chance to work with the kids at Camp Reece was more than rewarding; it really made me feel like I was making an impact on the lives of the children who were there," Justin Zitelli '23 says of his clinical field experience. "My experience allowed me to further my knowledge within the domain of clinical

psychology and confirmed my desire to work with children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), ADHD (attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder), and anxiety."

Experiences like that of Zitelli are what Sternberg was hoping for. "At Skidmore, I recognized my intellectual power. It has been important to me to give back — to provide current and future Skidmore students with the intellectual and creative building blocks the College provided to me," says Sternberg, who graduated as an English major and history minor. "The Sternberg Fund represents the strategic intent that my husband, Erich, and I established, to focus our philanthropy on building capacity for autism services."

"Through creative thought and partnership, we were able to tie our support with Skidmore with the idea of wanting to build capacity at a liberal arts institution — not with graduate students, not with data or research — but rather by building career-defining experiences for students who want to make a difference in a community that's so important to our family."

With the support and dedication of individuals built around Jake, he now lives in a private home with two housemates near Katie and Erich in Chicago. He finds fulfillment in his work at a local animal shelter, volunteers to read to children and adults with disabilities, and is also working toward an associate degree.

The Sternbergs' hope is that the fund they created will allow Skidmore students to engage in transformative experiences that will leave a lasting impact on individuals like Jake for years to come.

# MDOCS

## A Decade of Documentary

### The John B. Moore Documentary Studies Collaborative (MDOCS) celebrates 10 years of supporting students' journeys as storytellers

By Maitreya Ravenstar '25, Charlotte Mahn '25, and Catherine (Catie) Hamilton '25

When the John B. Moore Documentary Studies Collaborative (MDOCS) was founded in 2014, it set out to embed documentary into Skidmore's core curriculum and culture through a wide variety of courses in nonfiction storytelling — a unique offering among liberal arts colleges.

A decade after its founding, MDOCS courses encompass film, archive, exhibit, photography, writing, virtual reality, mapping, web design, and more, allowing students to grow their potential as independent creators. The interdisciplinary program is open to students from all majors.

"MDOCS has grown into fulfilling its mission of serving the campuswide community with training in the documentary arts and storytelling through courses, workshops, project support, course support, a summer residency program, marquee public events, and more," says Director Adam Tinkle. "But it has also had an impact far beyond campus, as many of our students have forged collaborations that have sustained them well beyond graduation. They have networked with leaders in the industry who have become their mentors and colleagues, and they have leveraged the craft they learned in MDOCS toward the pursuit of distinguished careers in documentary and related fields."

In its early years, Inaugural Director and Professor of History Jordana Dym could only imagine what the small, partially student-led program would become.

"When MDOCS was getting started, those students helped invent the program as much as I, (Assistant Director) Jesse (O'Connell), or Adam did," Dym says. "The original program goal was to bring storytelling into the disciplines as much as to develop media makers."

Many MDOCS students go on to further cultivate passions they discovered in the program; two of three student authors of this piece are now bringing some of those skills to the pages of *Scope* magazine. Others apply MDOCS skills to a wide range of professional fields. All reflect on their time working with MDOCS as incredibly meaningful in the development of subsequent careers.

"Whether you're giving a presentation, redrafting your resume, or writing an email, you need to be able to tell stories," explains Harry Sultan '17, who is in the process of opening a coffee shop and board-game bar in Portland, Maine. "The art of storytelling exists in all disciplines, and MDOCS provides the perfect toolkit."

Other notable MDOCS alumni include Emily Rizzo '18, who has spent the past four years as a radio producer at WHYI — Philadelphia's NPR affiliate — largely reporting on Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and its schools; Amanda Peckler '20, who has worked in post-production for Apple TV and AMC and is now moving into immersive games; and Claire Mask '21, whose film *Final Touch* has been shown at major festivals including DOC NYC, Hot Springs International Documentary Festival, and Brooklyn Film Festival.

Skidmore community members gathered in the fall to commemorate the 10-year anniversary of MDOCS with screenings of notable work at the Firehouse Cinema in New York in September and again on campus in October during the College's annual Celebration Weekend. The screenings, which featured the work of students, alumni, and faculty from the past 10 years, serve as but one example of how crucial MDOCS has become to the creative passion and education of Skidmore students.

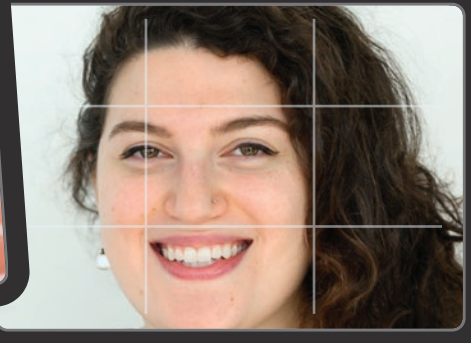
But many alumni think of MDOCS as more than just an academic program; it is a community that prioritizes building practical skills alongside creating lasting and meaningful connections. Having spoken extensively to many MDOCS alumni, it is striking how truly vital MDOCS is to Skidmore's programming, allowing students to find their niche, network, and generate experiences that will continue to serve them no matter what career they pursue.



"Whether you're giving a presentation, redrafting your resume, or writing an email, you need to be able to tell stories. The art of storytelling exists in all disciplines, and MDOCS provides the perfect toolkit."

Harry Sultan '17





### **ELI RUBEN '17**

*Marketing and Promotional Strategist*

Now a marketing and promotional strategist at FCP Euro — a retailer for European car parts — Eli Ruben, a management and business major and Spanish minor at Skidmore, was uniquely involved in the MDOCS curriculum. When he joined the program in its first year, he already had extensive video storytelling experience, so he began teaching other students.

“I was a teacher’s assistant for MDOCS classes, like Video Storytelling, and I also taught workshops in technical skill building, like Final Cut Pro. I really enjoyed teaching these classes and helping other students develop their video skills. It was rewarding to watch people use the skills I taught them in larger projects, like documentaries made in the Storytellers’ Institute.”

Ruben says MDOCS was integral to honing his technical skills — especially when it comes to his YouTube channel, @IgnitionTube, where he posts videos about cars and has amassed over 70,000 subscribers.

“Even now, whenever I set up to film a YouTube video, I hear my MDOCS professors in my head instructing me on how and where to set up my camera,” he says.

Aside from YouTube content creation and his work at FCP Euro, Ruben regularly puts his MDOCS skills to the test through freelance photography and videography work throughout Boston.

### **LISA FIERSTEIN '16**

*Podcast Marketer*

Lisa Fierstein says MDOCS has played an enormous role in shaping her post-graduate life and a career in marketing for top podcasts and the audio streaming service Spotify.

At Skidmore, Fierstein was an American studies major with minors in arts administration and media and film studies. She took full advantage of all that a growing MDOCS program had to offer, allowing her to hone her abilities, test different mediums, and collaborate with talented people she met while in the program.

“MDOCS gave me the opportunity to learn how to determine what medium best serves the story I am trying to tell. My MDOCS courses also developed my editing eye — when I see the raw video footage, audio recording, web design mockup, or written draft, I’m now more instinctually able to know what I need to do to carve out the right story,” says Fierstein.

Those skills have been evident throughout a career that has blended podcasting, education, and marketing. For five years, Fierstein was a content marketing manager for Spotify for Podcasters, a platform that allows content creators to start and grow their podcasts.

“At Spotify, I designed multimedia educational resources to support podcast creators in shaping their stories, building their technical skills, and growing their audiences,” she says.

Fierstein also notes MDOCS’ unique ability to share student work with audiences. She recalls a short film she produced, *The Presence Project*, about Skidmore artist Meghan Murray and her work with Alzheimer’s patients, which was shown at the Legacy Film Festival on Aging.

In addition to her work at Spotify, she has also worked on the marketing for several chart-topping podcasts, including Malcolm Gladwell’s *Revisionist History*.

### **SHANA KLEINER '20**

*Lab Manager, University of Pennsylvania*

Shana Kleiner’s work at the University of Pennsylvania demonstrates just how versatile MDOCS-learned skills can be.

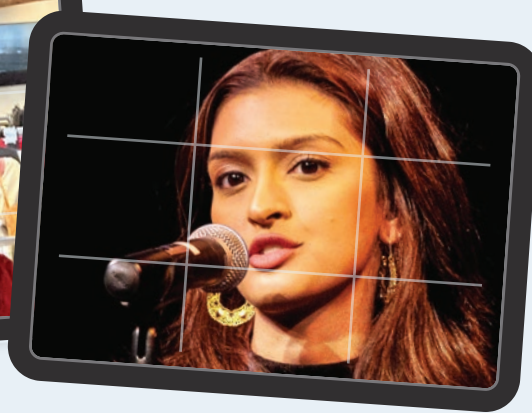
Kleiner, who majored in social work at Skidmore and earned a master’s degree from Columbia University, works as manager of the research lab SAFELab examining digital language and expressions of grief in the lives of youth of color online.

“The key thing for me is thinking about my experiences with grief and what I’m bringing to my research. That’s a lot of the work we did in MDOCS,” Kleiner says. “Of course, there was a lot of tangible groundwork for our projects, but I feel as though what really stuck with me is the progress we made in building relationships with each other and ourselves.”

Kleiner’s work at SAFELab rests on a foundation of co-creation with youth of color and treating them as domain experts. Her MDOCS education, she says, helped her advocate for real co-creation that involves community members from the incipient stages of research.

Another part of Kleiner’s role at the University of Pennsylvania has her working on a documentary about Black grief in Harlem. “It’s been humbling and also really cool to be doing this documentary work,” she says. “My MDOCS experience was what gave me the confidence to agree to this collaboration.”

Kleiner says she feels fortunate to be able to incorporate the creativity she fostered through MDOCS in her career in social work, a field where that isn’t always expected.



### **HADIA BAKKAR '20**

*Multimedia Journalist for NBC News and the Associated Press*

Three years post-graduation, Hadia Bakkar has achieved her lifelong dream of being a journalist. At Skidmore, Bakkar worked hard to prepare for her career, majoring in political science, minoring in media and film studies, and serving as editor-in-chief of Skidmore News, the College's student-run newspaper. However, Bakkar credits MDOCS as the space where she learned the most tangible skills for her career in journalism.

"Before I started my classes with MDOCS, I wanted to be a print journalist, but these classes — especially the three-part documentary I made in lieu of a senior thesis — showed me that I wanted to work more prominently in audio and video storytelling," she says. "MDOCS taught me all the concrete skills, from learning how to use a camera to shaping an audio story."

After graduating, Bakkar moved to London, interned at both BBC News and National Public Radio (NPR), and completed a graduate program in journalism at Goldsmiths University of London. Currently, Bakkar works as a video journalist for the Associated Press and as a live requests coordinator at NBC News, where she uses the skills she learned through MDOCS every day.

She fondly recalls the projects she worked on and the people she met through the program.

"In the summer before my senior year, Professor Adam Tinkle invited me to display my work ahead of a Skidmore Peace Week lecture and documentary screening. As an international student from Syria, this was a special opportunity for me to educate people who might not know about my culture. Journalists do not often receive in-person feedback, so this was also a rare chance for me to experience people connecting with and appreciating what I was doing."

### **SANJNA SELVA '21**

*Producer at Aubin Pictures Inc.*

Sanjna Selva says she had never held a camera before coming to Skidmore. Now, she works as a producer for the social justice-driven documentary film company Aubin Pictures, and her debut film, *Call Me Anytime, I'm Not Leaving the House*, centering two sisters who have been separated because of the war in Ukraine, was acquired for broadcast by PBS.

In the fall semester of her first year, the international affairs major and media and film studies minor took her first MDOCS class and was "completely sold," citing the MDOCS community members who would become her friends and professional network.

"It was really amazing to get an introduction to documentary studies through the lens of women and women of color creatives who were out there breaking boundaries," she says. "I saw a lot of myself in them, and they were so nurturing, which is not always the typical climate of this industry."

For her next project, Selva is producing a film about the rise of right-wing nationalism in India. Meanwhile, *Silent Beauty*, a documentary she worked on as an associate producer, won best documentary feature at Urbanworld Film Festival.

*Call Me Anytime, I'm Not Leaving the House*, is the first film to be broadcast twice on POV by PBS and has been screened at a variety of film festivals nationally and internationally.

## **MDOCS**

### **Storytellers' Institute:**

#### **A Space for Creative Exchange**

Harry Sultan '17 had just graduated when he took part in the Storytellers' Institute, an opportunity for MDOCS fellows to work on independent projects and engage with a community of creatives. Sultan was interested in audio documentary and, as he puts it, "the Storytellers' Institute just kind of cemented why I loved it as much as I did and gave me that fuel to continue forward."

Every June, MDOCS offers the unique opportunity for its fellows "to develop a nonfiction project with the inspiration of a community who are pursuing similar questions and ideas in the beautiful setting of Saratoga Springs." Sultan's project explored the history of Saratoga Springs during Prohibition, and the piece of audio storytelling has followed him throughout his career.

During the Institute's Forum Weekend, industry professionals come to Skidmore to view MDOCS fellows' work. For many fellows, connections made during this event become crucial later in their careers.

"It was an incredible experience where I got to meet brilliant creatives who have made content that is both challenging and fun," says Iona Herriott '21.

Sanjna Selva '21 observes, "It all ties back to the ethos of MDOCS, which is very much a community that looks out for each other."

In a way, the Storytellers' Institute represents the crux of MDOCS' purpose: practical skills combined with passion. It provides the opportunity to pursue documentary storytelling in the real world — no grades, just feedback from people with real industry experience.

Sarah Friedland has been director of the Institute since 2017.

"Every year, I strive to make it a non-hierarchical space of exchange where students and professional artists can learn from and be inspired by one another," Friedland says. "I curate and facilitate public and institute-only events that form the backbone of the program, but I also value the unstructured time that is needed to move creative work forward and can give way to spontaneous moments of fellowship."

The joy of storytelling fostered by the Institute inspires future documentarians to pursue their passions with the knowledge that there will be a network of people supporting them.

Reflects Friedland, "It has been beautiful to see the lasting relationships that have come out of the Storytellers' Institute."

# Skidmore students RISE to meet a need

The partnership between Skidmore’s Social Work Department and the long-running Saratoga nonprofit has a powerful impact on the students and the struggling populations they’re serving.

By Angela Valden



## Sybil Newell '00 at the helm

The nonprofit organization is led by a Skidmore alumna, Executive Director Sybil Newell '00.

“We are just recently becoming better known as an agency, but we’ve been in the community for 45 years and we’ve been the primary provider of housing and support for individuals with severe mental illness that entire time,” Newell says. “At any given time, we have over 200 people under RISE roofs through various programs, and last year we served well over 500 people in our care management program as well.”

**“There’s a big need out there, and RISE has a big impact.”**

One of Newell’s first jobs after graduating from Skidmore with a bachelor’s degree in psychology was at Four Winds Hospital in Saratoga Springs, supporting inpatient and outpatient mental health treatment for children, adolescents, and adults. From there she joined Transitional Services Association, today known as RISE, and started out doing the type of frontline work that current Skidmore students are doing with the organization now.

“I came from a family with a lot of mental illness, lots of addictions, and I wanted to work in the field and help people,” she says of her chosen career path. Realizing that she would need a master’s degree in social work, psychology, mental health, or a related area to further advance in the field, she balanced career and family to pursue her master’s in community psychology, completing the program while on maternity leave with her second son.

“Over the past 20 years, I just worked really hard and decided that what I was really passionate about is community mental health — helping people in the community rather than a hospital setting. I think you can have a huge impact on people’s lives if you put supports around them and allow them to be part of the community rather than be separate from it.”

As RISE’s executive director, Newell spends much of her time focusing on public relations, fundraising, grant writing, developing new programs, and meeting with various members of the community to assess needs and ways that RISE can accommodate them, either through existing programs or new programs. “One day is never like the other,” she says.

For two years and counting, more than a dozen Skidmore College students have worked closely with a Saratoga County organization that has been helping individuals and families impacted by homelessness, mental illness, substance abuse, and other life challenges since 1978.

Through Social Work Department field placements, internships, independent study, and full- and part-time positions, Skidmore students have become deeply invested in the people, programs, and communities they have come to know through RISE Housing and Support Services.

“RISE is extremely engaged, and they do an amazing job of meeting the clients where they are and being very client-centered, which is one of the things that we stress in our program here at Skidmore,” says Peter McCarthy, senior teaching professor and director of field education in the Social Work Department. “They have been an exceptional partner to us. They provide amazing opportunities for our students, and we provide them with the resource of people hours.”

*Above: Sybil Newell '00, executive director of RISE Housing and Support Services in Saratoga Springs, works alongside Skidmore students and alumni in addressing the needs of Saratoga County citizens impacted by homelessness, mental illness, and substance abuse.*





*Left: Skidmore students played an important role alongside RISE staff and volunteers in preparing the new 24/7, low-barrier homeless shelter on Adelphi Street in Saratoga Springs, helping to assemble beds, paint walls, and create welcoming, functional spaces for guests.*

## Rethinking justice and offering second chances

Mia Cohen '25, also now a part-time relief staff member, joined RISE as a second-session summer program intern last July, three weeks after the Adelphi Street shelter opened. In her roles, she has been helping to support shelter operations and assist full-time staff with the day-to-day.

A highlight of her summer internship, she says, was attending Saratoga Springs' Community Outreach Court — a highly impactful service that helps members of the county's homeless population get back on their feet.

Initiated in October 2020, the collaboration between RISE, Saratoga Springs City Court Judge Francine Vero, and local law enforcement assists individuals who are experiencing homelessness and are charged with non-violent offenses. Orders handed down by the court are intended to address underlying issues, such as mental illness and substance abuse, that often drive recidivism. Individuals are referred to RISE Community Outreach Court coordinators upon arraignment, and those who meet the orders and remain arrest- and conviction-free have their arrest records expunged.

Since it began in 2020, about 80% of the individuals the court has worked with have appeared at all their court dates, and about 70% have had their records cleared. Saratoga Springs' new mayor, John Safford, has publicly stated his intent to expand the successful program even further.

"I had never been to court of any kind, so just to witness it was really interesting," says social work major Cohen.

Before working with RISE, Cohen had no prior experience in the field or with the homeless population. "I went in with no expectations, and everyone has been so kind. Hearing their stories has changed my perspective on the housing crisis and the homeless population — not just in Saratoga but in the States overall."

The experience has made her more appreciative of being involved in the local community and even more invested in the work she does as a peer health educator on the Skidmore campus, she says. "Now I tell other students who are nervous about working with the homeless that they have to do it. It's so rewarding."

## Providing a safe place to stay and hope for better days

As RISE worked to open its new 24/7, low-barrier homeless shelter on Adelphi Street in Saratoga Springs last year, Newell lent a hand alongside staff, volunteers, and Skidmore students in preparing the space and caring for guests. The new shelter offers 36 beds, a congregate area with a television and couches, a dining area, access to warm showers, laundry facilities, lockers, a counseling office for staff, and a yard with picnic tables and a basketball court.

Led by Victoria Furfaro, RISE's director of advocacy and outreach, Skidmore interns played a critical role in the setup and operations of the new shelter, from conducting research to painting walls, assembling beds, and serving meals.

Social work major Amber Hardy '24, now a full-time shelter advocate for RISE, was among those interns. At the end of her summer placement, she was offered a part-time relief staff position, then promoted to full-time support staff in early fall, then promoted again to her current position, all while attending Skidmore full time.

"It's the best job in the world. I feel very comfortable here," Hardy said one Monday morning in late November after leading a house meeting for shelter guests and then dishing out warm food. "This place feels like my baby."

Talia Remba '24, now a part-time relief staff member, was also introduced to RISE through her Social Work Department field placement and worked with Furfaro, Hardy, Jack Egan '24, Audrey Rudd '23, shelter advocate Marco Amantini '22, and others to get the Adelphi Street shelter up and running by June.

"I've learned so much about the unhoused in Saratoga," Remba says. "We started off reading files and attending meetings regarding the clients RISE works with. Then we phased into the creation of the shelter. We researched how other shelters operated and what rules a low-barrier facility would need to implement, which required calling other shelters across New York state and asking them about their protocol."

When the shelter opened in June, the interns and staff began forming bonds with many of its residents, who ranged in age from 22 to 75.

"I was so grateful to be a part of something so valuable to the community," Remba says.

Witnessing that very real impact on people's lives is the most rewarding part of the work, Newell says. "I have loved opening this new shelter with the interns because it gave me the opportunity to get out of my office and out of my administrative role and jump back into direct care for a while, and to really get to know some folks who are in a really bad situation and see them already making positive changes in their lives."



*From left: RISE Executive Director Sybil Newell '00, former intern Jack Egan '24, and full-time shelter advocates Amber Hardy '24 and Marco Amantini '22 stand outside RISE's new low-barrier homeless shelter in Saratoga Springs.*

“This professional experience has shaped what I want to do for the rest of my life, and I am overwhelmingly thankful for the opportunity.”

**Talia Remba '24**

“There are just endless opportunities here. Everything that matters in social work you can find here.”

**Amber Hardy '24**

### ‘Showing that you care ... no matter what’

In addition to Community Outreach Court and the new low-barrier shelter, RISE offers a number of other community residences and affordable housing programs throughout the area; care management for families and individuals to coordinate services with local healthcare resources; advocacy and outreach to proactively address homelessness; and a variety of recovery services.

“There are just endless opportunities here,” Hardy '24 says. “Everything that matters in social work you can find here.”

When Marco Amantini '22 was hoping to start his career in the Saratoga area after earning his bachelor's degree in social work at Skidmore, his advisor, Senior Teaching Professor Peter McCarthy, recommended he look into a role with RISE. Amantini took a position as shelter support staff after graduation and then quickly moved up to a full-time shelter advocate position.

“I am now involved in making sure respect is maintained and rules are followed in the Adelphi Street shelter, connecting guests to all kinds of resources, and striving to help them grow, move on, and into the appropriate level of care housing needed. I think a big part of the job is showing that you care about them and are there for them no matter what.”

Just being able to make the slightest difference in a person's life for the better makes the work incredibly meaningful, he says.

“I have learned so much about myself and about how to approach a conversation with another human being who is just like me but also very different from me because of the experiences they've had. I am now able to really look past the superficial and initial information I receive by engaging with someone, and ask myself, ‘Why might they be behaving the way they do? What might have brought them to where they are now? How might they be able to change?’”

### Communities working together to change lives

McCarthy and the Social Work Department are looking forward to further developing the partnership — which has been so beneficial for both Skidmore students and RISE — into the future. “We're very happy with the relationship,” he says.

Many of the current students who have made a deep connection to the work they do at RISE are planning to continue on with the organization as well, either through the end of their time at Skidmore or, in some cases, beyond. Most plan to also pursue advanced degrees in the field.

“This has been genuinely life-changing,” Remba '24 says of her time at RISE. “I would have never learned this much about case management, shelter creation, or the unhoused population if it weren't for Skidmore's phenomenal social work program. This professional experience has shaped what I want to do for the rest of my life, and I am overwhelmingly thankful for the opportunity.”



# Reflecting on ‘The Unhealed Wound’ in America

By Angela Valden

Pulitzer Prize winner and former U.S. Poet Laureate Rita Dove joined Grammy Award-winning composer Richard Danielpour on the Skidmore College campus for the 2023 McCormack Endowed Visiting Artist-Scholar Residency in late September, premiering Danielpour’s *The Unhealed Wound*, a Skidmore-commissioned song cycle based on Dove’s latest volume of poems, *Playlist for the Apocalypse*.

“There are times when the need for a work born by necessity arises,” Danielpour said in introducing the performance in Arthur Zankel Music Center’s Helen Filene Ladd Concert Hall. “*The Unhealed Wound* was a piece that both I and Rita Dove felt was such a work.”

Most of the poems in *The Unhealed Wound* were written during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic — “a time when most of us retreated into social isolation while the contagions of fear and envy and greed bubbled unchecked,” Dove recounted in her program note.

Following a growing awareness of how the country had become more polarized in its views about race, Danielpour composed the song cycle in 2021. “It is my hope that this work brings a deeper awareness to our communities, throughout the United States and in the world, about the importance of bringing people together rather than tearing them apart, and that in spite of our differences, backgrounds, and perspectives, we all will remember that we belong to the same human family.”

The operatic talents of Christopher Humbert and Amanda Lynn Bottoms and a chorus of Skidmore students, faculty, and guest singers, conducted by Artist-in-Residence and Choral Director Floyd Ricketts, brought the song cycle to life on the Zankel stage. Seven poems were performed in movements for mezzo-soprano, bass-baritone, violoncello, piano, and chorus.

“There are so many moving parts in putting this together,” Dove observed in her remarks to open the show. “Just as there are many moving parts to a family – a family that I hope we all belong to and that I hope you will hear threaded through this gorgeous music tonight.”

On the evening prior to the premiere performance, Dove and Danielpour presented “Artists in Conversation” in Gannett Auditorium, moderated by Skidmore faculty members April Bernard and Teisha Duncan, with an introduction by Skidmore President Marc Conner.

Rita Dove is “a voice of our nation’s conscience today,” Danielpour observed. “I feel that she is one of those very rare writers who speaks for the times when few dare to go in those specific places.”

Skidmore students engaged with the artists in the classroom as well. Dove visited literary studies and poetry writing classes with professors Bernard, Susannah Mintz, and Barbara Black, as well as Professor Winston Grady-Willis’ Introduction to Black Studies class. Danielpour spoke to Professor Evan Mack’s Music Outreach class; String Ensemble with Professor Michael Emery; and Professor Charlotte D’Evelyn’s Cross-Cultural Listening and Thinking About Music classes.



From top: Pulitzer Prize winner and former U.S. Poet Laureate Rita Dove and Grammy Award-winning composer Richard Danielpour engage with students during class visits on the Skidmore campus.

# The voices of the people, through the lens of many scholars

The *Social (In)Justice at the U.S.-Mexico Border* series — a highly collaborative Skidmore effort — provides a sincere, unedited window into life at the border through art. *By Angela Valden*



Left: Diana Barnes, senior teaching professor of Spanish and co-organizer of last fall's *Social (In)Justice at the U.S.-Mexico Border* series, joins Colombian-born Tucson artist and border activist Álvaro Enciso and fellow volunteers in placing his secular crosses at sites where migrants' remains have been found in the Sonoran Desert in Arizona. (Photo courtesy of Diana Barnes)

Crosses dot a desert landscape to mark where the remains of migrants have been found, many of them unidentified.

Instead of violence and pain, a photograph captures a moment of joyful touch between members of the "Rainbow 17," a group of LGBTQ+ migrants who crossed the U.S.-Mexico border together in 2017.

The tempo of a song replicates a heartbeat, and the confluence of music genres tells a story — that to live on the border is to live simultaneously in different rhythms.

"If you've read anything about the border — through broadcast news, print, podcasts, nonfiction pieces, documentaries, whatever — there's so much narrative there that is really problematic. I wanted people to have their own opportunity to connect with the borderlands in a sincere way, without that influence," says Diana Barnes, senior teaching professor of Spanish and co-organizer of last fall's *Social (In)Justice at the U.S.-Mexico Border* series. "I wanted to present to the Skidmore community something palpable, something they could feel about the border."

The series, which coincided with National Hispanic Heritage Month, Sept. 15 through Oct. 15, offered lectures, exhibitions, workshops, conversations, a concert, and a film screening, inviting members of the Skidmore community and area residents to engage with complex border issues in many ways, from many distinct perspectives. Supported by Skidmore's Office of the President, Racial Justice Initiative, and departments and programs including gender studies, international affairs, environmental studies and sciences, and Black studies, presenters spoke

on topics ranging from migration policy to faith-based organizing, to the experiences of Haitian immigrants at the border and undocumented farmworkers in California's Coachella Valley.

"Seeing so much interest and so many departments, programs, and offices across campus coming together to make it happen was extraordinary," says co-organizer Oscar Perez Hernandez, associate professor and director of Latin American, Caribbean, and Latinx studies; NY6 Mellon Fellow; and special assistant to the dean of the faculty. "Many attendees commented on how they never really thought about the border from the perspectives that the artists, scholars, activists, and experts shared with our community, from the politics of visibility of LGBTQ+ migrants and multiple artistic expressions as a form of resistance, to the environmental history of the border fence."

The presentations "offered a narrative that is sincere and original," Barnes says. "Not censored, not edited. It's from the heart, it's from the hand. It's from the voice of people who are feeling what it's like to live in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. And it really does reveal a reality of this beautiful landscape. It's diverse, it's intricate, it's complex, it's confusing."



Above: During an *Art of Resistance* workshop at the Tang Teaching Museum, students create art inspired by border experiences they learned about through the *Social (In)Justice* series.



creative thought  
current matters

▶ video

Scan the QR code to view Skidmore Senior Teaching Professor Diana Barnes' perspective on how art sheds light on the humanity of the U.S.-Mexico border crisis.



Top, clockwise from left: Diana Barnes introduces the Social (In)Justice at the U.S.-Mexico Border series at Skidmore College; students create border-inspired artwork in different mediums during an Art of Resistance workshop at the Tang Teaching Museum; acclaimed El Paso, Texas, musician and historian David Dorado Romo leads A Musical/Spoken Word Journey of the Borderlands: The Sounds of Recovered Memory in Davis Auditorium; and artist and border activist Álvaro Enciso paints a cross, part of his multimedia art project donde mueren los sueños (where dreams die), during his visit to the Tang Museum.

Bottom, from left, Peruvian-born Tucson artist Gabriela Galup, who tells stories of the border through textiles and puppetry; El Paso, Texas, muralist CIMI Alvarado, who creates public artwork through a process that often involves community participation; and Annie James '20, a Skidmore alumna who has traveled to the border to volunteer and witness migration at various stages and now works as lead case specialist, community services, at the International Institute of New England in Boston, speak during The Art of Resistance at the Tang Teaching Museum.



Above: Tucson artist and border activist Álvaro Enciso discusses his artwork during *The Art of Resistance* at the Tang Teaching Museum.

Right: Murals by CIMI Alvarado, like the one shown here, were showcased as part of *Picture the Wall*, a Mixed-Media Representation of the U.S.-Mexico Border Through the Artist's Lens exhibition in Case Gallery. (Image courtesy of Diana Barnes)



## Making 'the invisible visible'

Barnes has traveled extensively to the U.S.-Mexico border, bringing students and other faculty there as well. They go to the border wall, ride along with border patrol, and experience art and storytelling in myriad forms. "When you go there, it's very hard to look away, but everybody should have the opportunity to make a decision on whether or not they want to look away," she says. "We're a long way from the border, but on the other hand, we're impacted by it."

In 2019, Barnes initiated and spearheaded a play day for about 65 stranded Migrant Protection Protocols shelter children and their parents in Ciudad Juárez. With paintings the children produced, she curated the art exhibition *Painting the Border: A Child's Voice*, which has been shown at six different galleries in New York, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. Students in her first-year Scribner Seminar class at Skidmore assisted with the exhibition as their class project.

Muralist CIMI Alvarado, whose community-based work can be found throughout El Paso, Texas, and beyond, accompanied Barnes in Ciudad Juárez. "We took these kids from shelters to this dreamy kids' interactive space," Barnes recalls. "They ate pizzas, they played, we brought beads so they could make necklaces, and they got to feel what it was like to be a kid. That was the main thing — that in this journey, they have nothing. Their grandparents aren't there. Their books aren't there. Their toys aren't there. Their clothes aren't there. They have nothing from their childhood to remind them that they deserve to be able to be kids. And then CIMI sat down with them and taught them, without traumatizing them further, how to paint their story. And these kids painted their journeys and their hopes and dreams and memories."

The exhibition came to Skidmore's Case Gallery as a fixture of the *Social (In)Justice* series, along with other works by Alvarado, Colombian-born Tucson artist and border activist Álvaro Enciso, and Peruvian-born Tucson artist Gabriela Galup. The three also discussed their projects and presented an interactive workshop during two Art of Resistance events held at the Tang Teaching Museum.

Annie James '20, who at Skidmore was a double major in international affairs and Spanish with a political science minor, introduced Alvarado, Enciso, and Galup at the first Tang event. As a student, James traveled to the U.S.-Mexico border in El Paso with Professor Barnes, and she wrote her senior thesis about how sister border cities address policy. As a post-graduate, James returned to El Paso to volunteer, and she traveled to the Colombia-Venezuela and Mexico-Guatemala borders to witness migration at different stages. She currently works at a refugee resettlement department in Boston.

Language has been key throughout these different experiences, James said. "The language, vocabulary, conversations, and artwork we use matter."

Alvarado discussed the importance of the Chicano identity for Mexican Americans on the border, and how identity can be a struggle. "You're not Mexican enough to be Mexican, but not American enough to be American," he said.

"For people to feel proud, we have to start painting ourselves," he continued, pointing to one of his murals depicting Mexican American musicians. "My main thing right now is telling our own stories from our own communities."

Enciso honors migrants who have died in the Sonoran Desert in Arizona through his multimedia art project *donde mueren los sueños (where dreams die)*. With the help of volunteers like Barnes and using GPS coordinates obtained through the Pima County Medical Examiner's Office, he places his painted secular crosses at sites where migrants' remains have been found. A red dot on each cross draws a parallel to the red dots that cover the "Death Map" generated by the nonprofit organization Humane Borders. "The map is basically a sea of red now, because there have been 8,000 remains found," says Barnes. "Which means twice as many have not been found."

"I thought of a way to make the invisible visible," Enciso said of the endeavor. "I wanted to honor the courage of someone who leaves everything behind to go on a journey so dangerous. I needed to honor them."

## Challenging notions

Conversations throughout the series took a particularly thoughtful, discerning look at issues of identity, humanity, and perception.

In the virtual lecture “Border Sensualities: Photojournalism and the Everyday in Queer and Trans Migrations,” Ruben Zecena, an assistant professor of English at the University of California, Davis, and an interdisciplinary scholar in Latinx literature and culture, set out to demystify migration and draw attention to the beauty of queer and trans migrants at the border. Employing alternative modes of photojournalistic practices that focus on the “everyday” rather than shock value — for instance, highlighting simple acts of kindness and compassion among migrants rather than acts of hate and brutality toward them — helps to show migrants for who they really are, he said.

A screening of the 2021 documentary film *Invisible Valley* and a discussion with producer Zach McMillan challenged perceptions of the very term “migrant,” as the film follows the disparate stories of undocumented farmworkers, wealthy snowbirds, and music festival-goers who migrate to and from Coachella Valley for different reasons. The film, directed by Aaron Maurer, also draws attention to an emerging environmental and social crisis in the region and shows that despite their differences, the Valley’s inhabitants all require the same basic human necessities.

“The solution to problems like the one at the border must be grounded in love, not hate. The message the audience is to take away is that there is no saving a place that you do not love. To care for something is to love it, and in order to care for the people at the border, love must be involved.”

David Dorado Romo, writer and musician



During “A Musical/Spoken Word Journey of the Borderlands: The Sounds of Recovered Memory,” Barnes posed a challenging question to writer and musician David Dorado Romo: “How do we present a voice that isn’t monotone when discussing the issues at the border?”

“It’s difficult,” he responded. “The approach of solidarity doesn’t portray all of the nuance.”

His band, Los Liminals, also performed a free concert at historic Caffè Lena in downtown Saratoga Springs. The band explores many different genres to tell a wholistic story of the border using sounds from Mexican music and African polyrhythms.

“The solution to problems like the one at the border must be grounded in love, not hate,” Romo stressed. “The message the audience is to take away is that there is no saving a place that you do not love. To care for something is to love it, and in order to care for the people at the border, love must be involved.”



## Listening to the stories asking to be told

Hannah Egan ’26, a student in Barnes’ fall Bridge course *The Frontera Effect: Myth and Reality of the Power of the Wall*, found that the *Social (In)Justice* series expanded on the foundational theories she learned about in class and helped her to gain a fuller academic and emotional perspective of the border.

Egan watched as artist Gabriela Galup (pictured above), who creates characters and stories through textiles and puppetry, revealed a continuous landscape made of fiber, with a child connected to the land. Halfway through the show, Galup added a fence of barbed wire and metal that vertically cut into the fiber and blocked off the child puppet from the other half of its home. While trying to scale the fence, the infant died and was reclaimed by the land. “The silence of the performance left me feeling vulnerable and raw,” Egan recalls.

In the art workshop that followed, she felt another kind of connection to what she had learned.

“As I hear stories from the border, I feel more and more like a bystander. I want to act on the injustices and the cruelties I have learned about. The art workshop made me feel like I was part of spreading awareness of the issues at the border,” she says. “With art, you can’t escape how it makes you feel. The visceral reactions that art elicits tie in humanity and empathy with the border experience.”

Professor Barnes strives to convey to her students, and anyone who is willing to listen, that all migrants have countless stories to tell, but not enough people are hearing them.

“I truly think that the *Social (In)Justice at the U.S.-Mexico Border* series helps to change this,” Egan reflects. “I hope more series such as this one will be available at Skidmore in the future so that other students will hear the voices of those asking to be listened to.”

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*Maitreya Ravenstar ’25, Catie Hamilton ’25, and Charlotte Mann ’25 contributed to this story.*



# True belonging

## Rediscovering the values that matter in college admissions, at Skidmore and beyond

By James Helicke

**I**t all starts with admissions.

Liberal arts colleges like Skidmore depend on their admissions teams to build the best class possible each year. That means bringing the right number of students to campus to help keep the college running smoothly. It also means attracting a mix of students from many backgrounds and experiences who can build a community that will help prepare future graduates for careers in diverse workplaces and roles as citizens of the United States and countries across the globe.

It's tough, often stressful work that sometimes comes down to the wire. Not enough students in an incoming class can spell financial hardship. Too many can leave colleges without enough seats in the classroom and a range of other challenges.

For many years, Skidmore has enjoyed an enviable position among liberal arts colleges: It has consistently met its admissions targets, and applications have held strong.

But institutions — including Skidmore — shouldn't take past success for granted, as fundamental changes are radically transforming the college admissions landscape, says Ángel Pérez '98, a Skidmore alumnus who started his admissions career at Skidmore and is now CEO of the National Association for College Admissions Counseling (NACAC), the leading trade group for admissions and college counseling professionals. That sentiment is echoed by Jessica Ricker, Skidmore's new vice president for enrollment and dean of admissions and financial aid, and Janessa Dunn, the College's new director of admissions. Both are in their first academic year at Skidmore.

Pérez, Ricker, and Dunn spoke to *Scope* about this new landscape and how institutions of higher education, including Skidmore, are grappling with the changes. Most prominently, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a sweeping

decision last summer, in cases brought by the group Students for Fair Admissions against Harvard University and the University of North Carolina, against race-conscious admissions policies. Many institutions had long considered race among many other factors in broader efforts to ensure a representative incoming class.

But the Supreme Court ruling is only one part of the equation. Colleges, especially those in the Northeast, are bracing for major demographic shifts. Decreasing numbers of college-age students mean that institutions are dealt shrinking pools of applicants and will need to widen their reach to maintain their incoming classes.

Skidmore fully meets the demonstrated financial need of all students who are admitted, and the need for financial aid continues to grow. Two decades ago, about 44% of Skidmore students received some form of financial aid. That number now tops 55% and is only expected to increase. The rising costs associated with providing a liberal arts education further complicate the work of admissions officers.

Fortunately, Skidmore has a talented team to navigate uncertain times. But for dedicated professionals like Pérez, Ricker, and Dunn, the role and purpose of a college admissions team also extend far beyond the institutional bottom line: Ensuring that Skidmore can continue to recruit students who bring a full range of perspectives and experiences to campus is essential to fulfilling Skidmore's very mission as a liberal arts college.

"If we were to look for a silver lining from the Harvard and UNC cases, it would be that it's pushed us to really define what diversity means to us and why we value it," says Ricker, who joined Skidmore in June 2023, less than a month before the Supreme Court ruling. "Certainly, diversity is not just race and ethnicity; this moment is about expanding the definition of how and why we value what we do in this residential liberal arts environment."



From top:

Ángel Pérez '98, CEO of the National Association for College Admissions Counseling (NACAC);  
Jessica Ricker, Skidmore vice president for enrollment and dean of admissions and financial aid;  
Janessa Dunn, Skidmore director of admissions.

## Ensuring that higher education remains accessible

has defined the careers of Pérez, Ricker, and Dunn. All three say they had never considered admissions work until they entered the field through their respective alma maters, and it has since become a personal and professional calling. Drawing on the often less than ideal ways through which they found their own paths to college, they are working to ensure that prospective students representing a range of life experiences and backgrounds can enjoy the lifelong benefits associated with higher education.

Dunn, for instance, started working in the admissions office as an undergraduate at Georgia Southern University. She went on to leadership roles at Vanderbilt University and Wake Forest University, where she advanced important diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. At Wake Forest, she led an overhaul of the application review and selection process that minimized unconscious bias across readers. A new system helped the admissions team navigate a 20% increase in applications while also creating an equity- and mission-centered review process.

Asked to summarize the goal of admissions in just a few words, Dunn defined it as “true belonging” — building a supportive community where students can learn and thrive academically, professionally, and personally.

“My journey in higher education, like many folks in this field, is that you kind of stumble upon it in some way or another,” Dunn says. “For me personally, it was having the opportunity to usher families into this new era, into this new journey, that stuck with me. I chose education because I knew that it would be a lifelong impact.”

Like Dunn, Ricker also got her start at her undergraduate college, Connecticut College, where Ricker worked in admissions for nearly two decades. She came to Skidmore from Wellesley College, where she prioritized support for historically marginalized groups, assessed implicit bias in admissions, and devised an equitable, mission-driven application review and selection process. Throughout her career, she has drawn inspiration from her own experience as a first-generation college student.

“When I was applying to schools, I had no one giving me advice aside from the school counselor who said, ‘Why aren’t you staying in Ohio?’” Ricker says. “I landed where I did because of luck and a lot of financial aid. But luck isn’t how you should decide on your college or your future — it’s such a big decision. I felt that the admissions experience should be more intentional ... To change that trajectory and help other students be more intentional is part of my why.”

That sentiment is echoed by Pérez, who came to Skidmore through the Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP), which celebrated 50 years at Reunion last summer.

“I love what Jess said about intentionality because my process certainly was not intentional; I was very lucky. A high school counselor tapped me on the shoulder and said, ‘Have you ever thought about going to college?’” recalls Pérez, who landed his first job in the field as an admissions counselor at Skidmore. He went on to assume vice presidential roles at Pitzer College and Trinity College-Hartford. CEO of NACAC since 2020, he supported admissions and college counseling officials throughout the nation as they navigated the exceptional tumult of the pandemic, and he has advised the Biden-Harris administration on issues of college access, affordability, and diversity.

“I was a low-income student who grew up in the projects of the South Bronx and didn’t even know what Skidmore, HEOP, or the liberal arts were. It was really the interventions and support from my high school counselor, my HEOP advisor, and the Skidmore admissions office that put me on a different trajectory.”

Pérez, Ricker, and Dunn explained their work to *Scope* — and why it matters so much for the future of Skidmore and, most of all, students.





# Q&A

**Q:**

**Why is diversity important at a liberal arts college?**

**A: Ángel Pérez**

Skidmore was the kind of place where I went to learn from people who are different from me. I always talk about the fact that I made my first Muslim friends, wealthy white friends, LGBTQ friends, and others in college. I didn't have that exposure in my community. These kinds of encounters prepare people to live, work, and engage in a diverse society.

We're already a pretty divided nation. I worry about the future of America if institutions of higher learning don't maintain diversity and provide these types of experiences.

There is so much research that shows that students who learn in diverse teams go on to work in diverse teams. The research also shows that diverse teams make better, stronger decisions.

As educators, our role is to prepare students for their lives after college. Students will be entering a diverse workforce, and it's our responsibility to prepare them to live, work, and thrive in those spaces. That exposure happens and begins at Skidmore.

**Q:**

**Why is this Supreme Court decision so impactful?**

**A: Ángel Pérez**

California's Proposition 209 (a 1996 ballot initiative that effectively banned affirmative action in public schools in California) is an example of why we are concerned. When California as a state lost the ability to take race into consideration, the number of students of color who not only enrolled but also applied to college dropped dramatically. In fact, data show that the year after Prop 209 passed, UCLA and UC Berkeley enrolled 40% fewer black and Latinx students.

The Supreme Court decision impacts everyone, including Skidmore. We will have a better understanding of the local and national implications in a few years. But if history repeats itself, we all have reason to be concerned. The good news is that most institutions are committed to recruiting, retaining, and cultivating a diverse student body, but how that work is done is now incredibly challenging. Institutions must comply with the law and simultaneously find new and innovative ways to enroll students from all backgrounds.

I've had the pleasure of advising the U.S. Department of Education during this year of transition. The Department is very supportive and has issued guidelines to help institutions. They are also very concerned about overcorrection. The secretary of education has made it very clear that institutions should not become so conservative in their recruitment and application evaluation processes that they inadvertently move away from their mission and values.

**Q:**

**How might the ruling affect prospective applicants?**

**A: Jess Ricker**

This ruling is impacting young people at a time when there's already reticence about the value of higher ed, particularly the high price tag associated with residential liberal arts colleges like ours. Prospective students from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds may be left to wonder, "Did institutions ever truly care about diversity or were they just looking at race as a checkbox on an application?"

I think that's a hard thing to hear for a community like ours here at Skidmore, where we really do care and believe in a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, access, justice, and belonging. Though this may sound a little bit like an alphabet soup, these are all things that we are actively working on. In Admissions, we're thinking about how we convey that commitment. These are issues that we care about deeply and that matter to us, our community, and to young people who are applying to college.

**Q:**

**How is Skidmore working to admit a diverse class in this time of change?**

**A: Janessa Dunn**

I like to think in terms of assets rather than deficits. There's a lot of literature out there that looks at the different types of capital that students bring to the table — linguistic, cultural, and more. It's important that we appreciate and celebrate what each student brings to a residential liberal arts community like ours rather than focus on what we perceive as being missing.

To use a term that Jess has used in training with our staff, some systemic issues are often baked into high school transcripts, high school profiles, and the ways counselors and teachers are able to write about each student. And yet, I think we can look more deeply into the positive attributes that each student brings to the table.

Approaching college admissions in terms of the values that each student brings really represents a cultural shift in our line of work — and it's not always getting a lot of attention in the media. For our students, our parents and guardians, and everyone who supports our work, it's important that we emphasize those value-adds rather than the opposite.

**Q:**

**When we talk about diversity, do we only mean race?**

**A: Janessa Dunn**

The Supreme Court ruling is clear about not using race in the admissions decision process, and we as an institution recognize that systemic barriers grounded in race in society remain. President Conner launched Skidmore's Racial Justice Initiative because our community believes it is important to contribute meaningful change on campus, in our community, and beyond. Our mission and our values, including our long-standing commitments to diversity and inclusivity, will continue to guide and inspire our actions.

**A: Ángel Pérez**

One thing that has changed dramatically at Skidmore — and it makes me so happy — is the amount of pride exhibited by first-generation students. In 1994, none of us were walking around campus with an “I am first gen” T-shirt on. There really weren't that many of us on campus at the time, and imposter syndrome was real. I'm delighted to see Skidmore's incredible progress in this area.

For most people who were at Skidmore at the time, their family members graduated from college, and so they knew the questions to ask. They knew how to navigate certain spaces. There is a hidden curriculum in higher education, and for first-generation students, part of succeeding in college is learning it. I'm so grateful to Skidmore's academic and student support programs for helping make the transition easier.

A lot of the work I have done in enrollment and student success has focused on helping students navigate the admissions process and then creating support systems to ensure their success on campus. It's essential that we help all students uncover that hidden language of college and set them up for success. I believe all three of us — Jess, Janessa, and I — have dedicated our lives to doing just that.

We need to do things that help everyone succeed. It's taken a while for us in higher education to figure out how to support intersectional identities – being first gen and being low income; being first gen and being a student of color; being first gen and international. There are different ways that students need support, depending on their background and identities.

**Jess Ricker**

Vice President for Enrollment, Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid

**A: Jess Ricker**

Our commitment to racial justice is an important value for us at Skidmore. At the same time, diversity encompasses many attributes of our students' identities. Being a first-generation college student, for instance, is an identity that is often less visible. As a first-gen student, I didn't know about what Ángel calls the hidden curriculum of higher education — the unwritten rules that students use to navigate college.

We need to do things that help everyone succeed. It's taken a while for us in higher education to figure out how to support intersectional identities — being first gen and being low income; being first gen and being a student of color; being first gen and international. There are different ways that students need support, depending on their background and identities.

**Discovery Tour**

*Skidmore's Discovery Tour brings admitted students who have historically faced barriers to accessing higher education to campus each spring, so that they can acquaint themselves with academic and student life on campus.*



**Q:**

**What is the role of college application essays following the Supreme Court ruling?**

**A: Jess Ricker**

Some institutions have decided to add additional essays so students can talk about their lived experiences. At Skidmore, we thought long and hard about that. We decided that we didn't want to add additional hurdles to an already stressful and confusing process. Students may be thinking, “Am I allowed to say this? What are institutions allowed to hear? Does this mean that I need to take my lived experience, my race or ethnicity, for example, and tell a narrative of resilience in my essay?”

I'd much rather have a student's essay be a celebration of whatever it is they are passionate about and want to share within their college application. This moment has made it more urgent for us to communicate how our values tie into the admissions process and what we do.

**Q:**

**Are there reasons to be hopeful following the Supreme Court decision?**

**A: Jess Ricker**

The Harvard and UNC cases have inspired us to think carefully about what diversity means to us and why it's important.

While we do feel pushed to come up with better and more compelling ways to share that message and make sure it resonates, we are also re-energized. We're looking for ways to tell the Skidmore story better and to sharpen our language around Skidmore's values and why it has such an impact.

**A: Janessa Dunn**

I'm not afraid of this new change. I am also very excited and invigorated by it. Some of my personal motivation comes from growing up in a highly segregated city, in a highly segregated state, and having to navigate those systems over and over again.

It's exciting to know that we now have the opportunity to build practices that stem from our own mission and values here at Skidmore and to do so in a way that will affect generations to come. It is laborious work but also exciting work.



“One of the experiences of being a first-generation student is that no one gives you a blueprint. But you also get to make one for yourself.”

Altagracia Montilla '12  
CEO, A.M. Consulting

**Q:**

How does the newly announced partnership with QuestBridge support Skidmore's efforts?

**A: Janessa Dunn**

Skidmore has a long history of identifying and supporting talented students who otherwise wouldn't have us on their radar. We have the very successful Opportunity Program and other programs, such as S<sup>3</sup>M (Skidmore Scholars in Science and Mathematics scholarship) and our annual Discovery Tour, which brings admitted students who have historically faced barriers to accessing higher education to campus each spring.

QuestBridge is unique in that it offers prospective students the opportunity to come together and learn about the entire process of going to college. It builds community and connection at a time when students are seeking relationships and guidance that can transform their lives — and deepen their understanding of postsecondary education. The positive momentum that this exciting new partnership will provide just can't be underestimated.



*The Skidmore community gathered to support and celebrate first-generation students at a reception on national First-Generation College Celebration Day in November. Vice President for Enrollment and Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid Jessica Ricker, Dean of Students and Vice President for Student Affairs Adrian Bautista, both first-generation college graduates, and A.M. Consulting CEO Altagracia Montilla '12 were among dozens of faculty, staff, students, and alumni to attend the event.*

# Skidmore joins QuestBridge

## The partnership will bolster efforts to attract talented students from diverse backgrounds.

Skidmore is one of the newest college partners of QuestBridge, a national nonprofit that connects exceptional youth from low-income backgrounds with leading institutions of higher education and further life opportunities.

“This collaboration will further strengthen our efforts to identify and attract talented students from all backgrounds and help them realize their full potential at Skidmore,” said President Marc C. Conner.

Thousands of talented low-income students across the nation are academically qualified to attend top colleges each year, but the majority don’t apply to a single selective college.


QuestBridge is working with Skidmore and more than 50 other top liberal arts colleges and universities to increase the presence of high-achieving students from low-income backgrounds and ensure their institutions are accessible and affordable.

“Our partnership with QuestBridge reinforces our ongoing commitment to access, builds upon our dedicated efforts to date, and furthers our ability to let students everywhere know: Your dreams are achievable,” said Jess Ricker, vice president for enrollment and dean of admissions and financial aid.

Skidmore is participating in QuestBridge events in 2024 to help high school juniors selected as QuestBridge College Prep Scholars prepare for selective college admissions. In the fall, Skidmore will participate in the QuestBridge National College Match, which connects students from low-income backgrounds with admissions and full four-year scholarships to QuestBridge college partners. The first QuestBridge Scholars at Skidmore will matriculate in fall 2025.

Cornell University is also joining as a QuestBridge partner in 2024.

For more information, visit

 [skidmore.edu/questbridge](https://skidmore.edu/questbridge)

**Q:**

What other challenges do colleges face?

**A: Jess Ricker**

The cost of tuition, room, and board is rising much faster than family incomes, and inflation has made it even more difficult for families to afford college. The microgeneration emerging from the pandemic is certainly reticent about loans and debt. In addition, there are important changes in the United States — the population of high school graduates is shrinking, and they will increasingly be living in states outside of the Northeast, places where Skidmore has less brand recognition and awareness of who we are.

**A: Ángel Pérez**

I don’t want the Skidmore community to read this article and say, “Skidmore should just recruit in Texas more and that’ll solve all your problems.” That’s not how it works. There are fewer 18-year-olds in the United States, and that makes it very challenging to fill seats in colleges. There are also fewer families who can afford the price tag. The fastest-growing population of students in America are low-income, first-generation students. That’s a beautiful thing, but it’s also challenging because it means students will need a lot of financial aid to attend colleges like Skidmore. The future of the College’s success will depend on its ability to build a strong endowment for financial aid.

**Q:**

Why is college so expensive?

**A: Ángel Pérez**

Leaders of small, residential liberal arts colleges run a small city 24 hours a day. Schools feed students, educate them, provide housing, and cater to their every need as they develop in college. They also have a very talented workforce with the highest degrees in their fields who require competitive wages. The cost of running a physical plant goes up each year, and the kind of high touch experiences students receive are very expensive propositions. Did I mention inflation?

There is very little subsidy from the government for higher education, particularly for private institutions. Therefore, private institutions depend primarily on tuition and secondarily on donations to fund their operations. The pressure that these institutions feel is tremendous, and it’s not going to get any easier.

**Q:**

How can alumni support Skidmore?

**A: Ángel Pérez**

Time, talent, and treasure: When Skidmore says we need you, step up to the plate. Share your talents with Skidmore. As a community, we are a powerful collective and have much to contribute. Most importantly, don’t forget to include Skidmore in your philanthropic plans. So many Skidmore alums, my close friends included, are doing so well. They have built incredible lives as a result of the education they received. It’s time to give back. Skidmore is going to need the support so the next generation also has opportunity.

Finally, speak well of the College — that’s free, and it’s easy. Share your stories and your love for Skidmore because those are the kinds of things that translate into students becoming interested and students enrolling. There’s a huge opportunity to galvanize Skidmore’s alumni around these issues. Alumni might read articles in the media about the challenges facing higher education, but they don’t always connect the dots and realize that these national issues are also front and center for their alma mater.

# S<sup>3</sup>M

## Scholarships Changing Lives

By Peter MacDonald

It has been 16 years since then-Rep. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) announced a \$549,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to recruit academically competitive but financially disadvantaged students from underrepresented groups to pursue STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) disciplines at Skidmore.

The **Skidmore Scholars in Science and Mathematics (S<sup>3</sup>M)** program was established in 2007 to provide scholarships of \$20,000 to 24 recipients over their first and second years of college.

When the grant ended four years later, Skidmore continued to fund the program through other means. Overall, some 130 students have benefitted from S<sup>3</sup>M, including 30 current students.

Thanks in part to S<sup>3</sup>M, the percentage of Skidmore students majoring in science and math has increased from 20% to 33%, and the percentage of domestic students of color at Skidmore has increased from 17% to 25%.

In keeping with the interdisciplinary thrust of the program, S<sup>3</sup>M scholars have majored in 19 different disciplines — all nine science offerings, math, computer science, social work, American studies, international affairs, business, dance, studio art, education studies, and art history.

S<sup>3</sup>M grads have become doctors, nurses, physician assistants, teachers, social workers, data analysts, science researchers, software developers, engineers, and more.

Unlike the application-based Porter-Wachenheim Scholarship in Science and Mathematics, S<sup>3</sup>M scholarships are offered to select students when they receive their Skidmore acceptances — arriving as well-deserved recognition and boosts to financial aid.

“It’s such a privilege to watch the S<sup>3</sup>M students discover their passions and chart their own course during their time at Skidmore and beyond.”


**Rebecca Trousil**  
Senior Teaching Professor of Mathematics,  
S<sup>3</sup>M Program Director

Senior Teaching Professor of Mathematics Rebecca Trousil directs S<sup>3</sup>M, which is highlighted by a transitional, five-week summer program for rising sophomores that includes a focus on both disciplinary and interdisciplinary STEM areas through professor-taught mini-courses and an opportunity to intern with faculty members conducting ongoing research.

S<sup>3</sup>M also provides an academic support infrastructure comprised of peer tutoring, study

groups, mentoring and advising, and invaluable alumni networks and panels that provide an understanding of multiple pathways to graduate study and STEM careers.

Ultimately, Trousil says, the program works with S<sup>3</sup>M students to chart their academic and professional paths and help them identify research opportunities, internships, first jobs, and post-graduate programs. She adds, “It’s such a privilege to watch the S<sup>3</sup>M students discover their passions and chart their own course during their time at Skidmore and beyond.”



## Climbing the steps to the Federal Reserve Bank

S<sup>3</sup>M scholar **Edvin Leon Rios '19**, who enrolled at Skidmore through the Opportunity Program (OP) with virtually all of his college costs covered, is a regulatory data analyst for the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. He is also pursuing a federally funded Master of Science in statistics with a concentration in data science at Baruch College.

As a Mexican immigrant from a single-family household in the Bronx, Rios arrived on campus for the OP Summer Academic Institute with virtually no idea of what was in store for him. But he brought with him his longstanding mindset: "Find and pursue opportunity."

That opportunity presented itself during his first year at Skidmore, when Rebecca Trousil taught Rios' Pre-Calculus class in his first semester and his Calculus I class in his second semester. The S<sup>3</sup>M director would ultimately become Rios' faculty advisor, which the math major and economics minor says was hugely beneficial in preparing for his professional future. A summer internship with the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) led to a full-time post-college job offer. He also traveled abroad to Spain, solidifying his hard-won independence.

At his May 2019 Skidmore Commencement, Rios remembers feeling like both he and his mom "graduated together." He also remembers her saying, "You're not done, right?" He wasn't!



## Pediatrician fulfills childhood dream

**Brittney Dioneda '15** is a pediatric resident physician at Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital. She plans to sub-specialize in neonatal and perinatal care, which extends from pregnancy through the child's first year, with special attention to the first month of life.

Recruited to play lacrosse, Skidmore was Dioneda's top choice because she wanted to go to a college where "I knew my professors well enough that they could write thoughtful, intentional letters of recommendation for my med school applications."

Initially, however, Dioneda planned to attend a Midwest school that was a better fit for her family's budget. Happily, the combination of her mother's helpful conversations with Skidmore's Office of Financial Aid and the S<sup>3</sup>M scholarship changed the equation. Her mom called her to tell her she could attend Skidmore after all — "the best phone call of my life," Dioneda says.

She would go on to co-captain the women's lacrosse team and major in exercise sciences (now health and human physiological sciences) — a "super-unique major that separated me from other med school applicants." She also added a minor in chemistry. As part of S<sup>3</sup>M's summer program, Dioneda shadowed her health professions advisor, Professor T.H. Reynolds, in his lab, exploring the connection between Type 2 diabetes and obesity.

After graduation, thanks to alumnus Joshua Boyce '81, chief of the Division of Allergy and Clinical Immunology at Boston-based Brigham and Women's Hospital, Dioneda landed a research assistant position in the hospital's Asthma Research Center. Two years later, she happily returned to her home state after being accepted into the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Medicine.

Says Dioneda, "I wouldn't change a thing about my Skidmore experience. I could relive it over and over again."



## Unexpectedly a U.S. park ranger

**Jennifer Cristiano '18** majored in environmental science and is now a U.S. park ranger. The first-generation college graduate recently finished a nearly two-year stint at Glacier Bay National Park in Alaska — three million acres of beautiful mountains, glaciers, rainforest, and coastlines. There, she and other park rangers boarded cruise ships, rotating between leading a junior park ranger workshop, doing a general theater presentation, and narrating the four-hour boat trip. She also staffed the visitor center and led education programming for local schoolchildren.

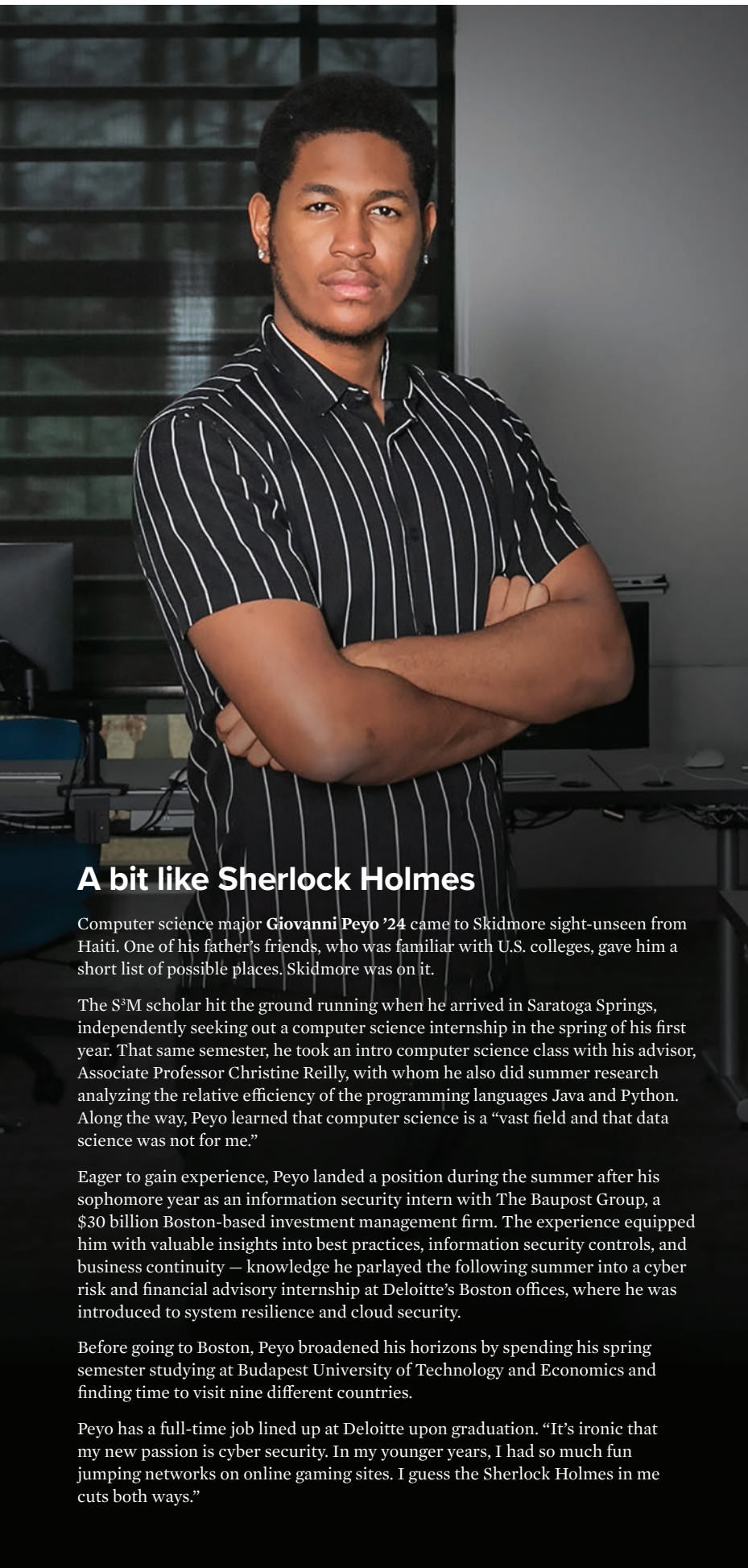
The Yorktown Heights, New York, native says the S<sup>3</sup>M scholarship was pivotal to her decision to attend Skidmore, especially the summer research component, since research is what she wanted to pursue. "The scholarship — both the funds and the program — is the reason I said yes to Skidmore."

During the summer program, Cristiano conducted research with Senior Lecturer Anne Ernst on whether rising water temperatures and development affected water quality in Saratoga County's Kayaderosseras Creek. She went on to do collaborative research with Associate Professor of Environmental Sciences and Studies Kurt Smemo in the Adirondack Mountains — notably, a multiyear study on levels of atmospheric carbon stored in the soil in different forest ecosystems.

Prior to her senior year, Cristiano and a fellow student traveled with Smemo to present their soil research findings at a conference in Portland, Oregon. Afterward, the students traveled to Glacier Bay, camping out and taking a memorable boat ride with a park ranger. It was then that Cristiano decided that she really wanted to become a park ranger. A light bulb went off. "I never intended to follow this path, but I'm so happy with how it's turned out."

Says Cristiano, "Doing research was a whole different way of learning, and I really enjoyed doing fieldwork and being outdoors. But my favorite part was — and still is — taking data and making it accessible and understandable to the general public. Becoming a ranger was a natural transition for me."





## A bit like Sherlock Holmes

Computer science major **Giovanni Peyo '24** came to Skidmore sight-unseen from Haiti. One of his father's friends, who was familiar with U.S. colleges, gave him a short list of possible places. Skidmore was on it.

The S<sup>3</sup>M scholar hit the ground running when he arrived in Saratoga Springs, independently seeking out a computer science internship in the spring of his first year. That same semester, he took an intro computer science class with his advisor, Associate Professor Christine Reilly, with whom he also did summer research analyzing the relative efficiency of the programming languages Java and Python. Along the way, Peyo learned that computer science is a “vast field and that data science was not for me.”

Eager to gain experience, Peyo landed a position during the summer after his sophomore year as an information security intern with The Baupost Group, a \$30 billion Boston-based investment management firm. The experience equipped him with valuable insights into best practices, information security controls, and business continuity — knowledge he parlayed the following summer into a cyber risk and financial advisory internship at Deloitte's Boston offices, where he was introduced to system resilience and cloud security.

Before going to Boston, Peyo broadened his horizons by spending his spring semester studying at Budapest University of Technology and Economics and finding time to visit nine different countries.

Peyo has a full-time job lined up at Deloitte upon graduation. “It's ironic that my new passion is cyber security. In my younger years, I had so much fun jumping networks on online gaming sites. I guess the Sherlock Holmes in me cuts both ways.”



## Engineering college on their own

**Pauline Searles '15**, who attended nearby Glens Falls High School, majored in physics and minored in computer science, in addition to earning a 2016 bachelor's degree in engineering from Dartmouth College as part of Skidmore's cooperative dual degree program.

They are currently a senior project engineer on the engineering and construction team for Enel Green Power, a worldwide developer and operator of renewable energy plants including hydroelectric, wind, solar, and geothermal.

The S<sup>3</sup>M scholarship was not only “an honor” but crucial in Searles' decision to attend Skidmore. Because they had to finance the full cost of college on their own, minimizing student loans was important.

As a rising sophomore, Searles did astronomy-related research with Professor of Physics Mary Crone Odekon: “Fitting the Schechter (luminosity) Function to Hi Masses in Groups of Galaxies.”

When looking for an internship, they credit Crone Odekon with advising them to instead “consider applying for a job I was excited about — in my case, one in the renewable energy field — but not truly qualified for, and in the application express an interest in creating an analogous internship position.” This tactic led to an internship with Albany-based renewables consulting company AWS Truepower (now UL Solutions), which paved the way to multiple project manager positions, including four years in San Diego.

“I loved consulting because I got to talk with everybody in the industry, from the office to the field,” says Searles, who is based in Portland, Maine, and thinks climbing 110-foot wind turbine towers is pretty cool. On their LinkedIn profile, Searles lists just one primary skill for each of their numerous jobs: “communication.”

In addition to their core math and physics classes at Skidmore (“great because of the small class sizes”), Searles also has fond memories of playing for Skidmore's field hockey team, including an NCAA tournament semifinal appearance in 2013. They were selected All-Liberty League second team in 2014.

# What *is* a teaching museum?

A record number of class visits highlights what the Tang Teaching Museum is all about: a space where students and faculty explore, experiment, and learn together.

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*By Michael Janairo*



*Skidmore students, including those in Corinne Moss-Racusin's Psychology at the Tang course (above), often participate in close-looking exercises that encourage them to examine art deeply while engaging with the complex issues and sentiment that a piece raises.*



Above: Associate Professor of Asian Studies Ben Bogin speaks about the work on view in *Forms of Awakening: Selections from the Jack Shear Collection of Himalayan Art*.

PHOTO BY MEGAN MUMFORD

**O**n a given day at the Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery, you might find business students in a gallery analyzing a work of art, English majors composing poems inspired by NASA photographs, and psychology students making unexpected connections between their class readings and art from the Tang.

The Tang's exhibitions and collections are about much more than amazing art; they're an integral component of the interdisciplinary and experiential learning opportunities that make a Skidmore education so unique. The Tang is a space where academic paradigms are challenged, connections are drawn across disciplines, and students learn in novel ways.

The students coming with their classes are all part of a growing — and record — number of course-related student visits to the museum. The 2022-23 academic year saw 4,602 student visits\*, far surpassing the previous best of 2,499 in 2018-19. Although final numbers for the 2023-24 academic year aren't yet available, the exceptionally strong showing last year is holding strong.

As the number of visits climbs, opportunities for new collaborative, learning experiences are helping to create new academic directions for students, reshaping existing courses, and offering new ways to learn and discover. The Tang is also where biology students practice drawing with abstract sculptures, Black studies students delve into the history of the Black Panther Party through primary sources, and art history students sit down with contemporary artists, producing oral histories of their lives and work.

The museum can even serve as a textbook. In fall 2023, Associate Professor of Asian Studies Ben Bogin brought every meeting of his upper-level class into the exhibition *Forms of Awakening: Selections from the Jack Shear Collection of Himalayan Art*, which featured traditional Buddhist paintings alongside contemporary art. The class? *Forms of Awakening: Tibetan Buddhism at the Tang*, an interdisciplinary examination of Tibetan Buddhist history, literature, and art.

"When faculty and students come to the museum, they're removed from the comforts of the traditional classroom and enter a new space where they are on more equal footing, learning together," said Dayton Director Ian Berry. "The museum's founding vision as a space where disciplines can meet is being realized thanks to the behind-the-scenes work of Tang staff who reach out to faculty to find new ways to collaborate."

## Tang Teaching Museum visits by the numbers

**4,602 STUDENT VISITS**  
**127 DIFFERENT CLASSES**  
**82 FACULTY MEMBERS**  
**32 DEPARTMENTS**

The 4,602 student visits in the 2022-23 academic year equate to 253 class visits by 127 different classes last academic year.

Those 127 classes span intro to upper-level courses and curricular touchstones, including:

- 11 Racial Justice Initiative courses
- 13 Bridge Experience courses
- 15 Scribner Seminars

The classes were taught by 82 faculty members, representing 32 departments and programs, highlighting the extensive versatility of art-inspired learning.



*Professors representing four distinct academic programs — physics, religious studies, Asian studies, and English literature — visit the Tang with students in the interdisciplinary science literacy course Parallax: Framing The Cosmos.*

## MB 107 at the Tang

Take, for instance, the management and business course MB 107, the cornerstone course of Skidmore's management and business major and minor programs and a defining course for generations of alumni.

In 2014, David Cohen, who is now department chair, first brought MB 107 students to the Tang as part of ongoing efforts to offer new learning experiences in a rigorous business program that is firmly enmeshed in Skidmore's liberal arts curriculum. Now, a visit to the Tang is a regular component of the course each semester. There were 185 student visits for the course last academic year, and another 117 in fall 2023 alone.

Like many classes that come to the Tang, MB 107 students begin their session with a close-looking exercise: Unlike a traditional museum, in which a tour leader tells visitors the artist's name, the artwork's title, and its history, the Tang asks students to look at the work and talk about what they see.

Once the students share their observations, they're asked to reflect on the experience. Some express frustration because they want to be told what it means. Others say their perception of the work changed based on hearing their classmates' observations.

Once the students share their observations, they're asked to reflect on the experience. Some express frustration because they want to be told what it means. Others say their perception of the work changed based on hearing their classmates' observations. Many say they appreciate being able to think through their own ideas about the work, instead of having their ideas shaped by the staff.

Many say they appreciate being able to think through their own ideas about the work, instead of having their ideas shaped by the museum staff. MB 107 then turns to the question of value and how it works in the art market, where unlike typical consumer goods, prices can be set without much regard to cost.

"Visits to the Tang are always so eye-opening for MB 107 students," said Mark Youndt, professor of management and business, who brought all four of his MB 107 sections to the Tang in 2022-23. "Students usually have a reasonably good grasp of willingness to pay and pricing of consumer goods, but our discussions around art and value open them up to thinking more deeply and nuanced about how the reputations of artists, galleries, and auction houses, as well as everything that goes into building those reputations, influence willingness to pay and pricing in the world of art."

"These discussions are also eye-opening to me, as some students who may not feel completely comfortable participating in the classroom suddenly open up in the gallery."

## The poetry of the cosmos

Skidmore faculty sometimes find so much value in the Tang that they work with Tang staff to organize major interdisciplinary exhibitions that offer new ways of exploring academic interests and sharing them with students.

*Parallax: Framing the Cosmos* presented conceptual, experimental, and documentary photography; textiles; scientific and artistic prints and drawings; sculpture; painting; and hundreds of NASA press photographs in a dazzling array on one wall. It was co-curated by Maggie Greaves, a poet and associate professor of English.

Greaves credits a two-day trip to cultural venues in the Hudson Valley with impressing upon her the value of object-based learning. Led by the Tang, the trip teaches Skidmore faculty in all disciplines how to use the museum in their teaching. The trip, which has been taken by 45 faculty members, is called the “Mini Mellon” and is an offshoot of the semester-long Mellon Faculty Seminar, supported by the Mellon Foundation, which since 2011 has been taken by 96 faculty members. The Tang actively reaches out to faculty throughout the academic year to make them aware of opportunities for collaboration.

“I started to see parallels between exercises in seeing, of approaching a work of art with no context whatsoever, and the process of approaching poetry,” Greaves said. She brings students to the museum to develop observation and analytical skills, and then has her students use those skills with poetry.

“If you think of a poem as a gallery, then students can think more literally about what is happening in a poem: What are the objects? How are they laid out? Then they can ask about how the greater cultural context informs the poem’s architecture and shapes its meanings,” Greaves said.

Last year, Greaves brought all her classes to *Parallax*. In fall 2022, the course *Writing Outer Space* visited twice (32 student visits) and *Confessional Poetry* visited once (18 student visits). In spring 2023, *Writing Outer Space* made 18 visits (324 student visits); the honors forum science literacy course *Parallax: The Cosmos* made five visits (80 student visits), and *Introduction to Poetry Writing* visited once (15 student visits).

When asked about her curatorial experience, Greaves compared it with her new book, *Lyric Poetry and Space Exploration from Einstein to the Present* (2023, Oxford University Press).

She said the exhibition could reach her students in ways that a book cannot, inviting them to make their own meaning out of the art. The Tang’s accessibility is a large part of what makes it so valuable. (You can read an excerpt of Greaves’ book on Page 6 of this magazine.)



*Parallax: Framing the Cosmos*, curated by Dayton Director Ian Berry, Skidmore Associate Professor of English Maggie Greaves, and Associate Curator Rebecca McNamara presented outer space as a backdrop for understanding ourselves and interrogated both individual quests for unique places in space and culturally specific myths.



One element of the exhibition that drew a lot of interest was a wall of NASA photographs, which Greaves helped to select. “I had my hand on every single one of the photographs,” she said.

She made the NASA photographs a cornerstone of each of her EN 105 classes last year. In fall 2023, Greaves returned to the Tang with her Scribner Seminar, *Reading the Cosmos*, specifically to explore the NASA photos. “Students might come to class thinking they may not like taking a required expository writing course, but when I get them to the Tang, everything changes. They get so excited.”

They talk about the things they see, Greaves said, such as the details of the spacecraft and the

representation of astronauts. They then contextualize those observations in terms of what they’ve read about science and the culture of space. “They come to write increasingly complex papers.”

She gave her EN 105 students a challenge to rewrite the museum label for the NASA photographs. “It is so hard to write that label,” Greaves said. “They learned a lot about concision and style, and how to write in an accessible way for multiple audiences.”

Recently, she collaborated with a student to co-create a new course called *Poetry at the Museum*, which will use ideas learned from her experiences with the Tang.

## Psychology at the Tang



Corinne Moss-Racusin, professor of psychology, also worked with a student to co-create a course, Psychology and the Tang.

The class met three times a week in spring 2023: two seminars to focus readings of scientific literature in psychology and a two-hour lab at the Tang. The lab explores exhibitions and work from the collection so students can make connections between art and that week's readings. Her class was focused on inequality, one of her major research areas. A unit on sexism applied scientific research to Nan Goldin photographs in the Tang collection from her acclaimed series *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*.

Though the students were nervous at first because they felt like they didn't know enough about psychology or about art, Moss-Racusin said, "they showed up with enthusiasm and delight and discovery. They were able to make in-depth connections. It was electrifying."

"Students learn best in dynamic and cross-cutting settings that shatter traditional boundaries and let them think beyond constraints of social norms," Moss-Racusin said, adding, "The insights they drew are so deeply in the spirit of the liberal arts mission and the Skidmore experience."

One student wrote: "I spent most of my life unable to connect with art and to have the patience to understand how I attach meaning to different types of art. This class, specifically through visiting the Tang, has shown me that I have always been capable of seeing the various and complex meanings behind different forms of art. Along with the vulnerable and intimate class discussions that took place this semester, I am also grateful to have finally experienced the beauty and diversity within the Tang."

The semester culminated in an online exhibition of students' insights paired with work from the Tang collection (you can see it at [tang.skidmore.edu](http://tang.skidmore.edu)). The class is meant to act as a blueprint, so any psychology faculty member can teach it and change the focus to their own area of expertise.

"The Tang is such a wonderful resource that I think every department should have a class at the Tang," Moss-Racusin said. "The class was a truly interdisciplinary experience. It embodies the kinds of opportunities that drew me to Skidmore and that drives a lot of students to come here. It's a powerful demonstration of what sets us apart from peer and aspirant institutions. And it was such a delight to teach."

As classes continue to visit the Tang, the Museum invites all those on campus to consider how its galleries might find a home in their studies or curriculum. In the meantime, the Tang Teaching Museum continues to be an indispensable staple in the Skidmore community's academic experience.



Students learn best in dynamic and cross-cutting settings that shatter traditional boundaries and let them think beyond constraints of social norms. The insights they drew are so deeply in the spirit of the liberal arts mission and the Skidmore experience.

**Corinne Moss-Racusin**  
Professor of Psychology



Installation view, *Forms of Awakening: Selections from the Jack Shear Collection of Himalayan Art*

PHOTO BY MINDY MCDANIEL

## New Tang collaboration with Vassar and Williams colleges presents new ways to share, display, and teach through art

Since opening in 2000, the Tang Teaching Museum has become a leader among academic museums for its ability to integrate its collection with learning across Skidmore’s disciplines. Its collection has grown to include more than 18,000 works, with a strong emphasis on modern and contemporary art and photography that reflect the museum’s exhibition history and the intellectual interests of Skidmore’s faculty and students.

So when collector Jack Shear approached the Tang with an extraordinary gift of Tibetan art — including visually stunning thangka paintings from the 18th through 20th centuries — the museum was in a unique position to leverage two decades of experience to find innovative ways of sharing, displaying, and teaching with the work.

The 2023 exhibition *Forms of Awakening: Selections from the Jack Shear Collection of Himalayan Art* presented more than 25 thangka paintings alongside contemporary work by artists of Tibetan heritage, including Palden Weinreb ’04. The juxtaposition of the traditional paintings — historically used as instructional and devotional objects — with the new artwork emphasized continuity of images and ideas from the past to the present-day Tibetan diaspora.

The artwork on view served as a focal point for curricular integration, with classes from a dozen disciplines — as wide ranging as anthropology, media and film studies, and physics — incorporating the work on view in their lessons. It also served as a resource for inventive forms of pedagogy: Associate Professor of Asian Studies Ben Bogin created a new class, called *Forms of Awakening*, in which students would step into the course “textbook” each time they stepped into the exhibition.

Bogin, a co-curator of the exhibition, also invited many visiting artists, scholars, musicians, poets, and translators to campus. Through public dialogues, readings, symposia, and workshops, the special guests shed new light on the artwork. They also convened discussions around teaching and collecting Tibetan art. These talks are serving as a catalyst for new scholarship, which will be published in a catalogue in 2024.

The Tang’s innovations around the Shear gift extend beyond the Skidmore campus and Tibetan scholars. Tang Dayton Director Ian Berry suggested to Shear the idea of multiplying the impact of his gift through a joint acquisition among the campus art museums at Vassar, Williams, and Skidmore colleges. The exciting and unprecedented collaboration in resource sharing among the academic museums can be a model for others: It allows each institution to enhance teaching with original artworks while sharing lessons learned across faculty and students at each of the three colleges.



Tenzin Choegyial performs at *Forms of Awakening: Selections from the Jack Shear Collection of Himalayan Art*, in October 2023.

PHOTO BY SHAWN LACHAPPELLE


Visit the Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery online at:

 [tang.skidmore.edu](https://tang.skidmore.edu)

# Class Notes



Do you have a class note or photo that you'd like to share?

 Reach out to your class correspondent or email [classnotes@skidmore.edu](mailto:classnotes@skidmore.edu).

## '40s

**Phyllis Levenson '45** turned 100 last October. She writes, "I have four fantastic great-grandchildren, and my two sons are retired. I had four wonderful years at Skidmore."

**Ruth Kroon '47** recently moved to Cambridge, Mass.

## '50

**Nancy Lang** moved to Long Island to be close to family.

**Sina Nazzaro Conte** lost her husband last year.

**Jan Sutherland Fairservis** writes: "My daughter, **Jenny Fairservis '84**, lives with me now. She was an art major, became a jewelry designer, and then retrained as an acupuncturist and master of Chinese medicine." Jan self-published *Angels of Our Better Nature* in 2022.

Class correspondent **Irene Marcus Senter** writes that 93 is treating her well, and that she recently moved from Connecticut to South Carolina.

 **Irene Marcus Senter**  
[senter2@comcast.net](mailto:senter2@comcast.net)

## '51

 **Pat Bryant Koedding**  
[pbkoedding@outlook.com](mailto:pbkoedding@outlook.com)

## '52

**Sandra Buhai Barz** celebrated her 93rd birthday at her home in Amagansett, Long Island. The presence of four generations made it a very special occasion.

**Bea Kee** was recently filmed in a documentary, *More than a Medal*, which can be viewed on YouTube. She is proud of her ancestor, Sing Lau Kee, awarded posthumously with the Medal of Honor. After extensive research, many ethnically diverse U.S. service members in WWII are now being recognized for their valor.

**Dawn Rylander Spitz** and Eric are still singing! Four for a Song is the name of their group, which includes a young soprano and an outstanding pianist. Their frequent concerts at senior residences in Connecticut and New York are enjoyed by all. They still reside seasonally in Stanford, Conn., and Venice, Fla.

**Dorothy "Dotsy" Bernstein Modlin** and **Bobbie Neustaedter Scheer** reminisced about the good old days while enjoying lunch recently in New York City. Dotsy's daughter and family now live in Saratoga Springs. Last summer, her 8-year-old great-granddaughter attended Camp Northwoods on the Skidmore campus. Dotsy also enjoys her other great-granddaughter, whose mother is **Susan Modlin Markowitz '82**. Four generations of Modlins are now a Skidmore family!

Class correspondent **Betty Johnson Boothe** notes that her three great-grandchildren and their families live in the Boston area, so fun visits are frequent. Her annual trips to Lake Winnepesaukee, N.H., and Northeast Harbor, Maine, were very special this year.

 **Betty Johnson Boothe**  
[bettyboothe@gmail.com](mailto:bettyboothe@gmail.com)

## '53

**Barbara Feder Mindel** writes, "The constant vitality of Skidmore for making the most of a college education is phenomenal and a joy to be a historic part of!"

## '54

**Patricia Kennedy Snyderman** keeps in touch with **Edythe "Edy" Kopman Tomkinson**. She writes, "I have a key to Gramercy Park, which is very special!"

 **Lydia Pardo McMinn**  
[lpmmcminn@gmail.com](mailto:lpmmcminn@gmail.com)

## '55

**Barbara Justin Handler** still keeps in touch with **Renee Rosenthal Landau**.

**Audrey Schmierer Deren** spends the winter in Florida and summers in Cherry Hill, N.J.

**Sue Gannon** reports the birth of her fourth great-grandchild, Cecilla. Sue now lives at Marsh's Edge retirement community in Georgia.

**Jacqueline Stempfle** remembers the positive influence Skidmore had on shaping her ideas about the future and her choice of a career. Everett Stonequist was professor of sociology when she attended Skidmore, and Jackie was his student assistant her senior year. "He taught me so much," she writes. She landed her first job in the baby adoption department at Hillside Children's Center in Rochester.

**Nancy Mathis Engen** was surprised when family from around the country gathered last spring to celebrate her and her husband's 90th birthdays. A second great-granddaughter was born last spring as well.



## '56

**Sue Paley Colker** writes, "It was wonderful to be back in Saratoga for our granddaughter's graduation in May. Saratoga has certainly changed! Joel and I have moved to Kimball Farms in Lenox, Mass. We also welcomed our fourth great-grandchild."

**Joan Perkins Ferguson** enjoys living on Saratoga Lake. She is a 46er, having completed all 46 high peaks in the Adirondacks when she was 60.

**Mary Anne Dyer Dragoon** writes, "Sadly, Bob died on June 24, 2022. He always enjoyed Skidmore events, both on campus back in the '50s and the alumni club gatherings wherever we lived. This will be my last winter in Florida, as I plan to relocate back to Maine."

**Susan "Susie" Kahn Fiedler** volunteers at a local hospital twice a week and belongs to two garden clubs.

**Jean Landy Peffers** writes, "After our reunion in 2016, I left San Antonio after 47 years and moved to Raleigh, N.C." She has been living in Brookdale, another retirement home in the same area, since 2022.

## '57

**Mary Gund "Bang Bang" Farr** is happily married after 63 years to the RPI student she fixed up with her classmates. They have homes in Ohio, Michigan, and Florida. She writes, "All our family visit us in Michigan on the island my grandfather bought almost 100 years ago."

**Rachel Peckham Elder** reports that her special birth-daughter in New York City is enjoying a relationship with three newly contacted paternal half-siblings in Saratoga and also with her maternal half-sibs she has known for 40 years.

**Ingrid Kolseth Zola** lives at Meadow Ridge in Connecticut. She recently visited Martha's Vineyard with her daughter, **Laurie Gendell '81**. Her son, **Brad Zola '86**, resides in London with his wife.

**Marcia Seymour Hanson** completed a three-day, two-night backpacking trip of the Northville Placid Trail in the Adirondacks with six family members. It was in honor of her husband, who had been working on completing the trail. He died in 2022.

**Harriet Kaye Sobol** participates in book talk groups for Scarsdale Adult School.

**Marcia Seymour Hanson** still lives in Albany. Her husband died last January so she has been traveling to visit family in Virginia, California, and South Carolina. She has five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

 **Dotty Wakeman Mattoon**  
mattoondotty35@gmail.com

## '58

**Sidney Wright Coursen** writes, "Wishing everyone all the best as we look back on 65 years! Beau and I are blessed to be celebrating our 65th anniversary, too. Memories of our wedding in the middle of senior year!"

**Elizabeth "Betsy" Helmer Nickerson** enjoys life on the ocean at in Scarborough, Maine.

## '59

**Maryann Bruno McCrea, Sandy Bendfeldt, Rose "Roe" Shainman Halper, Rosalind "Roz" Sutton Oesterle, and Cynthia Magriel Wetzler** often meet for lunch in Westchester, N.Y. If anyone in the area would like to join, please contact Maryann.

## '60

**Mary Jane Adriance Hall** chats on Facebook with **Mary Jane "MJ" Springer Auch** and hears from **Margaret "Peggy" Campbell Rhoads, Ann Schuyler Young, and Sandra Blair Ohanian** at Christmastime.

**Judy Harmon Miller, Kathey Adair Coombs, Mary Kelchner Lindner, and Barbara Block Zwick** Zoom every other Friday evening. Judy writes, "We always end up thanking Skidmore for bringing us together in Thompson House. Important news: Kathey and I like the Giants."

**Becky Martin Watson** reports happy events in her family, with notable birthdays (including her sister, **Dorothy Milne '65**, who turned 80), weddings (sixth family wedding at the Lotus Lake camp in Vermont), and college and high school graduations. The sisters are also co-authors of the pictorial history book *Lotus Lake Lore*, which they self-published in 2022.

**Kathleen Ford Lyons** lives in Salt Lake City near her son and his family. They spend summer vacations on the beach in San Diego.

**Mary Winters Cooper** often sees **Carol Santry Covello** and **Floss Bishop Bogdan**, who live nearby in the Naples, Fla., area. She reports a "delightful, lingering lunch" with **Elaine Perlman Cohen** and husband Aaron while visiting in New York for a grandson's graduation. She reports that **Mary Hoff Fallon** has moved to a retirement community in Saratoga Springs, located not too far from the Skidmore campus, and loves it there.

Last year, I had the pleasure of a recent visit with three classmates in their homes: **Judy White** at her cheerful apartment in Denver; **Ellie Davies Bowden** in her charming apartment in Boothbay, Maine; and **Judy Harmon Miller** on a nearby island that is the Miller's summer home. Roland Miller captained the water taxi service that got us to and from the island. I enjoyed a lunch visit with **Pam Crossley Faulkner**, who was in Northampton, Mass., for her grandson's high school graduation.

 **Marty Miller Spencer**  
spencer.mam@gmail.com

## '61

**Joan Beckwith Braffet** writes, "My husband passed away in 2019. In 2021, I moved to Dripping Springs, Texas, so I can be closer to my daughter and family."

**Zelda Jacobson Schwartz** writes, "I was so sorry to have missed our 60th reunion in 2022, though grateful to have had the Zoom experience with the attendees from our class. I loved the photos as well. Our Skidmore contact is enriched by our granddaughter, **Ayla Wellnitz '25**."

**Margaret "Skeet" Howe-Soper** reports, "I was on the Skidmore campus last August. Lovely place! I'm enjoying living in North Carolina."

**Edna Simons Alvarez**, post-retirement from a law career, is enjoying her birdwatching travels in more than 60 countries and viewing 3,000 species. Edna also participates in philanthropy, particularly in the area of hunger. She founded the First Friday Ideas Salon, which looks at critical issues in the 21st century.

**Paula Rosen Janis** and **Carole Damas**, co-stars of the children's TV series *The Magic Garden*, are celebrating 70 years of friendship with the scheduled 2024 release of the documentary movie *Magic Garden, Magic Women*. To watch a teaser, visit [MagicGardenMagicWomen.com](http://MagicGardenMagicWomen.com).

**Pat Hurlbut Williams** writes that life is good in Burlington, Vt., and her granddaughter, **Hanako Memon '24**, will be graduating this year!

**Ellie Platzman Palmer** and **Debby Goldfarb Cooper** enjoyed sharing lunch with **Carol Heller, Debby Selkowitz Neuner, Judy Webb, and Debby Goldfarb Cooper** in Darien, Conn.

**Pamela White Leighton** resides in a retirement home near Philadelphia. **Joan Horowitz Behr** and **Judy Brown Tulchin** recently visited for lunch. Pam enjoyed a recent trip to Croatia and the Dalmatian Coast with her daughter.

**Susan Stark Match** and husband Ron spent a special day visiting Skidmore, the Tang Museum, and downtown Saratoga Springs.

**Betsy Hodson Dare** lives in London. She travels a lot, especially in February when London is grim.

Class correspondent **Charlotte "Gig" Smiley Read** says, "Now I get to experience my granddaughter, Nora, applying to colleges. And then there is brother Ben in first grade. A friend encouraged me to buy an electric bike and I did!"

 **Charlotte "Gig" Smiley Read**  
gig4smile@aol.com

## '62

 **Susan Sambrook Berry**  
lcrssberryret@yahoo.com

## '63

**Linda Blanchard Chapman** had luncheon dates with **Judith Pettingall** and **Charlotte "Pixie" Cram Elsberry**. She writes, "We reminisced about our Skidmore days and life on the old campus — centered around smaller dorms (except for the Pink Palace)."

 **Susan Blum Loukedis**  
[littperson@optonline.net](mailto:littperson@optonline.net)

## '64

**Lurline McLaughlin Lapolla** was interviewed in a 55-minute documentary, *Working Through the Details: A Walter Richards Retrospective*, directed and produced by **Nick Ranieri '20** on the life and career of Walter DuBois Richards (1907-2006). Walter Richards was a multimedia artist, illustrator, a designer of 37 U.S. postage stamps, and the official United States Air Force artist during the Vietnam War. Lurline was a former student of Richards, and several of her paintings were showcased as part of the video. Nick is editor and content producer at Lapham Community Center in Connecticut where the video was produced. The documentary is available on the Lapham Community Center's YouTube channel.

**Sandy Berlin Light** moved to Cambridge, Mass. She loves Boston and volunteers at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

**Jane Boyle Gerrish** went on a Road Scholar trip to Alaska in June, traveling 400 miles plus on the Alaska Railroad. A highlight of her trip was visiting her son and grandchildren. Jane also writes of her Road Scholar trip to Vermont and the tremendous difference she discovered between walking and hiking.

**Nancy Harrison** and her husband, Ray Nord, purchased a summer condo in Brunswick, Maine. They traveled this year to visit her siblings and their children in the Midwest and to Spain to visit Ray's two daughters and their families.

**Lynne Knobel** writes that, although she is always busy painting and having art shows in the Westport area, she still finds the time to lease a horse and enjoy living at the beach!

**Val Burkhardt Marier** traveled to Ireland for a family reunion, gathering at her great-grandfather's home in Milltown Malbay and enjoying fabulous cruises and castle dinners. Val writes for the *Tourist & Town Magazine* and has a weekly blog. Her recent visits and contacts include **Susie Riley Gunderson**, **Carol Little Weg**, **Ellen Sax Aronson**, **Carol Lindsay**, and **Barbara Reid Jordan**, as well as a surprise encounter with **Inese Zeltins Houlis** on the beach in Vero Beach, Florida.

**Peggy Mitchell Bliss** looks forward to Reunion 2024!

**Toni Brackis** reports that her grandson, **Eli Cott '25**, is having an amazing experience at Skidmore, as she remembers her Skidmore days fondly.



*Five members of the Class of 1967 met for a reunion week on Cape Cod last fall. Front row: Sandy McDonald Bell '67 and Barbara Feuchter '67. Back row: Susan Gottlieb Beckerman '67, Sara Schroeder Keaney '67, and Betsy Chandler Sutton '67.*

According to class correspondent **Janice BozBeckian Touloukian**, "Our lives have been busy as well. We visited Martha's Vineyard for two weeks this summer in Edgartown for annual family time. I have had visits and contacts with **Linda Keating Fuller**, **Jane Boyle Gerrish**, **Nancy Harrison**, **Pattie McAuley Kolff**, **Mary Ellen Fulton Efferen**, and **Bev Furhmann Gregory**, as well as others. I have taken on the position for two years as moderator for New Haven Association United Church of Christ churches and serve as staff at First Church of Christ Woodbridge."

 **Janice BozBeckian Touloukian**  
[jantouloukian@gmail.com](mailto:jantouloukian@gmail.com)

## '65

**Freddi Shurr Hammerschlag** has served on the executive board of Friends of Brookside Gardens in Wheaton, Md., for the past 10 years to raise money for Brookside Gardens. She has also served as editor for the quarterly Friends of Brookside Gardens newsletter.

**Rothlyn "Rorry" Pond Zahourek** visited with **Mary Kerber Krugman** in Colorado and **Katherine (Kathy) Feingold Hotchner** in Phoenix. She also often sees **Nancy Whitcomb Lipton** in Massachusetts.

**Karen Berlan Bleier**, stepdaughters, and grandchildren rented two houses in Top Sail, N.C., for a birthday reunion, one of which is owned by classmate **Eileen Kirwin Cameron**. Karen is vice president of fundraising for the Pap Corps, a cancer research institution in South Florida.

**Elizabeth "Lee" Cranshaw Rowan** and husband Michael moved into a lifecare place in Exeter, N.H., two years ago. They spent the summer in

Maine and visited lifelong friends, **Judy Farmer Fulton** and **Rufus Fulton**, in Pennsylvania.

 **Toby Weisberg Rubenstein**  
[owcpcclaimsconsulting@gmail.com](mailto:owcpcclaimsconsulting@gmail.com)

## '66

**Carole Lynne Most, M.D.**, volunteers as a hematologist oncologist at the Lestonnac Free Clinic in California. She worked until she was 75 and had a bit of trouble "retiring" with "nothing to do." But she has since found meaning, purpose, joy, gratitude and appreciation in her life through her volunteer work.

**Tee Neville** retired at age 78 after 57 years of teaching nearly every level of school, from kindergarten through doctoral students at the University of Virginia. She now grows flowers to sell at the farm market across the road and paints watercolors that sell at the local art gallery. She is also president of the Cushing Historical Society.

**Robin Gue Willink** is looking forward to a cruise from Rome to Barcelona followed by the winter in Big Sky, Mont.

Class correspondent **Ann LoDolce** writes, "I continue to enjoy living with my husband in the heart of Boston while working part time as a family law mediator and volunteering as a conciliator in the court system, which was decimated by the COVID-19 pandemic."

 **Ann LoDolce**  
[Ann@LoDolceFamilyLaw.com](mailto:Ann@LoDolceFamilyLaw.com)

## '67

**Beverly Harrison Miller** moved to Montpelier, Vt. Recently, she and her family traveled to Tanzania for a safari.

**Pam Scharmann Stewart** continues to sing and perform. She is taking a course in Greek drama.

Enamel artist **Barbara Cherry Marder** moved into a new space in Allston, Mass., offering classes on enameling glass on copper and an occasional watercolor workshop. She and husband Steve celebrated 59 years of marriage.

**Mary Whitaker Taber** is still working and moved her counseling center offices to Westborough, Mass. She has a new granddaughter, Mercedes S. Stackley, in Myrtle Beach, S.C.

 **Lorraine Rorke Bader**  
[Lorraine.bader@gmail.com](mailto:Lorraine.bader@gmail.com)

## '68

**Linda Garrettson** writes a food column and lectures on nutrition. Learn more at [goodnaturedcooking.com](http://goodnaturedcooking.com).

**Debby Mayer**, writer, editor, and blogger, has a weekly blog, *Travels with Sizzle*, on the online platform Substack. The posts are short conversa-

tions and musings about everyday life with her 16-year-old dog, Sizzle.

**Ellen Sherman** is co-host of a new podcast, *Binge or Bomb*, which gives short thumbs-up/ thumbs-down reviews of every kind of streaming TV series from all over the world. So far, they've reviewed more than 60 series!

 **Nicoline Holbrook Sabbath**  
nhs46ff@gmail.com

## '69

In January, I enjoyed a lovely reunion with **Donna Allen Bell, Stephanie Brewster Wagoner, Barbie Herbert von der Groeben, Nancy Marx Ellsworth, and Alex Schilling Friedman**. In April, Barbie and I attended a Rejuvenation Retreat in Santa Cruz, and then Stephanie hosted us all again, as well as **Anna Ershler Richert** and **Elaine Hammerman Posner**, for a lovely luncheon.

For the Nantucket Book Festival last summer, **Elizabeth "Brownie" Eaton Roe** hosted a wonderful weekend for classmates **Liz McKinley Loomis, Chris Steffens Roe, Anne Harvey Grote, Diana Clark Crookes, Meredith Black Zahlaway, and Carol Curran Lyall** where they indulged in good books, food, and fun. They briefly caught up with **Barbie Herbert von der Groeben**, who was also in attendance.



From left: Liz McKinley Loomis '69, Chris Steffens Roe '69, Brownie Eaton Roe '69, Anne Harvey Grote '69, and Diana Clark Crookes '69.

 **Carol Bogardus**  
mscarolab@gmail.com

## '70

**Kathe Fox** and her husband, Michael, moved to Verona, N.J., after 28 years in Baltimore. Not long after, Michael was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and died in March 2023, a year to the day of their move. Kathe still spends a great deal of time in the Adirondacks and visits often with **Vicky Wirth '72**.

**Jane Converse Miller** works part time as an educational training consultant for McGraw Hill curriculum products.

 **Janet Sangenito Fagal**  
jfagal@gmail.com

## '71

**Jane Babbitt** is the lead editor of the online publication *Cruising Guide to Maine*, offered for free by the Cruising Club of America. She also celebrated her 50th wedding anniversary.

## '72

**Joan Barkan** and hubby John celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. **Julie McConchie Forte** and **Becky Bartovics** were bridesmaids.

 **Bobbsie Hertz Rifkin**  
bobbsiehr@aol.com

## '73

Our 50th Reunion was an absolutely fabulous event! Special thanks to all the classmates who helped plan and do things to make it such a success, especially to our chair, **Cathy Offinger**, and everyone else who took leadership roles. The co-chairs and committee folks who decorated and organized our hospitality room went far above and beyond anything that Skidmore has ever seen before. Especially of note is the Magical Mystery Tour Clue Hunt Adventure. Thank you, **Susie Garlock Lesser** and **Timi Carter**.

Our class was well represented in the Alumni Art Exhibition at the Tang. **Carol DeLancey, Linda Jackson-Chalmers, Theresa Mckee von der Heydt, Kathie Chwals Milligan, Zoe Vose Morsette, Jennifer Pearman Lammer, and Peter VanderDoes** all had items that were selected.

And, our class cheered loudly and proudly for our very own **Linda Jackson-Chalmers**, as she was one of the 2023 alumni award honorees. Linda has served on the Board of Trustees for Skidmore and worked on numerous committees and projects throughout the years. She helps to make our class shine bright. Congratulations, Linda, from your classmates! **Doug Gray** sent the promised link to our yearbook slideshow.

**Anne Blodgett-Holberton** reports, "Reunion was memorable in so many ways. Our college president only wished there was more time to catch up with everyone." Last July, Anne's son, Tod



2023 alumni association award honoree  
Linda Jackson-Chalmers '73.

Holberton, married Christie Bonfilgio on a perfect sunny day in Connecticut.

**Timi Carter** is still grinning from Reunion fun! While getting a new well pump in Manchester N.H., Timi managed to meet up with **Anne Blodgett-Holberton** for lunch. Then, **Mimi Westervelt** stopped overnight on her way to Nova Scotia and they hunted up **Bill Lefurgy**. Since he lives close by, they ventured over and had a nice visit.

**Terrie O'Donnell, Lynn Faught, and Carolynn "Lynn" English Ainsworth** (roommates in sophomore year) met for lunch in Washington, D.C., last August. Terrie and Lynn Faught gave Lynn Ainsworth a review of our 50th Reunion, while trying not to make her feel too bad about missing such a wonderful weekend.

**Faye Mihuta** missed our 50th Reunion because of her daughter's wedding at Saratoga Springs' Canfield Casino. Faye says she now has added new layers of memories to Congress Park that began when on beautiful days she used to head to the park from her dorm with books in tow. The next stop is a trip to Ireland to explore the Irish roots of her great-great-grandparents, whom her genealogy ventures have just uncovered.

**Gary Muldoon** is author of *Family Law Slangage of New York*, which he published in 2023.

In late September, **Carol Mulvihill Ahlers** met **Timi Carter** and **Janet Glidden** in Ogunquit, Maine, for a beautiful hike along the Marginal Way, followed by lunch.

After a slow summer, work on Broadway picked up last fall, says **Zoe Morsette**. She delivered a batch of prop documents and three new wedding bouquets to the Broadway production of *Hamilton*. Zoe worked on six sets of custom-sculpted Grinch finger extensions for two tours. She also made kraken tentacles for an annual gala fundraiser for Culture Lab LIC, a nonprofit arts organization.

**Joan Halpert** writes that her son, **Eric Hanson '03**, has a new job as the director of business intelligence and yield management at Direct Digital Holdings.

**Katherine Chwals Milligan** writes, “My husband, Mark, finally retired, and we flew to Hawaii to visit our best friend, **Marci Abad-Ronka**, in Oahu. On the way, we stopped in Laguna Beach, California to visit daughter Sarah and family.”

**Patricia Bissell** participated in the first Skidmore Virtual Class Reunion for 1973. She writes, “What a perfect tool for networking and reunion-ing! It was nice seeing some familiar faces, but the meeting left little time for socializing. We broke out into smaller groups and were tasked with ways to get grads from the Class of '73 to come to our 50th Reunion in June 2023.

 **Joanne Rubin**  
jrubin610@aol.com

## '74

As our Class of '74 progresses toward its momentous 50th Reunion, it is gratifying to read friends' updates and to anticipate reconnecting in person. We all look forward to an enjoyable, nostalgic weekend together — '74 has much more to explore!

Shortly before the pandemic, **Roxann Chambers** had the opportunity to visit the Skidmore campus, and she returned in September 2023 with board member **Linda Jackson-Chalmers '73**. They also caught up with **Arnelle Ullrich '75**. During a recent visit to Atlanta, Roxann enjoyed seeing **Barbara Lucas Roberts '73**.

**Bonnie Mortimer Baird** retired as a speech-language pathologist to begin a new life chapter as a volunteer and grandmother. She recently became a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution as a way to help war veterans. She would enjoy hearing from Skidmore friends at [oceanbaird@gmail.com](mailto:oceanbaird@gmail.com).

**Winnie H. Wan**, semi-retired since 2016, is still active as board director/executive advisor for several biotech startups. She and her husband were thrilled when their daughter relocated in 2021 to live and work in the San Francisco area. Her daughter married and they are now grandparents of a baby girl.

**Bill McKendree**, CEO and owner of The Clarion Group, teaches at Skidmore one day each semester in Colleen Burke's business classes. He and wife Kathy enjoy their Rhode Island farm. Bill keeps in touch with **Joe Salibra '75**, **Jim Melville**, and **Alan Braunstein '75**. He misses **Dave Coggeshall '77**, who passed away in 2020.

**Elizabeth Keith**, who earned a graduate degree from Pace University, worked for 42 years in medicine. Now retired, Elizabeth often visits friends in Saratoga.

**Catherine Stroup** volunteers at the Columbus library and the Ohio Historic Preservation Office and also leads tours at the Ohio Supreme Court. Her recent travels included Costa Rica and visiting **Kate Ferris** and husband Tim at their “fish cottage” along the St. Lawrence River in New York. She plans to attend our 50th Reunion!



*From left: Betsy Groves Campo '79, Ike Okpoebo '13, Sarah Groves '09, Katie Groves Alverson '74, Emery Matson '14, Lily Alverson Shepherd '13 (the bride), and Harry Alverson '73.*

**Kathryn Vought Reinhardt** filled her first retirement year as a hotline volunteer for the New York Abortion Access Fund. She also assists the League of Women Voters and participates in board service at the Whallonsburg Grange Hall, a local community arts center.

**Mila Delaware** and husband Paul enjoy life in Scottsdale, Ariz. Mila is an active real-estate agent with Coldwell Banker Realty. She hopes to attend our 50th Reunion.

**Denise Marcil**, who retired after 44 years of running her literary agency, enjoys attending drawing and painting classes and is active on the board of Friends of the Ferguson Library in Stamford, Conn. She started Freedom to Read, a committee focused on how book bans challenge intellectual freedom. She anticipates seeing many classmates at our 50th Reunion!

**Kathleen “Cooki” Landis Messmer** reconnected via Zoom last fall with three suitemates from junior year, sharing wonderful old times with **Devora Tabenkin Gronauer '76** and **Sandy Gibson-Quigley '76**, who were visiting **Barb Bromley '76** in Southern California.

**Janine Stover Rose** lives in Bennington, Vt., with her husband and two Parson Russell terriers. She keeps busy on the dog show circuit in the ring: handling, grooming, training, and breeding. Last summer, **Ellen Brickman** visited her at the dog show in Ballston Spa, N.Y. Janine has befriended **Maria Sacco '86**, another terrier fancier on the circuit.

**Doreen Spence Siddall**, longtime nurse practitioner at Boston's Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, moved to Maine in 2006 with husband Curt and worked in rehab and long-term care until retirement. She lives near freshman roommate **Alice Willard-Michaels** and nursing friends **Sue Camuse Campbell** and **Martha Weaver Teschner**.

**Katie Groves Alverson** and husband **Harry Alverson '73** shared news of a Skidmore mini reunion at the wedding of their daughter, **Lily Alverson '13**, last September. Seven Skidmore grads were among the revelers at Lily's wedding in Hyannis Port, Mass. Katie looks forward to returning to (the new) campus for her 50th!

**Eileen Argulewicz Berilla** enjoys retirement in Annapolis, Md., and is now a proud grandma to four little ones. Her new email address is [librarianieileen@gmail.com](mailto:librarianieileen@gmail.com).

**Victoria Paterson Haim** recently retired after more than 20 years in the aerospace industry as a displays engineer. She says, “Reconnecting with my college community and loving it.

**Elizabeth Burrows Jackson** and **Jana Dabrowski Fay** keep me grounded.”

 **Regina N. Carbon**  
[rcarbon14@gmail.com](mailto:rcarbon14@gmail.com)

## '75

**Marianne Boswell**, who retired from a genetic software startup, moved to Outer Cape Cod.

**Lucy L. Noonan** spent a week in Boston last fall at **Noreen “Noni” Reilly's** house. She says, “We thoroughly enjoyed ourselves at the JFK Museum, the New Bedford Whaling Museum, and visiting the local Irish pub.”

 **Noreen Reilly**  
[noreen.reilly@verizon.net](mailto:noreen.reilly@verizon.net)

## '76

**Eileen Crowley Sullivan '76** published *Cape Cod Fun* with Mascot Kids in 2022.

 **Ingeborg Hegemann Clark**  
[iehegemann@gmail.com](mailto:iehegemann@gmail.com)

## '77

**Peter Weisman**, who is majoring in entrepreneurialism at Harvard Business School, has completed his first course, Disruptive Strategy, taught by renowned Harvard professor Clayton Christensen. He and his sons, Matt and Jordan, recently formed a new entity, NLA Capital Partners, to acquire single tenant net leases.

**Deborah Brighton** retired in September 2022 after 31 years at the San Diego State University Research Foundation. She hopes to see everyone at Reunion.

**Wendy Coleman Hilboldt** enjoys retirement as a teacher but still volunteers over 60 hours a month as an EMT with New Canaan EMS. She says, "I am going on 44 years and enjoy teaching and mentoring all of our newest EMTs and drivers. We just welcomed our fourth grandchild."

## '78

Last June, we celebrated our 45th Reunion! Many classmates were able to make it back to campus and enjoyed time together. We look forward to our 50th and continuing to find opportunities to connect with our classmates.

**Carol Befanis O'Donnell** shares that she was wowed out of retirement to consult for the legal department of Republic, an international financial services company involved in crowdfunding, crypto, and banking. She also serves as an independent director of Sono-tek, a manufacturer of high-tech micro-coating spray systems.

**Margaret "Peggy" Isham** enjoyed catching up with a few dear friends from our class, both on the phone and in person.

**Faith Surkin Sherman** writes, "How wonderful it was to see everyone who could make it back for our 45th Reunion! Old friends, new friends — let's continue to keep in contact and check on each other via email, social media, cellphone, and build on our friendships."

**Larry Monahan** licensed a Swedish product to make and sell in the U.S. and Canada. The Firegloo mobile firepit is made in western Michigan from locally sourced materials.

**Kathy Herlihy-Paoli** had an exhibition of paintings sponsored by Brackett Creek Exhibitions and Marinaro Gallery in NYC. **Bonnie Smith Gannon** came to the opening with her niece, Carly. **Amy Byrnes Simek** hosted me, **Alexis Schade McCormack**, and **Priscilla Nawn Adam** at her beautiful new beach house in Connecticut. It was great to reconnect with everyone and with quite a few more alums, including **Barbara Kahn Moller**, at our 45th Reunion. I hope to see many more of you at our big 50th Reunion in 2028!

**William Ortiz** and his wife, Robin, have retired from State Farm Insurance and relocated to western Tennessee to spend more time with their first grandchild. He writes, "Unfortunately, I was unable to attend our 45th Reunion to attend my

son's wedding in the Dominican Republic, but I look forward to attending our 50th!" He returned to Lake George for two weeks recently and visited with **Bob Antonez**.

 **Emily Walker Bracchitta**  
[embracchitta@gmail.com](mailto:embracchitta@gmail.com)

## '79



Skidmore roommates **Christie Langwig Guevin**, **Elizabeth "Muff" Parsons-Reinhardt**, and **Lisa Wander** continue to spend time together whenever they can, chasing musical adventures and dancing their way through their 60s! They can't wait to have others join them dancing at Reunion!

**Richard Schneider** and his wife, Michele, moved from Baltimore to the Bethany Beach, Del., area. They have had a vacation getaway there for the past 10 years and decided to make it their permanent home. He continues to work in the Preservation Division at the National Archives at College Park, Md.

**Michele Herman** received an honorable mention in the Robinson Jeffers Tor House Contest for her poem "Frying Marbles with My Father." She's teaching three levels of memoir classes at The Writers Studio and working one-on-one with lots of writers. In 2022, she published *Save the Village* with Regal House Publishing. The novel was a finalist for the Eric Hoffer Prize for Fiction.

**Karen Schwarz**, who lives in Los Angeles, still works in college admissions and volunteers at a local food pantry.

**Lori Gedon** and **Wendy Barkin Lubetsky** visited the Bahamas last summer. They spent a week in Treasure Cay on Abaco Island — a community that was completely destroyed by Hurricane Dorian in 2019. Lori's family had three vacation homes there that were destroyed. She rented a new villa, and she and Wendy visited the adjacent Green Turtle Cay. It was a very different experience from when Lori and Wendy were in Treasure Cay more than 30 years ago! On another note, Lori and husband Mark celebrated their fifth anniversary!

**Carol Nussbaum** ended her artist residency with the Dunedin Fine Art Center in Florida with her submission of three fabulous mandalas on the central theme of "play." Her original images were children's toys, with photos taken at toy stores, and vintage flea markets.

**Lizabeth Hollis**, who lives in Connecticut, is looking forward to Reunion 2024. She is still involved with the family business, Stew Leonard's.

As for me, I missed a mini reunion with **Migs Schuchart Wright**, **Lisa Ochs**, **Martha Van Gelder**, and **Linda Winnard** due to COVID-19. I was able to get to Switzerland last fall and hiked in the French and Italian Alps. Looking forward to seeing everyone at Reunion!

 **Debbie Monosson**  
[debbie@bfec.com](mailto:debbie@bfec.com)

## '80

**Missy Godfrey Fitzpatrick** writes, "Honored to be recognized by Brady United for work on behalf of the Gun Safety Alliance on the End Family Fire campaign."

**Cathy Krayner Kimball** retired in July 2020 after 20 years as executive director of the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art. She and her husband moved to Sammamish, Wash. Every other year, she sees fellow Skiddie **Donna Meadows** in Houston.

 **Peri Snyderman**  
[specialcat@msn.com](mailto:specialcat@msn.com)

## '81



**Charlene Cerami-Nucci**, **Marki Cunningham Cool**, **Dianne Ledlie Agoglia**, and **Laurie Zola Gendell** met in summer 2022 at Laurie's beautiful home in Westport, Conn., for a fabulous weekend.

 **Karen Bradley McElroy**  
[bkccamac@gmail.com](mailto:bkccamac@gmail.com)

## '82

**Lisa Fairchild Heist** retired after 40 years as a neonatal ICU nurse, 37 of which were at Stamford Hospital in Connecticut. She and her husband built a winter home in St. Johns, Fla. Visitors are welcome!

**David Schaffer** and **Nancy Wagner Schaffer '83** celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary last fall.

 **Lesia Stramondo Botti**  
[bottifamily4@gmail.com](mailto:bottifamily4@gmail.com)

## '83

 **Lilly Jaray Ostrove**  
danjasry@yahoo.com

## '84

**Mark Nathan** formed another company, this time helping the environment. PlasTechFree has shipped to Walmart, Talon Industries, and others.


**Cynthia Erickson Zarker** writes, "My daughter, **Abby Zarker '26**, is a student at Skidmore and I am enjoying seeing the College through her eyes. Fun to spend time in Saratoga, too!"

## '85

**Lisa Bogart**, promoted to director of the North Hudson Campus Library at Hudson County Community College, received an Excellence Award from the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development. She also sailed on Saratoga Lake in the third annual Sunfish Megabowl Regatta hosted by the Saratoga Lake Sailing Club. She writes, "While there, I visited Skidmore and saw the completed parts of the Billie Tisch Center for Integrated Sciences. Wow! The campus looked great!" Finishing out the summer, she won first place in a regatta with her home club.

**Norwood Creech**, from Memphis, has been creating art and pursuing education over the last three years. She is working on a master's degree in arts education from Boston University. Reach her at norwoodc@mac.com.

**Cindy Pendleton** writes, "Here in New England over the summer, we spent time with **Vinca Jarrett** and her husband, Richard, before she jetted off to film festivals. I love hearing from you all and look forward to seeing you in just over a year."

 **Cindy Pendleton**  
copen1985@gmail.com

## '86

**Brian Downing** has moved to Martha's Vineyard. His company, Library Ideas, is in its 15th year and has grown to have 80 plus employees. It recently made a publishing deal with Tad Hills, a *New York Times* best-selling author.

 **Clifford Nelson**  
clifford.s.nelson@live.com

## '87

**Chris Hillabrant** moved to Germany last summer for a new job at Vantage Towers, a large digital infrastructure firm.

**Scott Kennedy** attended the 50th National Foundation for Infectious Diseases awards ceremony

with Neil deGrasse Tyson! Scott also directed the 2023 film *Shot in the Arm*.

**Bob Myhal** is a full-time chief marketing officer at a national marketing agency. He lives in Kennebunkport, Maine, with his life partner, Cathryn, and their boys Dylan, Beckett, and Blake.



**Gregory Rutchik** writes, "Proud to attend classmate **Howard Skora's** latest play, *Freud on Cocaine*. Superb. Bravo, Howard."

Class correspondent **Melissa Weintraub** had the chance to visit with college roommate **Ceci Zak** last summer in Vail, Colo.

 **Melissa Weintraub**  
bleat13@comcast.net

## '88

We had a great turnout for our 35th Reunion. For those of you who weren't able to attend, mark your calendars for our 40th — the countdown is on!

**Tracy Burke** of Cape Elizabeth, Maine, won a gold medal at the inaugural Pickle4 Ballpark Series at Fenway Park in Boston last summer. Burke, 57, and partner Julie Brooke, 38, were undefeated and took the top podium spot in Women's Doubles 4.0, ages 18-39.

Rabbi **Elizabeth Hersh Kleinlehrer** received the Interfaith Partnership Award in St. Louis, Mo., last fall. She is the senior rabbi at Temple Emanuel and chair of the Newmark Institute of Jewish Community Relations Council.

**Holly Holleran** moved to Aiken, S.C., in the heart of horse country! She runs her own company, Tico's Whoopies, and is the national sales director of the Benefab Corporation and the Handy Holster Company, two equine-based companies. She writes, "Reach out if you are in the area!"

**Chris Lichtenberg** writes, "Now the resident baddie with the Milford Performing Arts Center. Credits include the governor in Gogol's *The Government Inspector*, Bill Sykes in *Oliver Twist*, and now Orin the dentist in *Little Shop of Horrors*. I am a bit typecast. Hope everyone is doing great out there."

**Kathryn Greene Wolfe** began a new position as associate court attorney to an Oswego county court judge after 10 years as a law clerk in New York State Supreme Court.

 **Clara Rabassa**  
uwantcr@yahoo.com

## '89

**Michele Blouin** self-published *The Flower Garden Collection* through Amazon in May 2021.

**Rick Jimenez** is an elementary school principal in Japan. He writes, "The kids have returned to the States and are doing well there. Maybe we'll make it to the 35th Reunion? Meet you at The Parting Glass! Feel free to reach out if you're ever in Japan: jimenezsasebo@gmail.com."

**Colleen Mallory's** son, **Rylan "Riley" Mallory '22**, graduated sum cum laude with a degree in anthropology. Riley recently joined Professor of Anthropology **Heather Hurst '97** to help document her team's investigative work in ancient Maya settlements associated with the San Bartolo Regional Archaeological Project in Guatemala. Riley's brother, **Logan Mallory '26**, is also a Skidmore student. Colleen writes, "Spending time in Saratoga and visiting the campus again has been wonderful, and we hope to continue our yearly visits long after our youngest graduates in 2026."

**Jesse Stovin** is an attorney at the New York firm Simpson Thacher & Bartlett, where he works primarily on corporate litigation matters.

## '90



Left to right: **Erik Rimalovski**, **Maya Weil**, **John Pitman**, **Rob Schurgin**, **Ross Freedman**, and **Kim Awbrey Pitman '91**

**Ross Freedman**, a freelance creative director in Oak Park, Ill., released a four-song EP (available for streaming!) last fall. He writes: "It was so much fun catching up with freshman year roommates **Erik Rimalovski** and **Rob Schurgin**, along with **John Pitman** and **Kim Awbrey Pitman '91**, in Washington, D.C., to celebrate Rob's recent wedding. We had all lived in D.C. after graduation, so it was like a reunion on top of a reunion."

**Jill Bacharach** was a guest speaker who spoke about forgiveness at the Family Support Resources Summit 2023. The Summit is a collection of discussions and presentations with leading international relationship and mental health experts to help individuals break free from the struggles of family estrangement.

**Angela Castonguay Edwards**, who joined Trantolo & Trantolo last year, is a plaintiff's personal injury litigation attorney in Connecticut and Massachusetts.

**Emily Schaefer Gallagher** writes that her daughter, **Franny Gallagher '26**, is now part of the Skidmore community, making Franny the third generation to attend Skidmore. Family graduates include Emily's mom, **Gale Quinn Schaefer '60**.

 **Dana Metes**  
danametes@yahoo.com

'91

 **Heather Santmire Denkmire**  
skidmore@grantwinners.net

'92

**Liv Cummins** co-authored *Student-Led Peer Review: A Practical Guide to Implementation Across Disciplines and Modalities*, published by Routledge in 2022. Liv also wrote a musical with composer Rob Hartmann that was performed at Theatre Institute at Sage in Troy, N.Y.

**Robert Hoffman** has been named CEO of Yo San University, a nonprofit institution, which specializes in acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine. He is also conducting cancer research in pursuit of a Ph.D. in pharmacology. Robert lives in Redondo Beach, Calif., with his wife, Melody, and their two children.

**Naomi Vladeck** released the book *Braving Creativity: Artists Who Turn the Scary Thrilling Messy Path of Change into Courageous Transformation* with New Degree Press in 2023.

 **Jamie Nimmons**  
jamie.nimmons@gmail.com

'93

**Andrea Bastiani Archibald** and **Fran Kirmser** got together last spring to celebrate their shared birthday and to attend the final performance of Bob Fosse's *Dancin* on Broadway. Fran was a producer of the musical. Andrea, a psychologist and nonprofit consultant with Orr Group, and Fran, the Tony Award-winning founder and CEO of Fran Kirmser Productions, danced together while at Skidmore!

 **Jenny Herdman Lando**  
jennylando@gmail.com

'94

**Matthew Miczek** competed in the 2022 USATF National Mountain Running Championships at Whiteface Mountain in New York's Adirondack Mountains. The mountain race encompassed 4,000 feet of elevation gain along a 7-mile loop course. Matt says, "Certain stretches of the course were so steep that you had to use your hands in order to keep climbing."

**John Beckman** joined design Bridgewater Studio as vice president for design and development.

John has been working at the Adler Planetarium in Chicago as the director of experience design and production while also running his consultancy/design firm, Sage Creative Group, with his partner, Faith.

**Emily Sellergren** lives in Boulder, Colo., with her family. She is a school counselor at the University of Colorado. She writes, "Looking forward to a trip to Chile over the holidays to do some fly fishing."

 **Vicki Tisch**  
vickitisch@yahoo.com

'95

**Becca Conner**, who lives in the Washington, D.C., area, is a records management and Freedom of Information Act officer for Amtrak. She writes, "I love my job! I also married Sophia Whiteoak in a private ceremony in January 2022. Attending was my mother, **Jessica Chernay Eggleston '69**. Unfortunately, my mother passed away a few days later."

**Meredith Kates Forster**, a dyslexia specialist for K-4 students, lives in Newport, R.I., with her husband and three daughters. Her oldest, **Julia Forster '24**, is a student at Skidmore.

**Sharon Harbauer** works at Reynolds American as the quality director at subsidiary American Snuff Company, overseeing quality at sites in Tennessee and North Carolina. Before that, she worked for Collins Aerospace after moving to North Carolina.



**Arlene "Amala" Lane** married Steven Soblick in February 2023 after being together for eight years. She writes, "We have created a home and life in Ithaca, where he is retired and I am working as an event and media coordinator at Cornell University in Global Learning and the East Asia Program."

**Taylor Tyng** published a children's novel, *Clara Poole and the Long Way Round*, with Pixel+Ink in 2023.

'96

**Eric Goss** and his wife, Kim, welcomed baby Leyna in March 2023.

**Ben Soreff** is the owner of House to Home Organizing, based out of Ridgefield, Conn. When he is not busy helping people take back control of their space, he ignores his family to hang out with **Colin Moore** and **Brian Dean**!

'97

**Peter Stiepleman** is author of *An Imperfect Leader: Human-Centered Leadership in (After) Action*, published by Rowman & Littlefield Publishers in 2023.

'98

**Maija Teitlebaum Barnett** published *Heart Like a Broken Arrow (Ya Verse)* with West 44 Books in 2023.

**Sarah E. Hardesty** had a solo exhibition at MoCA Arlington last summer that received a nice review in *The Washington Post*. She also recently received tenure at Marymount University, where she is associate professor of art.

 **Michele Rothstein**  
mdrothstein@gmail.com

'99

 **Nancy Magnus**  
magnusnancy@gmail.com

'00

**Alison Better**, professor of sociology at Kingsborough Community College (a CUNY campus in Brooklyn, N.Y.), was the 2023 recipient of the American Sociological Association's Section on Teaching and Learning Hans O. Mauksch Award for distinguished contributions to undergraduate sociology. Alison is especially honored to join the ranks of Mauksch awardees, as this list also includes Skidmore Professor of Sociology Catherine White Berheide, who received this honor in 2003.

**Jennifer Cummings Hillery** co-launched Redwood Speaking, a business to help individuals become more authentic and confident speakers. Jen, who launched the company after several years of leading a public speaking club for women, loves using her own voice as a storyteller and has found herself on The Moth stage several times last year.

 **Lauren Granahan**  
lauren.granahan@gmail.com

## '01

**Marissa Hoehstetter**, an advocate for survivors sexually abused by medical staff, was an integral part of New York state's Adult Survivors Act, enacted into law in November 2022. The law, with a one-year window, enabled adult survivors of sexual assault outside the statute of limitations to file a civil case against their abusers or the institution that protected the abusers.

 **Janine Geller Jones**  
jrgeller@hotmail.com

## '02

**Tracy Villaume** has returned to iHeartMedia as co-host of the radio *River Morning Show* on 99.5 The River. She has also been an adjunct professor of journalism, first at The College of Saint Rose and currently at Siena College.

 **Kate Nedelman Herbst**  
kateherbst@gmail.com

## '03

**Dave Charbonneau** and his wife, Allie, welcomed their second boy, Jack, to the family last June.

**Haley Rose Cohen** and Timothy Lovell were married Sept. 4, 2022, in Highlands, N.C. Friends from Skidmore who attended included **Owen Reynolds Clements**, **Stephanie "Stevie" Howell**, **Maritza Cirigliano Schaeffer**, **Rosemarie (Rosie) Garschina**, **Melissa Osborne**, **Judith Andiman Pagnam**, **James Pagnam '04**, and **Georgia Owen Clay**.



**Betty Hagymasi '03** has been named to the endowed Anne and Henry Zarrow Chair in Math and Sciences at The Frederick Gunn School, a co-educational, independent college preparatory school in Connecticut. Betty has been a member of the Science Department faculty at Gunn since 2021. In addition to teaching chemistry, honors chemistry, and AP chemistry courses, she serves as head coach for junior varsity field hockey and assistant coach for varsity skiing.

 **Bridget Cummings Dorman**  
bcdorman09@gmail.com

## '04

**Virginia E. Berry** released the children's picture book *Long Walk: Using Our Senses to Find Our Way*, with Berry Publishing House in 2023.

**Pritha Mani**, a licensed mental health counselor, works with children, adolescents, and young adults coping with anxiety, depression, trauma, and sexual violence. She is also a visiting professor at Webster University and board member of Hand In Hand Switzerland (an NGO that aims to eradicate child labor, educate children, empower women, and combat climate change). She self-published the book *It's On Us! Sexual Violence Prevention Handbook* in 2023.

 **Jacqueline Vernarelli**  
jvernarelli@gmail.com

## '05

**Jonah Lobe** released the illustrated book *Marvel Anatomy: A Scientific Study of the Superhuman* with Insight Editions in 2022.

**Kevin Wozniak** recently began a new position as a faculty member in the School of Law and Criminology at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. He published *The Politics of Crime Prevention: Race, Public Opinion, and the Meaning of Community Safety* with New York University Press in 2023.

**Meghan Fair** and David Walsh welcomed their new baby daughter, Eleanor Catherine Fair Walsh, in August 2022.

 **Robert Caiazzo**  
robert.j.caiazzo.jr@gmail.com


## '06

**Earlyne Daddario** writes, "For over 40 years, I have written and illustrated many children's picture books. My pride and joy is titled *The Day My Mom Sucked An Ant Up The Vacuum Cleaner*. My next step is to publish it."

 **Alexandra Ravener Feigman**  
afeigman@gmail.com

## '07

**Molly Lange** was recently appointed director of special services for Warren Township Schools in Warren, N.J. She is excited to move into a district leadership position where she can focus on supporting the ever-changing needs of students.

 **Autumn Bush**  
autumnbush@gmail.com

## '08

**Jessica Dunham** and Michael McLaughlin were married in December 2022 at the Woodstock



From left, Kelsey Lewis '08, Margaret Farris '08, Jessica Dunham '08 (bride), Michael McLaughlin (groom), Samantha Morrison Ugol '08, and Jonathan Ugol '08

SABIN GRATZ PHOTOGRAPHY

Inn & Resort in Woodstock, Vt. In attendance were Skidmore friends **Kelsey Lewis**, **Margaret Farris**, **Samantha Morrison Ugol**, and **Jonathan Ugol**. Since the wedding, Jessica and Michael traveled to Rome, where their marriage was blessed by Pope Francis. They honeymooned in the French Riviera and celebrated the coronation of King Charles III in London. The couple live in Tewksbury, Mass. Jessica works in nonprofit management and Michael is an administrator at a local private school.

**Sara Eddison Wyatt**, who lives along the coast of central California, has a wallpapering business, The Trusted Brush. You can follow along her journey on IG @thetrustedbrush.

 **Kelly Genois**  
kgenois@gmail.com

## '09

**Margaret "Maggie" Stack**, who was a professional dancer for 10 years in San Francisco, now resides with her two baby boys and husband in Reno, Nev., where she teaches dance locally and is a guest artist at University of Nevada, Reno.

## '10

**Katie Dalton** released the children's book, *Ryan Goes Mountain Biking*, with Whole Kid Books in 2023.

 **Claire Solomon Nisen**  
claire.a.solomon@gmail.com

## '11

**Emma Case** and Greg Morales were married and lots of Skiddies attended!

 **Tanner Kaufman**  
Tanner.Kaufman@gmail.com



## '12

 **Ross Lovern**  
ross@lovern.com

## '13

 **Class Notes Editor**  
classnotes@skidmore.edu

## '14

Skid for life! Theater Department friends from all over the country reunited at the wedding of **Gina Doherty Sayre** in Beacon, N.Y.

**Margeaux Cannon** earned her Ph.D. in counseling psychology last summer from the University at Albany. She is a clinical postdoc at the Brattleboro Retreat in Vermont, working with adult patients with co-occurring mental health and addiction struggles. Also, she and Donnie Ager were engaged last year.

## '15

**Abby Erchak** is an English teacher at Fort Edward High School in upstate New York.

**Renee Schapiro** married David Gross last spring in St. Petersburg, Fla. Plans for honeymooning include a trip to Thailand and Cambodia.

**Samantha Ziemba** and **Sam Hudziak '18** were married last summer in Shelburne, Vt. Skidmore friends traveled from around the country to join Sam and Sam in celebrating their big day. The couple reside in North Liberty, Iowa.

**Halley Furlong-Mitchell** married Ethan Cantor last fall in Brooklyn's Prospect Park. The wedding was DJed by **Noah Prebish '16**. Halley received her MFA in poetry from Columbia University in 2017 and works as director of copy and content at Ever/Body. The couple live in Brooklyn.

 **Jessica Dunning**  
jldunning11@gmail.com

## '16

**Chloe Larson** and **Schuyler Borden** were married last summer at the Prospect Park Boathouse in Brooklyn, N.Y. Skidmore alumni **Jenna Borden '12**, **Adrian Caridi '12**, **Rebecca Stern**, **Emily Mandel**, **Ben Ginsberg '18**, and **Betsey Selkowitz '66** were there to celebrate!

**Olivia Minicucci** writes, "My experience at Skidmore College helped me land my dream job! I am now the registered dietitian for the Inter Miami CF team." The team includes Argentine soccer player Lionel Messi.

**Jenny G. Zhang** passed the American Board of Genetic Counseling certification exam and is now a certified genetic counselor.



*Pictured clockwise: Jack Ireland, Emily Pintel Ireland '13, Kev Berry '15, Gina Doherty Sayre (bride), Jon Lemay '15, Emma Bridges, Christine Pardos, Jon Lee-Rey '15, Laura Cornachio, Gab Johnson-Nieparent, and Billy Berger-Bailey '13.*



*Alumni from the classes of 2015 to 2019 at the wedding of Samantha Ziemba '15 and Sam Hudziak '18.*



*Halley Furlong-Mitchell '15 and Ethan Cantor*



*Chloe Larson '16 and Schuyler Borden '16*



## Choosing to do both

**Alia Carponter-Walker '16**

Alia Carponter-Walker, an accomplished dancer who trained at The Ailey School, recently spoke to *Dance Magazine* about why she ended up selecting Skidmore over a conservatory. "There's a real stigma of 'If you're going to do something else, you can't dance' or 'If you're going to dance, you can't do anything else,'" she told the magazine. "But Carponter-Walker chose to do both," *Dance Magazine* explained. "She attended Skidmore College, graduating in 2016 with a double major in dance and international affairs, plus a minor in Spanish. 'I love dancing, and I'm not giving up dancing.

But there's also so much more of who I am," the magazine reported. After graduation, the Brooklyn native taught in Spain, where she studied and performed flamenco. Back in the U.S., she has pursued a career in education, working at schools and nonprofits, completing a master's degree at the University of Pennsylvania, and maintaining an enduring passion for dance. Since last summer, she has been director of equity and community life at The Hewitt School, where she "hopes to use music, dance, and culture to educate students about diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, and has coached student dance teams, all while dancing herself with choreographers including Fredrick Earl Mosley."

The article, "Majors and Minors That Enrich a Dance Degree," was published by *Dance Magazine* on Oct. 9, 2023.



From left: Lauren Cataldi '17, Evan Marzouk, Robin Cooley, Sam Kastner '15, Kathleen Schoolcraft, Lenore Wilkinson, Alec Grossman, George Dilthey, Emily Eilertsen, Nicole Katz, Leila Farrer, Nola Donkin '18, and Ian Gregory-Davis '17. Not pictured but in attendance: Cindy Galvis-Lan, Raph Galvis '14, Julia Rutkovsky '16, Raymond Skyer '17, Melissa Kotlen '92, and Matt Lueckheide '17

**George Dilthey** and **Emily Eilertsen** were married last June, with a whole host of Skidmore friends in attendance. He writes, "We didn't get a picture with ALL of the alumni in attendance, but we did manage to get most of them."

 **Stella C. Langat**  
stellalangat@gmail.com

## '17

**Reina Kiefer** won a Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award Fellowship from the National Institutes of Health. A doctoral candidate in clinical psychology at the University of Rhode Island, Kiefer is conducting research funded by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

 **Blair Warren**  
blairshields15@gmail.com

## '18

**Josh Karen** and **Tiffany Cheng** were married last spring, in Villanova, Pa. Alumni who joined the celebration included **Kyle Ferris** and **Owen Kula '19**, who were among the groomsmen.

## '19

**Roman DiPasquale** and **Tiffany Kapela-Barlow** were engaged in October 2022 at Saratoga Apple in Schuylerville, N.Y.

**Lexi Parker** teaches at Whitehall Elementary School in upstate New York and was recently awarded tenure.

 **Desiree Sim**  
Dsim188@gmail.com

## '20

**Kyra Foley** started her first company, Kyra Vail, which offers social media marketing strategy and execution, including planning, content creation, and email marketing campaigns.

## '21

**Charlotte "Charlie" Squire** completed the book *Slouching: A Field Guide to Art and (Un) Belonging in Europe* as the culmination of a six-month fellowship with the Creative Impact Research Centre Europe. An inaugural fellow, Charlie was awarded about \$25,000 from Germany's Bundesregierung for Culture and Media and the European Commission's Brexit Adjustment Reserve to write and research the book. *Slouching* is an investigation into the affective qualities of space and public history, combining writing with illustration and photography.

## '22

**Sophie Mae Berman** is taking the Oxford University's two-year MPhil International Relations course. She says, "I am deeply grateful for the intellectual community at Skidmore, which has inspired and supported me throughout my journey."

## '23

**Tory Abbott** recently joined Skidmore's Office of Communications and Marketing as strategic communications coordinator and is using the skills they developed as an English major as a contributor to this magazine.



**Hunter Wasser** hiked the Long Trail, Vermont's 272-mile "footpath in the wilderness," over three weeks last September and October. Next, he's going on a cross-country road trip through the national parks in Colorado, Utah, and Arizona on his way to Mammoth Lakes, Calif.

**Abigail Rogers** started a new position as a business development coordinator with Kleinfelder in its Boston office. "This job entails a great deal of writing, editing, and creativity — none of which would be possible without my English studies from Skidmore College."

 **Aymon Langlois**  
aymonlanglois@outlook.com

## Alumni Authors

**Jan Sutherland Fairservis '50**  
*Angels of our Better Nature*

**Eileen Crowley Sullivan '76**  
*Cape Cod Fun*

**Michele Herman '79**  
*Save the Village*

**Michele Blouin '89**  
*The Flower Garden Collection*

**Liv Cummins '92**  
*Student Led Peer Review*

**Naomi Vladeck '92**  
*Braving Creativity*

**Taylor Tyng '95**  
*Clara Poole and the Long Way Round*

**Peter Stiepleman '97**  
*An Imperfect Leader*

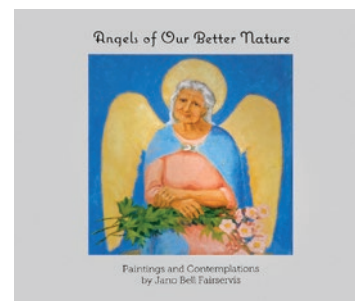
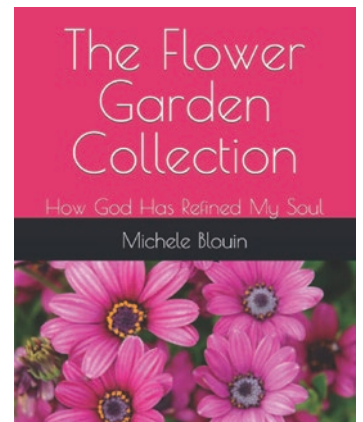
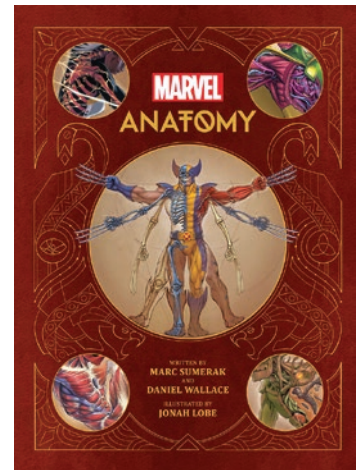
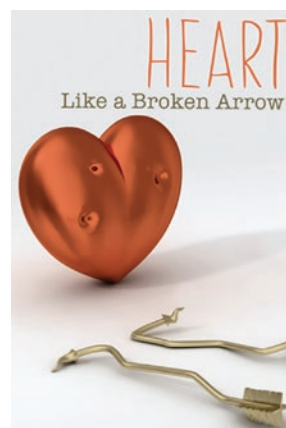
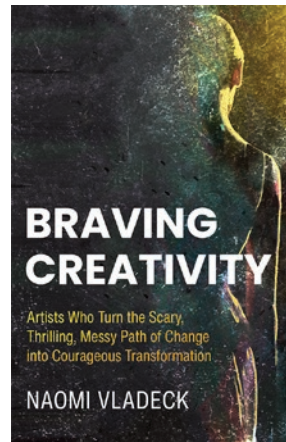
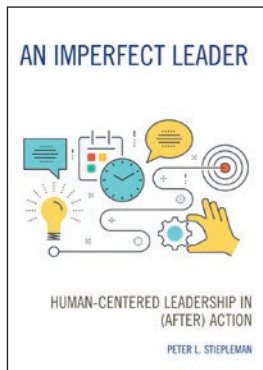
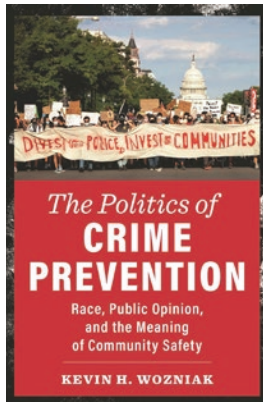
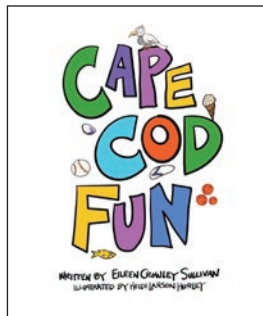
**Maija Teitlebaum Barnett '98**  
*Heart Like a Broken Arrow*

**Virginia E. Berry '04**  
*Long Walk*

**Jonah Lobe '05**  
*Marvel Anatomy*

**Kevin Wozniak '05**  
*The Politics of Crime Prevention*

**Katie Dalton '10**  
*Ryan Goes Mountain Biking*



# Guardian of the Great Lakes

**U.S. Coast Guard Cmdr. Michael Cavanagh '03** brings creative thought to his service to his country and fellow citizens through search and rescue.

by ANGELA VALDEN

Throughout his 18-year career in the U.S. Coast Guard, Michael Cavanagh '03 has responded to numerous hurricanes on American soil, the aftermath of the Maui wildfires, a tsunami in American Samoa, an earthquake in Haiti, the capsizing of a cargo ship, and two pipeline spills. He has also provided special security at events including President Barack Obama's inauguration.

"There are two driving factors for me: I want to defend the country and I want to serve and give back to the country, but I also want to help people," he says. "It's a unique opportunity as a military branch to be able to directly help citizens in their own backyards and in their homes."

Now, as the enforcement branch chief in the Ninth Coast Guard District, Cmdr. Cavanagh is responsible for all aspects of maritime law enforcement across the expansive Great Lakes region and the St. Lawrence Seaway.

"We're the guardians of the Great Lakes. Busiest from Memorial Day through Labor Day, we do a lot of search and rescue. We have active recreational boating activity on the Great Lakes and many people who aren't necessarily experienced and need our help."

His current role also demands that he lead his branch in navigating complex issues while respecting international sovereignty along the shared border with Canada.

"For instance, what do we do if there's an active shooter on a boat that's on the Canadian side, but we're on the U.S. side? Are we able to have our boat crews respond and save lives? So, (we're) trying to figure out issues like that, and how to do it legally without causing an international incident."

Cavanagh, a native of Cleveland, Ohio, attended Skidmore with the assistance of a Kettering grant. He celebrated his 20th Skidmore Reunion this past June.

"I fell in love with the campus immediately, fell in love with the school, the feeling of being there. I ended up loving those four years there — they were some of the best of my life. I still have good, lifelong friends from the College."

Cavanagh majored in government (now political science) and particularly enjoyed the ability to jump between disciplines to explore different courses and being challenged by Skidmore professors.

Associate Professor of Political Science Bob Turner "pushed me to realize levels of critical thought in state and local government that I hadn't even considered before," Cavanagh says.

He also fondly remembers serving in Student Government Association and the engaging discussions that played out during sessions.

"It was just great to see people taking it seriously and practicing and honing their skills for respectful debate, which is something I think people need now more than ever — to speak with passion and respectfully disagree with each other without being insulting."

An internship in the Cleveland office of then-Cuyahoga County Commissioner Jane Campbell prepared Cavanagh for a career in local government after graduation. He went to work

*"It's about Creative Thought Matters, but it's also about being lifelong learners. And that was something that always stuck with me throughout my tenure at Skidmore College — you never stop learning, you should always be hungry for more information, and you should always be looking to unwind those complex issues. So that's a parallel with the United States Coast Guard — to constantly keep improving and learning."*

for Campbell as she campaigned to become Cleveland's first female mayor and served under her after she was elected.

"I did that for a few years and enjoyed it, but it wasn't exactly what I was looking for, so I enlisted in the Coast Guard Reserve in 2005."

The following year, he attended Reserve Officer Candidate Indoctrination at the Coast Guard Academy and received his commission. He was almost immediately activated in support of Hurricane Katrina and assumed the duties of finance section chief for the more than \$264 million recovery operation.

Cavanagh began his active-duty career at the Coast Guard Headquarters Office of Law Enforcement in Washington, where he rose to the rank of lieutenant. From there, he moved to an operational unit in Long Island Sound, where he was chief of emergency management and force readiness. A special assignment as a program reviewer took him back to Coast Guard



Headquarters in D.C., where he crafted strategic communications with the Department of Homeland Security, White House, and Congress to support and defend the Coast Guard's budget.

Cavanagh's next assignment was to another operational unit, this time in North Carolina. There, he served as incident management division chief, leading responses to hurricanes Dorian and Isaias, as well as complex environmental protection operations involving multiple grounded large commercial fishing vessels.

The recipient of a Meritorious Service Medal, seven Coast Guard Commendation Medals, three Coast Guard Achievement Medals, two Commandant's Letters of Commendation, and numerous unit and service awards, Cavanagh still finds that every day brings with it a new opportunity to learn and grow, especially as he navigates his current role as Ninth Coast Guard District commander.

# Reasons *for* Reunion

By Tory Abbott '23



## Reconnect with your Skidmore family.

**Natalie Jones Neri '53** brings something special with her to each of her Skidmore reunions. Around her neck she wears a ring, inscribed on its surface in gold art deco lettering a careful "S." "This was my mother's ring," she explains. "Class of 1921."

Natalie, who turned 92 in June, was the only representative of her class and oldest alumna at the 2023 Reunion. A 2013 recipient of the Outstanding Service Award, she was honored with a seat at the president's table during the first meal of Reunion.

Her mother, **Edith Jones '21 P'54 '53**, was a home economics major and dietitian, graduating from Skidmore School of Arts the year before it would become Skidmore College and begin granting four-year degrees. As a result, Natalie grew up hearing about Skidmore. As she'll tell you, "Skidmore's enthusiasm — it started a long time ago."

When it came to her own education, she didn't have to think twice about enrolling, and her sister, **Constance Peck '54**, quickly followed. For her, Reunion is a family occasion — in the past, she brought her mother with her; in 2023, her granddaughter, **Kate Savage '11**, and her daughter, Julie Neri, accompanied her.

"I didn't go to Skidmore, but I flew in from Colorado in order to be part of the experience," Julie Neri said. "Skidmore is very meaningful to our whole family."

"Skidmore is family," replied Natalie.

## Reintroduce yourself to a community that cares about the true you.

If you were to revisit a 1983 yearbook, you would see no mention of **Criss Christoff Smith '83** (pictured above, right). When asked, his classmates often say that they do not remember a "Criss." Criss is not upset that he isn't immediately recognized. He pulls out an old photo and points proudly. They nod. "Oh yes, you were Crystall!"

His 40th Reunion was the first time Criss was back on campus since he transitioned eight years before; it was also his first-time meeting many of his classmates as the person he was always meant to be.

"When I graduated, transition wasn't feasible, but things are different now. There's a freedom in coming back and a great happiness. It's a really fantastic feeling."

Criss returned to Skidmore with his good friend **Jenny Wolff '83** (above, left), who had also known Criss at Skidmore. The two reintroduced at their 30th Reunion and have remained close ever since.

## Rekindle an old flame or discover a new one.

When **Joshua Raymond '93** and **Elisa Feinstein Raymond '93** returned to campus in 2023, they were celebrating much more than 30 years since their graduation; they were celebrating the anniversary of their first date.

Although the pair were both members of the Jewish Student Union for four years and even lived two doors away from each other in Scribner Village, they barely knew each other as students. There's not even a photo of the two together from this time. All of that changed when sparks flew at their 10th Reunion.

"They put the tent in the middle of the green and it poured," Josh said, remembering the event. "As we were dancing, the dance floor was getting smaller and smaller because it was flooding. But we danced that night."

A year and a half later, Josh proposed on that very same spot on Case Green. The couple, who are parents of two children, celebrate 20 years together this year. Active Skidmore volunteers, they say wouldn't think of missing Reunion.

## Reunion 2024

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For classes ending in 4 and 9  
For more information, visit [skidmore.edu/reunion](https://skidmore.edu/reunion)



## IN MEMORIAM

*Remembering the Skidmore alumni and community members we have lost.*

Betty Stilz Weiss '38  
Mary Voskanyan Duval '42  
Dorothy Lodgen Halpern '42  
Virginia Rathbun Stuart-Howard '43  
Jane Bierman Leton '44  
Harriet Hathaway Macomber '44  
Claire Anderson McCann '44  
Ruth Lawrence McComb '44  
Rosalie Seh Samson '44  
Rita Gagnier Buffinton '45  
Ruth Swarhout Stone '45  
Janet Hamilton Muyskens '46  
June Crocker Snider '46  
Gloria Biren Luria '47  
Elizabeth Eastburn Wells '47  
Beverly Hodge Baar '48  
Jean Drake Barber '48  
Susanne Lutz Dean '48  
Anne Skinner Gray '48  
Patricia Boan Rothermel '48  
Joyce Watkins Bates '49  
Alice Stevenson Calvert '49  
Carol Kerslake Gridley '49  
Nancy Hosking Junkins '49  
Barbara A. McMurray '49  
Virginia "Ginger" Joseph Saba '49  
Marjorie Schede Sposato '49  
Ellen Kniffin Wright '49  
Marilyn Welsh Andrews '50  
Margaret Kahles Guyder '50  
Doris Stanton Jett '50  
Mary Lee Harding Wales '50  
Eleanor Frank Weinstock '50  
Ann Ballinger Wilcox '50  
Anne Hardman Allen '51  
Helen Cox Colman '51  
Aline Mayer Drescher '51  
Hollis Titman Ellis '51

Ann Longacre Hyser '51  
Margaret Lamson Koban '51  
Suzanne Macwatty Morris '51  
Margaret Coughlin Powell '51  
Ina Spelke Schnell '51  
Barbara Ettinger Bernstein '52  
Mary Canfield Falk '52  
Carolyn Wood Halleck '52  
Mary Frances Hatfield '52  
Lenore Perskie Holland '52  
Flora Shoemaker Taylor '52  
Mary Caskey Avery '53  
Elizabeth Pouch Bischoff '53  
Ann Shaaber Campney '53  
Elinor Reponen Cronin '53  
Norma Fisher '53  
Mary Lyon Holton '53  
Joan Manchee Jeffries '53  
Joan Chase Kessler '53  
Janet Loring '53  
Brette Nolan Monagle '53  
Abigail McKay '53  
Mary Magai Mutter '53  
Deborah Phillips '53  
Alice Gundersen Schofield '53  
Dolores Chambers Smith '53  
Janet Danziger Weinstein '53  
Joan Cohee Zabel '53  
Barbara Ferguson Keller '54  
Anne Rayner Korjeff '54  
Joan Thompson Lauber '54  
Adelaide Warner Minott '54  
Joan Wollenberg Bristow '55  
Beth Leibowitz Flusser '55  
Edward K. Horton '55  
Sylvia E. Mallery '55  
Kathryn Scharmann Mower '55  
Bryna Cohen Potsdam '55

Susan Bauman Walker '55  
Phyllis Asquith Gary '56  
Averill Dayton Geus '56  
Catherine Hinds '56  
Erna P. Eaton '56  
Janet Samuels Fishbone '56  
Roberta Frye Hyde '56  
Rosemary Sheridan Phillips '56  
Judith Fletcher Baker '57  
Marie Bonady Napier '57  
Carolyn "Tink" Haller Wallace '57  
Audrey Englebardt Zalutsky '57  
Johanna Wethly Anderson-Boehm '58  
Carolyn Davidson Becker '58  
Valeria Hill Beckwith '58  
Ann Epstein Bradbury '58  
Anne Davis Carrier '58  
Sandra Waehner Checchi '58  
Dorothy White Cobb '58  
Joyce Gilbert Hood-Jelliff '58  
Eunice Clark Harper '58  
Priscilla Wilder Ambrose '59  
Elizabeth Kirk Cramer '59  
Althea Briggs Friedman '59  
Barbara Foote Tallman '59  
Betsy Dunnet Lindfors '60  
Elaine Casdin Feingold '60  
Sarah Couch McQuilkin '60  
Glenda Danziger Reingold '60  
Roberta "Kelly" Shack Lustig '60  
Linda Dresden Silverman '60  
Sandra Fucci Smith '60  
Carol Joplin Elliott '61  
Carole Saunders Schontag '61  
Joan Royter Walsh '61  
Jocelyn Leathem Barrett '62  
Caroline "Rachel" Bradbury '62  
Sherrilyn Tatham Davidson '62 P'91

Jill Brandon Mautner '62  
Marcia Polacsek Metzger '62  
Alice Hayman O'Dwyer '62  
Jan Silverman Rifkin '63  
Susanne Benoit Wooldridge '63  
Noel Riedinger-Johnson '64  
Kathryn Rosenbaum Kaminsky '64  
Virginia Rasmussen Leone '64  
Janet VanArsdale Marshall '64  
Lynn Stevens Shafer '64  
Elizabeth Needham Shaw '64  
Nancy Tessein Stine '64 P'98  
Mary Kerber Krugman '65  
Diane Abrahams Alkes '66  
Sharon Walker Boyd '66  
Carol Ellison Garey '66  
Ellen McKeefe '66  
Katherine Muller Brundige '66  
Barbara Shoen Brundige '67  
Mary Lee Christensen '67  
Stephanie Girard LeBoutillier '67  
Marcia Haughton Nybakken '67  
Judith Brown Schimmel '68  
Diane Dow Cox '69  
Jessica Chernay Eggleston '69  
Candace Gunion Guberman '69  
Sharon Church '70  
JoAnne S. Foster '70  
Arlyne Gonczewski '71  
Diana Williams Green '71  
Sarah Stueber Merrill '71  
Judith Sarubin '71  
Joan Wadleigh Curran '72  
Colleen F. Kenyon '73  
Betsey Sands '73  
Theresa P. Elm '74  
Jennifer Haviland-Eduah '74  
Linda Quiñones Connell '74  
Dana DeLuca Shechtman '74  
Elizabeth Ayers '75  
David H. Bullard '75  
Melanie McGarry McKennett '75  
Corinne Croskey Baldwin '76  
Susan Schemel Hoffmann '76  
Kathy Godlewski Butler '78  
Priscilla A. Paterson '78  
Christopher E. Saxe '78  
Amy Allison Steele '78  
Shirley De Grasse Norton '79  
Kim Allen Grassfield '80  
Peggy Bresnick Kendler '80  
Maria Routh Terry '82  
Maureen C. Mahar '84  
Paul F. Harkins '87  
Gabrielle A. Rousseau '87  
Kara Hughes Salgado '89  
Ellen Leonard '94  
Frank R. Sieper '94  
Lila S. Margulies '96  
Rand Faulkenberry '97  
Erica Baggett Gerstin '01  
Timothy Moran '02  
Allison Gillum '06  
Stephanie Abrams '09  
Byron Smith '18  
Jaclyn Elmquist '22

## Amadou Thiam '26

*"A life that smiles without bounds"*

Amadou Thiam '26, a rising sophomore and recipient of a prestigious Skidmore Scholars in Science and Math (S<sup>3</sup>M) merit scholarship, drowned while swimming off Jacob Riis Beach in Queens, New York, on July 28, 2023. He was 19.

Born in Senegal, Amadou immigrated to the United States as a teen, and friends described his constant, often infectious optimism.

At Skidmore, he was an active member of the Muslim Student Association and participated in Teaching Professor of Religious Studies Greg Spinner's first-year Scribner Seminar, Graven Images. A prospective computer science major, he conducted collaborative research with Associate Professor of Computer Science Aarathi Prasad over the summer as part of his S<sup>3</sup>M scholarship.

"Keeping yourself happy, appreciating others, being humble, connecting work and fun, and inspiring others along the way as a positive energy of change — these are all the core values I learned from him," Azizul Hakim '26, Amadou's first-year roommate, said at a campus gathering held in his memory in September. He described Amadou as having lived "a life that smiles without bounds."

## Charles Breneman Buchanan

Charles Breneman Buchanan, a successful businessman, long-serving trustee, and honorary alumnus who combined business acumen with deep care for the Skidmore community, died March 24, 2023. He was 91.

An executive with Albany International, Buchanan served Skidmore as a trustee from 1981 until 2020. He contributed financial expertise to the Audit, Finance, and Investment committees and held leadership positions in every national fundraising initiative for Skidmore since the 1980s. He and his wife, Charlotte, established the Don and Judy McCormack Endowed Visiting Artist Scholar Residency.

## Michael Casey

Michael Casey, a respected and accomplished fundraising executive who served as Skidmore's Collyer Vice President for Advancement from 2000 to 2017, died Aug. 22, 2023, following a bicycle accident. He was 63.

During his tenure, Skidmore raised over a half-billion dollars for initiatives that included construction of the Arthur Zankel Music Center. He also secured support for financial aid and academic programs, including 15 endowed chairs and the John B. Moore Documentary Studies Collaborative (MDOCS). Since 2017, he was vice president for advancement at Trinity College.

Survivors include Janet Casey, associate dean of the faculty and professor of English.

## Robert "Bud" Foulke

Robert "Bud" Foulke, an accomplished literary and maritime scholar and travel writer who chaired the Department of English for a decade, died on Feb. 15, 2023. He was 92.

Foulke was appointed professor and chair of the English Department in 1970, a tumultuous and divisive time across the United States and at many academic institutions. A U.S. Navy veteran and former U.S. Naval Academy sailing instructor, he used his nautical background to chart Odysseus' return from the Trojan War as described in Homer's *Odyssey* during a sabbatical.

Survivors include his son, David Foulke '83.

## Barry Goldensohn

Barry Goldensohn, a beloved professor of English emeritus whose teaching and poetry inspired countless colleagues and students, died on March 26, 2023. He was 85.

Goldensohn joined Skidmore in 1982 and served as director of creative writing at Skidmore until his retirement in 2003. He published multiple collections of poetry, including *The Hundred Yard Dash Man* and *Snake in the Spine, Wolf in the Heart*.

## Paul H. L. Walter

Paul H. L. Walter, a former chair of the Chemistry Department who served in national leadership positions in both the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and the American Chemical Society (ACS), died June 25, 2023.

He joined Skidmore in 1967 and chaired the Department of Physics and Chemistry from 1975 to 1985. He worked to establish Skidmore's cooperative engineering program with Dartmouth College and enabled the department to receive accreditation from the American Chemical Society. He retired in 1996.

Walter served as national president of AAUP (1984-1986) and ACS (1998).

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