

PITZER COLLEGE

Spring-Summer 2019 Vol. 52 No. 1

The Participant

The Joy of Science
Alumni Blaze New Trails

Class of 2019
"Your Time Is Now"

Surfboard Art & Culture
Shaping a New Perspective



George C.S. Benson Auditorium

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

PRODUCING MASTERPIECES

Pitzer College recently celebrated 264 of our seniors as they accepted their hard-earned diplomas at the College's 55th Commencement. We congratulate them on their self-transformation, with help from their Pitzer professors, friends and supportive families.

I was privileged to introduce Pitzer's newest graduates and encourage them to produce a personal or professional masterpiece in their lives: through their hands, such as a work of art; their mind, such as creative writing, scholarship, a feat of engineering; or their heart, through relationships, social ties and passionate societal engagement. My wish for our new alumni is that they will also make masterpieces of themselves and transform the world. Their Pitzer diploma is just the beginning of their unfolding story.

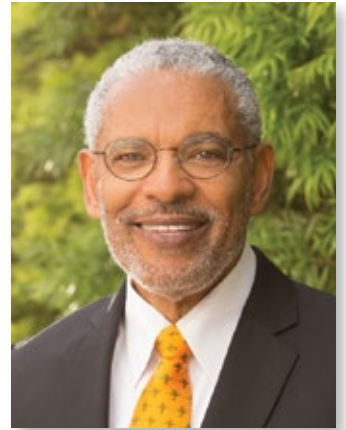
In this edition of *The Participant*, we are presented with a combination of alumni stories and faculty achievements that lift our community—from the growing Keck Science program to faculty research, publications and national and international honors. The feature story profiles a Pitzer student and three alumni breaking barriers in the sciences. They inspire me and I hope will inspire you. The sciences at Pitzer have grown beyond all expectations, and these profiles about how our students and alumni are blazing new trails in science create a compelling picture. It is fitting, considering this critical moment in Pitzer's Keck Science program history as we transition from a three-college to a two-college partnership.

We also catch up with our professors, who are fanning out around the world to conduct research, develop knowledge and prepare to lead a new class of students on their next academic journey.

At Pitzer, our students, faculty and staff never hesitate to confront real-world issues, as we have continued to do from the environmental to the political. This year, we have challenged each other to open up to other experiences and perspectives. This commitment has been essential to transitioning from research and visioning the College's future to implementation of the Pitzer College Strategic Plan 2024.

Thank you for being a part of our Pitzer community, for your support and for joining us on our search for ever-brighter futures for our students and our graduates. With your help, we are continuing to make Pitzer a masterpiece of higher education.

Melvin L. Oliver
President



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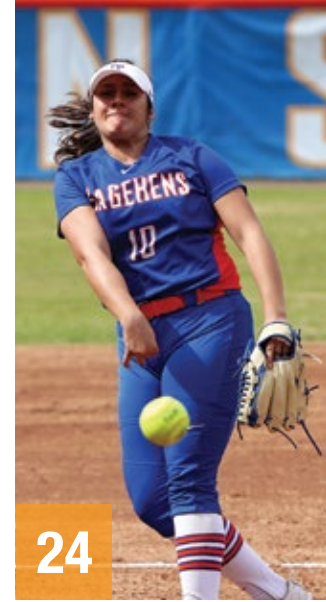




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The Participant

Spring-Summer 2019

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ON THE COVER: A robotic limb controlled through artificial intelligence is opening exciting possibilities for understanding human movement and disability. Brian Cohn '15 helped create the limb as a member of a research team at USC's Viterbi School of Engineering. Photo: Matthew Lin/USC

The diverse opinions expressed in *The Participant* are those of the individual profilees and do not necessarily represent the views of the editors or the College. *The Participant* welcomes comments from its readers.

Pitzer College is a nationally top-ranked undergraduate college of the liberal arts and sciences. Pitzer offers a distinctive approach to a liberal arts education by linking intellectual inquiry with interdisciplinary studies, cultural immersion, social responsibility and community involvement.



ANGELA SANBRANO '75 Commitment to a more humane world inspired a meaningful life

When Angela Sanbrano '75 earned her BA in psychology from Pitzer College, she began a path that would lead her to the heights of international activism and meaningful social change.

Since the 1970s, Angela organized communities, advocated bilingual education and supported housing rights in Los Angeles. In the 1980s and 1990s, she earned her law degree from Peoples College of Law, became executive director of the national grassroots organization CISPES, supported social and economic justice and opposed US military intervention in El Salvador. She was an official witness of the signing of the Chapultepec Peace Accords in Mexico City. In fighting for immigration rights, she organized marches that drew more than one million people to the streets.

Angela credits her Pitzer education as a turning point in her life. Recently, Pitzer designated her its 2019 Distinguished Alumni Award honoree.

Angela Sanbrano blazed her own path to serve immigrants and refugees in California. Today, she is making a meaningful difference around the world.

Follow your passion

PITZER COLLEGE
PATHFINDER



Class of 2019

Family, friends, faculty and staff celebrated the Class of 2019 at Pitzer College's 55th Commencement ceremony on May 18, 2019, with more than 2,500 in attendance.

Keynote speaker, actress, activist Laverne Cox told the class: "We need your innovation, your vision, your wisdom, your courage in the world right now."

For this year's Class Charge, President Melvin L. Oliver challenged the newest alumni to produce "masterpieces that embody a commitment to intellectual curiosity, intense observation, critical appreciation, perseverance, human sympathy, discipline and diligence. They add to the richness of our lives and the lives that come after. I charge you to make the commitment to produce a masterpiece that lives beyond your time and leaves a legacy for all of humanity."

264 graduates

- came from 31 states and 13 countries
- range in ages from 20 to 50 years old

Top 5 majors

- Environmental Analysis
- Organizational Studies
- Psychology
- Economics
- Human Biology

Collectively, the graduates won prestigious fellowships and scholarships during their four years, including:

- EnviroLab Asia Fellowships
- Neuroscience Fellowship
- Freeman-ASIA Award
- Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship
- Fulbright Fellowships

Some graduates are headed to graduate studies at:

- Stanford University
- Johns Hopkins University
- Cornell University
- University of Calgary
- University of Oklahoma
- UCLA

Other graduates are starting their careers at:

- AEG Presents
- Salesforce
- Fox Television
- Goldman Sachs
- Nike
- Apple, Inc.
- PwC China
- IBM



Around the Mounds

News from Campus and Beyond



Room for Resistance

Pitzer College Art Galleries spring exhibitions, *Publishing Against the Grain* and *Emerging Artist Series #14: Cathy Akers*, opened on February 2. Organized by the Independent Curators International, *Publishing Against the Grain* created a space for reading, thinking and talking — “where slowing down can become a form of intellectual resistance.” Cathy Akers’ exhibition, curated by Pitzer College Art Galleries Director Ciara Ennis, explored two experimental communes that closed in the 1970s.



Modern Metamorphoses

The 5C Theatre and Dance production of *Metamorphoses*, a modern retelling of Ovid’s interwoven myths where gods, humans and nature intermingle and collide, played March 7-10 in the Seaver Theater with Pitzer students on stage and behind the scenes.



1st in CA, 4th in World to Reach Net Zero

This April, the Robert Redford Conservancy for Southern California Sustainability at Pitzer College won the first higher education building certification in California for its zero net energy consumption. The certification from the International Living Future Institute is highly sought-after and challenging to achieve. The Redford Conservancy is only the fourth higher education structure in the world to earn ILFI Zero Energy Certification. The Claremont Heritage also recognized the Redford Conservancy with its Bess Garner Preservation Award, which honors excellence in historic preservation in the city of Claremont.

Students Aid Refugees at Border

Pitzer College students, increasingly aware of the humanitarian crisis for Central American refugees at the US-Mexico border, decided to do more than study the situation. They acted.

Working with other students and faculty of The Claremont Colleges, they formed Claremont for Refugee Rights to raise funds, supplies and awareness. Then, in November 2018, a group of six students and Suyapa Portillo ’96, assistant professor of Chicano/a-Latino/a transnational studies at Pitzer, traveled to a refugee shelter run by the Mexican government in Tijuana. They wanted to see things for themselves and help where they could.

Javier Lopez Casertano ’19, one of the student organizers, was surprised how much help was needed. “There were so many people. We were making only a temporary difference. There’s a lot of work to do,” he said.

On their initial visit to the camp, the students were not prepared for the crowd’s reaction to the distribution of goods. “Every time you opened a suitcase, you would be flooded with people. They were grabbing whatever they could—it became quite chaotic,” said Lopez Casertano.

The students revised their methods. They went to a grocery store to purchase the basics— toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap—and made individual small bags. “It just became handing out what we had,” said Lopez Casertano.



Students continue to raise funds and awareness, hold campus events and provide information to refugees to help them gain asylum. While the process has been time-consuming and often frustrating, Lopez Casertano said students are making progress. With funds in hand and energy to spare, they are increasingly able to act proactively.

This spring, US Congressional Representative Norma Torres honored the students for their work on the US-Mexico border at a ceremony at the Chicano-Latino Student Association. “Our students garnered her ear and admiration with their grassroots work on this pertinent issue, a Pitzer tradition,” said Portillo.



From CA Drought to the Arctic Climate

The College hosted several endowed lecture series, which kicked off on February 5 with the 2019 Murray Pepper and Vicki Reynolds Pepper Distinguished Visiting Artist Lecture with poet Sesshu Foster and artist Arturo Ernesto Romo’s presentation of “Recent Rupture Radio Hour (The East L.A. Dirigible Tapes).” On February 15, the 2019 John D. Sullivan Memorial Lecture brought award-winning author and journalist Mark Arax, who has chronicled California throughout his career, digging “deep into the dirt of the Golden State.” Arax’s talk, “The Dreamt Land: Chasing Dust and Water Across California,” was hosted by the Redford Conservancy at Pitzer College.

Next up, Associate Professor of Environmental Science Branwen Williams was the featured speaker for the 2019 Distinguished Scientist Lecture, where she spoke on “Arctic Climate, as documented by algal rocks.” The spring series concluded with filmmaker, writer and painter Moussa Sene Absa’s “Niit Nitka” (“Enlightening Humanity”) at the Stephen and Sandra Glass Humanities Lecture.

3 × Power

This Earth Day, Pitzer College expanded its commitment to environmental sustainability at a ribbon-cutting ceremony by dedicating six new ChargePoint electric vehicle power stations in the East Mesa parking lot on campus. This expansion triples Pitzer's electric vehicle power stations.



Crafting with Conscience

As part of The Claremont Colleges' Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service on January 19, students wrote greeting cards to senior citizens and postcards to refugee children. This "Crafting with a Conscience" volunteer event included a presentation about Martin Luther King, Jr.



Pitzer & U of Haifa

In November 2018, the faculty passed a motion to suspend the direct enroll program with the University of Haifa. Following requests from the Student Senate and other governing bodies at the College, the faculty decided that the matter needed to undergo the College's shared governance review.



On March 14, the College Council voted 67 to 28 with eight abstentions on an amended motion in favor of suspending the program. According to College shared-governance bylaws, the motion was then presented as a recommendation to the president. President Oliver shared his decision with the community, noting that, among other reasons, the suspension would set the College "on a path away from the free exchange of ideas, a direction that ultimately destroys the academy's ability to fulfill our educational mission." He said, "I categorically oppose any form of academic boycott of any country." Additionally, he noted that for the College to take a political position, "there must be a consensus across all the College's internal and external constituencies in support of the position. This recommendation fails that test."

President Oliver concluded that "we will seek to expand our students' opportunities for study abroad in the Middle East and around the world. Our goal must be to create engagement in the world that our students will one day lead, not less." To this end, he visited the University of Haifa on May 28-29, where he met with students, faculty and administrators and also addressed the University of Haifa Board of Governors. This visit was the first step in a presidential initiative to increase opportunities for scholarly exchange and cooperation between Pitzer and institutions across the Middle East.

2019 Family Weekend

This February, more than 320 family members traveled to Claremont for Pitzer College Family Weekend. The annual event provides family members a glimpse into their students' Pitzer educational experience. This year, they heard from alumni about their lives post Pitzer; attended lectures by Professors Jessica Kizer, Jemma Lorenat, Shelva Paulse and Phil Zuckerman; and toured the Redford Conservancy.

To relive moments from Family Weekend in photos, be sure to check out *The Participant* online at www.pitzer.edu/participant.



Volunteer Service Awardees

Tracy Strayer P'18 and Ed Wong P'18 were honored with the 2019 Parent Volunteer Service Award during Family Weekend. Strayer and Wong are both finance professionals and former members of Pitzer's Parent Leadership Council. They have spent countless hours providing guidance and advice to our students on their career-related interests. They inspired and helped found the Pitzer Career Roundtable, an annual event that connects Pitzer students with alumni, parents, trustees and other supporters.

Their daughter, Everest Strayer-Wong '18, graduated with a degree in art politics. In an October 2018 *VICE* article, writer Kat Thompson described her art as "a harmonious marriage of color and texture, with themes of her mixed-race identity and intrigue with astrology sprinkled throughout." You can find Strayer-Wong's work on Instagram @sinistersquids.



International Flair

International Place of The Claremont Colleges and our international students hosted the 41st International Festival. Open to all, the event showcased international cuisine, cultural activities, live music and dance hosted and performed by students and professional artists from around the world.

The Joy of Science

THE SECRET IS OUT: If you want to do fascinating and fun things in college, meet like-minded people and have a rewarding time—it's all there for you. And your parents will approve.

It's science at Pitzer College. To be exact, science in the integrated W.M. Keck Science Department. Each year, more and more students discover this secret for themselves. Thirty percent of Pitzer College students major in a STEM-related field, with human biology and neuroscience consistently among the top 10 majors.

Why the increased interest? As Pitzer alumna Dr. Susan Celniker '75 said, "Science is too much fun."

Opportunities abound in the Keck Science program. Each science major participates in a substantive research project; students often co-author with faculty on peer-reviewed articles and present their own work at professional scientific conferences. In the interdisciplinary program, in partnership with students from Claremont McKenna and Scripps Colleges, Pitzer students apply their education to real-world issues. Undergraduates rarely obtain such benefits elsewhere, especially at large universities, where graduate students garner most of the research perks. In the Keck Science program, undergraduates do scientific research, often at the graduate level.

The result of this influx of Pitzer students in science is outstanding scholarship and groundbreaking research. National recognition has followed.

This spring, **Marya Ornelas '20**, a rising senior and biology major, won the Barry Goldwater Scholarship, regarded as one of the most prestigious recognitions of talent in science and mathematics among US college undergraduates. A talented researcher, she continues to lead other students in the Keck Science biology lab.

Two recent graduates, **Ben Mitchell '18** and **Brian Cohn '15**, are applying their highly competitive National Science Foundation (NSF) grants to doctoral studies—Mitchell in chemistry at the University of Washington, Cohn at the University of Southern California (USC) researching neuromuscular control.

Anne Conn '95 is using her degree in neurology to leapfrog from the biotech industry into the new field of regulatory compliance oversight in the production and distribution of cannabis.

Why did these successful scientists choose Pitzer as the best place to pursue their undergraduate degrees? Their reasons vary, yet all center on the College's commitment to excellence through the Keck Science program.

Here are their stories:



Owning the Challenge

Marya Ornelas '20 was playing in a summer softball tournament in high school when the Pomona-Pitzer Sagehens' coach happened to be watching another player on Ornelas' team. This chance encounter sparked interest in both the coach and in Ornelas, who hadn't ever heard of

The Claremont Colleges. The coach invited her to campus and introduced Ornelas to the people and the programs.

The selling point for Ornelas, a first-generation student from the San Francisco Bay Area, was that Pitzer has a human biology major. "I was super pre-med," she said. There was also the lure of softball. "I wasn't sure I could balance academics and sports—but when I visited, I met current students and was inspired by their ability to do both."

Ornelas soon stood out in Associate Professor Aaron Leconte's Introductory Biological-Chemistry class, in fall 2016. Leconte noted that Ornelas produced some of the class's most intelligent work on problem sets, which challenge students to apply their newfound knowledge. He invited her to join his lab as a research assistant the following semester and as a full-time paid assistant in the summer of 2017. She has continued through to spring 2019.

"Because of Marya's obvious interest and talent, I wanted to give her a project that she could take ownership of and develop over time," said Leconte.

Leconte's group was working on a project to engineer improved medical imaging tools by evolving the protein firefly luciferase. Although others had done essential research, nobody to date had worked on developing methodology to improve the brightness of the protein. Color and stability often lessen the brightness of the enzyme, explained Leconte, so being able to engineer this property has high value.

"I intentionally gave Marya this project because it would challenge her to develop her own ideas and take ownership of the project," Leconte said. "Marya has taken this challenge and run with it."

It is her main project in the lab. "Ultimately, we want to be able to use this protein in mammalian systems in order to do things like monitor gene expression patterns and inform drug discovery substance in whole animals, and to use it effectively, we want to have bright enzymes that can be detected by an external camera. Now that we have a method to maximize light emission, we are in the process of evolving brighter enzymes," she said.

Ornelas, who leads two other students in the project, said she enjoys being surrounded by people who love science and research as much as she does. "Doing research at Keck is such a profound experience because you get to learn so much from the professor and also from other people in the lab. I enjoy never-ending questions. The more you learn, the better questions you can ask. I just love the open-endedness of that. You can go into the lab and answer the scientific question with your own hands."

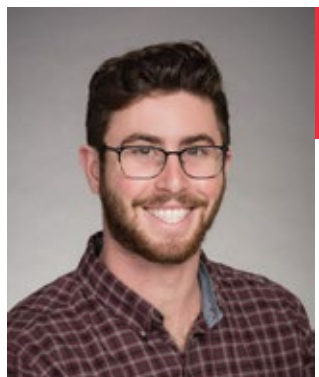
Although she once planned to be a doctor, a visit to a SACNAS (Society

for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science) conference in Long Beach as a first-year student changed her mind. It was the first time she was exposed to research at the undergraduate level.

"I was walking from poster to poster thinking, 'Wow! These undergrads are doing such cool research. This is really awesome.' Then, when the opportunity arose to work in Aaron's lab, I was like, 'Yes, of course!'"

Ornelas's interests have expanded at Pitzer in other ways. She co-founded a reboot of SACNAS, bringing together students from across The Claremont Colleges. This year, in addition to hosting study sessions and research-related programming, SACNAS held a symposium to showcase the research that students did over the summer. A leader in the First-Gen Club, she also advocates for STEM education among underrepresented student groups. "She deeply cares about giving other students access to the opportunities that she has embraced," said Leconte.

This summer Ornelas will be doing research at Northwestern University's Center for Synthetic Biology, funded through NSF. Ultimately, she is interested in creating cellular therapeutics.



Sharing His Passions

Ben Mitchell '18 learned it was possible at Pitzer College to follow his many passions and succeed at them all.

His most recent success is winning a three-year NSF grant to pursue graduate studies in chemistry at the University of Washington, where he

begins his second year in a doctoral program this fall.

Being a science major at a small liberal arts school gave Mitchell boundless opportunities. "At Pitzer, I explored many fields, including art, anthropology, politics and environmental sciences," he said. "This broad scope led me to approach scientific and societal problems with an interdisciplinary mindset. I became particularly passionate about education and socioeconomic equality."

The son of two chemists, Mitchell grew up in San Diego, CA, with his simple childhood questions explained through science. When he wondered how trees can grow so tall, his father told him about photosynthesis and its role in nature, then taught him about hydrogen bonding. His expanding interest in the workings of the physical world shaped his decision to pursue a chemistry degree in college.

Pitzer College, with its renowned joint Keck Science Department, seemed the right choice. But there was a competing passion: soccer. At first, he thought he'd need to go to a large university to pursue both interests. When he learned Pitzer is partnered with Pomona College in NCAA Division III as the Pomona-Pitzer Sagehens, it was a match made in science-soccer heaven. At Pitzer, Mitchell became a team captain and was on the SCIAC All-Academic Team for three years and the Scholar All-West Team in 2017. As goalie, he posted more than 200 career saves.

Mitchell couldn't decide at first which area of science to pursue. Then, he took Associate Professor Nancy Williams' inorganic chemistry class. Williams treated her students much like graduate students, said Mitchell. "This approach was one of the reasons I went into the field."

Mitchell soon became fascinated by carbon-metal bonds and contacted Professor Adam Johnson, an organometallic chemist at Harvey Mudd

College, about an internship. Johnson welcomed Mitchell to his lab on a volunteer basis.

"Based on his enthusiasm and demonstrated work ethic, I offered him a position in my lab for the summer of 2017 and then continuing for his senior thesis project," said Johnson. "His willingness to follow his own thoughts rather than relying on my 'expertise,' led him to try solvent systems that I had told him were not likely to be successful."

Not giving up, Mitchell was able to crystallize a titanium complex of one of his ligands. Then, with Johnson, he drove to Caltech, where he could mount the crystal and solve the structure. "Seeing him be so successful and excited about his structure was one of the highlights of my career," said Johnson.

During his time in Johnson's lab, Mitchell built a diverse research portfolio, which resulted in the American Chemical Society Undergraduate Award in Inorganic Chemistry and Best Thesis in Chemistry Award in 2018.

Mitchell calls his Pitzer experience "awesome!" He said he "loved the tiny classes—in inorganic chemistry, there were 10 students. I had one-on-one time with brilliant professors. I was able to go to other classes within The Claremont Colleges. Also, the people at Pitzer are second to none."

Adding to Mitchell's interests is STEM outreach. In high school, he started a club, H2OPE For Uganda, where he and classmates wrote a \$10,000 grant to furnish Gayaza Cambridge College of St. Mbaaga with textbooks and science supplies; the grant was fully funded by Fisher Scientific. At Pitzer, he became involved with the non-profit organization Middle Tree, which offers reduced-price tutoring and test prep to elementary, middle and high school students. Mitchell also volunteered weekly as a math and science tutor to local students from low-income families. While at the University of Washington, Mitchell will volunteer on weekends for Seattle MESA, which provides hands-on STEM experiences for underrepresented minorities in middle and high school.

"More than ever today, it is necessary to make science accessible to everyone, regardless of their background," he said. "This is why I am passionate about youth outreach and why I continue to strive to make a change for the better throughout graduate school, and for the rest of my life."

Mitchell's goal, after earning his PhD, is to teach at a small undergraduate institution, much like Pitzer, where "professors have their own research and are doing cool stuff. I want to spread my excitement and passion for science," he said.

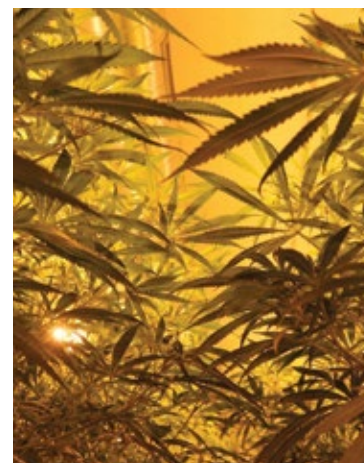
Presumably, with a soccer ball in the corner of his lab.



Keeping the Pot Clean—and Safe

A science degree often leads to a medical practice or research. But the curiosity science demands can seduce some scientists into exploring unexpected career paths.

Anne Conn '95 has taken the road less traveled.



She parlayed her Pitzer College degree in neurology from biotechnology to cannabis production and distribution. It's been a trip.

Conn was 24 and married when she entered Pitzer as a New Resources Student to finish the degree she had started at San Francisco State University. Always interested in science, she designed her own major under the direction of Professor of Psychology (now emeritus) Alan Jones. Her senior project focused on neuropsychology and learning-disabled adults.

In the Keck Science Department, Conn said that her professors, advisers and other students were so focused on science that age and gender didn't matter. "It was a magical space to learn and develop as students, scientists and STEM leaders."

After graduating from Pitzer with honors, she entered the world of big biotech at giants Genentech (now Roche) and Novartis. There, she applied her science degree to biotechnology and process development. As she grew at Genentech, she moved to quality oversight and regulation and continued this focus at Novartis.

After years in biotech, she saw a one-sentence job posting for a position in the cannabis industry. It read: "The changing regulatory landscape has uncovered the need for a Project Manager."

"I was just looking around for something new and interesting," she said, and thought, "Why not?" She met with the owner and joined the team.

Cannabis, one of the fastest growing global consumer products, is still in its infancy as an industry. California made the sale and use of recreational cannabis legal on January 1, 2019, thus opening the world's largest legal marijuana market. (Medical marijuana has been legal in the state for more than 20 years.) Several states across the country have passed similar laws. Ever since, demand for safe, reliable products has been vigorous. As companies position themselves to meet this need, they must comply with myriad state and county regulations or face severe penalties or business closure. Conn faces this challenge daily.

Conn is project manager for Hype Cannabis Company, a California-based cannabis cultivator and retail store operator that grows, packages and sells cannabis goods. It is owned by Vibe Bioscience, a production and distribution company with licensed retail locations currently in Sacramento and Stockton. Its retail division sells its own product, as well as products from other growers.

"I wear lots of different hats," she said. "I'm primarily responsible for maintaining our current state-issued and city-issued operational licenses, as well as getting new licenses submitted with various regulatory agencies."

The main licensing authority Conn deals with is the Bureau of Cannabis Control with different subdivisions that have primary responsibility for retail activities. The California Department of Food and

Agriculture licenses growing activities, both indoors and outdoors. There is no federal oversight, explains Conn, "because we're still considered a Schedule One substance at the federal level, which puts us in the same realm as various drugs, such as opioids. This makes it difficult to have an online presence."

Conn's role is to make sure that the company complies with all regulations and with its own stringent expectations for a safe, quality product.

"We have a responsibility not only to our customers, but also to the industry overall to help shape the perception of the cannabis industry and the culture," she said. "It's frustrating when we hear about all the illegal shops that are operating. We work hard to do the right thing and to keep our side of the street clean."

Conn anticipates that cannabis will soon be regulated on the federal level. "It's growing so fast," she said. "I want to stay in the industry and help shape some of the policies."

"I find it very exciting to be able to tell our story in a way that proves our compliance to all the agencies that regulate us. Our regulators are asking us how we're going to keep up with the pace and stay in compliance. I get to say, 'This is how.'"



Empowering Robots to Adapt

Imagine a robotic leg that can learn to walk by itself in about five minutes. Brian Cohn '15, a doctoral candidate in computer science at the USC Viterbi School of Engineering, is part of a

research team that has created such a limb controlled through artificial intelligence. The limb can be tripped up and then recover within the time of the next footfall, a task the robot was never explicitly programmed to do.

This breakthrough opens exciting possibilities for understanding human movement and disability, such as creating responsive prosthetics that can help a person walk. Robots could also assist in disaster areas or in space exploration, where a robot's leg might adapt to different terrains better than a human's could.

Cohn is the computer scientist on the team, which draws on expertise in biology, mathematics, engineering and computer science to build better robots. Francisco J. Valero-Cuevas, professor of biomedical engineering and professor of biokinesiology and physical therapy at USC, leads the team of three doctoral students, which also includes Ali Marjaninejad and Darío Urbina-Meléndez.

Their article, "Autonomous functional movements in a tendon-driven limb via limited experience," was the March 2019 cover article in *Nature Machine Intelligence*. The authors say that, unlike most current work, their robots learn by doing without any prior or parallel computer simulations to guide learning, much like the natural learning that babies do. This is important because while programmers can predict and code for multiple situations, they can't code for every possible scenario—thus, preprogrammed robots are inevitably prone to failure.

Cohn explained how the robotic leg learned to adapt on its own: "We made our leg walk, and during the submission process to the

journal, one reviewer said, “This is great, but how robust is this? Is it a house of cards where you move it a tiny bit and it will just crash into the ground? Or will it actually be robust, like a human?”

“So, we went back to the lab to start the experiment again and whacked the leg with a stick. When we hit it, it looked weird for a moment, then it went right back producing movement on the treadmill. We were pretty amazed when that happened.”

According to Cohn, this work is a step toward empowering robots to learn and adapt from each experience, just as animals do.

In 2016, Cohn received the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship to support his work at USC. His research focuses on predicting human muscle control pattern in health, development, aging and pathological conditions, as well as the design of artificial intelligence pipelines that can handle new levels of data. In addition to his fellowship, he is chief data scientist and co-owner of Kaspect, a strategic consulting firm that merges modern biotech business and artificial intelligence. He is also an Innovation Studio mentor for the Children’s Hospital of Los Angeles, where he focuses on extended reality technologies and their application in pediatric care.

Yet science was not the reason Cohn chose Pitzer College for his undergraduate degree. He came to Pitzer because “I liked the challenge it would bring to my academic sense and my political sense.” Originally, he focused on the humanities, but after a few research experiences in chemistry at the Keck Science Department, he switched to science. He became a student of Associate Professor Lars Schmitz, whom Cohn considers one of his biggest mentors. “He still is,” he said.

After taking one of Schmitz’s courses and doing research together, they published their results—an opportunity Cohn believes he wouldn’t have had elsewhere. “At larger institutions, it’s really hard to publish a paper, especially if you’re doing something that’s very technical and very hands-on.”

At Keck Science, Cohn and Schmitz dissected the eyes of unique reef fishes to discover how evolution affects the anatomy of eyes. “We created some pretty cool algorithms that nurtured my interest in computer science and development,” Cohn said. “That’s why I got my master’s and am in pursuit of my PhD in computer science at USC. I felt my Pitzer degree in computational biology would be even more valuable if I could learn the deeply algorithmic approaches to science.”

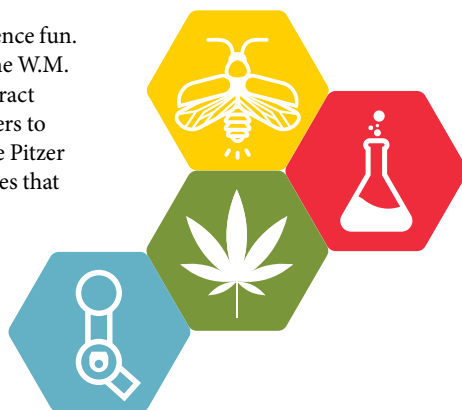
Cohn speaks passionately about bringing new concepts into health care, such as unique delivery mechanisms. He has worked on an application that allows a parent to deliver speech therapy care to their child through an artificial intelligence. Another one of his projects uses algorithmic approaches to interpret people’s motion in order to empower physical and occupational therapists to deliver more precise care.

This summer, Cohn is doing further PhD research at Microsoft, in Redmond, WA. He is designing augmented and virtual reality environments and programs that intersect with human health and human perception.

“It should be fun!” he said.

Pitzer students and alumni do find science fun. They also find science rewarding. As the W.M. Keck Science Program continues to attract dedicated explorers and creative thinkers to its many opportunities, more and more Pitzer scientists make life-changing discoveries that improve life for all.

WHAT COULD TOP THAT?



The Science of Giving \$5 Million for Keck Science Program

Two recent gifts totaling \$5 million will help renovate and expand the science program at the W.M. Keck Science Department (KSD), which is transitioning to a joint Pitzer College and Scripps College program.

The Pitzer Family Foundation (PFF) has donated \$3 million to Pitzer College to support the growth and expansion of science facilities at KSD. Along with a \$1 million donation from the PFF in April 2017, this gift will reinvigorate Keck Science’s facilities and academic programs to provide a more effective 21st century science education for Pitzer and Scripps students. It will also enable the colleges to move forward with the construction of a new \$65 million shared science facility located directly west of the W.M. Keck Science Center.

In June, Scripps and Pitzer Colleges received a combined total gift of \$2 million (\$1 million to each college) from the W.M. Keck Foundation toward the purchase of equipment and the renovation of the Keck Science Center. The Foundation has awarded \$4.9 to Pitzer since 1982 and more than \$4.7 to Scripps.

Pitzer President Melvin Oliver said: “The Keck Science Program is special in that undergraduate students participate in original research, present their findings at national venues and publication opportunities either alone or with their professors before they even graduate. We extend our most sincere gratitude to the Pitzer family for their long-standing support and their commitment to superior science education, and we deeply appreciate the Keck Foundation for recognizing the department’s success in fostering future leaders in science and supporting the program’s growth.”



Pitzer College Joins Elite Colleges in Social Science Research

Pitzer College has become a select member of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) College and University Fund for the Social Sciences. The fund’s purpose is to sustain and enhance the national infrastructure of social science research, launch and enhance the careers of young scholars and deepen relationships with campus faculty communities through various forms of service and intellectual participation.

The fund was initiated in 2013 with a dozen supporters—University of California, Berkeley, Brown University, Columbia University, City University of New York, Cornell University, Duke University, Harvard University, Johns Hopkins University, New York University, Princeton University, Stanford University and Vanderbilt University. Today, the fund has grown to more than three dozen members, including Swarthmore College, Boston College, Dartmouth College and now Pitzer College.

Pitzer College President Melvin L. Oliver, a social scientist himself, said: “This prestigious membership creates outstanding opportunities for Pitzer’s social scientists to inform the direction of modern social science and ensure that the College’s scholarship makes a difference.”



A STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

PITZER COLLEGE STRATEGIC PLAN 2024

Following more than a year of information-gathering and priority-setting by the entire Pitzer community, the College has established four distinct goals as it enters Phase Three: Implementation.

Academic Resources & Planning

GOAL I: Broaden the interdisciplinary landscape and expand academic resources to better equip students to engage holistically with the complex problems of the world.

- Create new interdisciplinary strategies, leveraging existing academic programs, both to guide and respond to students' changing academic interests.
- Rethink the allocation of faculty lines through cross-disciplinary, faculty-led conversations to advance the College's academic plans and priorities.
- Further integrate Keck Science into traditional core academic programming to expand interdisciplinary learning opportunities and promote creativity and innovation in the sciences.
- Improve student learning by using added resources to create new program offerings, enhance academic space and technology, support increased enrollment at Keck Science and support existing faculty lines and majors.
- Enhance academic support services to better meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student body.
- Reimagine the first- and second-year student experiences in ways that increase retention and improve academic and career advising.

Build a Thriving Community

GOAL II: Advance a College-wide sense of community and engagement by cultivating an environment where students, faculty and staff all thrive.

- Facilitate the bringing together of students, faculty and staff in both formal and informal settings by expanding the portfolio of shared experiences.
- Steward campus facilities and technology to promote learning, community and engagement.
- Promote intercultural understanding and community trust through cross-group dialogue and other means.
- Anticipate, identify and respond to the diverse needs of all members of the College community, emphasizing inclusion and equity.
- Improve the overall student experience, using student-led dialogue as the basis for planning.
- Develop a long-term strategic enrollment plan that increases access to the College, optimizes the use of College resources and positions the College to have a more socioeconomically diverse student body.

Financial Sustainability

GOAL III: Deepen our commitment to financial sustainability to promote broader access to a Pitzer education and create adaptability in response to the evolving higher education landscape.

- Implement a thoughtful plan for enrollment growth to increase revenue and realize the benefits of scale.
- Build a more robust, nimble and creative advancement operation.
- Build our brand, create more awareness, and capture more of our public's mindshare through a concerted communications program
- Diversify revenue sources, including building the endowment, to create a more flexible foundation for the future.

emphasizing the accomplishments of our students, alumni, faculty and staff, and how these reflect and reinforce the College's core values.

Planning & Decision-Making

GOAL IV: Develop a culture of inclusive, intentional and transparent planning and decision-making.

- Build a flexible, collaborative infrastructure to collect, store, analyze and share data to inform institutional planning and decisions.
- Align consortium collaborations with the College's strategy and goals.
- Make governance structures, policies and processes more effective, ensuring they draw fully on the wisdom of all stakeholders.



MARCHANT LEADS STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Jim Marchant has been appointed Pitzer's first vice president for strategic initiatives and community relations. This position was established to provide leadership as Pitzer implements its institutional strategic plan and bolsters its commitment to the community.

Marchant's tenure at Pitzer College spans 25 years, during which he has helped Pitzer ascend into the top tier of national liberal arts colleges. He has held numerous key positions at Pitzer, including as the longest-serving vice president for student affairs and as executive director of advancement, where he has built relationships and raised funds for numerous institutional priorities, such as financial aid, student life programs and the renovation and expansion of science facilities.





“Pitzer College and I are a perfect match. I am excited to be part of such a vibrant and innovative academic community.”

Meet Allen M. Omoto New Dean of the Faculty

Allen M. Omoto became Pitzer’s new vice president for academic affairs and dean of the faculty on July 1.

Most recently, Omoto served as Claremont Graduate University’s associate provost for academic affairs and as the director of its Institute for Research on Social Issues. He joined CGU in 2000 as a professor of psychology. He went on to serve in several leadership roles, including as interim dean of the School of Educational Studies at CGU. Prior to CGU, Omoto was an associate professor of psychology at the University of Kansas. His scholarly research focuses on issues relating to the environment, HIV disease and lesbian, gay and bisexual concerns from a social psychological perspective.

“Even before joining The Claremont Colleges, I have known about and admired Pitzer College and its distinctive academic mission. Throughout my career, my scholarly, community and professional service work has centered on themes of diversity, social justice and civic engagement,” said Omoto. “Pitzer College and I are a perfect match. I am excited to be part of such a vibrant and innovative academic community.”

Among Omoto’s many professional affiliations, he is a fellow of the American Psychological Association and a charter member and fellow of the Association for Psychological Science. He has received a Distinguished

Contribution to Education and Training Award from the Society for the Psychological Study of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Issues; a Distinguished Service Award from the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues; the Western Psychological Association’s Social Responsibility Award; and an Outstanding Achievement Award from the Committee on Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity of the American Psychological Association. He is a recipient of a presidential citation from the American Psychological Association. He has also been honored for his support of the Queer Resource Center at The Claremont Colleges and was a member of CGU’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee. Omoto served as president of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues and as president of the Society for the Psychological Study of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Issues. He has written scores of journal articles, edited scholarly texts and presented nationally and internationally.

Omoto holds a PhD in psychology with a specialization in social psychology from the University of Minnesota and a BA with honors in psychology from Kalamazoo College.



Pitzer Faculty Field Notes

Awards, Grants, Honors

- Associate Professor of Philosophy **Ahmed Alwishah** served as a guest researcher with Representation and Reality: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Aristotelian Tradition, a research program within the Department of Philosophy, Linguistics and Theory of Science at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden. A life member of Cambridge University’s Clare Hall College, Alwishah is co-editor of the anthology *Aristotle and the Arabic Tradition*, among other volumes. His research focuses on philosophy of language and mind in Islamic tradition, as well as the intersection between Aristotle and Arabic philosophy.
- Professor of English and World Literature **Sumangala Bhattacharya** was admitted to the California State Bar in December 2018. She also penned two articles, “Elusive Justice: The Rohingya Chronic Crisis and the Responsibility to Protect” for the *Loyola of Los Angeles International and Comparative Law Review* and “Taj of the Raj: Appropriating the Colonial Legacy of Kolkata’s Victoria Memorial Hall” for *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*. In April, she presented a paper, “Imperial Bric-à-Brac or India’s Other Taj Mahal? Appropriating the Victoria Memorial in Kolkata,” at the Interdisciplinary Nineteenth-Century Studies annual conference.
- Former Dean of Faculty and Vice President of Academic Affairs **Nigel Boyle** was named a Fulbright Global Scholar through a senior Fulbright grant for 2019-20. Next year, he will undertake three extended research trips to Pakistan, Germany and Vietnam as part of a

project focused on new liberal arts colleges. Following his Fulbright year, he will return to teaching at Pitzer as a professor of political studies and to lead the College’s Institute for Global/Local Action and Study. Boyle served as dean of faculty and vice president for academic affairs from 2015-19.

- The National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies honored Professor Emeritus of Sociology and Chicano/a-Latino/a Studies **José Z. Calderón** by naming him the 2019 NACCS Scholar. “Dr. Calderón is the quintessential Chicano activist scholar,” said the NACCS Board in announcing the award. He is “a true representative of this award through his lifetime commitment to the establishment of NACCS, the Community Caucus and his championing of the Chicana and Chicano community with exceptional academic excellence.”



- Professor of History **Carina L. Johnson** was awarded a Short-Term Research Fellowship from the New York Public Library and a research fellowship from the Herzog August Bibliothek

Wolfenbüttel for her research project “Matters of Appearance: Identity Markers and Complexion in Sixteenth-Century Europe.” She also wrote a book chapter, “Naming the Turk and the Moor: Prehistories of Race,” in *Names and Naming in Early Modern Germany*.

- **Tarrah Krajnak**, associate professor of art, won a Harpo Foundation Emerging Artist Grant and a Photo London/La Fabrica Book Dummy Award. Her solo exhibition, *1979: Contact Negatives*, was hosted at as-is gallery in Los Angeles and was a critics’ pick in *Artforum*. Her photobook, *El Jardin de Senderos Que Se Bifurcan*, was shown in Northern Ireland and Spain.

Assistant Professor of Mathematics **Jemma Lorenat** won the Maria Gaetana Agnesi Third Centennial Prize for her paper “Certain Modern Ideas and Methods: ‘Geometric Reality’ in the Mathematics of Charlotte Angus Scott,” published in the *Review of Symbolic Logic*.

- Professor of Biology and Environmental Science **Donald McFarlane** received the Kenneth S. Pitzer Professorship, which recognizes excellence in the areas of mathematics and the natural sciences.
- Professor of Psychology **David S. Moore** has been elected a member-at-large of the Executive Committee of Division 7 (Developmental Psychology) of the American Psychological Association. His term begins January 1, 2020. He was also the featured speaker in the *Future Tech Podcast* episode “Rethinking Genes, Understanding Epigenetics.”
- Professor of Psychology **Norma Rodriguez** received the Flora Sanborn Pitzer Professorship, which recognizes substantial distinction in the

fields of mathematics and applied mathematics in the social or behavioral sciences. She most recently held the Peter and Gloria Gold Endowed Professorship.

- **Jacqueline Levering Sullivan**, director emerita of academic writing, was one of five women selected for an oral history project, *Women in Action in Claremont*, sponsored by Claremont Heritage. A reception honoring the six participants was held at Claremont Heritage and Memorial Park in June. Sullivan's fourth book, *Tell the Rain Goodbye*, is forthcoming this fall.



- Associate Professor of Chicano/a-Latino/a Transnational Studies **Suyapa Portillo Villeda '96** received recognitions from Congresswoman Judy Chu and South Pasadena Mayor Marina Khubesrian (not shown) for her Fulbright Scholar research, "Hidden Narratives of Mitigation in the Sending Country: Gender, Sexuality and Youth," in Honduras. Portillo Villeda was recently elected to the executive council of the Latin American Studies Association. She also provided expert commentary about Honduran social movements and the immigration caravan for numerous national media outlets, including *The New York Times*.

- Professor of Economics **Linus Yamane** received the Peter and Gloria Gold Endowed Professorship, which is awarded to a professor who has made outstanding contributions to Pitzer, taking into consideration teaching and advising, impact on the College as an intellectual community, research, publications and participation in the self-governance of the College or in public affairs. He was also awarded a visiting faculty fellowship to the Associated Kyoto Program at Doshisha University in Kyoto, Japan, for the spring 2020 semester. His most recent paper, "Biracial Asian and White: Demographic and Labor Market Status," was published in *Theoretical and Applied Economics*.

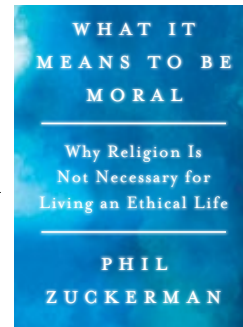
- Professor of Asian American Studies and former Associate Dean of Faculty **Kathleen Yep** received the 2019-20 Lenz Fellowship at Naropa University in Boulder, CO, to research culturally relevant contemplative practices beside families impacted by immigration detention centers. She also presented at the annual American Public Health Association Conference and the Campus Compact's Continuums of Service Conference.

Books, Essays and Articles

- Associate Professor of Spanish and Portuguese **Juanita C. Aristizábal** co-edited a dossier on violence and representation in contemporary cultural production from Mexico and Colombia in the *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos*, published by Washington University in St. Louis. She co-authored the introduction to the dossier and an article titled "Mausoleos y formas sin nombre: Escritura y violencia en Tomás González y Juan Gabriel Vásquez."
- Assistant Professor of Organizational Studies **Barbara Junisbai** and Associate Professor of Sociology **Azamat Junisbai** co-authored two peer-reviewed articles, "Regime type versus patronal politics: a comparison of 'ardent democrats' in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan," published by *Post-Soviet Affairs*, and "Polarization during Institutional Decline: Variation in Educational Attainment in Post-Soviet Central Asia, 1991-2006," in *European Education*. They also co-authored two articles, "Institutional Trust in Kazakhstan versus Kyrgyzstan: How Divergent Trajectories Matter," published in *Ponars Eurasia*, and "O Raschetivom i Apolotichnom Pokolenii Novogo Kazakhstana" ("On Kazakhstan's Calculating and Apolitical New Generation"), for *Fergana News*.
- Associate Professor of Psychology and Cognitive Science **Timothy Justus** published a paper, "Form and Meaning in Music," in the journal *Auditory Perception & Cognition* with Pitzer alumnae Laura Gabriel '15 and Adela Pfaff '19. Justus also gave a presentation titled "Constructing Film Emotions" at the Society for Cognitive Studies of the Moving Image in Hamburg, Germany.
- Professor of Philosophy **Brian Keeley** authored two papers, "The credulity of conspiracy theorists: Conspiratorial, scientific & religious explanation compared" for *Conspiracy Theories and the People Who Believe Them* and "Is a belief in providence the same as a belief in conspiracy?" for *Brill Handbook of Conspiracy Theory and Contemporary Religion*.
- **Amanda R.W. Lagji**, assistant professor of English and world literature, penned two articles, "Waiting in Motion: Mapping Postcolonial Fiction, New Mobilities, and Migration through Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West*" in *Mobilities* and "Fragments of a World That 'Doesn't End': The Apocalyptic Impulse in a Time of Perpetual War," published in *Post45's "Forms of the Global Anglophone."*
- **John Milton**, William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of Computational Neuroscience, co-wrote the article "Outgrowing seizures in childhood absence epilepsy: time delays and bistability" for the *Journal of Computational Neuroscience*.
- **Shelva Paule**, assistant dean of faculty for academic affairs, wrote "Continuities across continents: Assessing African American cultural themes among Black and Coloured South Africans" for the *International Journal of Psychology*

and "Which predicts student performance in cooperative & competitive math learning? For whom?" for *Urban Education*.

- Associate Professor of Urban Studies **Tessa Hicks Peterson** authored the chapter "Healing Pedagogy from the Inside Out: The Paradox of Liberatory Education in Prison" in the anthology *Critical Perspectives on Teaching in Prison: Students and Instructors on Pedagogy Behind the Wall*, published by Routledge on June 2. The book's chapters are written by prison instructors, currently incarcerated students and formerly incarcerated students, providing a variety of perspectives on the many roadblocks and ambitions of teaching and learning in carceral settings.
- Chemistry Professor **Kathleen Purvis-Roberts** co-authored a book chapter, "Equity through Access to Computer Science Learning at a Small Liberal Arts College," for *Culturally Responsive Strategies for Reforming STEM Higher Education: Turning the TIDES on Inequity*. She also co-authored "Comparative Genomic Analysis in Two Yeasts Reveals Conserved Pathways in the Response Network to Phenol Stress," a peer-reviewed article with several Keck Science students and other Claremont Colleges faculty.
- Professor Emerita of Anthropology **Susan Seymour** penned the book chapter "Growing up Female in North India" in *The Psychology of Women under Patriarchy*. The book, published by University of New Mexico Press, will be released this November.
- Professor of History **Andre Wakefield** authored "Cameratism, Physiocracy and Anti-Physiocracy in the Germanies" in *The Economic Turn: Recasting Political Economy in Eighteenth-Century Europe*. His "The Origins and History of the Earth" is in the *Oxford Handbook of Leibniz*.
- In his forthcoming book, *What It Means to Be Moral: Why Religion Is Not Necessary for Living an Ethical Life*, Professor of Sociology and Secular Studies **Phil Zuckerman** argues that the major challenges facing the world today are best approached from a nonreligious ethical framework. In short, we need to look to our fellow humans and within ourselves for moral progress and ethical action. He also published two peer-reviewed articles in the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* and the *Journal of Contemporary Religion*. In February, he spoke on "The 'Nones' and Political Activism" at Augsburg University.



"Turn a Blind Eye" (detail) by Timothy Berg

Arts, Media & Talks

- Professor of Art **Timothy Berg** showcased his work in five exhibitions across the country: *Birdwatcher* at Visions West Contemporary Gallery in Denver, CO; *Making a Difference* at The Clay Studio in Philadelphia, PA, and at the Art Miami in Miami, FL; and *Nature In/Forms* at the Great Park Gallery in Irvine, CA. In addition, he wrote "Test Sieve Brush" for *Ceramics Monthly*. He and Associate Professor of Art **Jessica McCoy** participated in *Campus Mail Art: The Claremont Colleges*, an exhibition featuring works by faculty and staff that were either hand-delivered at The Claremont Colleges or traveled through the intercampus mail system.
- During this year's annual meeting of Alphabet City and Cave Canem in Pittsburgh, PA, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy **Jim Bogen** and his wife, author Deborah Bogen '90, had the opportunity to play music with poet Cornelius Eady. Jim played the banjo while Deborah played the uke and sang with Cornelius to his original songs. Alphabet City is part of an organization that houses and shelters writers who have been exiled for their political views and activities.
- Associate Professor of Sociology **Alicia Bonaparte** discussed racial and class lines in the

natural birthing movement in the article "Why Are Women Still Refusing Painkillers During Childbirth," published in January by *Tonic*, VICE's health website and digital video channel. She was also an invited speaker at the Born into This conference's panel "Doula Trainings International" in Austin, TX, in June.

- Professor of Environmental Analysis **Paul Faulstich '79, P'15** held a second exhibition this academic year of photos of local wildlife he's taken with motion-triggered trail cameras. *Intimate Encounters: Up Close with Claremont's Wildlife* opened in February at the Claremont Community Foundation. He also joined the Editorial Review Board of *Australian Archeology*.
- **Judith V. Grabiner**, Flora Sanborn Pitzer Professor of Mathematics Emerita, gave a lecture at Claremont McKenna College's Athenaeum titled "Mathematics and Culture: Geometry and Everything Else."
- Professor of Political Studies/Chicano Studies **Adrian Pantoja P'18** discussed immigrant "Dreamers" roles in the midterm election in the *Los Angeles Times* article "How young immigrant 'Dreamers' made flipping control of the House a personal quest."
- Professor of Environmental Analysis **Susan Phillips** presented "Radical Stratigraphy: A

Century of Los Angeles Graffiti" at Society of American Archaeological meetings in Albuquerque, NM. Her essay "Moniker Writing as Invented Tradition" was published in *Monikers: Identity Lost and Found*.

- In May, Assistant Professor of Psychology **Marcus Rodriguez** co-taught a five-day intensive workshop on Dialectical Behavior Therapy for 166 mental health professionals at the Shanghai Mental Health Center in China.
- Associate Professor of Chemistry **Babak Sanii** spoke on "Scalable biomembrane manufacturing" at the UCLA Center for Minimally Invasive Therapeutics. He co-authored with several students the article "Drawing and Hydrophobicity-patterning Long Polydimethylsiloxane Silicone Filaments" in the *Journal of Visualized Experiments*.
- Associate Professor of Academic Writing and Writing Center Director **Andrea Scott** delivered the opening keynote at the first joint conference of the German Society for Writing Didactics and Research, the Austrian Society for Academic Writing and the Swiss Forum for Academic Writing, hosted by the Alpen-Adria-Universität in Klagenfurt, Austria. She co-authored the peer-reviewed article "What Can Citations Tell Us About the State of the Discipline Now?" in *JoSch: Journal der Schreibberatung*.

Shaping New

Perspectives

One-of-a-kind course
dives into the art &
culture of surfboards

Shelby Ottengheime '22 was excited about her Art 105 class from the start. She had made her own archery bow and skateboard during high school, and the Pitzer College course titled The Surfboard as Art and Culture would provide a new creative challenge: designing and shaping a functional surfboard.

"I have an obsession with functional art pieces," says Ottengheime. "To make an amazing piece of art and express myself was exactly what I wanted, and it was possible in a class."

Ottengheime wasn't alone in her enthusiasm about the course, offered for the first time in spring 2019. More than 80 students across the five undergraduate Claremont colleges sought to learn about the design, function and history of surfboards

and to build boards of their own. But just 12 would experience the class co-taught by Pitzer professors Adrian Pantoja and Tim Berg.

"We wanted students from different colleges, majors and class years," says Berg, a professor of art and noted ceramicist

whose work is showcased around the world. "We ended up with a couple of first-year students interested in art as a major or minor. We had computer science and political science majors. The thing we all shared was a passion for outdoor activities."

Pantoja, a professor of political studies and Chicano/a studies, notes additional selection criteria. He explains, "I looked for an appreciation of surfing beyond the superficial and acknowledgment of some type of cultural connection to the sport. We were also looking for individuals who wanted to challenge the status quo of surfing, who would push the boundaries of both design and culture."

Ottengheime's application described her interest in functional art, connection to the ocean and desire to explore surf culture in an academic setting. Nick Kapule '21 grew up surfing in Hawaii and understood its culture from a native Hawaiian viewpoint but wanted to learn the art and process of crafting a surfboard.

Also making the cut was Sarah Woo '21, one of 10 women in the class. The Seattle native has family ties to Hawaii, where her aunt taught her to surf.

"The board you ride is important and has meaning, so I wanted to learn how to make my own board," says Woo. "I was also interested because the class focused on the indigenous Hawaiian



people. Though I'm not native Hawaiian, my family has been in Hawaii for generations. It's a place and culture I wanted to connect with."

The idea for a course about surfboards originated with Pantoja, who started surfing six years ago and had previously taught a class examining the history and politics of surfing.

"Surfing isn't a hobby for me; it's part of my identity as a professor. I'm interested in the cultural aspects of surfing, and because I like working with my hands, I became interested in surfboards," says Pantoja. "I wanted to combine two disciplines to create something entirely new."

Pantoja approached Berg about teaching the course together. Though Berg wasn't a surfer, he was expert in turning materials into objects and had worked with polyurethane, the material they would use to fabricate the surfboards.

"One of the reasons I love teaching at Pitzer is that I'm able to teach with faculty in diverse disciplines and find common ground," says Berg. "I also like the idea of design and utility, the intersection of making something aesthetically pleasing that also works well."

Pantoja believes the course they taught is unique to Pitzer. He explains: "There are certainly classes in surf culture, but in

terms of making a surfboard, I don't think there's anything like it. There was no model, so every hour of the class was innovative. That's the nature of Pitzer. It's an institution that encourages experimentation and innovation."

Berg worked with the students on craftsmanship, tool safety and design ideas, while Pantoja addressed surf culture and its products, history and politics. But the students played a large role in the class proceedings, including decision-making related to constructing the shaping room where they would create their surfboards.

"Because the class was innovative, we both said the students would be partners in it. We didn't say this is how it's done. Just in building a shaping room, there are hundreds of puzzles. We figured them out collectively," says Pantoja.

The surfboards the students and professors made in the class, however, reflected individual rather than collective perspectives. Pantoja says: "There were 14 different personalities, so there were 14 different designs. There are thousands of forms a surfboard can take. It was up to each student to connect their interest, surfing ability and where they want to surf to a particular design. They were authentically representing who they were through these boards."



Kapule made a fish surfboard like those he had at home in Hawaii but designed for what he terms the "mushy California waves." Ottengheime's creation was a funboard featuring her Japanese family's crest and an image of the Japanese woodblock print *The Great Wave Off Kanagawa*. Woo designed a longboard, a choice based on both her surfing skill level and its cultural significance to Hawaii, and incorporated personally significant artwork.

"My family always loved turtles, so my board has five turtles on it—one for each of my family members. When I'm paddling, they'll be right next to me," says Woo.

The students' efforts were also of interest to award-winning surf photographer and filmmaker Elizabeth Pepin Silva, who was making a film about backyard surfboard building. When Silva learned that most of the class participants were women, she jumped at the opportunity to interview and film everyone.

Pantoja explains, "There is a singular representation of a female surfer, and Elizabeth was tired of that. The women she knew in surfing were all ages, all body types and all colors. For her, the class represented the future of surfing: diverse women in water."

Silva also engaged two of the students in her photography and filmmaking process. All of them benefitted from her involvement in another way. Silva invited professional surfer Dan Malloy to join the students in testing their boards in the water.

The students also shared their surfboard experience and knowledge with the Claremont community. They designed an exhibit at The Hive, which promotes creative development and collaboration across The Claremont Colleges and provided funding for the course. The timeline the students created covered the history of surfing from native Hawaiian society to the present and once again required collective thinking.

Berg, who worked with the students on the exhibit, says that they needed to resolve how they needed to organize information, tell a story and illustrate the history of an object. He notes, "Throughout the class, they learned a lot of practical skills, whether it was how to use a band saw correctly or how to work together and across differences."

The professors hope to offer the course again, although Pantoja believes it will be impossible to replicate what he considers the "magic" of the first time. He comments, "There are certain classes where you can tell something is happening that is going to transform lives."

The students felt the same magic. Kapule calls it his favorite class at Pitzer. Woo expresses gratitude to the professors for creating a rare course. And Ottengheime concludes, "I got everything I needed out of the class—everything and more. It was a truly great class and an amazing opportunity."



Sagehens Sports Highlights



SCIAC Champs x7

Pomona-Pitzer capped the year with seven SCIAC Championships. For the first time in program history, the Sagehens were champs in all winter sports: Men's and Women's Basketball (the women's team made its first appearance in the NCAA Tournament since 2002) and Men's and Women's Swimming and Diving. In the spring, Sagehens claimed SCIAC Championships in Women's Soccer and Men's and Women's Water Polo.

A Man For All Positions

Hunter Hennigh '21 played every position in a single game—a feat never accomplished before by any Sagehen—as the Baseball team ended their season with a four-game sweep over non-conference opponent Linfield. In the final game, Hennigh started in right field, then moved to a different position each inning, finishing as pitcher in the 9th; final score: 7-1. With the win, the Sagehens ended the season 21-18.



Unsung Hero

Sonia Olson '20 of the Women's Lacrosse Team earned the Yearley Reynolds Love Unsung Hero Award, an honor given to only six student-athletes in the nation who help their collegiate lacrosse teams achieve success on and off the field. Olson was diagnosed with cancer in mid-season but she continued to cheer on her teammates while undergoing chemotherapy. Off the field, Olson serves the community by bringing college education to women in prison and aiding survivors of sex trafficking.



Hall of Fame

The Sagehens inducted multi-sport athlete **Kathy Finn-Senseman '94** (at right) into the Pomona-Pitzer Hall of Fame on March 9. Finn-Senseman played basketball, softball and soccer and spent two seasons with the Women's Track and Field team. Among her honors are SCIAC Offensive Player of the Year in softball, All-SCIAC honors in track and the Pomona-Pitzer Athletic Excellence award for a student-athlete participating in more than one intercollegiate sport.



Directors' Cup High

The Pomona-Pitzer Sagehens earned its highest-ever ranking in the Learfield Directors' Cup at No. 23 to close the 2018-19 athletics season. This is the second time in three years the Sagehens finished in the top 30. The Directors' Cup ranks every athletic program in the US and awards points based on each program's finish in the NCAA Championships.



Season Best

Softball posted its best season in program history, 31-12-1 overall and 21-7 in SCIAC play. SCIAC Pitcher of the Year **Liz Rodarte '19** ended her career as the Sagehens' all-time strikeout leader, single season strikeout leader and wins leader.



Courting Excellence

Men's Basketball was 26-3 overall and 15-1 in SCIAC play, both single-season highs. **Micah Elan '20** earned SCIAC Athlete of the Week and D3hoops.com Team of the Week in November after scoring a career-high 38 points against then-No. 4 Whitman College. In January, he notched his 1,000-career point in a game against Chapman University and earned his second SCIAC Athlete of the Week. Sagehens finished with the best record in program history, most wins, most conference wins, and longest win-streak (15 Games). Elan finished First Team All-SCIAC.

Legacy of Excellence

Lesley Irvine, Pomona-Pitzer athletic director since 2015, resigned in May to accept a position as vice president and director of athletics at Colorado College. During her highly successful tenure, Sagehen Athletics finished in the top 40 of the Division III Learfield Directors' Cup each of the past three years and won the SCIAC men's all-sports trophy in 2017-18 for the first time in program history. Jennifer Scanlon, head coach of the Sagehens women's soccer team since 2003, is serving as interim athletic director.



Her Research Makes Things Happen

If your image of a social policy researcher is a quiet soul pondering charts in isolation, meet Dr. Dionne Barnes-Proby '97.

Barnes-Proby does her best work in the field, engaged with people.

At the nonprofit, non-partisan RAND Corporation since 2000, Barnes-Proby is a standout. "She is quite remarkable," says Jennifer Sloan McCombs, director of the Behavioral and Policy Sciences Department, who oversees her work. McCombs praises Barnes-Proby for her qualitative methods, analytic skills and ability to work with community partners—and perhaps most important, her ability to translate her findings into positive action for individuals and communities.

Praise Iyiewuare PO '13, whom Barnes-Proby has mentored at RAND, said Barnes-Proby taught her not only how to conduct research, but how to connect with people, how to navigate to get what you need. "She has such strong interpersonal skills—she can relate to a lot of people and develop relationships to make research possible."

Last year, Barnes-Proby led a case study of a job training and placement program for formerly incarcerated individuals in Sacramento County.

As a result, the Sacramento County Probation Department has started to implement the RAND team's recommendations, which include methods to help probationers alleviate their financial burdens and provide them with a full range of support—from stipends for program participation to on-site substance-use treatment programming.

Barnes-Proby is known for her natural empathy for people. "I feel it's an imperative to help those in need, especially children. I have to step up because maybe no one else will," she said. As a qualitative researcher, she spends time in communities, with children, families, administrators and service providers, giving them a platform for their perceptions and experiences. She shares their stories and makes recommendations for improving their circumstances.

Barnes-Proby believes her empathy comes from facing similar personal challenges.

Raised by a single mother in a low-income high-crime neighborhood in south Los Angeles, Barnes-Proby admits that life was hard: "I hadn't been the best version of myself up to that point." As a result, her high school grades were subpar. Yet a Pitzer admissions counselor saw Barnes-Proby's

“*I came into being me at Pitzer.*”

potential and advised her to go to a community college for a year and to keep in touch. "I didn't have to do it alone. I could always go to her for advice," she said.

She excelled at community college, was admitted to Pitzer and her academic career took off. "At Pitzer, I got a depth of understanding on what I wanted to do," she says. Her professor and adviser, Halford Fairchild, now professor emeritus of psychology and black studies, was instrumental in her development by talking through her concerns with her. "All the professors cultivated personal discovery," she said. "This helped me develop confidence in my abilities. I came into being me at Pitzer."

After graduating from Pitzer with a degree in psychology and black studies, Barnes-Proby earned an MSW in policy, planning and administration at Loma Linda University and a doctorate in public administration-collaborative governance at the University of La Verne. Her dissertation explored the relationship between the performance of an interorganizational network and foster youth outcomes. She was a foster care social worker for several years, gaining direct clinical practice with at-risk youth and families.

Now at RAND, she is part of a group of social policy researchers who are dedicated to the organization's mission "to help make communities throughout the world safer and more secure, healthier and more prosperous."

The field of social policy work is competitive (an estimated one percent of all RAND applicants are hired), but people are needed, says Barnes-Proby, especially those with diversity in life experiences.

RAND gives its researchers the freedom to follow their personal interests, provided the project addresses a policy issue and there is adequate funding; Barnes-Proby is currently pursuing funding for multiple projects to improve the wellbeing of system-involved youth. One example is a project to prevent human sex trafficking for children involved with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

"I see policy research as a conduit for affecting positive change," she said. "Things happen because of research."



2019 Alumni Weekend

Pitzer alumni came from far and wide to reconnect in Claremont, May 3-5. Kicking off the weekend was the second annual Girls Fly! Pitzer Inter-Generational Global Women's Leadership Conference hosted by Pitzer's Community Engagement Center and Girls Fly! founder Gael Sylvia Pullen '78.

President Melvin Oliver and Suzanne Oliver hosted the Class of 1969's 50th reunion at the President's Residence. This year, our alumni also celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Community Engagement Center and CASA Pitzer, the life and work of Professor Stu McConnell, and Angela Sanbrano '75 as the 2019 Distinguished Alumni awardee and Mere Abrams '10 as the Young Alumni Achievement Award honoree.

They rocked out at Latinx Student Union's Rockabilly Festival, tasted beer and wine with Alumni Brewmasters and started their morning with meditation and yoga.

Don't miss your chances to reconnect with Pitzer alumni throughout the year and around the country. Visit: www.pitzer.edu/alumni/events for more information.



2019 Alumni Awardees

Angela Sanbrano '75 is an acclaimed activist and community organizer who has led some of the nation's most prominent immigrant- and refugee-rights groups.

Pitzer's Distinguished Alumni Award recognizes a graduate who boldly puts the spirit of a Pitzer education into action and demonstrates a commitment to making meaningful changes in the community.

Mere Abrams '10 is a gender specialist and consultant who is helping the world understand that "the idea that there is male and female isn't incorrect, it is just incomplete."

Pitzer's Young Alumni Achievement Award recognizes graduates of the last 10 years who apply Pitzer's unique educational experience to their professional lives and find creative and innovative ways to make impactful changes in the community.

Class Notes

1960s

1970s

1980s

1990s

2000s

2010s

1970s

'75 **Michael Philips** received his undergraduate degree in environmental studies at Pitzer and a master's degree in city and regional planning with a finance concentration from Cornell University. Philips is an authority on technology, finance and public policy, focusing on renewable clean energy on a global scale. He is an accomplished musician and co-hosts his own jazz program in Washington DC. Philips held a White House assignment at the US Department of Energy's Office of Policy and was a staff member on the US House of Representatives' Resources Committee.

'76 **Susan Feniger** and business partner Mary Sue Milliken opened their newest restaurant, Socalo, in the Gateway Hotel in Santa Monica, CA, this summer. Culinary pioneers, Feniger and Milliken established their first restaurant, Border Grill, 34 years ago in Los Angeles and hosted the Food Network show, *Too Hot Tamales*, in the mid-'90s. In 2018, they became the first women and duo to win the Julia Child Award.

'77 Claremont-Pomona Locally Grown Power, founded by **Devon Hartman**, received \$2.1 million in the 2019-20 California state budget to construct a manufacturing facility that will produce solar panels for low- to moderate-income households. Locally Grown Power is a program of the nonprofit CHERP Inc., at which Hartman serves as the executive director.

Michael Roper manages interactive media at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts. He designs and directs multimedia for the museum, which has nearly 450,000 works of art in its collection. Roper studied history and philosophy at Pitzer and went on to earn a master's degree in visual studies from MIT.

'79 **Karin Russo Skiba** has created art for over 40 years. She now has a studio in Joshua Tree, CA, and devotes the majority of her time to making art. Skiba's latest work involves layered and constructed mixed-media paintings that include trees and portraits. She had a solo exhibition of work at the Joshua Tree Art Gallery, which ran from February to March 2019.



1980s

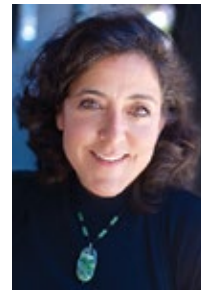
'83 **Adrian Arleo** spoke about her artwork and artistic process at Southern Utah University in February. Arleo is a studio artist based in Missoula, MT, whose work has been exhibited at the World Ceramic Exposition Foundation, Racine Art Museum, New Orleans Museum of Art, Yellowstone Art Museum and University of Washington-Seattle, among other venues. After studying art and anthropology at Pitzer, she earned her MFA in ceramics from the Rhode Island School of Design.



Tanya Muftic '85

'85 **Tanya Muftic's** first collection of poetry, *Two Souls Collided: A Poetic Journey*, was published in February 2018. The collection of free-verse poetry deals with transformation, divorce and coming out and is available through Amazon, Barnes and Noble and Balboa Press. When Muftic is not writing, she is a Montessori teacher and performs with a local acting company. She enjoys spending time with her family in the Rocky Mountains, where she has reveled in the scenery since 1968.

'86 **Beatrice Casagan**, founding artistic director of Ophelia's Jump Productions and theatre program director at Diamond Bar High School, received the 41st Assembly District 2019 Woman of Distinction Award representing the city of Upland, CA. Casagan launched the Ophelia's Jump Claremont Midsummer Shakespeare Festival, which takes place at Pomona College's Sontag Greek Theater each summer.



'88 **Annie Davidson Babineau** joined the staff of the University of Rhode Island Publications and Creative Services Department as an editor and project manager in 2018. She is a senior ambassador and team leader with Pure Haven, a company that creates and promotes nontoxic products. She is also the founder of the Rhode Island chapter of the nonprofit Savvy Women's Alliance and a volunteer with the Pitzer Alumni Interview Program. She lives in southern Rhode Island with her husband and two children.

'89 **Todd Simon**, a clinical hypnotherapist, started his own company, Kinder Mind Hypnosis. Based in Santa Monica, CA, Simon works with professional athletes and individuals dealing with anxiety, self-sabotage, fears and phobias, as well as other issues. Immersed Therapy, his secondary business venture, combines virtual reality and hypnosis techniques to help people free themselves from fears, phobias and vices (or habits) such as heights, public speaking and smoking.



1990s

'90 **Catherine Caporale** trained as a climate reality leader in a three-day training with former Vice President Al Gore in Los Angeles in 2018. She then became a citizen producer for the #24HoursOfReality movement, which involved Gore and The Climate Reality Project hosting a day of compelling stories and conversations about the climate crisis and how it can be solved.



Class of 1990 mini-reunion: (L-R) **Renee Mitez Goldstein** and **Naomi Weiss Glasky** traveled to Tokyo to spend a week with **Lori Fine** to celebrate over 30 years of friendship and their 50th birthdays.

'93 **Tom Freund's** latest album, *East of Lincoln*, dropped in fall 2018. *The Claremont Courier* described his new album as "a melodic, smoldering masterpiece of Americana." In December, Freund played a solo show at Claremont's Folk Music Center.

'95 **Michele Siqueiros** was appointed to the California Senate's Community College Student Success Funding Formula Oversight Committee by State Senate President pro Tempore Toni Atkins. An educational access advocate, Siqueiros is president of the nonprofit Campaign for College Opportunity. Siqueiros also took over as the new Pitzer College Alumni Board president on July 1.



'96 **Peter Harper** and his band, The Last Three, played songs from their upcoming album for the *Santa Barbara Independent*. Harper, who is a sculptor and fine arts teacher at California State University Channel Islands, also spoke with the *Independent* about creating both music and art.

'97 **Lauren Dolgen** was named Paramount Networks' new senior vice president, unscripted development and production. She began her career at MTV developing hits such as *16 and Pregnant*, *Teen Mom*, *Teen Mom 2* and *Punk'd*. She went on to lead the West Coast development for Viceland and was most recently head of BuzzFeed Studios.

2000s

'00 **Michael Collins** joined Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI), as vice president, government relations, in 2018. He leads the company's efforts to protect the rights of its songwriters, composers and music publishers. A political and policy strategist, Collins previously served as a principal with the lobbying firm Mehlman Castagnetti Rosen & Thomas and spent 15 years working for Tom Udall, who is now a US senator.



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*Submissions may be edited for content and length.



'05 **Kurosh Hashemi** founded tech startup and free-travel community RoadGoat. RoadGoat maps where people have traveled and matches them with personalized suggestions about where to go next. Hashemi currently lives in Brooklyn, NY, with his wife, Lindsay.

2010s

'10 **Cal Siegel's** solo exhibition *I am the box no roof can cover* opened at CUE Art Foundation in New York in January. The exhibition included a large-scale house-like structure sheathed in dollhouse shingles. Along with paintings, photographs and drawings, Siegel's exhibition employed "visual cues from vernacular colonial architecture to explore the violence and exclusion of American history," according to CUE's website.

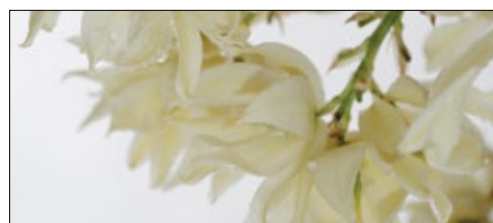
'14 **Alfredo "Freddy" Valencia**, who is pursuing his PhD in chemical biology at Harvard University, co-authored a review article for the 20th anniversary edition of the journal *Nature Cell Biology*. Valencia's article, "Chromatin regulatory mechanisms and therapeutic opportunities in cancer," was commissioned by the publication.



Andrea Senteno '05 (far left) was appointed as Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) Regional Counsel for the Washington DC area. **Elijah Pantoja '18** (second from left), a fellow MALDEFian, helped coordinate and execute her welcome reception in DC.

'17 **Chance Kawar** became the operations manager at the Los Angeles Parks Foundation last year. With an office located inside Griffith Park, Kawar says he's excited to be working in a field that reflects Pitzer's core values of environmental sustainability and social responsibility.

'18 **Alegria Martinez's** video *What Is it Like Being Latinx at Pitzer?*, which she produced as a Pitzer student, screened at the UCLA Latinx Film Festival in January. Presented by the UCLA Latinx Film and Theatre Association, the film festival features cinematic works by UCLA Latinx students and alumni as well as other emerging Latinx filmmakers.



In Memoriam

Cristina "Cris" Preciado (Maria Cristina Preciado Ortiz) '72 lost her battle with cancer on January 28, 2019, in Jalisco, Mexico, her home of many years. She is survived by four children and two grandchildren. Preciado received a teaching credential and master's degree from UCLA. She went on to teach English and mediation at ITESO, Universidad Jesuita de Guadalajara in Mexico. She will be remembered for her inclusive stance on spirituality.

Emily "Emmy" Norris '73 passed away on November 22, 2018, after being diagnosed with glioblastoma. She strongly believed in political involvement and was a committed activist for local environmental issues. She loved listening to music and attending concerts, lectures and movies. Over the years, she worked as a massage therapist, caregiver and landscaper. Norris leaves behind two sisters; her partner, Patrick McGinn; her cat, NiWhi; and many friends. Her family says her humor, sense of style and inner light will be greatly missed.



Monica Miller '08, senior counsel at the American Humanist Association, argued before the Supreme Court in "American Legion et al. v. American Humanist Assn et al." in February 2019.



Stuart McConnell

— Years at Pitzer: 1987-2018 —

Professor Emeritus of History Stuart McConnell, a charismatic and inspiring presence on the Pitzer College campus for 32 years, passed away on February 14 at age 62, after battling pancreatic cancer for several years. He taught his last class at Pitzer in fall 2018.

Known for his playful sense of humor that brought delight to students and colleagues alike, McConnell explained his approach in an interview for *The Participant* in 2018. "Playful is a quality of interaction between teachers and students that's less formal. It's where you aren't 'Herr Doktor,' imparting the wisdom of the ages, but somebody who has a favorite sports team. Whatever it is that brings you down off the pedestal."

McConnell's neckties, which he wore each day, made him an anomaly among the usually more casually attired faculty. Colorful and graced with either whimsical or historical themes, the ties sparked comments and interaction—McConnell's purpose.

"He was open and available to friends and strangers alike and lived Pitzer's mission of educating students to make meaningful contributions to the world," said President Melvin L. Oliver of McConnell. "Throughout his illness, he never lost his verve and joy in teaching, no matter the venue. He was a historian who thought the most important thing was to get the facts right. His own work, as represented in his deeply researched and elegantly written *Glorious Contentment: the Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900*, demonstrated that commitment. He also taught that to students."

Chris Bray '03, who took McConnell's senior historiography seminar, recalls, "He taught students to think like historians, to be careful about evidence and make arguments we could support."

Jade Finlinson '15 said, "His consistent encouragement to refine my ideas through concise writing helped me produce work I could stand behind."

McConnell received his undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan and earned his PhD at Johns Hopkins University. Prior to his scholarship on history, McConnell wrote for the *Grand Junction Daily Sentinel*, as well as for several Chicago weeklies. In graduate school at Johns Hopkins, his adviser knew he had a journalism background, so assigned him to design a course on the history of journalism as part of his qualifying exams. McConnell continued to teach that very same course at Pitzer until 2018. His other courses included a two-semester survey class on US history, from 1847 through 1877, and 1877 to 1940.

McConnell provided expert remarks about America's violent political climate in the 1970s, helping set the stage for Pitzer's private screening of Robert Redford's *The Company You Keep* in 2013. He stayed after the screening and answered every attendee's question.

Last spring, McConnell introduced the Stephen and Sandra Glass endowed lecturer, Professor Jeffrey Stewart, whose book, *The New Negro: The Life of Alain Locke*, received the 2018 National Book Award and the 2019 Pulitzer Prize for nonfiction. McConnell's introduction weaved humor with acute observations on Stewart's work.

Last fall, Pitzer's faculty hosted a retirement dinner for McConnell, where he was given the rarefied honor of being named Pitzer Professor Emeritus and friend for life.

He is survived by his wife, Rebecca Franko, and children Alex and Leah.

“

I am a student, a residence assistant and the CEO of a vegan cosmetics brand, Labio Couture. Cultivating a safe space for students to thrive is essential when molding future leaders. My confidence in my business and ability to lead other students has grown exponentially since coming to Pitzer.

”



Del Martin '21
Pitzer student



Nick Romo '14
Policy Consultant
California State Senator, Connie M. Leyva

“

My Pitzer education gave me the skills and confidence to turn my studies into action. I wrote my senior thesis on the successful local political advocacy of Latino-led environmental justice groups across the Inland Empire. Under the leadership of State Senator Connie Leyva, my senior thesis conclusion became the basis for significant environmental justice legislation, California Senate Bill No. 1000.

”

“

Pitzer helped me find myself, pushed me outside my comfort zone and allowed me to discover my purpose in encouraging other women of color to pursue education and STEM careers. For the past 25 years, I have led Sisters Gonna Work It Out, an empowerment conference that encourages ninth- and tenth-grade at-risk teenage girls of color to overcome their obstacles, stay in school and believe in achieving the impossible through higher education.

”



Leeshawn Moore '87
Director of Institutional Research,
University of La Verne

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Pitzer Participant

SINGLETON COX '94 realized early on as a student at Pitzer that she should develop not only awareness of knowledge related to her political economy major but also recognize this discipline within the larger mosaic of knowledge.

This insight opened her to a journey of discovery at Pitzer and beyond that has motivated her to earn her MBA at Boston College and later success in investment banking. Each accomplishment grew from seeds that were planted at Pitzer and cultivated by her fierce commitment to serve higher purposes. She aligned her talents, experience and character with recognized needs toward that goal. Today, she is a director of mergers and acquisitions for DaVita Healthcare Partners, where she leads transactions and business development.

Singleton has served on Pitzer's Alumni Board and regularly supports Pitzer's activities in New York City. Throughout, she has contributed consistently and generously to Pitzer's Annual Scholarship Fund to help other students extend their reach in life, work and service.

"I am happy to raise awareness for the Pitzer Promise program. Where would I be without the generosity of those who gave to my Pitzer education, which has served me well across my key life endeavors?"

— Singleton Cox '94



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