

RIDER

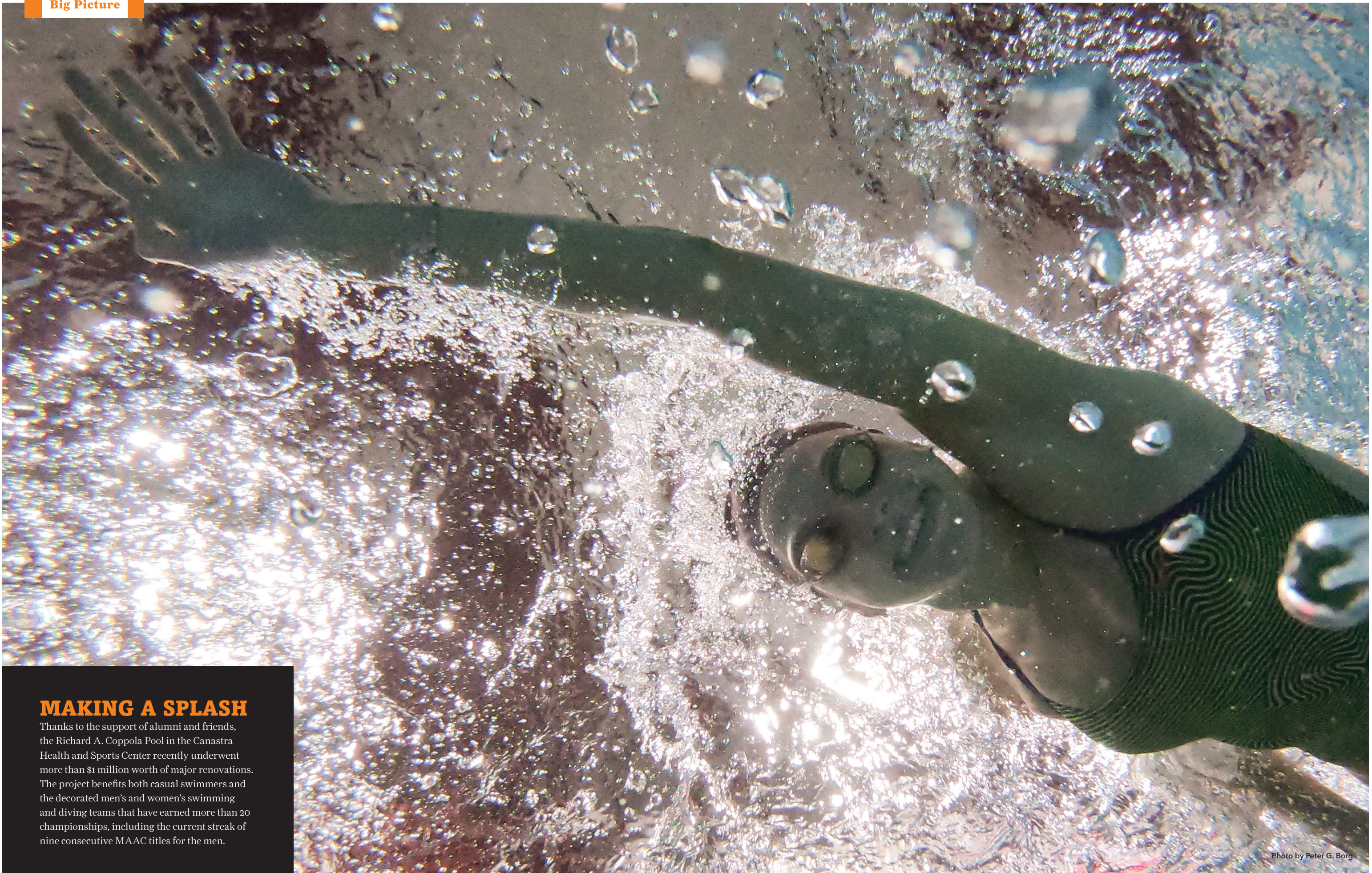
a magazine for alumni and friends

Spring 2020

KEY CHANGE

The innovative programming of
Sam Brukhman '15 is bringing
choral music to the masses





MAKING A SPLASH

Thanks to the support of alumni and friends, the Richard A. Coppola Pool in the Canastra Health and Sports Center recently underwent more than \$1 million worth of major renovations. The project benefits both casual swimmers and the decorated men's and women's swimming and diving teams that have earned more than 20 championships, including the current streak of nine consecutive MAAC titles for the men.

Spring 2020



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RIDER

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Rider (USPS 892-560) is published for the Rider University community, including alumni, parents, faculty and staff, by Rider University.

Correction:
 An article in the fall 2019 magazine incorrectly stated some Rider career statistics by pitcher Nick Margevicius '17. He gave up 110 runs and 81 earned runs. He was also named to the second team all-MAAC in 2016, not 2017. The president's letter incorrectly stated that seven Rider alumni have pitched in Major League Baseball. Seven alumni have played in the majors, not pitched.



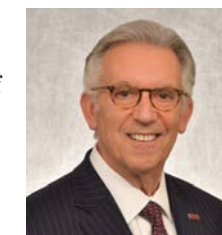
Dear alumni and friends,

DURING MY PROFESSIONAL CAREER, I HAVE FACED MANY CHALLENGES, BUT THE SCALE OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS PRECIPITATED BY THE CORONAVIRUS DWARFS ANYTHING THAT I CAN RECALL.

It has upset so many of the simple things we previously had the luxury of taking for granted, such as traveling to see loved ones, going to the movies and buying groceries. And it has fundamentally disrupted the normal operations of Rider University. With only a few weeks left in the spring semester, Rider's campus looks in some ways the same as you would expect. The tulips are blooming and the Campus Mall is verdant and welcoming. Yet, the residence halls are vacant, classrooms are empty and stages are idle.

As the coronavirus has extended its grip on our society, we have had to pivot toward solutions that are impossible to imagine in almost any other context. While those solutions are playing a meaningful role in helping to slow the spread of the virus, they are also going to have serious and sobering repercussions for the University.

These conditions demand that we call upon our reserves of strength and wisdom so that we can endure this trial and, when it is safe to do so, advance once again into a brighter future. I have faith that we will get there — collectively and individually — because I have faith in Rider and its people. Since becoming president, I have benefitted from seeing and listening to so many of your own stories of perseverance and triumph. Those stories are represented as always in your alumni magazine. Even though it was conceived and



assembled before the coronavirus outbreak, the stories repeatedly show how adept we are at solving problems and overcoming challenges.

Look to the way Sam Brukhman '15 has

persevered through early struggles to receive a first-class education and create a vocal ensemble in Dallas, Texas. Verdigris is cultivating new audiences for choral music — an art form as old as recorded history itself. Sam has drawn rave reviews for the inspired way he has fused choral music with imagery and video and text and brought his ensemble to perform in unusual spaces, like planetariums.

Look to the way Sharon Sherman has adapted and persevered. She rose from her humble beginnings in the Bronx to become a nationally recognized innovator in STEM teacher education. Under her leadership, Rider's College of Education and Human Services earned multiple accreditations, became home to the University's first doctoral program and excelled in the delivery of online education. At Rider, I'm proud to see this style of leadership on display all the time. We will emerge from this crisis through that kind of leadership.

Sincerely,

Gregory G. Dell'Omo, Ph.D.
 President, Rider University

UNIVERSITY *News*

Quotable



“The most important thing...is authenticity. So, all of us have to be confident enough to bring our authentic self to the game — whatever that is.”

- Susan L. Taylor, editor-in-chief emeritus of *Essence* magazine, presented the the 2019 Business of Media Lecture at Rider on Nov. 7

Once in a lifetime

The national tour of the Tony Award-winning musical *Once* kicked off last fall with four Rider alumni starring in the production. Carlos Castillo '18, Jack Gerhard '19, Mariah Lotz '18 and Matthew Staley '17 performed together in nearly 40 cities. Previously, as students, each of them had done at least one show together. "It almost feels like a Rider show because I'm surrounded by so many familiar faces," Staley said.



Honoring life and legacy

The Rider community joined together to celebrate the life of Dr. Michele Kamens and dedicate an award in her honor — The Michele Kamens Council for Exceptional Children Leadership Award. The award memorializes her commitment to the Council for Exceptional Children, the national professional association of educators dedicated to advancing the success of children with exceptionalities.

The award was presented to David Eggert '18 at the ceremony on Oct. 22, 2019. The award is designated for an individual who served on the Council for Exceptional Children and has shown leadership and dedication in supporting and serving individuals with disabilities and their families. Kamens, who was a part of the Rider family for more than 20 years, died in late 2018 following a lengthy illness. During her time at Rider, she left a lasting impact as a vocal advocate for the inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom.



Inclusive excellence

Rider's new Inclusive Excellence Plan was introduced during an event last October. The plan highlights Rider's values of diversity, equity and inclusion and outlines strategic commitments to advance Rider as an inclusive community. It also aligns with and advances the University's strategic plan. The plan is an outgrowth of work completed by the President's Council on Inclusion, which was charged with recommending how to promote the University's values around equity and inclusion. The diversification of the University's student body has been growing over the past several years. Forty-nine percent of the 2019 freshman class is made up of underrepresented students (students of color and/or Hispanic), making it the most diverse class in Rider history. The class is also comprised of a number of students who are first-generation, have differing abilities and identify as LGBTQ+, among other identities.

Influencers

InsiderNj, which covers New Jersey political news, named six Rider alumni to its list of most influential millennials in New Jersey politics. Fatima Heyward '15 and Missy Rebovich '12 cracked the top 40, with Joe Forte '13 landing at No. 84. Meanwhile, Jonathan Chebra '09, Lee Clark '14, '18 and Christopher Scales '18 were named to the list of "millennials to watch." As undergraduates, each of the alumni was also affiliated with the Rebovich Institute for New Jersey Politics, which is dedicated to public service and scholarly analysis of government, public policy, campaigns and elections in New Jersey.



Jumping for joy

Alicia Weismann, the president of the Rider University Equestrian Team, continued her impressive run of earning awards from prestigious national and international competitions. Last fall, she was one of three college students representing the United States in the Student Riding Nations Cup in Ireland. Individually, Weismann, a junior majoring in marketing, finished first in the show jumping style and third in show jumping, competing against 45 other riders in both categories. Competing against 14 international teams, Team USA ranked sixth overall in the dressage category and fourth overall in both the show jumping category and the combined dressage and show jumping category.



Surprise!

Last December, Rob '87 and Janet Schimek announced a surprise \$1 million gift to Rider that created two new endowed scholarships in honor of two individuals that Rob Schimek credits with connecting him to Rider and launching his career, assistant professor Dr. Barry Ashmen '69, '70 and former adjunct professor Dennis F. Wasniewski. Rob is the chair of Rider's Board of Trustees and the managing director and group chief operating officer of FWD Group, an Asia-based insurance company.



On track

On Oct. 12, 2019, Rider Athletics hosted a ceremony to formally unveil the Michael P. Brady Track Building & Pavilion, which was renamed in April to honor the legacy of former track and field coach Mike Brady '76. The building has enhanced the daily operations of the track and field program, and helped to professionalize meet management and bolster recruiting efforts.

UNIVERSITY *News*

It takes a village

Last September, alumnus Steven R. Beckett '74 and his wife, Sharon A. McDonald-Beckett, visited campus to announce they have pledged their entire estate, currently worth \$4.5 million, to the University through a planned gift to support full-tuition scholarships for students majoring in accounting. In honor of the couple's faithful support, the University named West Village residence hall the Steven R. Beckett '74 and Sharon A. McDonald-Beckett Village.



100 years of choral excellence

Setting the standard for choral excellence since 1920, the Westminster Choir celebrated its 100th anniversary with a 2019-20 concert tour. The tour featured repertoire rooted deep in the Westminster Choir's history and included stops on both the East and West Coasts as well as workshops for high schools and colleges.



5-0

For 50 years, Rider University's graduate business programs have consistently helped students reach their potential as business leaders. Rider's Norm Brodsky College of Business is marking the half-century milestone this year with a year-long celebration. Rider launched its Master of Business Administration program in 1968 and graduated its first class in 1970. From that initial class of nine, Rider's business graduate programs have grown to include more than 5,000 alumni. Currently, more than 250 Rider alumni are CEOs, presidents and organizational leaders.

Health and wellness

Last October, Rider entered a partnership with The JED Foundation in support of student mental health and well-being. The program is designed to help schools evaluate and strengthen their mental health, substance misuse and suicide prevention programs and systems to ensure that schools have the strongest possible mental health safety nets.



'News' report

Rider was named to U.S. News and World Report's Best Colleges list and the *Wall Street Journal's* Top U.S. College list. Rider was listed among the top quarter of the best 179 regional colleges in the north by U.S. News and among the top 400 colleges in the United States by the *Wall Street Journal*. Rider also earned additional accolades from U.S. News in a number of categories in the north region.



What's in a name?

Rider University's 154-year-old College of Business Administration was renamed the Norm Brodsky College of Business last fall after a multimillion-dollar investment by the distinguished alumnus and his wife.

Rider celebrated the news on Oct. 17, 2019, with a special ceremony to honor entrepreneur Norm Brodsky '64 and his wife and business partner, Elaine, and to announce the couple's \$10 million gift. The gift endowed a scholarship for business students and will be used to support future business school projects. Their gift is the largest donation ever received by the University.

Brodsky, an entrepreneur, lawyer and accountant who has launched eight successful businesses, has long been devoted to the success of Rider students. He is an adjunct professor at the University and has been instrumental in providing students with unique and important networking opportunities with successful business professionals.

"This extraordinary gift exemplifies Norm and Elaine's deep passion for Rider and its students," said Rider University President Gregory G. Dell'Omo, Ph.D. "In recognizing this unprecedented level of support, we look to the future, and to what can be accomplished because of the generosity of the Brodskys. The impact of this gift will be nothing short of remarkable for our University."

The Norm Brodsky College of Business is the first college at the University to be named for an alumnus.

Quotable

"It's incredible to feel the energy from the crowd at the games and help keep the spirit alive."

-Senior musical theatre major Anna Sanzone, who is one of 20 cheerleaders for the Philadelphia Flyers



Under construction

Construction began on Gill Memorial Chapel in February. The renovations are designed to create a flexible space in the main chapel area that will be able to accommodate full Westminster Symphonic Choir rehearsals and performances by smaller ensembles, as well as some performances and rehearsals by musical theatre, theatre and dance students. The chapel has the capacity to seat about 300 people. The project will also create 13 new large and small practice rooms, an expanded lobby and worship spaces.



Dr. Md Liakat Ali

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
OF COMPUTER SCIENCE

Md Liakat Ali loves to tell the story of when he knew he wanted to be a teacher. He says the moment, while seemingly trivial, defined how he wanted to impact others throughout his career.

Two of his cousins came to him for help with math homework, something Ali excelled at from a young age. He realized that not only was he able to help them understand the problem, he also found a different, easier way to solve it. He became intrigued by the idea of constantly learning through teaching.

From that day on, he never stopped teaching. He became a tutor during his school years in his small village in Chittagong, Bangladesh, and continued throughout college where he earned his bachelor's in computer science and engineering.

"I realized that while teaching, I am not only teaching, I am also learning," he says. "This was one of the main motivations for me to become a professor."

Ali was drawn to computer science because it paired his love of math and his nonstop desire to learn as the field is constantly evolving. He's deepened his knowledge in the field by earning two master's in Sweden, one in electrical engineering and one in computer science, and a doctorate in computer science in the U.S.

Ali is one of the newest full-time computer science faculty members in Rider's growing bachelor's program, which launched in 2017. He has helped develop many of the courses in both the computer science program and the recently added cybersecurity bachelor's program. He's looking to expand the curriculum as the program grows to include artificial intelligence, robotics and more.

"I TEACH because I enjoy helping students become knowledgeable and independent."

What does the field of computer science look like for those who wish to make a career of it?

Computer science is a diverse field and spans several core areas including theory, design, development and application of software and systems. You can specialize in cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, robotics, computer game development, bioinformatics, software development, data analytics and more. As a result, computer science is one of the most popular fields of science around the globe. The field is not growing in isolation though. It is also helping other disciplines to advance. Many other fields such as physics, mathematics, biology, chemistry, astronomy, neuroscience, sociology, robotics, education, music, art and even sports rely heavily on computers.

Your research involves a combination of cybersecurity,

machine learning and behavioral biometrics. What have you learned by studying this intersection?

Imagine if you left your iPhone on a table and someone knew your passcode. They could easily unlock your phone and retrieve data inside it. My focus has been on exploring keystroke biometric user identification — or more simply — how one's behavior when typing in their passcode serves as another layer of authentication. So even if you left your phone on the table, no one else could unlock it unless they typed in the passcode exactly the way you do. It depends on how we hold our devices, the speed with which we type, how we swipe the screen and the pressure we apply on the keypad.

What sort of implications does this type of security have?

Software can be created and implemented that includes one's keystroke biometric behavior pattern. The software would

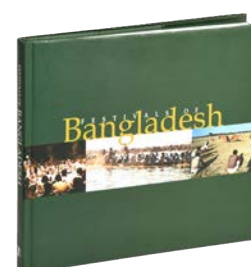
require someone to type in a password or passcode a few times to learn their individual patterns and create a profile for them. This software is easily installed and could be used on devices like phones and tablets or on ATMs, really, any place where someone is typing in their password.

What are some things people can do to secure their information?

Many people are not prepared in terms of cybersecurity because although there are tools out there, they aren't using them. Often people do not know how to use the security tools properly. When you create a password, there are encouraged security measures, but a lot of people make easy passwords and use the same password for everything. The most common password throughout the world is still 123456. Even just installing some security software on your computer at home and at work can help to protect your data.

By Rachel Stengel '14
Photos by Peter G. Borg

What's in your office, professor?



'Festivals of Bangladesh'

This book reminds me of my roots and my culture. No matter what one's religion or race is, everyone celebrates the Bengali New Year. We wear Bengali traditional clothes, meet in a specific place and eat a special meal to express pride for our culture.



Honorary crest

The crest was given to me by BRAC University in Bangladesh for conducting a seminar on computer security using keystroke biometrics.

ATHLETIC HIGHLIGHTS



PICTURED: MORGAN ROMANO, FRESHMAN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION AND HEALTH SCIENCES MAJOR, SYLVAIN COCO, SENIOR SPORTS MEDIA MAJOR

The Rider wrestling team finished its inaugural season as part of the Mid-American Conference (MAC) with a 7-1 record, claiming first place in the East Division of the MAC. **Jesse Dellavecchia** became the Broncs' first-ever Mid-American Conference Champion at 157 lbs. and was joined by **Ethan Laird**, **Ryan Cloud** and **Dean Sherry** as NCAA Qualifiers on March 8. The Broncs' finished fourth overall at the match.



Photo by Peter G. Borg

A Whole New Ballgame

A.J. MOORE ON SPORTS AND MEDIA

The small screen



Associate Professor of Journalism A.J. Moore is the director of Rider's program in sports media.

SPORTS FANS ARE GIVING UP COMFORTABILITY IN FAVOR OF MOBILITY

By A.J. Moore

Until the outbreak of the coronavirus, the passing of former NBA Commissioner David Stern was arguably one of the biggest sports media story this year. Stern will be forever remembered for molding a superstar-driven league into an international entity. Surprisingly, during the many eulogies and memorials given after his death, one of his visionary decisions was overlooked.

Two decades ago, Stern ended the NBA's long-term relationship with broadcast television and went all in on a newer media. It was 2002 and the NBA's TV deal with NBC had expired. Stern became a pioneer by moving all NBA national games away from broadcast television to cable.

Some said Stern was foolish, but it wasn't a mistake — it was brilliant. The commissioner recognized that the fragmentation and specialization of the media were altering sports viewing habits and he wanted the NBA to be in front of the changes.

How influential was his move?

Now when it's time for *Monday Night Football*, we go straight to ESPN and don't even think of ABC.

Twenty or so years ago, cable was indeed Camelot for sports viewers and Stern was the first to make it a permanent home. Today it's different and cable has lost its luster, the same way a new house often does. The time has come to search for a new residence, and there happens to be a vacant one down the sports media block.

Your new sports media locale will soon be the same streaming services that provide countless hours of binge watching for other kinds of entertainment. Get ready for the marriage of streaming and sports.

Consistently viewing sports on the move via phones, just like you currently do with back seasons of *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, will free the majority of sports fans from being tethered to the cable boxes in their living rooms.

In an oxymoronic manner, the smaller screen will soon get most of our sports attention. And we will be happier for it. During the new era of sports television, viewers will give up comfortability in favor of mobility.

Martin Scorsese made mass appeals to his fans not to watch *The Irishman* on their phones. He wanted the old-school viewing style on a big screen. However, Marty, it was more convenient for us to watch a little here and there on an iPhone in the doctor's waiting room or during halftime of our kids' basketball games.

The really small screen is the way many people now watch movies, and it's the way many will watch sports.

The streaming of major college and professional sports exists now but on a limited basis and, in the case of Facebook, it looks like a cable access program. Over the next decade though, when all four major leagues and the NCAA renegotiate their media rights deals, streaming EVERY game for EVERY consumer will be the norm.

Cable networks are starting to feel like unnecessary middlemen, and the leagues will soon value streaming contracts over cable deals just like Stern's disruptive move earlier this century.

WRESTLING

DEAN SHERRY earned MAC East Division Wrestler of the Week on Nov. 20 after pinning the wrestler, then ranked No. 6 in the nation at 174 lbs. to lead Rider wrestling past No. 6 Minnesota on Nov. 15.

VOLLEYBALL

MORGAN ROMANO was named MAAC and ECAC Rookie of the Year after earning MAAC Rookie of the Week in every week of the 2019 season. She also finished 13th nationally in both points and kills.

FIELD HOCKEY

JULIA DIVORRA was named NEC Offensive Player of the Year and earned Second Team All-Region, becoming the first Rider field hockey player to earn the honor since 2013.

SOCCER

VALERIA PASCUET was named to the All-MAAC Women's Soccer First Team. She finishes her Rider career tied for third all-time with 18 assists.

SYLVAIN COCO earned All-MAAC Men's Soccer honors for the third time in as many years at Rider, serving as the Broncs' center back while also contributing three goals.

Lights out

STELLA JOHNSON MAKES HER CASE ON THE COURT AS BEING THE BEST-EVER RIDER WOMEN'S BASKETBALL PLAYER

By Adam Grybowski

When the game's on the line, everyone knows Stella Johnson is going to get the ball.

The 5'10" senior guard from Denville, N.J., can shoot, drive, pass, rebound and defend, but it's her scoring that draws the most attention. For most of the season, she's been leading the nation in points per game. In January, she became the all-time leading scorer of Rider's women basketball, with 1,707 career points.

Then, near the end of the first quarter during a game on the road against the Quinnipiac Bobcats, Johnson squared up from the wing and drained a three-pointer. With that bucket, she earned the 2,000th point of her career.

After that game, in which Johnson scored 29 points while leading the Broncos to a win, Head Coach Lynn Milligan called the 2,000-point milestone an "amazing feat."

"It goes to her efficiency, how hard she works and how she is involved in everything we do," Milligan said.

Johnson's achievements have hardly gone unrecognized. Last

year, she was the MAAC Player of the Year. This year, she was named one of 10 candidates for the 2020 Nancy Lieberman Award, which recognizes the top point guard in women's NCAA Division I college basketball. Hardly a week went by when she doesn't earn some award: the MAAC Player of the Week, the College Sports Madness National Mid-Major Player of the Week, the College Sports Madness MAAC Player of the Week.

Despite the steady stream of accolades, Johnson has been tending the spotlight in her own way, which is to say reluctantly and with humility. Thrust into a leadership role in her sophomore season, Johnson is more apt to give credit to her teammates than shine the spotlight on her own accomplishments. "I'm motivated to be the best in the league," she says. "It's for my teammates, and their belief in me helps me."

Johnson began playing basketball in fourth grade. In

"I'm motivated to be the best in the league."

high school, she had aspirations of playing Division 1 basketball but drew little interest. "It was humbling," Johnson recalls. "I had much growing to do before coming to college."

But she stood out to Rider, and has grown in each season in points, rebounds and free-throw percentage. Knowing the ball is coming her way in high-pressure situations, she calls on the reassurance of her discipline. She says she wakes at 6 a.m. to watch film or practice on Rider's Jason C. Thompson Court, putting up hundreds of shots before many students have opened their eyes to face the day. Having run through her practice routines so many times, she has confidence in her skills.

"I think it's all about composure," she says. "You have to be that calm leader."

A sports media major with a minor in French, Johnson envisions a career in sports broadcasting, eventually. "When I'm done with basketball, I want to be around sports," she says. "I love sports."

But her future in basketball appears to be bright. Coaches and administrators say a shot at playing in the WNBA is well within Johnson's grasp. For now, she's not spending a lot of mental energy looking that far into the future. She isn't wasting time reflecting on her status in the Rider record books or her record-breaking college career either.

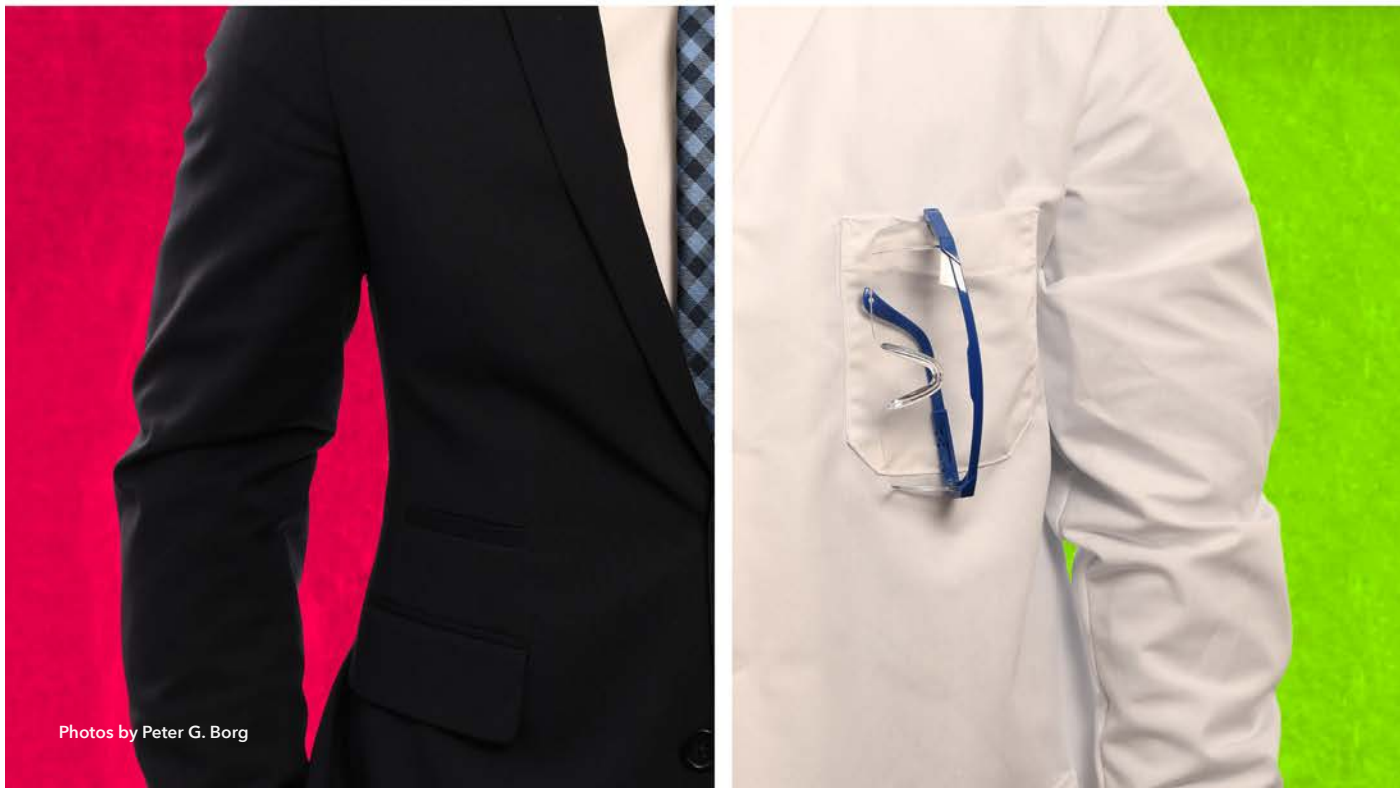
"I think I'm going to wait for this chapter to end before I start reflecting on what it all means," she says.

Editor's note:

On April 17, after this story was completed, Johnson was selected 29th overall in the 2020 WNBA Draft by the Phoenix Mercury.

Photo by Gregory Fisher/
Icon Sportswire





Photos by Peter G. Borg



THE ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET

OVER THE PAST DECADE, THE DEFINITION OF THE WORD 'ENTREPRENEUR' HAS EXPANDED TO INCLUDE THOSE WHO INNOVATE FROM THE INSIDE OF ORGANIZATIONS

By Rachel Stengel '14

After nearly nine years in the corporate world, Doug Beck '07 felt stuck. He decided he needed to make a big, but calculated, change.

Although he knew nothing about real estate outside of his own recent experience of buying a home with his wife, Dima, Beck signed up for an intensive real estate mentorship program. He paid for the program by charging \$28,000 on three different credit cards — something, at the time, he was embarrassed to admit. But he was confident the opportunity would allow him to exit a career with little future and

create his own pathway for success.

"I had to make some tough decisions along the way, starting with spending the \$28,000 for the year-long real estate investing educational program and then 18 months later, walking away from my six-figure salary after investing over eight years with one of the most well-respected companies in the world," Beck says.

Within six months, Beck began selling fixer-upper houses, and this year he is celebrating the sixth anniversary of his real estate investment firm JDL Ventures. He also owns three other real estate-affiliated business-

es. To make such a transformative decision, Beck did what any sensible business person does and consulted with others. One of his most important allies was his father, who throughout his life has played a large role in guiding Beck's decision making.

"Entrepreneurs need to have a support network of others in their lives that can help evaluate opportunities so they can make more educated and calculated decisions," he says. "By researching, reflecting and consulting with others who made similar decisions, I was better equipped to measure the risk versus the reward.

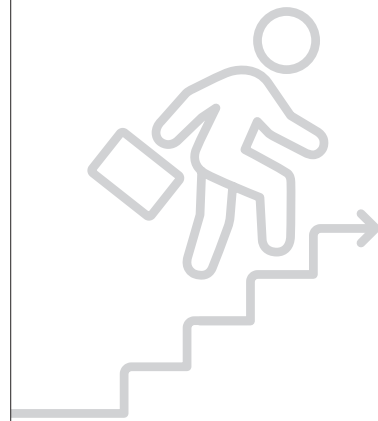
Intuitively, I knew that I could achieve the success I sought out for in my own business with focus, discipline and execution. I'm proud to say that my decisiveness and willingness to take those risks helped me walk away from a corporate environment that I felt stuck in and the reward has been priceless."

This type of calculated risk-taking represents the classic way entrepreneurs have embraced opportunities to create new businesses. "You need to be able to evaluate opportunities for risk versus reward," Beck says, "but entrepreneurs say, 'If it smells like a good opportunity and it looks like a good opportunity,

“You can be an entrepreneur within the organization you're working for and have business goals that aren't strictly about dollars and cents.”

the risk is typically worth taking.”

Over the past decade or so, the very definition of the word "entrepreneur" has been evolving, taking on additional meaning in the workplace beyond the traditional image of people like Beck striking out on their own to found their own businesses. The idea of entrepreneurship has expanded to include those who innovate from the inside of organizations. This still requires today's entrepreneurs to be able to recognize opportunities, evaluate risk and embrace challenges, but without the inherent risk of going it alone.



Embracing this mindset means anyone can be an entrepreneur, according to Lisa Teach '02, '09, the director of Rider's Center for Entrepreneurial Studies and a visiting professor.

"What we're finding is that employers don't just want people who take directions, but people who are creative and can improve upon current practices or products," she says.

One of her favorite examples is the creation of the Starbucks frappuccino. The company says the drink was developed by an employee who noticed an opportunity and employed some creativity behind the coffee bar to create one of Starbucks' most popular beverages.

"Entrepreneurs are rarely recreating the wheel," Teach says. "Few new ideas are created. The majority of ideas come from people working in an organization and they identify a way to meet a need the company isn't."

Embracing ingenuity and forging opportunities is something Mike Makovec '05 is very familiar with. He's a 15-year veteran and audit and assurance partner at one of the Big Four accounting firms, Deloitte & Touche LLP. The alpha to Beck's omega on the spectrum of entrepreneurship, Makovec has embraced the entrepreneurial mindset throughout his career with the firm in the audit practice.

"You can be an entrepreneur within the organization you're working for and have business goals that aren't strictly about dollars and cents," he says. "You can still bring a wide array of value to your organization and ultimately enhance your career."

Early in his career, Makovec made an ambitious personal goal for himself: to become a partner at Deloitte. Throughout his career he set smaller milestones along the way and took advantage of opportunities as they presented themselves. One such opportunity began when he noticed a number of his clients were having difficulty

tracking and accounting for discounts and rebates in the complex U.S. health care system. Dedicated to working with pharmaceutical companies in the life sciences segment of the firm, Makovec sought to become a leader on an issue faced by many in the industry.

He collaborated with colleagues in different service areas to see if they had similar issues, and they were able to gain a deeper understanding of the problem. From this

“The majority of ideas come from people working in an organization and they identify a way to meet a need the company isn't.”

research and discovery, Makovec developed and leads a new advisory service line within the business.

"You have to be able to understand the broader context of what you're doing and how that aligns with your organization's objectives," he says. "I was able to bring additive value in an area I was passionate about, but also navigate my own career goals. Once you know what you want, you can then marry that up to what the organization views as critical and make those goals align. You can then make better decisions on how you want to succeed and advance your career."

Entrepreneurs are made, not born, says Teach, though she says there seems to be a propensity for entrepreneurs to run in families.

Teach, who ran a successful chain of Five Guys restaurants, remembers her father's incessant drive to own his own business. An immigrant from the United Kingdom in the 1960s, he opened a health food store in Manhattan and then a produce-selling business.

Watching the ups and downs of business ownership, at first, unnerved her and her brother who witnessed days when their father came home with cash and others where the business began to fail.

"My father made a lot of mistakes with his one business, but that is part of being an entrepreneur — that ability to fail," Teach says.

Beck also learned about the ins and outs of owning a business from a young age. His family

In 2019, he made a \$10 million gift to the College of Business — the largest gift Rider has ever received. Brodsky was instrumental in the development of Rider's Innovation Intensive Program at the University of Oxford, a collaboration between the University and St. Stephen's House, that gave 25 Rider students and recent alumni the extraordinary opportunity to interact with and learn from CEOs. In 2018 and 2019, Brodsky and

owned a hair salon and he worked as the only receptionist growing up.

Makovec's family instilled in him the idea that he could create the future he wanted. "My grandfather worked in a factory and provided the opportunity for my dad to go to college," he says. "My dad worked his way up in the company he worked for and taught me that I could be an entrepreneur within an organization."

Encouraging budding business leaders to embrace the entrepreneurial mindset is a cornerstone of Rider's Norm Brodsky College of Business.

"I strongly believe that anyone can be an entrepreneur," says the College's namesake, Norm Brodsky '64. "Just because you work for a company doesn't mean you can't be an entrepreneur within that company. It's a way of thinking."

Brodsky, a long-time entrepreneur who founded eight successful businesses, including Citi Storage, the largest privately owned archive business in the country, is devoted to encouraging this mindset in students.

his wife, Elaine, sponsored a student trip to the Inc. 5000 Conference. The invitation-only event has exposed more than a dozen Rider students to the nation's rising business leaders.

The Brodskys also sponsor the Norm Brodsky Business Concept Competition, which grants a full, four-year scholarship to one high school senior. Eric Voros' concept for a device called Orion's Belt, a product in which a traditional-looking belt transforms into a tourniquet during emergency situations, won him the 2019 competition. Now a freshman global supply chain major with a patent for his product, Voros says becoming an entrepreneur is an attainable goal.

"For some reason most people — especially people my age — have this idea stuck in their head that you need to be older to be an entrepreneur," he says. "Having successful people like Norm Brodsky tell you that anybody can be an entrepreneur is inspiring, and it makes you realize that older isn't an age, so you just need to go for it." ■

KEY CHA NGE

SAM BRUKHMAN '15 IS ENGAGING NEW
AUDIENCES FOR CHORAL MUSIC WITH STORY-
DRIVEN, MULTISENSORY PERFORMANCES

By Ilene Dube



Photos by Dickie Hill



“ We get audiences to relate, feel and experience what they can’t elsewhere. ”

“Verdigris Wants to Blow Your Mind.”

That’s just one of many such headlines that Verdigris has garnered since Sam Brukhman ’15 formed the choral ensemble three years ago in Dallas, Texas.

Brukhman has made it his mission to take choral music to the masses, not only because it was choral music that turned his own life around, but because he wants others to feel the human connection that choral music uniquely inspires. To cultivate new audiences, Verdigris is using innovative programming while addressing novel topics such as immigration, the Dust Bowl and space exploration.

In its first season, the ensemble offered *Becoming Alive: A Musical Narration of The Velveteen Rabbit*, which combined choral music and synthesizer improvisation with live narration of the children’s classic. *Consolation of Apollo* fused choral music with images of the 1968 Apollo 8 space mission and was presented in planetariums.

In February, Verdigris presented *Dust Bowl*, a documentary with bluegrass music, video and choreography about the man-made environmental disaster that consumed nearly a decade beginning in 1931. The text is derived from newspaper articles, diaries and first-hand oral accounts of survivors. The music is composed by fellow Westminster Choir College alumnus and William Jewell College faculty member Anthony Maglione ’01.

As dark-haired, bushy-browed Brukhman gestures to his chorus during performances with expressive arms, he seems a born maestro. But it was only after his experience at Westminster Choir College that his artistic vision and entrepreneurial spirit found a focus.

During a recent visit to New Jersey, Brukhman stopped in at his alma mater to catch up with one of his mentors, distinguished faculty member and conductor Dr. Joe Miller.

“I’ve known Dr. Miller since I was in eighth grade,” Brukhman says. Their discussion centered on how choral music is transforming, how the art form is becoming less formalized and more focused on reaching audiences. The terms “story-driven” and “multi-sensory experience” came up frequently.

“He is a dynamic young voice in our choral community,” Miller says.

The two met when Brukhman was singing in the Youth Chorale at Westminster Conservatory, the community music school of Rider’s Westminster Choir College.

“He has always had a vibrant spirit and a passion for music,” Miller continues. “I knew that Westminster Choir College would be a formative place for him to meet other people who shared his talent and love of choral music.”

It wasn’t long before Brukhman’s “drive and ability to form a vision” became apparent. When it came to pursuing his goals, Miller says Brukhman was fearless.

“Sam once came to me with the idea of starting a treble ensemble on campus,” Miller says. “We already had so many choirs, but he had a vision for the type of music he wanted to study, the outreach and connections with composers that he was interested in cultivating, and the tenacity of learning by doing.”

While at Westminster, Brukhman started Vox Mousai Women’s Choir. In three years, the choir grew from 12 to 55 members and collaborated with the Princeton Girlchoir, composers Paul Mealer and Ola Gjeilo and premiered works by award-winning composers Alexander Leon, Ola Gjeilo, Emily Vite and Michael Smith.

“This is the type of entrepreneurial endeavor that is possible at Westminster,” Miller says. “With so many talented students and resources, students with Sam’s drive are able to learn how to build a life as a professional musician. Sam responded to this environment by expressing his experiences through his unique lens.”

Brukhman’s parents, Soviet Jews, and later his grandparents, emigrated from St. Petersburg in 1990. His parents arrived in the U.S. with a single suitcase between them. His father was just shy of completing a doctorate in physics, and his mother had studied engineering. In the U.S. they had to find different work.

“It was a huge sacrifice,” Brukhman says. “To find a better life they gave up their home, their physical things, photographs and their security.”

His grandmother, who lives in Brooklyn, not only taught Sam piano beginning at age 5 but accompanied him during his Westminster audition. Brukhman recently tweeted a photo of his grandmother looking through VR goggles to see the Glinka Choir Academy — one of the earliest choral academies in Russia — where she once taught.

How did the son of Jewish Soviet emigrants discover a passion for choral music? “I was never religious so choral music came as a secular discovery when I was a student at Wardlaw Hartridge School in Edison, N.J.,” Brukhman says.

He confides that he was a troubled child and didn’t do well in school. “My parents, being immigrants, encouraged me to be an overachiever,” Brukhman says, but their pressure had the opposite effect. It didn’t help that his brother achieved the standards set by his parents. (Brukhman’s brother now serves as a Verdigris board member.)

In ninth grade, Brukhman’s girlfriend encouraged him to join the choir. “I thought it was stupid,” he says. “My teachers had given up on me, but the choir director pulled me aside and said, ‘You have a lot more to offer.’ He was the only teacher who believed in me, and then choral music pulled me in. When I sang, I felt connected to humanity.”

That same choir director encouraged him to attend Westminster’s High School Summer Vocal Institute, followed by the Youth Chorale and the Community Chorus. “I became obsessed,” Brukhman says.

Even though his grandmother had told him he had great ears and great hands, he stopped taking piano lessons from her because he hated practicing. But at 14, he came around and pleaded with his grandmother to take him back on as a student. Soon he was playing Schumann’s “Aufschwung” and Bach’s Four-Part Preludes and Fugues. He won competitions and by 16 found himself on stage at Carnegie Hall, which his grandmother considered a miracle for someone who hadn’t spent his childhood quarantined in a practice room eight hours a day.

“It was an enormous climb in one year, but I knew I wanted to pursue choral music and I wanted to do it at Westminster,” Brukhman says. He dreamed of singing opera at the Met. “Westminster was the only school I applied to because I knew how good the professors were and because I wanted to study with Joe Miller.”

By mixing early music and Gregorian chant with folk and contemporary music, Miller changed the way Brukhman saw choral concerts. “He also worked with stage design and stage presence,” Brukhman says. “The singers didn’t just stand on risers, they would interact with the audience.”

Professor and conductor James Jordan also had a major impact, as did Dr. Frank Abrahams, a professor of music education and Westminster’s associate dean, with whom he’d studied conducting. “There were so many formative moments,” Brukhman says.

After graduating, Brukhman moved to Dallas to work as assistant choir director at Rowlett High School. From there he went on to teach at Brown Middle School. Meanwhile, he started talking to community leaders about what was missing in Dallas in terms of a choir. A lot of them

rolled their eyes, he recalls, but he learned that new music created by Dallas composers was a void he could fill.

If it takes a village, Brukhman says the village started with anyone who would listen as he continued to cultivate relationships. Then he began hiring singers who were passionate about his vision. Patrons and donors followed, enabling him to create a season.

Brukhman also directs the choir at Temple Shalom and sings at the Church of the Incarnation. Since August, he has been artistic director of the Arts District Chorale. But this is the first year that he is able to devote himself full-time to Verdigris; thanks to its growth, he is able to earn an income from it.

With a 16-member ensemble, Verdigris has a board of directors composed of attorneys, business leaders, marketing professionals, religious leaders, scholars and educators. Verdigris offers transparency of its finances to aid in fundraising.

Brukhman credits Westminster for helping to develop his entrepreneurial, in addition to his musical, skills. He learned to connect with people of influence, a key ingredient in establishing Verdigris. Beginning with two house concerts, an online campaign was developed to kickstart fundraising and secure grants.

There continue to be challenges, for sure, from competition for donors to getting millennial audiences accustomed to watching from home to show up for concerts. But, so far, experiential concerts with relevant storytelling and unconventional settings have made that happen. “We get audiences to relate, feel and experience what they can’t elsewhere,” Brukhman says.

“I’m a firm believer that anyone can do what I do,” he continues. “The reason I’m good at talking to people is because, early on, I didn’t have anyone who believed in me. My search for connection manifested in that way. My grandmother reminds me how difficult I was to teach, and that I’ve chosen the hardest profession.”

The most difficult part, he adds, is creating a sound, staying humble and being attuned to the teachable moments.

“This is apparent in his work with Verdigris,” Miller says. “Sam continues to mature as a musician, to expand his dreams and to test his mettle galvanizing a community to support the vision of this ensemble. It requires the skills of a musician, a fundraiser and an artist. The seeds that Sam has always had inside him are beginning to produce outstanding results.”



Sharon Sherman can't stop

AFTER 10 YEARS AS DEAN, SHERMAN IS STEPPING DOWN TO RETURN TO THE FACULTY. SHE HAS NO INTENTION OF SLOWING DOWN

By Adam Grybowski



Photo by Peter G. Borg

One day last December, Dr. Sharon Sherman stood on the stage of the Bart Luedeke Center Theater on Rider's campus and listened to the provost read a list of her many accomplishments as dean of Rider's College of Education and Human Services.

Sherman was about to receive the Provost's Initiative Award, and the provost, Dr. DonnaJean Fredeen, told the audience that last year, under Sherman's leadership, students of the College of Education and Human Services had achieved a 100% passing rate on two critical teaching assessment tests, Praxis and edTPA.

"Next year," Sherman interrupted, "we're going to do better."

The glint in her eye was visible from the back row. The joke may have elicited a few chuckles from the faculty and staff gathered in the theater, but its spirit captured something about Sherman as true as grades being due at the end of the semester: She is devoted to student success and willing to do whatever she can to empower them to achieve their goals.

"This is a job where you go go go," says Sherman, who has served as dean since 2009. "It's been 10 years of 24/7 work, where you rarely get the break you need."

Now, Sherman is finally giving herself an extended break. In January, Rider announced that she will step down from the position of dean and, after a leave of absence that will allow her to write a book (her 11th), return to the faculty. Retirement does not appear to be in her vocabulary.

"I miss teaching and working directly with students," Sherman says during



Sherman and professors Michele Kamens and Diane Giannola organized a faculty-led study tour to Ireland.

a wide-ranging interview in her office inside Bierenbaum Fisher Hall.

While Sherman has held a multitude of positions during her long career in education, many of them have been at the head of a classroom. She was a professor at The College of New Jersey for 14 years before she received an unsolicited phone call from a recruiter that a dean's position had opened at Rider.

No way, Sherman recalls thinking as her initial reaction. "I was perfectly happy," she says. "But the recruiter contacted me several times and convinced me to meet the search committee."

Sherman struggles to articulate exactly what happened during the interview process that swayed her to change her mind and accept the position

other than to say it was an emotional connection with the University.

"Students always tell us the same thing: 'I stepped foot here on Rider's campus and I felt the warmth and camaraderie and knew it was a match,'" she says. "That's what I felt with the search committee."

Sherman believes the business of educating educators has grown increasingly complex over time, especially with the changing federal and state mandates and tougher accreditation standards over the past decade. She hopes the book she plans to write will help prepare deans to understand that complexity while dealing with the overall headwinds roiling higher education, such as the rising cost of tuition and the nationwide shrinking pool of college applicants.

Despite those challenges, Sherman has, since becoming dean, amassed an impressive record of accomplishment. Under her leadership, the College of Education and Human Services earned multiple accreditations, including, crucially, from the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education and the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation. Counseling programs and the school psychology program also received important accreditations. In 2017, she helped the College launch Rider's first doctoral program, in educational leadership. Many programs developed online options. As dean, Sherman became a nationally recognized innovator in STEM teacher education, with White House invitations under her belt to prove it.

"Dr. Sherman has been relentless in her efforts to ensure the success of Rider's College of Education and Human Services," says Provost Fredeen. "Her dedication and single-minded drive have truly served the best interests of our students and the entire University. To say that I will miss her leadership as a great Rider University dean is an

understatement."

To understand Sherman's drive and spirit you have to understand the story of her family.

She grew up in the housing projects of the Bronx with her mother, father and sister. The apartment's sole bathroom was so small Sherman says you could barely turn around in it. But there was always room for the hobbies of Sherman's father, Max, an inveterate and skilled tinkerer and inventor whose formal training as an engineer was cut short when he left college to fight in World War II. Spare parts were regularly scattered across the living room floor. Sherman says her father once built the family a working television and that he was constantly fixing and rebuilding car engines.

Both he and Sherman's mother, Gert, who worked as a bookkeeper for her family's successful bakery, were born in the U.S., but her grandparents emigrated from Eastern Europe in the early 1900s during challenging political times. During her childhood her grandparents shared stories of their journeys to the promised land and the many obstacles they had to overcome.

"They taught me to deal with whatever challenges life brings, never to give up, to push on and look for the bright side even when there doesn't seem to be a bright side," Sherman says. "That was instilled in me. It taught me that you had to have reasonable goals and that you may have obstacles in pursuing those goals but you do your best to overcome them. My mother always said that when things don't go as expected, you have to pick yourself up, regroup and go on. It's about empowering yourself."

In her office, surrounded by the trappings of a successful career, Sherman continued, "I am grateful for my ancestors every single day."

Sherman never planned on becoming a teacher. Her passions as a youngster were science and music.

She excelled in the New York City public school system, which, even after a career immersed in inspiring educational excellence, Sherman describes as "first-class." She skipped third grade. In fourth grade, she and a friend won a citywide science fair, snatching up tickets to see *Ben-Hur*

“Rider is for a lifetime. Rider faculty and staff are there for their students not only while they’re here, but after.”

“Nothing is more important than having a good teacher, because teachers change lives.”

as the prize. Interested in music, she spent most of her youth playing the violin and piano. But her main pursuit in school was chemistry.

“At the time, this was not a subject any girl should like — you were either going to be a teacher or a nurse,” Sherman says.

Despite her aptitude and talent, she didn't receive much encouragement from either parent to attend college after graduating from high school. (Neither of them grew up in a culture that expected females to attend college.) But Sherman was determined to pursue her education in chemistry.

“I didn't have a lot of choices,” she says. “I needed a school I could commute to.”

She enrolled at New York University. “I was the only female in most of my advanced classes,” she remembers. “I was first-generation, like many of our students at Rider.”

Because she was paying her own way, she pursued and earned a certificate that would permit her to work as a substitute teacher in districts throughout New Jersey during the day, with nights reserved for classes and study.

The decision inadvertently set her

on a new career path.

Since graduating from college, Sherman's career has been defined by holding many different jobs within the field of education.

The first job she was offered after she received a bachelor's was as a high school chemistry teacher. She had earned a good reputation as a substitute teacher, and even though her ultimate dream was to enroll in medical school, she accepted the job.

“I had no formal teacher preparation at all,” she says. “I was the ultimate alternate route candidate.”

She was also already married (at 19) to a man she had met as an undergraduate. At the time, Alan Sherman was a doctoral candidate at NYU. They had moved to East Brunswick in New Jersey by the time Sharon became a teacher, with her husband teaching at Middlesex County College.

Today, Sharon and Alan have two sons, two daughters-in-law and six grandchildren. Their first son, Rob, was born when Sharon was 25. Mike was born three years later. Two days after Rob was born, Sharon and Alan's first book, *Basic Concepts of Chemistry*, was published by Houghton Mifflin. Over the years, six

editions of the book were published, and it was translated into Spanish and Japanese. “Our sons grew up in a house where writing was the norm,” Sharon says. “Both of them are authors and we joke that we're waiting for the next generation of Sherman writers and authors to emerge.”

Like many parents, having children deepened Sherman's connection with the local educational system. First, she became the president of her son's school's PTA. Later, when an opening on the school board in North Brunswick became available, Sherman realized no candidates represented her status as a young mother. She entered the race and won.

Over the next couple of decades, Sherman moved on from high school to elementary and middle school education. She made time to earn a master's in science education and a doctorate in educational administration and supervision from Rutgers University. She taught at community colleges and four-year universities. She worked at the New Jersey Department of Education. She co-founded centers, raked in significant grant money, served as a department chair and created new academic



Sherman and professor Michele Kamens led students on a study abroad trip to Ireland.



Sherman at the top of the Story Bridge in Brisbane, Australia, when she completed a bridge climb.



As dean, Sherman became a nationally recognized innovator in STEM teacher education and was invited to the White House.

programs. She continued as a researcher, publishing articles and books. She became a director for prestigious institutional programs, including at Princeton University.

Asked why she put her hands in so many pots, Sherman says, “I like adventure, and I let the adventure happen. I embrace change as a way to keep learning. It is because I've had so many diverse experiences that I can put the pieces together and understand the full picture of the enterprise of education.”

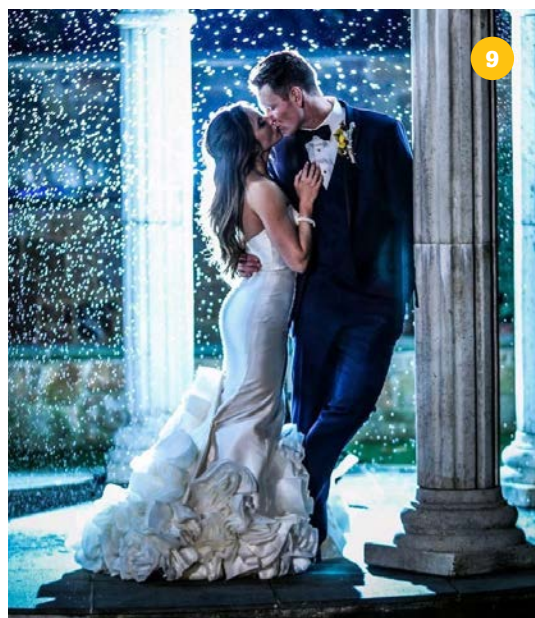
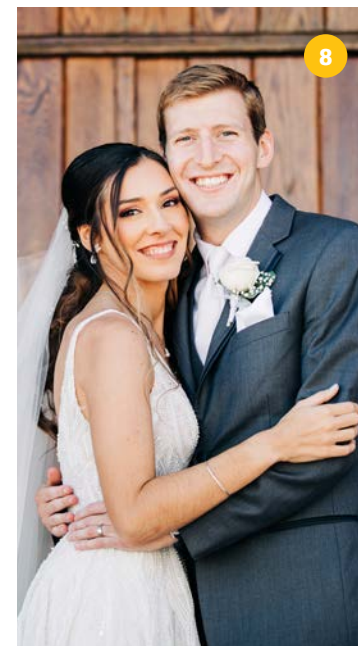
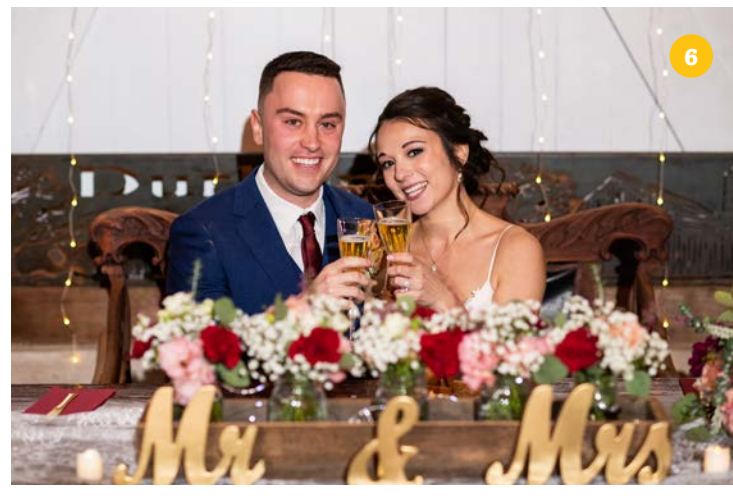
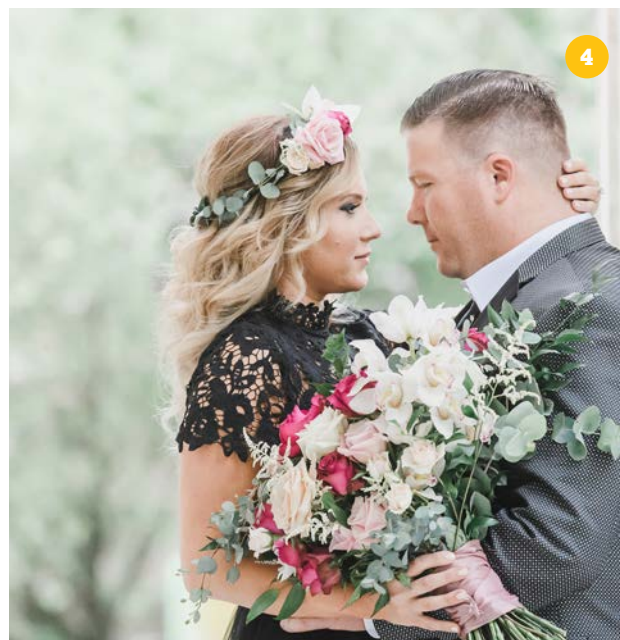
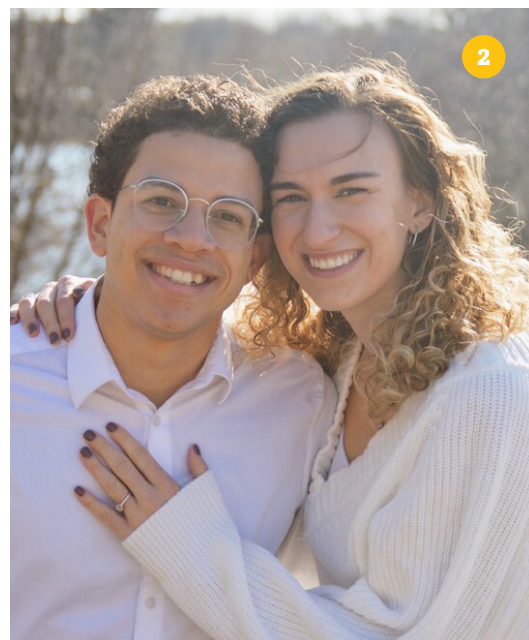
Driving all of those activities is Sherman's simple yet powerful belief in the power of education.

“Nothing is more important than having a good teacher, because teachers change lives,” she says. “And they're responsible for our futures. Aside from caregivers, they spend the most time with children and adolescents. You can probably ask anyone who has gone through life about a teacher or professor who changed their life.”

Sherman swells with pride when discussing the dedication of her faculty and the special connection they have with their students and alumni. In speaking about that bond, Sherman is also, in a way, speaking about her own connection to the University.

“Rider is for a lifetime,” she says. “Rider faculty and staff are there for their students not only while they're here, but after. That's what Rider is all about. I think that's what I felt in that room when I interviewed for the dean's job. It's an aura. It's magic.”

Having concluded a long interview reflecting on her life and career, Sherman gets up and walks into the dean's suite. There's much to attend to. She has to get back to work. ■



Weddings, births and gatherings

- 1 **Kathlyn Walker '16** and **Brandon Roffina '14** were engaged on June 22, 2019. They will be married on June 27 in Moorestown, N.J.
- 2 **Johnathan Jackson '17** and **Tori Brewer '18, '19** became engaged last June. The pair first met on the track team (they ran the same event, the 800 meters). They began dating in December of Brewer's first year at Rider.
- 3 **Jessica Spinosa '17** and **Nicholas Maglione '16**, who met at Rider in 2015, became engaged to be married last October. Taking Jessica back to the place where they met, Nick proposed on Rider's campus. They plan to marry in October 2021.
- 4 **Carly Pustay '12** and William Seitz were engaged on Dec. 24, 2018. They are planning a Sept. 4 wedding at the Ashford Estate in Allentown, N.J., with close family and friends. Seitz is a police officer in Hamilton, N.J., and Pustay is a child advocate with Womanspace.
- 5 **Brittany (Diego) Tinucci '09** and **Jeff Tinucci '09** welcomed a baby boy, Theodore Everett Tinucci, on Sept. 8, 2019.
- 6 **Emily '16** and **Kyle '15, '17 Anacker** celebrated their marriage on Nov. 23, 2019.
- 7 **Alexa Caplinger '16** and **Steven Wyrwas '10** were engaged on Oct. 2, 2019, at Magic Kingdom in Walt Disney World in Florida. Caplinger, who is employed in the Norm Brodsky College of Business, is currently pursuing a Master of Business Administration from Rider.
- 8 **Matt '14, '15** and Dani Sampson were married on Oct. 12, 2019, in Long Branch, N.J. They currently live in Keyport, N.J., with their Australian shepherd puppy, Charlie. Matt graduated from Rider with a bachelor's in business administration and a master's in accounting.
- 9 **Nick Margevicius '17** and **Shannon Kelly '17** were married on October 25, 2019. The couple met freshman year and Nick proposed on their last day of school their senior year. They both visit Rider each year to support the athletic programs and reflect on all the great memories they made in Lawrenceville.
- 10 A group of Zeta Tau Alpha (ZTA) sorority sisters joined **Yin Chung Becker '85** as she was recognized among the "Best and the Brightest Women Leaders" in New Jersey by Leading Women Entrepreneurs, a networking organization that recognizes women in business and strives for their overall advancement. From left to right: **Barbara Zakowski DeRogatis '86, Stephanie Brown Tarnowski '86, Yin Chung Becker '85, Georgeann Tresca Schenker '85** and **Nancy Brenner Gavel '85**. Becker is vice president of communications, public affairs and corporate marketing for Stryker, a global leader in medical technology.
- 11 **Robert Pycior '15**, a dual major in history and psychology, and **Kelsey Valentino '15**, a dual major in history and secondary education, were married on Oct. 19, 2019, at Bridgewater Manor in New Jersey. Many Rider alumni were in attendance.
- 12 **Alexandra (Alazio) Bilodeau '04** and her husband, Robert, of Bloomfield, N.J., announced the birth of their first child, a daughter named Aviana Della, on Oct. 30, 2019.



Dear alumni and friends,

It is hard to believe that I am writing my final *Rider* magazine letter as president of the Rider University Alumni Board of Directors and Alumni Association. My tenure as president has been both exciting and rewarding. While Rider University has experienced great change — a new strategic plan, changes to campus, student expansion and preparations to welcome Westminster Choir College to Lawrenceville — I have had the wonderful opportunity of experiencing these changes as a representative of over 50,000 Rider alumni. It has absolutely been my privilege to serve Rider University and all alumni.

While this may be the end of my term as president, it is a beautiful beginning to what lies ahead for Rider. The Lawrenceville campus is undergoing many campus improvements and renovations, including the addition to the Fine Arts Center and improvements to Gill Chapel. I look forward to joining all of you on campus to enjoy these changes.

In the coming months, the Alumni Association will welcome a new president. I invite you to join me in welcoming them!

Marci Gnant '00, '03

President, Alumni Board of Directors and Alumni Association

SAVE THE DATE!
OCTOBER 30 TO
NOVEMBER 1, 2020



**HOMECOMING &
FAMILY WEEKEND '20**
RIDER UNIVERSITY

'40s

Howard Albrecht '48 and **Bernice Freedland Albrecht '47** are celebrating the 75th anniversary of their meeting in Rider's halls, when the institution was located in Trenton. They recall sharing a hot fudge sundae at the Sweet Shop or at Moe's and enjoying a Sunday walk in Stacy Park. Howard and Bernice have been happily married for 72 years.

'60s

Dominick Karp '64 sends his best wishes "to all who knew me at Rider and also to all the others at Rider — past and present." Karp received a bachelor's in management from Rider. After graduation, he was drafted into the Army for two years, which included a tour of duty in Vietnam in the 25th Infantry Division. After being discharged, he held a management position with the W.T. Grant retail company until 1973. At that time he began a career as an Internal Revenue agent with the Internal Revenue Service auditing corporations. He says, "I was glad I had my Rider education because it prepared me well for my IRS employment. I have fond memories of my days on the Rider campus and of my multitude of experiences performing IRS examinations. I retired from the IRS in January 2005. I am healthy, happy and live in New Hope, Pa."

'70s

Michael J. Bozek '79 was named to the 14-member board of trustees of Samaritan Healthcare & Hospice. He is a controller at Railroad Construction Company of South Jersey. He received a bachelor's from Rider, as well as a master's

from Drexel University.

'80s

Clifford Parrish '82 was named the new music director and organist for Trinity Parish Church in St. Augustine, Fla. Parrish received a bachelor's in music education from Jacksonville University and a Master of Music in Conducting from Westminster Choir College. He resides in St. Augustine.

Gina Ackerman '85 was appointed administrative director of surgical services at Cape Regional Health System in New Jersey. She has served as a healthcare executive in the tri-county region for over 25 years. Ackerman received a bachelor's from Rider and a master's from Rutgers University. She is also a certified Six Sigma Green Belt in health care from Villanova University.

Vincent Milano '85 was appointed to the board of directors of Aclaris Therapeutics, a physician-led biopharmaceutical company focused on immuno-inflammatory diseases, in January. Milano is the president and chief executive officer of biopharmaceutical company Idera Pharmaceuticals. He received a bachelor's in accounting from Rider.

Steven Wallitt '85 was appointed to SCWorx's board of directors last October. He has worked as owner and director of a packaging materials company since 1981. SCWorx helps empower health care providers to significantly lower costs and increase overall efficiency. Wallitt received a Bachelor of Arts in Communications from Rider.

Patricia Rohmer Evans '86 retired last June after a long career in education. She has taught at the Eden Institute for Children with Autism in Princeton, N.J.; the Pemberton

Newsmaker



First Act

Terrie Goins '19 books national tour of 'The Book of Mormon'

By Rachel Stengel '14

Terrie Goins '19 had one rule for her parents when she booked an ensemble role in the national tour of *The Book of Mormon* — don't come to the first show. Full of nerves and energy, she wanted to perfect her role before her biggest fans came to see her make her touring debut.

Her father, promptly, ignored this rule.

"My dad was so excited that he came to the show anyway," Goins says, laughing. "I'm glad he didn't tell me ahead of time. He came the first full week, then he came to the shows in Mexico. My mom's a teacher so she's coming to see the show soon, and I can't wait."

Her family is proud and rightly so. Goins was only two months out of college when she found out she would be joining the cast of the Tony Award-winning musical on a nearly 20-city tour.

"I had originally auditioned for the part before I came to Rider, but didn't get it so I was so excited when I found out I got it this time," she says. "It's such a rewarding goal to be fresh out of college and have my parents see me in a Broadway tour."

The Book of Mormon tells the story of two Mormon missionaries sent to convert the citizens of a rural village in Uganda to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Developed by the creators of *South Park*, the show includes the crude humor you'd expect with heartfelt sentiment you may not.

"These missionaries come in and try to change the villagers' beliefs and the way our lives are lived, but we end up changing their lives," Goins says.

Goins comes from a deeply musical family. "I've been musically inclined since I was in my mom's belly," she says.

Her father is a musician specializing in gospel music and her mother sang in church on Sundays. Some of her fondest childhood memories are listening to her father play the organ and her mother practice for mass. Goins too got her performing start at church, but discovered her passion for musical theatre after being cast in her high school's production of *Hairspray*. Since then, she hasn't looked back.

"Most teenagers ask their parents for money to go to the mall, but I was asking to attend a master class or to see a Broadway show," she says. "My parents made a lot of sacrifices and always found a way to get me there. They never deterred me from my dreams and my desire to make this my career."

EVERY GIFT MAKES A DIFFERENCE



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"MY SCHOLARSHIP HELPED ME TO BECOME A STUDENT LEADER ON CAMPUS AND PROVIDED ME WITH OPPORTUNITIES TO SUCCESSFULLY GAIN EXPERIENCE THROUGH INTERNSHIPS AND CREATE LIFELONG RELATIONSHIPS."

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BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE MAJOR



Newsmaker



Hitting the high notes

Dísella Lárusdóttir '05 receives raves for her performance at the Metropolitan Opera

By Adam Grybowski

The score of Philip Glass's opera *Akhnaten* features the composer's famously intricate, repetitive musical patterns. The first time soprano Dísella Lárusdóttir '05 looked at the parts for a character named Queen Tye, she likes to joke that she needed a recording to prove a singer could actually perform them.

"The register was so high, and the way the music looked on the page, with the repetition — it's not the typical way of singing for soprano," she says.

Jokes aside, Lárusdóttir proved without a doubt that one could sing the part when she performed the role at the Metropolitan Opera last year. *The New York Times* called her performance "radiant."

Lárusdóttir's voice has been captivating audiences for years. Her career combines, in a sense, the passions of her parents. Her father was a trumpet player in the Iceland Symphony Orchestra for 30 years, and her mother is an actress. As a child, Lárusdóttir played the trumpet and piano, but she didn't intend to become a professional musician. She attended graduate school with an emphasis on psychology in her native Iceland. Following her father's death in 2000, Lárusdóttir finally decided to fully embrace music and seriously study voice.

In 2003, she participated in a master class taught by Laura Brooks Rice, a Westminster Choir College professor of voice, and decided to enroll in a graduate program at the College. She received a master's in voice performance and pedagogy in 2005.

Although classically trained, Lárusdóttir has never quite relinquished a pop sensibility that she embraced early on in her life. As a budding opera star, she says she received warnings that associations with popular music would distort how serious critics perceived her.

"People would tell me not to sing pop anymore because no one would take me seriously, but during recitals, audiences would always ask for the popular stuff they saw me sing on YouTube," says Lárusdóttir, whose latest album, *dóttir*, includes both arias as well as non-operatic songs. "I feel like you don't have to choose. You can be versatile."

Watching her exuberant performances, audiences may be surprised that Lárusdóttir describes herself as a shy person. "I do get nervous, but being on stage is a safe zone," she says. "You're with colleagues you trust, who you've rehearsed with for so long."

While it's not uncommon for Lárusdóttir to witness opera-goers attending the same performance multiple times, she is aware that some view opera as unapproachable.

"At the end of the day, it's entertainment," she says. "You get to hear beautiful music, where you often know a melody or two. I believe as soon as someone gives it a chance, they'll love it."

school district; and, for the past 23 years, in Abbotsford, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. She writes, "Rider provided me with the foundation and passion needed to excel in a teaching career that I have adored. My policy was to teach 'the whole family.' Inclusion was my specialty and strength. Every year for 33 years, I insisted I have the special needs and behavior students in grade one each year. Thank you, Rider, for inspiring me and laying the groundwork for such an amazing career. I know in my heart, I have touched many lives over the years."

Michael F. Housel '87 has written his second book, *The Persona*, published by Airship 27. His first book, *Flask of Eyes*, was published by Caliburn Press. *The Persona* stems from his love of such pulp characters as The Shadow and the Green Hornet. Housel has been employed by the New Jersey Department of Education as a credentials examiner for 20 years. He currently resides in Trenton, N.J., with his wife, Donna, and their cat, Cody.

Kristina Eastmond '89 was promoted to director of client service of Allegiant Private Advisors, an independent Sarasota, Fla., firm that offers fiduciary-level financial planning and investment advisory services. She received a bachelor's in business management from Rider.

'90s

Daria Carlin Long '90, was promoted to vice president and general manager of Gelest's personal care group. Reporting to Gelest chief executive officer, Long, who is a member of the Society of Cosmetic Chemists and Cosmetic Executive Women, leads all aspects of the company's personal care business,



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including marketing, sales, and product and distribution-channel management. She received a master's in business administration in international marketing from Rider and a bachelor's in biochemical engineering from the University of Pennsylvania.

Ian Gordon '91, who received a master's in business administration from Rider, was named in January president of operations of Elara Caring, one of the nation's leading providers of home health care services. Gordon received a bachelor's from Montclair State University and an additional master's from the University of Virginia.

Christopher Hunninghake '95, a science teacher, supervisor and administrator, retired in July 2018 after 30 years of working in New Jersey private and public schools. He is currently an education consultant providing workshops and coaching to New Jersey school districts implementing the Next Generation Science Standards. Hunninghake received a bachelor's in biology from the University of Virginia and a master's in education administration from Rider.

Jeanette Iversen Rattle '96 was promoted to director of marketing communications for JEVS Human Services, one of Greater Philadelphia's largest human services organizations. She has been with the nonprofit for 19 years, helping to promote and grow its educational and career services programming for individuals facing economic and personal barriers. Rattle received a bachelor's in journalism/advertising from Rider and a master's in public relations from Rowan University.

T. Missy Balmir '98 was named the interim new business admin-

istrator and public works director of Hamilton Township in New Jersey. She has worked for various elected officials at the federal, state and local levels of government during the last two decades. Balmir received a bachelor's in political science from Rider and a master's in public affairs and politics from Rutgers University.

Derrick Perry '98 was elected president of the Norristown Council in Pennsylvania in January. He received a bachelor's in communications from Rider and is a member of a nonprofit One Love and Tabernacle Deliverance Church. Perry is the father of two children, Joey and Derrick Jr.

'00s

Timothy Daly '02 was promoted to executive vice president of finance to oversee the operations, finance and IT of Ovid Therapeutics, a biopharmaceutical company committed to developing medicines that transform the lives of people with rare neurological diseases. Daly joined Ovid in September 2015. Daly received his Bachelor of Science in Accounting from Rider.

Melissa Hofmann '03, '04 was named a partner of DIGIT, a full-service company providing comprehensive digital accounting services, consulting and financial education. She was previously the director of digital accounting. Hofmann, who received a bachelor's in accounting and a master's in business administration from Rider, is a former board member and an active member and speaker with the New Jersey Regional Chapter of the Pennsylvania/Delaware Valley Chapter of Community Associations Institute (CAI) and a lifetime member of Beta Alpha Psi.

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ALUMNI EVENTS



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Advice for alumni, from alumni



On planning a vacation

By Alex Simon '14

1

FIND YOUR FEELING

It's easy — and overwhelming — to scroll on Instagram or Facebook and find hundreds of places on your bucket list. The best way to start planning a vacation is to think about what you're trying to "feel" on your getaway. Ask yourself, "Do I want to sit by the beach? Go skiing? Explore a new city I've never seen before?" Once you decide on what type of trip you want, the planning process becomes simple.

2

SET A BUDGET AND GET THOSE DEALS.

Before searching for a specific place that you had in mind, try coming up with a ballpark budget for your vacation. Use some online vacation planning tools and compare the costs of various destinations. You may find that instead of going to Florida again, you can get a Barcelona experience for the same cost!

3

BREAK IT DOWN

This is where *many* people get lost, confused and overwhelmed. Once you've locked down a specific location, you can now break down your itinerary day by day or keep it wide open for spontaneity. If you like to have a set plan then try securing tickets, passes and excursion trips before you get there. Be sure to research the location and check out blogs from other travelers. You may find an awesome spot you wouldn't have known about!

4

PACK AND GET THINGS SORTED

Don't wait until the last minute to dust off your suitcase! If you're traveling internationally, make sure your visas and passport are set. The best packing tip is to map out your days and pack according to your itinerary. In any case, make sure your clothes and shoes are versatile.

5

DON'T THINK — ENJOY!

Planning a vacation can become stressful and you might even lose sight of the purpose of the trip — to break away! Once you arrive at your destination, sit back, relax and enjoy your hard work.

Alex Simon '14 is the CEO and co-founder of Elude along with Frankie Scerbo '07. Elude is a travel app that allows users to search for travel packages based on their budget. He is a former business manager at Morgan Stanley and Deutsche Bank.

Newsmaker



On the borders

Harold Laudien '03 runs across the state of NJ to raise money for an incurable disease

By Adam Grybowski

From even the farthest reaches of the Garden State, the Jersey Shore is easily within driving distance. Its proximity doesn't feel so close though if you ditch your car and instead travel on foot.

That's exactly what Harold Laudien '03 chose to do last October, when he departed from one state border, the Delaware River near Washington Crossing State Park in Titusville, and began running toward another, in Belmar. The nearly 53-mile trek took him 9.5 hours to complete, with News 12 New Jersey there to capture Laudien celebrating the end of his solo double marathon by splashing into the Atlantic Ocean.

Laudien's long run was part of his efforts to raise awareness and money for Team PHe-nomenal Hope, a nonprofit that assists people diagnosed with pulmonary hypertension, an incurable disease of the heart and lungs that leaves people short of breath, fatigued and in pain.

His friend and colleague Kirsten Braley was diagnosed with the disease in 2017, and since then, Laudien has pledged to, in his words, "do something a little crazy" every year to support her.

"She has family and friends and others who support her in more traditional ways," Laudien says. "I wanted to show her that I cared by providing an untraditional form of support. Otherwise, for me, it wouldn't seem like I was doing enough."

For his first effort at raising money for pulmonary hypertension, in 2018, Laudien completed a three-day triathlon in Florida, which saw him run, swim and bike across 300 miles.

Laudien has long pursued his idiosyncrasies and personal visions. He was a serial entrepreneur even before he arrived at Rider in 1999. As a child, he sold soda to people stuck in traffic at Raceway Park in Old Bridge, N.J., and, later, sold trading cards at the Englishtown Auction. At 16, he opened a storefront in Jamesburg, N.J., selling gifts and novelty items ("My father had to sign the lease," Laudien says), and then he started an auto detailing and customization business.

Attracted to Rider's longstanding reputation for business, Laudien didn't bother to apply to any other schools. He completed a bachelor's in organizational behavior and management, with a second major in business administration and a minor in entrepreneurial studies.

Upon graduating, Laudien held finance and accounting positions at Jasna Palana and Merrill Lynch before once again striking out on his own. In 2010, he founded Mercer Wealth Management, a firm dedicated to serving those who have traditionally been undervalued or underserved in personal finance.

"The field is complicated and constantly evolving," Laudien says. "It's not something that's taught to people, but it makes a big difference in people's lives."

Like the result of running "crazy" marathons and triathlons for charity, Laudien likes that, through his business, he can see the positive impact he's making on other people.

"That's what keeps it interesting," he says.

Doug Tomson '03 was sworn in as the new mayor of Hillsborough Township in New Jersey in January. He received a bachelor's in political science and global studies from Rider.

Sara Bonstein '06 was appointed as chief financial officer for Inmed Inc., a biopharmaceutical company in the rare disease space. She is responsible for leading the company's financials, including planning and analysis, investor relations, accounting, tax and treasury. She also serves as a member of the executive committee. She holds a Master of Business Administration from Rider and a Bachelor of Science in finance from The College of New Jersey.

Andrew Silver '06 has recently entered the voice-over field. Since completing a vocalization execution training course called Voice Box, he has used his voice for multiple characters in a cartoon, a project for a graduate student requiring voices of different students and for promotional reads. Throughout his success, he has applied the skills instructed to him throughout his training and has applied the discussions from the communications courses he attended during his Rider years. Aside from continuing his voice-over pursuit, Silver is working with his brother.

Makeda Hampton '09 sang in the Metropolitan Opera's production of *Porgy and Bess* this winter. A soprano from New Castle, Del., she is a current doctoral candidate at the University of Kentucky. She received a bachelor's and a master's in voice performance and pedagogy from Oakwood University and Rider's Westminster Choir College.

Nathan Rugge '09 was appointed as senior vice president, actuarial reserving, of Selective Insurance Company of America. The compa-



"Rider is in my will because it provided me with a full athletic scholarship, a hands-on education and a warm, encouraging environment to increase my understanding of the world and my place in it."

- **Diane Fulham Blaszkas '89**

Director of Grant Development and Administration, Rutgers University Foundation

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ny announced the appointment in January. Ruge joined Selective in November 2009 as an actuarial assistant and most recently served as assistant vice president, actuarial pricing. He received a bachelor's from Rider and holds designations as a fellow of the Casualty Actuarial Society and member of the American Academy of Actuaries.

'10s

Daniela Compton '10 was promoted to account manager within RT Specialty's National Environmental and Construction Professional Liability Practice. She is responsible for supporting the new business, marketing, sales and coverage assessment activities of the company's senior management. Prior to joining RT Specialty, Compton held numerous supervisory positions within the hospitality industry.

Angela Cleveland '11 released a new book, *Coding Capers: Luci and the Missing Robot*, published by NCYI, last fall. More information about the book is available at codingcapersbook.com.

Miguel Edwards '11 was appointed to the role of senior vice president – chief information officer of Pan-American Life Insurance Group, a leading provider of life, accident and health insurance throughout the Americas. Edwards received a bachelor's in business administration from the Metropolitan College of New York and a master's in business administration from Rider.

Lorelei Colbert '14 was named the creative director for The Dove Agency, which specializes

in servicing interior designers and homebuilders with project operations and marketing solutions. She holds a bachelor's in public relations and a certificate in leadership from Rider.

Georgine Johnson '15 was promoted to supervisor of special education in Hopewell Valley Regional School District in New Jersey.

Kate Bradley '17 was named the deputy chief of staff in Hamilton Township, N.J. She has previously worked as legislative director to Assemblyman Dan Benson.

Milika Griffiths '17 was cast in a tour of *Hamilton*. The musical theatre alumna joined the musical's San Francisco tour as an ensemble member and swing for four of the show's leading female roles — Angelica Schuyler, Eliza Hamilton, Peggy Schuyler and Maria Reynolds. This is Griffiths' third national tour. She booked her first while she was still a student at Rider.

Olivia Barone '19 was hired last November to be Montevallo's sustainability coordinator in Montevallo, Ala. At Rider, Barone was the president of the Student Government Association and majored in environmental studies.

Matthew Marinelli '19 was appointed assistant director of the Hunterdon Harmonizers, an all-male cappella singing group based in Flemington, N.J. Marinelli, a baritone and instrumentalist, received a bachelor's in voice performance from Westminster Choir College.

Alyssa Maurin '19 was recently accepted to the University of Connecticut's School of Dental Medicine and will start her post-graduate studies in the fall.

In Memoriam

Alumni

Jeanne Carlton Layton '39
Ann Connolly Gregory '40
Jane Stryker Barton '41
Mary Zuczek McIntyre '41
Marie Vocaturo Galick '42
Goldie R. Klempler '42
John W. Thierolf '42
Ina Herold Jones '43
Mary Corrigan O'Donnell '46
Jane Scannicchio Tosco '46
Norma Carr Bankenstein '47, '75
Patricia Barrett Anderson '48
James J. Egan Jr. '48
Emerson F. Harding '48
John R. Rapp '48
Rodney L. Rosebrook '48
Marjorie Lou Hawkins Hammond '49
Dorothy White Keith '49
David W. McCormick '49, '50
Edward J. Misbach '49
Paul R. Roedel '49
Annabelle Block Temkin '49
Frances Logan Brown '50, '51
Louis Rospars '50
G. Stanley Powell '51
Stuart A. Singer '51
Irene Silver Strausberg '51
Walter E. Sattler '52
Joel B. Srager '52
J. Joan Cavatta Hess '53
Betty Dunn Ziegler '53
Evelyn Wallin Jackson '54
Josalee Morrell Birchfield '55, '78
Max I. Cohen '56
Jack E. Snavely '56
G. Donald Dyer '57

John P. Farrington '57
Olga Gamero Yusko '57
Alan G. Katzman '58
Ronald E. Howarth '59
Barbara Wasinda Petrovic '60
Sandra J. Curley-Edstrom '61
Richard B. Hoffman '61
Alan J. Edmiston '63
Kenneth F. Putt Jr. '63
Lee M. Simmons '63
Albert J. Fullman III '64
Miriam Zito Hermosa '64
Dewey P. Bookholdt Jr. '65, '69
Richard E. Foster '65
Robert D. Milton '65
Richard H. Stoy '65
Anthony W. Kruzel Jr. '66
Ronald W. Thayer '66, '89
John T. Bentley '67
Thomas A. Brzoska '68
David L. Lazor '68
David J. Loughlin '68
Darlene Moore MacCrimdell '68, '71
Francis J. Rozycki III '68
Kerry L. Youndt '68
Barry L. Braim '69
Walter J. Durant '70
William M. Fynan '70
Nancy Wicklund Gray '70
John M. Ivanisik '71
Joseph A. Knoche Jr. '71
Robert White '71
Michael P. Alban '72
Thomas M. Dulin '72
Bruce E. Bryda '73
Joseph S. Holland Jr. '73
Tatyana Kunevich '73

Harriet Levine '74
Elfriede Kling Lynch '74
Robert J. Sopko '74
Edward A. Fenton '75
Frank J. Serago '75
George A. Smith '75
Peter C. Walus '76
Lynn Henderson Troianelli '77
David R. Burley '78
Charles W. Lueders III '78
Michael A. Podraza '78
Richard S. Winkler '79
Joel E. Cohen '81
Daryl M. Cross '81
Kenneth G. Fry '81
Joanne M. Minich '81
Gloria S. Cheeseman '83
Steven M. Demorest '83
William H. King '84
Mark W. Oschmann '84
Anna B. Benitz '87
Emma J. Delk '88
Denise Douros Croke '90
Roberta Gerrard Beriont '92
Richard E. Furda Jr. '93
Carol Salvi Galdi '93
Alexa Guerrero Cortez '95
Stacie Everett Herceg '96
Angela M. Jenkins '02
Gregory M. Bernstein '10

Faculty / Staff

Sherman M. Ancier
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Joan F. Hartman
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By Betsy Podsiadlo '20

Major: Voice performance

The constant and unrelenting pursuit of the highest, most intense form of musical excellence is not an inherited trait but a skill that is built over time. At Westminster Choir College, building that skill begins the moment you arrive as a first-year student.

My professors have instilled in me an understanding of why excellence in music matters: to touch people's lives and make the world a more beautiful and accepting place. They've taught me that the key to working at the professional level is by learning how to "do business with yourself." This attitude of individual preparedness contributing to group success is instrumental in the crown jewel of Westminster Choir College, the Westminster Symphonic Choir.

The Symphonic Choir's devotion to musical success and professional performance is spearheaded by our fearless leader and unparalleled conductor, Dr. Joe Miller. His biggest job is to take a group of budding artists and prepare us to take the

stage with some of the greatest performing artists of this era. Be it Metropolitan Opera singers, legendary oratorio performers or the New York Philharmonic players themselves, each of the individuals we work with has spent years building their skills and performing at a truly superior level.

This season, I had the opportunity to sing one of the greatest choral works of all time, the *Bach Mass in B Minor* — with one of the leading orchestras and conductors of this generation, the Philadelphia Orchestra and Yannick Nézet-Séguin.

Bach is not known for being uncomplicated, and this piece was no exception. Through the guidance of our professors and graduate assistants, we painstakingly learned every precise detail of Bach's great masterpiece. This intense preparation in class made it possible for us to truly focus on the creativity and emotion that rehearsal.

I was thoroughly changed as both a person and a professional musician after these perfor-



"I was thoroughly changed as both a person and a professional musician after these performances."

Illustration by James Yang

mances. It was not because we sang every note perfectly but because of the lessons I learned from the journey I was able to take with this piece, from stranger to friend, guided by the hands of such legendary musicians alongside my incredible colleagues.

There are many choirs that could simply prepare and perform the piece, but the compelling distinction of the Westminster Symphonic Choir comes from its dedication to illuminating truth and humanity. Dr. Miller reminds each of us in the Symphonic Choir that being a professional musician is more than what we see on the page; it is how we share who we are and what the music means to us with the audience that determines who is truly great.

This culture of excellence inspires Westminster students to continue our pursuit of perfection, while our connection to the music and each other fuels the next steps for the Choir College and choral music as we know it.



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Looking back

First-year student Charles Smith is hoisted above fans and players in Alumni Gym following a victory over Monmouth in the championship game of the 1994 Northeast Conference Men's Basketball Tournament. The win gave the Broncs an automatic bid to the 1994 NCAA Tournament.