

# Alumni Gazette

WESTERN'S ALUMNI MAGAZINE SINCE 1939

FALL 2016

## GIRL GEEK A-GO-GO

Sam Maggs, BA'10,  
our favourite  
fangirl, guides us  
through the galaxy



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**ON THE COVERS:** If you judge a magazine by its cover, then this month we're twice as good. This issue of Alumni Gazette features two covers randomly distributed to our readership – one featuring multimedia maven Sam Maggs, BA'10, with a photo by Krissy Myers, another spotlighting SAP Canada Chief Operating Officer Leagh Turner, BA'95, with a photo by Frank Neufeld. Read about both outstanding alumnae in this issue.



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- 'PRESSED' INTO CHANGING NEWS**  
Admittedly, it was a bit too much for Jacqueline Leung, BA'07.
- VOICE TO A GENERATION**  
If it was not for a lengthy line at the student Gazette office in 1985, Dan Shulman, BSc'89 (Actuarial Sciences), may have had an entirely different voice.
- UNLOCKING THE APPEAL**  
The teamwork required to work yourself through an 'escape room' is providing Shawn Nagy, BA'14 (Psychology), with a growing business opportunity and a professor with a powerful training tool.

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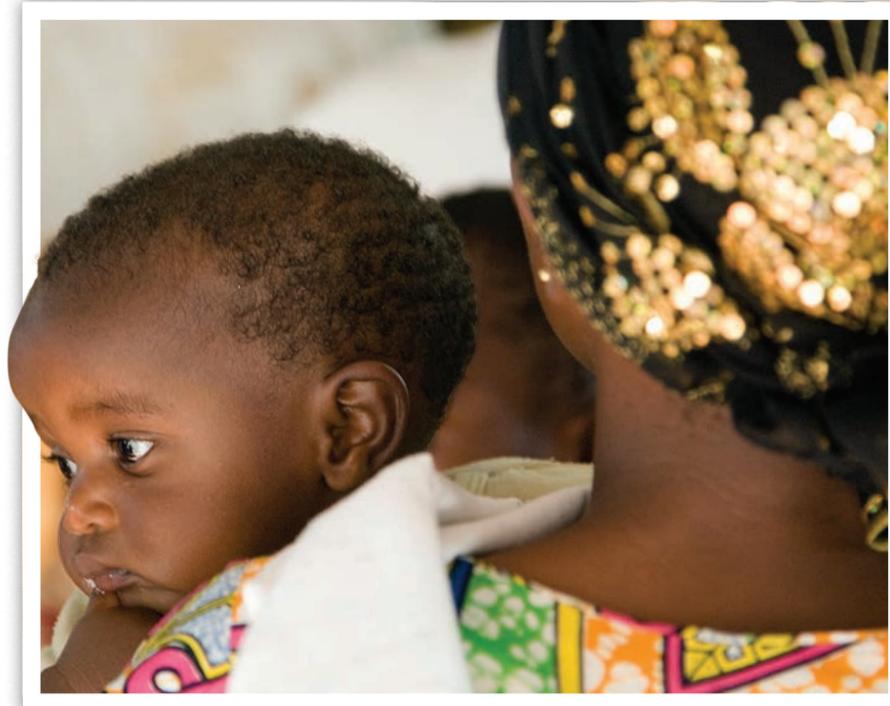
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## Funding spurs perinatal health-care efforts

In the last 25 years, the rate and number of child deaths around the world has been cut by more than one half. While this progress is impressive, child deaths, as well as maternal deaths, remain a huge



Cechetto

issue for developing countries, including Rwanda and Burundi.

Anatomy and Cell Biology professor David Cechetto wants to improve these outcomes.

Toward that effort, he recently received \$8.9 million in funding from Global Affairs Canada for his program Training, Support and Access Model for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health in Rwanda and Burundi (TSAM). The grant is part of the Partnerships for Strengthening Maternal, Newborn and Child Health program.

The funding will give Cechetto the opportunity to lead a team from Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry that will work with experts from the faculties of

Health Sciences and Social Science, as well as other Canadian universities and people on the ground in Africa, to develop training, mentoring and access programs for health-care providers.

"Essentially, what we're trying to do is develop a comprehensive model of continuing professional development, particularly around the area of emergency perinatal care, that we can prove is effective and that can be applied to other countries dealing with similar issues," Cechetto said.

TSAM will provide continuing professional development that focuses on emergency procedures, as that has been identified as an area that health-care providers in Rwanda and Burundi are not as comfortable or familiar with.

The program will train health-care providers to assess and treat common and critical health-care factors directly tied to maternal- and child-health outcomes. These factors, which can be fatal, include hemorrhaging, sepsis, hypertension, preeclampsia, cardiac disease, infant infection, maternal mental health and more.

## WEARABLE TECH AIDS CONCUSSION STUDY

The impact of concussions in sport is no longer a secret. Recent high-profile lawsuits brought against the National Football League and National Hockey Leagues by former players have brought international attention to what has become an epidemic in contact sports.

Despite the increased attention being paid to the causes, effects, prevention methods and treatments of head trauma in high-impact sports like football and hockey, relatively little research has been done on traditionally less physical sports like soccer, or the effects of repetitive low-impact hits to the head.

Researchers from Western hope to change this. Alexandra Harriss, a doctoral student in the Faculty of Health Sciences under the co-supervision of professor Jim Dickey and Dave Walton, is working with the Ontario Player

Development League and Burlington Youth Soccer Club to study the relationship between accumulated head impact exposures in youth soccer players and changes in brain function.

Using headbands containing GForceTracker micro-sensors, Harriss tracks impacts that players receive during all practices and games throughout the 2016 season, which include impacts such as head-to-ball, head-to-head, and head-to-ground. These impacts are monitored in real-time using a tablet computer from the sidelines, and can be immediately assessed.

"Our understanding of concussion comes a lot from football, but the nature of head impacts in soccer are different, primarily because players aren't wearing helmets in soccer," Harriss said. "And this is the purpose of our study, to understand those differences, and reduce the incidence of head injury."



Using headbands containing GForceTracker micro-sensors, Western researchers are tracking impacts players received during all practices and games throughout the 2016 season. (SUBMITTED PHOTO)



## WINTER IS COMING... and so is the course



Western students can explore the fantasy world of George R. R. Martin's *Game of Thrones* filled

with blood, sex and violence with one of the university's most prolific and respected English literature scholars this fall.

As soon as John Leonard heard talk of a new *Game of Thrones* course being suggested in the Department of English and Writing Studies, he quickly emailed the chair to volunteer. Most would question why a renowned Miltonist would want to teach a course about the Seven Kingdoms of Westeros. The reason: Leonard is a fan.

"My course is about the books – not about the TV show," Leonard explained. "One word of warning for any prospective students taking the course: You are not going to be able to 'wing it' on the TV show. It doesn't

mean the TV show is off-limits – I like the TV show, too – but this is a literary course in which the TV show may come in tangentially. It is not a popular-culture course about the TV show."

The course, 'Winter is Coming': *A Game of Thrones*, will be a serious study of the first four volumes of Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* series.

"My approach is not to ask the question, 'Why are millions of people watching this show or reading these books?' My approach is, 'What is it in these books that makes them of interest to us as students of literature?'" Leonard said. "One of the reasons I initially volunteered for this course is I was thinking of my 19-year-old self. My favourite book was *The Lord of the Rings* and then I discovered *Paradise Lost*. I've never looked back since.

"I look back on *The Lord of the Rings* with affection, as a work that brought me to other even more valuable and important things. One of the angles I want to take with this course is to be a gateway (to other works)."



### YOUNG ALUMNA BRINGING REALISM BACK TO THE ART WORLD

**Emily Copeland** knows your eye better than you do. Copeland, BFA'15, is perfecting the art of realism drawing. Only one year after graduation, the young artist is managed by Bernarducci Meisel Gallery in New York, which focuses on contemporary realist art. Currently, her work is part of the *First Look* exhibition at the gallery; she is working on completing a 12-piece exhibit for spring 2017. "I'm now the youngest person in the gallery," she said with a smile.



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(PHOTOS BY MONIQUE WIENDELS)

# CANADIAN COOL

## ILLBURY AND GOOSE PUTTING THE HIP BACK IN THE GREAT WHITE NORTH

BY JASON WINDERS, MES'10, PhD'16

Everybody has that story – that time at a cottage, that time at the beach, that time where waves lapped at your toes while a bonfire warmed your back. Meghan Kraft and Daniel Phillips want you to remember those times every time you think of their brand.

“We want to be a Canadian heritage brand, a lifestyle brand meant for every Canadian,” Kraft said. “People want to be proud to be Canadian, but they don’t want a tacky T-shirt to do it in. We have given them that opportunity to be cool and hip and trendy and socially responsible – all things Canadians are.”

Kraft, BSc'14 (Animal Behaviour), along with Phillips, a Fanshawe College graphic design graduate, are the creators of Illbury and Goose, a Canadian clothing and lifestyle company.

Today, the company is gaining attention not only for its style, but for its commitment to produce clothing, accessories and apothecary items for Canadians in Canada, all toward a mission of taking the definition of Canadian beyond “campfires and dog sleds.”

And it all started a handful of years ago with a couple of T-shirts.

In 2012, a gap in the “cool, unique products for guys” space led Phillips to design their first handful of shirts – one design showing a skull among geometric shapes, another bombers dropping wasps from their bays. They were cool, but perhaps not as deep as some thought.

“People thought we were sending this huge, huge political message,” Phillips laughed. “Honestly, we just thought they looked cool. I really just wanted a shirt with a skeleton on it.”

And so did a lot of other people. The company – then known as dpms (Dan Phillips Media Studio) – was a face-to-face business from the start. It grew thanks to hustle and chutzpa.

Customers connected with them over a rented table at the Western Fair Farmers and Crafts Market or countless summer festivals across the region. Strangers came by the pair’s

apartment to pick up orders. They sold beaded bracelets straight off their wrists in bars around town.

“We pretty much traveled anywhere where we could influence people in short time spurts. It was such a cool thing. We got to test market our product in this really organic way,” Kraft said. “We never forced it; there was no plan. We did something, people liked it and we decided to keep doing that.”

As the company grew in popularity, so did the product line – hats, leather goods, even personal care and apothecary items.

**“WE WANT TO BE A CANADIAN HERITAGE BRAND, A LIFESTYLE BRAND MEANT FOR EVERY CANADIAN.”**

The breakthrough came when they were recruited into Biz Inc. (now Propel), Western’s business accelerator, and opened a pop-up store in the basement of the University Community Centre in November 2012. “That was the most inspirational, most important thing that ever happened to me at Western,” Kraft said.

The following academic year, she deepened her connection to Biz Inc. She lived there in many ways, using the space to study and work on the business. Today, Kraft credits John Pollock, former Director of Biz Inc., for the company’s biggest push.

“Our business would not be the same without him. He really started pushing us to figure out who we were, what we wanted to do,” she said of the man she still calls “one of my greatest mentors.” “We were forced to write our business plan, create some goals and really figure out our company’s values. We didn’t know any of that going in because it was an experiment until then.

“All of the pieces started connecting together at that point.”

In 2014, Kraft and Phillips won the

Seed Your Startup competition and used the prize money to incorporate the business. With incorporation came a name change as the dpms name was shared with an American gun manufacturer.

Enter Illbury and Goose, a name honouring businesses run by their grandparents, Illbury Furs in Woodstock, Ont., and The Country Goose in Strathroy, Ont.

“We feel it is a really strong Canadian heritage name. I feel like it could be comparable to Abercrombie and Fitch. It sounds so Canadian; the history behind the brand is unbelievable. That has led us to what Illbury and Goose is,” Kraft said.

Today, the company continues to sell via its website, [illburyandgoose.com](http://illburyandgoose.com), and now boasts two physical locations, one opened at 884 Dundas Street in London in August 2015, a second on Queen Street West in Toronto in August 2016.

The signature product is its logo, a maple leaf fused to the top of an anchor. Not only is it the top-selling item, but it ‘anchors’ the company’s brand story better than any other single item.

“We get to hear these amazing stories from our customers wearing the brand around the world,” Kraft said. “It is absolutely crazy. We were selling T-shirts in a park and from our house, and four years later we have all this.” **WAG**



# A better way

## Alumnus serving those who are broke – not broken

BY SONIA PRESZCATOR

**“Sharing a good meal side by side is a fundamental human pleasure that goes a long way in reducing isolation and perceptions of inequality.”**

(PHOTO BY FRANK NEUFELD)

**T**en years ago, Stephen Giuliano found a better way.

“Programs created to specifically address the needs of the poor almost always end up becoming poor programs,” he explained. “What could be accomplished, if we understood that people are broke but not broken? Every day, I see people tapping into their resilience. It’s the stories we tell about poverty, and the approaches we take, that need fixing, not the people.”

As chaplain and director of Operation Sharing, an organization offering a range of service programs to residents of Oxford County, Ont., he set out to fix those problems in his community. And now, his innovative efforts are finding success and gaining international attention.

After graduating high school in Windsor, Ont., with a

dismal average, Giuliano, BA’82, MTS’94 (Theology), spent a year training in the Reserves and working the line in a factory. He soon became restless and dissatisfied. Giuliano called his former principal to talk about returning to school to better his grades and chances at postsecondary education. He was told he was not cut out for university.

Undeterred, Giuliano completed an introductory psychology course at the University of Windsor. Despite receiving an A in the course, Western was the only university to offer him admission as a mature student.

“When I got the acceptance in the mail, my first thought was, ‘It must be computer error.’ My second thought was, ‘In September I’m showing up, no matter what,’” he said.

In 1979, his efforts to join the Mustangs football team were sidelined by chronic right shoulder issues. His athletic career might have ended there, if not for Allan Richardson, a friend from residence.

“Hey Steve, you still have one good arm. Why don’t you try out for the fencing team?” Giuliano remembered

Richardson saying. “Fast forward three years – I went from never even seeing a sabre in my life, let alone holding one, to captain of the team in my senior year.”

Giuliano earned the Bronze W, the Western Mustangs’ second-highest honour. He ranked among the top five fencers in the province at the time of his graduation.

And that fighting spirit remains alive in him at Operation Sharing as he seeks a better way to fight hunger, inspire dignity and build stronger communities. “Poor people are not problems that need fixing. By putting ideas and hands to work, we fix approaches that are broken,” he said.

Giuliano remains unafraid to challenge certain notions that have gone unchallenged for generations.

In 2005, Giuliano introduced the Food for Friends program in Woodstock, Ont. The program sets out to eliminate the need for food banks, and instead replaces them with food cards participants use to purchase non-taxable items at local grocery stores, including fresh produce and meat. Funded through 25-cent donations by shoppers at participating grocery stores, every cent collected goes toward the cards.

This step allows people in need to “shop where everyone else does

and buy what food works best for them and their families, just like regular people.”

Applauded on the floor of the House of Commons, Food for Friends, with no need for transportation, warehouses or dozens of people to sort food, is on the verge of being piloted across the country and around the world. “We’ve had interest from as far away as the U.K., France, Spain and Australia,” Giuliano said.

And then there is Bullwinkles Eatery and Culinary Training Centre in Woodstock and its challenge to soup kitchens.

On March 1, more than 100 people marked the opening of the new community pub-style eatery and culinary training centre as a joint creation of the Moose Family Centre, Salvation Army and Operation Sharing. At the eatery, patrons choose what they want from an all-you-can-eat buffet and pay what they can afford, with a minimum donation of 50 cents and a cap of \$7. When they have money, people can purchase a \$4 card guaranteeing them eight hot meals at Bullwinkles.

“We wanted people from all walks of life to eat together. Sharing a good meal side by side is a fundamental human pleasure that goes a long way in reducing isolation and perceptions of inequality,” Giuliano said.

Chef Vanessa Giuliano, head of family and community services at the Salvation Army and Stephen’s spouse, is the instructor of the culinary training program at Bullwinkles. All program participants, be they volunteers or those looking for training, can learn valuable culinary skills, from nutrition and food safety to preparation and hospitality.

Another program of Giuliano’s designed as a catalyst for change is the Creative Concept Training Centre, a six-day think tank tasked with exploring ways of breaking the cycle of poverty. Now in its third year, the program is open to anyone interested in supporting individuals defined as ‘impoverished.’ It is an accredited course for students pursuing their Master of Theology Studies or Divinity degree at Huron University College.

The program ends with team participants pitching their ideas on the last day to a four-member panel in the style of Dragon’s Den.

“Our ‘Angel’s Den,’ as we call it, has evaluated some promising ideas,” Giuliano said. “We don’t want any more soup kitchens or food banks. A paradigm shift needs out-of-the-box thinking.” **WAG**

BY JEFFREY RENAUD

Multimedia maven Sam Maggs  
is the **First Lady of Geek**

# Millennial FALCON



(PHOTO BY KRISSY MYERS)

Sam Maggs earned her stripes as a 'geek girl' navigating the virtual worlds of Doom and Myst. But it was her Millennium Falcon-like manoeuvring of the very real D. B. Weldon Library, as both student and alumna, that provided the pop culture authority with the skills she needed to turn her love of sensation fiction into a sensational career.

In just a few short years since completing her university studies, Maggs, BA'10, has become the funny feminist face of geekdom – no easy task when you consider fictional places like Westeros, Jakku and Osiris are so often dominated by males both in portrayal and creation.

Winner of Cineplex Entertainment's Casting Call contest in 2014, Maggs – a lover of all things Jeff Goldblum – welcomed movie-goers as an on-screen, pre-show host for two years before moving to Edmonton earlier this year to start her dream job as a writer for best-selling video game developer, BioWare.

She was initially influenced by her mother and father, Nancy and Louis Maggulli, MSC'89, a Computer Science professor at Western – the couple saw the original *Star Wars* 20 times in the theatre – and, later, English and Writing Studies professor Christopher Keep.

"Having a professor and a mentor like Professor Keep, who believed in my writing even when I was not so confident in it, was really invaluable and gave me the skills and the confidence I needed to go on to a master's degree and book

publishing," explained Maggs, who studied a rarely researched sub-genre of Victorian literature known as 'sensation fiction' with Keep.

Maggs called sensation fiction an 1860s version of serialized television or comic books. And that's what she still talks and writes about today, which is why she very much connects her time at Western with her current game-changing place at the (gaming) table.

**"IT'S JUST REALLY COOL TO COME TO WORK EVERY DAY TO A PLACE WHERE YOU SIT DOWN IN A WRITER'S ROOM AND TALK ABOUT THINGS LIKE DIVERSITY AND REPRESENTATION."**

Maggs has logged hundreds, if not thousands, of hours gaming since she was a tween. The chance to work for the company behind such mega-hits as *Mass Effect*, *Dragon Age* and *Star Wars: The Old Republic* was a no-brainer for the young woman considered by many as the living embodiment of 'a strong female character.'

Making the geeky new gig particularly compelling is the fact the gaming industry has long been considered sexist by its critics – an assessment further fuelled by the #GamerGate harassment controversy. But Maggs confirms the notion could not be further from the truth as BioWare is one of the, if not THE, most progressive of all video game companies.

## MUST READS FROM SAM MAGGS

**The Long Way to a Small, Angry Planet** by Becky Chambers

**Fortune's Pawn** by Rachel Bach

**Planetfall** by Emma Newman

**Lightless** by C. A. Higgins

**A Darker Shade of Magic** by V. E. Schwab

**Tracked** by Jenny Martin

**The Fire Sermon** by Francesca Haig

**Alanna: The First Adventure** by Tamora Pierce

**Southern Cross** by Becky Cloonan and Andy Belanger (Image)

**Patsy Walker, A.K.A. Hellcat!** by Kate Leth and Brittney Williams (Marvel)

**Bitch Planet** by Kelly Sue DeConnick and Valentine De Landro (Image)

**Jem and the Holograms** by Kelly Thompson and Sophie Campbell (IDW)

**Zodiac Starforce** by Kevin Panetta and Paulina Ganucheau (Dark Horse)

**Captain Marvel** by Michele Fazekas, Tara Butters, and Kris Anka (Marvel)

**Ms. Marvel** by G. Willow Wilson, Jake Wyatt, and Adrian Alphona (Marvel)

**Batgirl of Burnside** by Brenden Fletcher, Cameron Stewart, and Babs Tarr (DC)

**InseXts** by Marguerite Bennett and Ariela Kristantina (Aftershock)



"The fact the team at BioWare is so progressive is the main reason I wanted to work with them," explained Maggs, whose left upper arm is emblazoned with a *Mass Effect*-inspired tattoo. "I feel incredibly lucky to be here (BioWare) and I'm just trying to learn how to make a video game. It's just really cool to come to work every day to a place where you sit down in a writer's room and talk about things like diversity and representation."

"Diversity and representation" are two words associated with Maggs, whether she's being interviewed on CBC Radio's flagship program Q or moderating a panel at San Diego Comic-Con.

"We still have a long way to go in terms of diversity and representation and a lot of work to do. But the amount of change I have seen, in even the last five years, is honestly extraordinary," Maggs said. "That's in large part because of the prominence of social media. Women have always been involved in geekdom; we've always liked sci-fi and TV and comic books. But we haven't traditionally felt welcome in the spaces in which these things are discussed. We didn't really feel like we could go into comic book stores. We didn't feel that we could reveal our genders in online forums. But now with social media, there are so many of us. There is this influx and we have been able to form these communities and find each other online and speak out about the things that we don't think represent us well."

"We're about half of the people who buy comic books and video games and go see these kinds of movies, which makes sense. The ability to say that on social media directly to the people who are responsible for bringing us this media is really valuable. It's made a huge difference in a really short amount of time."

Maggs is sworn to secrecy about her current video game project at BioWare ("I cannot talk about it

even one tiny little bit.") but did say it's going to be "really, really cool." That's two reallys for those counting at home.

And video games aren't the only thing Maggs is writing. The author of *The Fangirl's Guide to the Galaxy*, considered the ultimate handbook for ladies living the nerdy life, Maggs' next book from Quirk Books, titled *Wonder Women*, is slated for release in October.

In *Wonder Women*, Maggs profiles 25 female innovators, inventors and trailblazers who changed history without history taking notice – from Allied spy Noor Inayat Khan, a Muslim

**WOMEN HAVE ALWAYS BEEN INVOLVED IN GEEKDOM; WE'VE ALWAYS LIKED SCI-FI AND TV AND COMIC BOOKS.**



woman whom the Nazis considered 'highly dangerous' to German painter and entomologist Maria Sibylla Merian, who planned and embarked on the world's first scientific expedition.

"Honestly, I had so much fun writing this book because there are so many amazing women in history we just never learn about because – for some reason – they don't make their way into our textbooks," said Maggs, who conducted a lot of the research for the book at Western.

"So many women contributed to so many incredible discoveries and inventions through history that I feel very humbled to be able to bring their stories to the world and tell people about the really radical stuff that they did. I can't wait for people to learn about them." **WAG**

# Finding the fight in Virginia Walley

BY JASON WINDERS, MES'10, PHD'16

**DR. VIRGINIA WALLEY, MD'78, BEGAN HER ONE-YEAR TERM AS PRESIDENT OF THE ONTARIO MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (OMA) IN MAY 2016.**

**D**r. Virginia Walley never expected it to be easy.

Walley, MD'78, knew what loomed when she began her one-year term as President of the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) in May 2016. Two years had passed since the province had an agreement with the OMA. During that time, discontent had festered among some of the organization's 41,000 doctors, retired doctors and doctors-in-training after the Liberal government imposed multiple fee cuts on the sector.

And so, almost from the start, Walley was in for a fight.

"I would say I am a reluctant warrior – but I will fight when necessary," said the lab physician who works in Toronto and lives in Peterborough. "And this seems like exactly the right time. Everything I have talked to our members about – the energy they have for partnering with all the stakeholders in the system, the energy they have for improving the system – is palpable in everyone I talk to, everyone I follow on Twitter, everyone I hear from in emails or in person. We are energized to improve the system, yet



**"I WOULD SAY I AM A RELUCTANT WARRIOR – BUT I WILL FIGHT WHEN NECESSARY."**

(PHOTO BY FRANK NEUFELD)

we are thwarted in our relationship with the government.

"It makes me a bit grumpy that energy is not being used on patients' behalf. So much energy is being wasted."

In August, a tentative deal reached a month earlier was rejected by doctors.

Born in Deep River, Ont., Walley found her calling when she enrolled in Medicine as a 19-year-old kid after her first year at Western. "My experience at Western is integral to who I am now – all the great people, my teachers, my mentors, my fellow students" she said. "We're all just what other people helped us be."

Walley has been involved with medical leadership since the mid-1980s. She is the past President of the Ontario Association of Pathologists; a former Board Director of the Canadian Medical Association; and a member of the OMA Board for more than a decade. That commitment is rooted in firm belief.

"If you are involved in medicine in any way, you know there are things that can be improved about the system. If you have any interest in improving the system, then you have to get involved in leadership," she said. "Why be interested if you aren't interested in doing something about it?"

The first half of her term may have been more eventful than any of the OMA's previous 134 presidents. But the fight never phased Walley. For her, it is all part of the job.

"There is nothing special about me. I am the representative of, and advocate for, physicians," she said. "It is a fabulous honour to be in this position. Having that many bright, interested, energetic, motivated people, you want to do a great job for them."

"I don't have all the answers. However, collectively, I believe we do. There may not be a single solution out there. People just need to let loose, and be given rein to create the system that works best in their locale. Given that opportunity, people will sort it out. We all have a shared interest in doing the best for patients and the system." **WAG**

# TURNING ON A CURVE BALL

## SPORTSNET ANCHOR BETS ON HIMSELF IN CAREER, LIFE

BY FRED DEVRIES

The news came from left field. “The pain in your chest is a tumour attached to your heart. ...,” the doctor explained to Faizal Khamisa in May 2005.

For the next few minutes, Khamisa, BA’11, heard only fragments: “...the tumour is twice the size of your heart ... it’s too dangerous to remove it by surgery ... you have to start chemo right away.”

“Anything I was thinking was better than what I heard,” said the Sportsnet anchor, who was 16 years old at the time. “My parents and everyone in the room cried when they heard the diagnosis (non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma). I was petrified, but I couldn’t show it. I was determined to find the good, the silver lining. I was going to bet on myself.”

And bet he did. For the next three weeks, Khamisa underwent intense chemotherapy treatments at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. His life revolved around a regime of drugs, pain

killers and tests, as the medical team worked to quell the tumour. But the sporty, active teenager from Mississauga never lost his it’s-going-to-be-okay attitude.

While at the hospital, his school friends and sports teammates came by to visit. “Two days after being at SickKids, I received a huge card signed by hundreds of friends, parents and kids I coached. I had a whole lot of people behind me,” he said. “Playing a lot of sports showed me the team aspect to life.”

After he left SickKids, Khamisa returned to the hospital every day for the next year – his Grade 12 high school year – to receive chemotherapy treatments. His father changed his work schedule to take him. Over the next few months, he beat back the cancerous tumour, graduated from high school and applied to Western.

It looked like he scored. Then another setback.

The steroid medication he took to shrink the tumour stopped blood flow to his legs and arms. Khamisa needed double hip surgery in 2006 and shoulder surgery a year later. The summer before entering Western he laid in bed, recovering. He started to walk again just two days before his university career began.

Khamisa hobbled from class to class on crutches. “But that didn’t matter. I was up and about and going to university. And my hair was finally growing back,” he said, with a laugh.

His upbeat personality carried him though, even while he continued treatments in London between his class schedule. As a student, he shared his story for the first time at residence meetings, each time talking about what he’d learned about life.

That willingness to be

honest strengthened his commitment to anyone who comes his way. “It opened my eyes to being there for people, and how I need to support my friends. Life could have gone either way for me,” Khamisa said, “and I appreciate the support my friends gave me so much.”

“It’s easy to ‘like’ a picture on Facebook or Instagram; it’s harder to pick up the phone and talk to someone.”

**“IT’S EASY TO ‘LIKE’ A PICTURE ON FACEBOOK OR INSTAGRAM; IT’S HARDER TO PICK UP THE PHONE AND TALK TO SOMEONE.”**

Now, the 27-year-old Khamisa talks for a living. After graduating from Western, he completed training in sports media and broadcasting. He landed a job as a television anchor with Sportsnet. Dressed in stylish suits and ties, he brings his jovial, bigger-than-life personality to the set, delivering hourly updates on the latest scores and sports news.

“I played it safe at first. Then I took more risks on camera,” he said. “I wouldn’t be myself if I assimilated to sounding and looking like everyone else.”

His Twitter bio bills him a “cancer survivor, metal detector instigator, GIF creator and stylistic ninja,” as well as co-founder of SimpleAs Co., a men’s accessory line.

In late 2014, Khamisa had a second hip surgery – a further effect of his cancer treatments. Yet, even after two full years of chemotherapy, multiple operations, countless tests and ongoing pain, he says cancer is the best thing that’s happened to him.

“I may not know what’s happening on the inside of someone but I can make them laugh and smile. I want to be there for others and those I care about. If I can be a friend, then I can do that. And this place (Western) was part of what made me want to be like that.” **WAG**



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# The grapes of Tweed

BY KERI FERGUSON



## SANDOR JOHNSON BUCKS NAYSAYERS IN MODEL EFFORT FOR THE PERFECT VINTAGE



**W**hen model-turned-winemaker Sandor Johnson set out to grow grapes in Tweed, Ont., he faced a skepticism that rivalled any scrutiny he experienced in the highly competitive fashion industry.

Wine insiders dismissed what they described as a senseless dreamer's vision of a winery rooted in land well outside the Ontario wine appellations of Lake Erie North Shore, Niagara Peninsula and Prince Edward County. "And this was years before I made or sold any wine – before they even tried it – that was the attitude coming at me," said Johnson, BA'93 (English Language and Literature).

But he always knew the land – property that had been in his family since 1836 – was special.

Today, as he looks out over Potter Settlement Artisan Winery, the first and only winery in Hastings County, it's clear Johnson's detractors underestimated the grit that lay beneath his looks and land.

Of course, winemaking was not always the plan – neither was modelling, actually.

Johnson happened upon modelling during his first year at Western when an agency scout spotted him on campus. He worked locally, at first, for Kettle Creek Clothing Co., before signing with Ford Models in New York. By the time he graduated, he had appeared in an Armani campaign and was cast for a walk-on role on *The Young and the Restless*.

But it wasn't until he worked the finance beat at CNN Tokyo when he decided to model full time.

"Japan is very expensive. Reporters on the 'B' list don't make a lot. Here I was, paying ridiculous prices for just an apple or a cup of coffee, then I'd get a modelling job that would pay what I'd normally make working one or two months at CNN," Johnson said. "So I told my parents, 'Look, I'm

going to take some time off from journalism and do this fashion thing.' They were upset and said, 'You spent all that time in school. You really should be using that education. Why can't you go work at the CBC, like all your friends, where you'll have a good pension?'"

Instead, he did three commercials that summer, earning more than any model at his agency.

Today, Johnson is represented by 46 modelling agencies around the world. He is a familiar face promoting luxury brands and high-end retailers the world over. Yet, even with all his success, he still appreciates his parents' initial concerns.

"In the fashion industry, there's no pension," he said. "I'd rather be the master of my own domain and invest my money in my business, in my winery. It's a risk, but it's all on me. I'm not a gambling man. But I did start a winery in Tweed. That's probably the biggest gamble I've made.

"But you know what, I can make good stuff here. I know I can."

Johnson's vineyard sits nestled at the juncture of a significant geological transition, where the Canadian Shield drops out of sight and the Great Lakes Lowlands begin. "Mineral quality is the 'gold standard' when it comes to wines," he said. "That's what gives wine its complexity, its depth. I knew I had that right here."

He also had his brother, Robin, a professional winemaker and graduate of Brock University's Cool Climate Oenology & Viticulture Institute. "I had the soil; I had the winemaker. I thought, 'Now, if I could get some grapes to grow,'" Johnson said.

**HE HAD TO REPAIR THE LAND**, left badly damaged after decades of being quarried for soil used to construct county roads and to fill a mine in nearby Sulphide. It took over a decade – and 2,000 truckloads of fill – to raise, level and reclaim the land.

"Here I was, a fashion model with an English degree from Western," he laughed. "I didn't know how to run this stuff, but you just have to learn, when you're doing it on your own. Then, just as I was catching on, a hose burst on the back hoe. Well, guess what, now you're a diesel mechanic because you're not going to pay some guy \$200 an hour to fix it."

When he wasn't churning the land at home, he was building "homework tours" around his shoot schedules, consulting with vintners in California and across the United States, South Africa, Europe, New Zealand and Australia.

Given the raw winters in Tweed, Johnson first tested cold varieties from Austria and Germany. After investing \$20,000 in Riesling, only to see the grapes die, he scaled back, spending a quarter of that on Gruner Veltliner, with similar luck.

Turns out, the ideal grapes were closer to home – in French Canadian heritage-heirloom varieties from Québec, like Marechal Foch and St. Croix that grew along the St. Lawrence. These grapes hail from an earlier time, long before the standardization of the Canadian wine industry saw their vines ripped from the ground to make way for sure-bets like Merlot and Cabernet.

His research also led him to a cold-hardy red varietal, called Marquette, developed at the University of Minnesota for the relatively new northern wine industry.



Once his hand-planted, hand-picked vines bore fruit, he was eager to draw upon his brother's experience at the bigger wineries in Niagara and British Columbia.

"Look," his brother warned, "I can make merlot blindfolded, but I don't know this old French stuff. I don't know how to make wine out of these grapes and it's going to take a long time to figure out which barrel to use, which oak to use, which yeast to use and what style to make."

And, then – the revelation.

"To be quite honest, Sandor, everyone's laughing at you," Johnson recalled hearing, dumbfounded, as his brother continued. "They think this is a big joke. You're so far north. In Niagara, they're saying, 'What are you making? Chateau du Pine Cone?'"

With their reputations and family name at stake, the brothers vowed to let nothing but small-batch, high-quality wines leave their vineyard. They'd be free of tannins, sulphates and pesticides, which also meant if the grapes weren't good, they wouldn't be made into wine.

They took their time to figure it out – 17 years, in fact.

"We were the *Breaking Bad* of wine-making," Johnson said with a grin. "We were just trying to figure it out and come up with recipes that became our winners."

Those winners, bottled in 2015, have been well-received. Johnson's Marquette, in particular, has garnered high praise, including a presidential thumbs-up from Barack Obama who tried it at a political fundraising event.

Peter Ward, author and wine critic for the *Ottawa Citizen* for 29 years, noted the Marquette's "excellent fruit-acid-alcohol balance and lingering taste that can only be achieved



Sandor Johnson, BA'93 (English Language and Literature), met with U.S. President Barack Obama at a political fundraiser in 2011. Johnson's Marquette drew the interest and approval of the president when served at the event.

by controlling crop volume," an advantage Johnson holds as a small-batch vintner.

Doing what others deem remarkable or impossible is part of the creative ingenuity that sets Johnson and his winery apart. He's embraced the elements of his terrain, dynamiting a massive outcrop to create the perfect cave for aging wine beneath his winery.

The cave sits behind 700-pound solid hemlock doors hand-crafted by his cousin, Kelsey Moore, a blacksmith who also forged the 1,200-pound solid iron winery entrance gates that bear hand-pounded fleurs-de-lis and each letter of the winery name.

That hand-crafted detail flows throughout the property – from the stone walls he's laid by hand around his vineyard and the copper-topped gazebo he built to house his current tasting bar to the fountain and cherubs he had flown in from Florence, Italy.

For Johnson, Potter Settlements is not just a winery, but a destination.

"It's taken years and years of labour to get this right and I'm still working on it. I'm fortunate because of my modelling career, that I have the luxury of not bottling if the grapes aren't good. I just want to make good wine and have people come for an outing and experience." [WAG](#)

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# A *family* affair

## Daughters follow mother's lead of service to Western

BY TODD DEVLIN

Two decades had passed since the Rev. Cheryl Roach, BScN'78, graduated from Western University when she found herself back in London, strolling campus with her husband, the Rev. Allan Roach, and three daughters, then 12, 9 and 6 years old.

"I remember the campus was in full bloom – the tulips, the flowering crabs, the lilacs – it was riotous with colour," Roach recalled. "I said to the girls, 'Maybe you guys could come here someday. I had such an awesome experience here.'"

The seed was planted right then.

Flash forward to today and the last of those three girls is finishing her work at Western. Elizabeth, BMSc'08, MD'12, and Natalie, BScN'12, have completed their studies; the youngest, Meghan, BHSc'14, is now completing a master's degree in Physiotherapy.

Cumulatively, the four Roach women compiled 26 years of education at Western.

The university has become a family affair for the Roach family. But it all started with Cheryl, who in 1978, became the first member in her immediate family to graduate from university.

"My mother was a teacher – but those were the days of a one-year teacher's college. There were a lot of nurses (in the family) – but they went through the hospital program back in the day," Roach said. "They were educated women, for sure, but they didn't go to university."

After graduating with a Gold Medal in 1978, Roach started as a nurse at London's Victoria Hospital at the old South Street location for three years, and then spent years working in various areas of health care and promotion.

She then answered a different calling, joining her husband, a former RCMP officer, in the ministry. The couple opened a mission for the homeless in Peterborough, Ont. – the Brock Mission – still thriving today. In 1990, they moved to Nova Scotia, where Natalie and Meghan were born, and continued their ministry work in four small churches before moving to Timmins, Ont., in 1995.

"You move around a bit in pastoral ministry, but we thought we were in Timmins for good," said Roach. "We had no idea we'd be shifting and moving to London in 2000."

Before that move, Elizabeth announced she wanted to become a doctor.

"Now, you don't make a lot of money in pastoral ministry," Roach said, with a laugh. "In Grade 12, Elizabeth came to us and said, 'Mom, there's a \$10,000 scholarship if I get 95 percent in Grade 12. That's what I'm going to do.' I swallowed hard and I said, 'Okay, well, I know you can do it.' And she did it."

In fact, all three Roach daughters were awarded Continuing Admissions Scholarships.

And, like their mother, each earned prestigious awards during their Western careers. Elizabeth, 29, and Meghan, 26, received Faculty Gold Medals, and Natalie, 23, was awarded a Faculty Association Scholarship. (Roach's sister, Colleen Dawson (nee Westman), also earned a Gold Medal, graduating from Western with a degree in Education before enjoying a long teaching career.)

The financial assistance was a godsend for Cheryl and Allan, who saved diligently what they could for their daughters' future Western education – no matter how far away they were from London. Without the scholarships, though, there was "no way" they could have managed the full costs for all three girls.

"We're incredibly thankful for that," Roach said. "And we want to support Western for those financial initiatives for others."

Cheryl and Allan continue to reach others with their pastoral work at the Gathering Place in the Old East neighbourhood of London. To this day, Roach uses her nursing education every day. For her, that means serving others and making a difference in the community.

"It's the attitude of caring," she said. "That was so in the DNA of my program. They taught at a core level how to be 'other-centred,' and I soaked it up like a sponge. It was so life-giving, intellectually and emotionally." **WAG**



(PHOTO BY FRANK NEUFELD)

# Centre of conversation

BY HEATHER HUGHES

Leagh Turner,  
BA'95, embracing a  
career of growing,  
motivating people

(PHOTO BY FRANK NEUFELD)

Leagh Turner, BA'95 (English), loves being in the centre of it all.

"Because the world is so dependent on technology, and the evolution of business and commerce is so dependent on technology, being in technology means you are in the centre of a lot of really interesting and transformative conversations," she said. "That's what I really like about it."

As Chief Operating Officer for SAP Canada, Turner wants to make sure her employees are ready to respond to those conversations. She joined the company in 2008 as an account executive and has climbed the ranks to become a leader in a complex space that has one directive – help businesses run better.

"I learned it was never about the product you were selling; it was about meeting new people, understanding the issues they were wrestling with and providing them with help. I loved doing that," Turner said. "In learning to love helping people, I found myself in a customer-service industry and I've enjoyed every moment of every customer interaction I've ever had because it's been an amazing learning opportunity."

As one of the world's largest independent software manufacturers, SAP is an enterprise application software which aims to improve productivity by providing business insights and enabling people to work together more efficiently. A subsidiary of SAP SE, SAP Canada has offices in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Ottawa, as well as research-and-development labs in Vancouver, Toronto, Waterloo and Montreal.

Turner, stationed in Toronto, took an unorthodox path to a career in information technology. The former varsity swimmer and English major



(PHOTO BY FRANK NEUFELD)

joined the company because she saw it as a place to learn, develop and grow.

"The path for me wasn't clear. It happened as a result of bumping into a lot of things, trying things, finding things I enjoyed doing. And as I enjoyed doing things, I got to live a career of enjoying what I do and of growing and motivating people."

With few women in leadership positions in her field, Turner has found herself breaking new ground in many ways, bringing a unique perspective to the male-dominated industry.

"I'm not a pioneer here. But when you are among a few, the standard issues of juggling what can be a very complicated life are really hard in a changing IT or technology environment," she explained.

"I had early hurdles of trying to figure out how to balance my career with my family. I had early hurdles in working in a peer group who, frankly, didn't have the same issues or same balancing act. But,

the benefit is that in a really, hard, challenging, fast-paced environment, you bring a natural set of skills to problems other people may not bring. As a result, you can stand out from the crowd and can help contribute in a way other people may not be able to."

Turner believes leadership is about 'the team,' not 'the individual.' But in order to build a successful team and be a strong leader, she feels it is important to build a personal team of family, friends and mentors to offer support and encouragement.

"It's really important to build a team of people who challenge you personally, outside of work, in order to be a better leader – people who you talk to on a regular basis, who challenge your own thinking and stretch it and broaden it," she said. "The reality of any organization is that your thinking can become insular. It's really important as a leader to continue to nourish future thought and surround yourself with people who do that."

Fuelled by the diverse thoughts of her personal team, Turner is able to bring new ideas to her role. She also looks for diversity among her professional colleagues – in age, gender, background, bias and previous experience – who bring different ways of thinking to the team.

In order to understand a customer's need, organizations should look like their customer base, she noted. Programs such as Autism at Work, a company plan to have at least 1 per cent of the global workforce be people who are working on the autism spectrum, is an example of approaches to sourcing talented employees who offer different skillsets. SAP also collaborates with the not-for-profit organization GIRLsmarts4tech, which aims to encourage more young women to enter STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) fields.

Building a strong team of employees means Turner can have confidence in getting "out of the way" to allow her staff to flourish.

"It is important to try and create an environment that is fearless, meaning people are able to think of things without consequence, without fear of repercussions," she said. "Give them an opportunity to be super creative and know that if they don't succeed, that's OK. Failure is part of the job."

Turner doesn't restrict herself to the corner office. Having experience at various levels of the company, she is prepared – and willing – to abandon rank and title to dig into the details and be part of solving a problem.

"But, to have a leader that acts that way all of the time, gets in the way of the creative thought of the team and, frankly, means the team will only continue to solve things in the way they always have," she explained. "As a leader, it is important

that although you may have those skills, you get out of the way and watch the team, give them opportunities to come together and give them big, difficult problems to chew on, and really watch them as they shape the strategy."

In her field, Turner has a front seat to a major shift in global economies.

Small start-up companies are disrupting industries by cutting out the middlemen and offering an alternative to many of the Fortune 500 companies who have been doing the same thing for generations, she said. The conservative nature of Canada has left the country playing catch-up, instead of staying ahead of the curve. These challenges mean Turner is primarily focused on spurring Canadian organizations to "wake up to dramatic change, understand what is possible and create plans to get ahead of it; and to fund those plans and use technology to get there faster."

"Analysts say 40 per cent of Fortune 500 organizations will cease to exist. That is a big statement that means there is massive, industry-based disintermediation happening," she said. "This is a huge problem for us, as Canadians, but also a huge problem for the IT industry, which, frankly, is an enabler and accelerator of transformation and change."

**" IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT AS A LEADER TO CONTINUE TO NOURISH FUTURE THOUGHT AND SURROUND YOURSELF WITH PEOPLE WHO DO THAT."**

When Turner came to Western, she didn't know what career path she wanted to pursue. Rather, she spent her formative years learning and enjoying the experiences that broadened her perspective of the world and fostered a love of lifelong learning.

"My English degree helped me improve my communication skills and become a significantly better, down-the-road leader as a result of being able to communicate and motivate through language and writing," she said.

"It was an amazing place for building friendships and networks that last an entire lifetime," she continued, noting relationships founded at Western make up the 'personal team' who support her today. "If you look at education as being the foundation of the house you will ultimately build for your own life, Western was absolutely that for me; it was an amazing foundation."

As a varsity athlete, the former swim team member learned lessons about work/life balance, and the diverse faculty and students gave Turner a desire to travel and surround herself with great thinkers.

"I didn't know the direction I was going to go. I viewed life as an opportunity to really learn and I knew there was so much richness in that regard after having left Western," she said. "What I love most (about my job) is it is ever-changing and there's incredible opportunity for learning. If you love to learn and you are OK with not knowing where it will lead you, you can have a really great career." **WAG**

By Fred DeVries

# The fortunate life of Jennifer Robson

A war historian as a father. A fiction lover as a mother. A childhood encounter with Canadian literary legends. Jennifer Robson's life has led to her success as a writer of wartime novels.

**N**ovelist Jennifer Robson lives in another century, in an era imbued with war, conflict and loss, in a time filled with uncertainty. She lives there to give voice to stories of the Great War.

"At the foundation of what I'm trying to write is my attempt to honour the sacrifice of the people who served in the military and the civilians who lived through those days," said Robson, BA'92.

Her 'attempt' has become somewhat of a publishing sensation. In January 2016, every book in Robson's First World War trilogy – *Somewhere in France*, *After the War is Over* and *Moonlight in Paris* – sat on the best-seller's list. That's a feat no other Canadian author has ever achieved, and prompted the Globe and Mail to dub Robson as "the most successful Canadian author you've never heard of."

"I can't imagine anything being more horrible than being recognized in public," she said with a chuckle. "I love that my books do well but I love the idea most people have no clue who I am. That's just fine with me. I don't want to have to put on dark glasses to leave the house."

Being a relatively unheard-of author suits 46-year-old Robson. "It's better to be unknown and to have people discover you," she added.

In fact, she seems modestly astonished at her success: "Maybe it's just that I'm draped in horse shoes. I wake up every morning pinching myself. And reminding myself that this is really happening. How lucky am I?"

Robson's interest in historical fiction came early in

life. Her father, the acclaimed First World War historian Stuart Robson, taught for decades at Trent University in Peterborough, Ont. As a young girl, Robson heard him recount war stories at the dinner table, sometimes first-hand accounts from mature students in his classes who were veterans of both world wars.

"I always had a sense of how important their sacrifices were," she said. "In that way, I was singularly fortunate."

Her mother, Wendy Robson, a family lawyer and judge, loved fiction, particularly historical works. When Robson was a teenager, her mother suggested she read *Testament of Youth* by Vera Brittain (a memoir that captures the impact of the First World War on women in British society).

"When I finally worked up the courage to start writing in my late 30s, it was the idea that I would tell a story of a woman whose life is changed by the Great War."

Robson's early hesitation to write could have been ironically planted by the Canadian literary icons she met as a young girl. "In the 1970s, my parents had some wonderful, wonderful friends like Margaret Laurence and W.O. Mitchell," she said. "To sit at the knee of Margaret Laurence and to be in her presence, I'm still awestruck. I was privileged enough to meet her. The same for W.O., who was such a lovely, lovely man. Meeting and knowing these writers when I was young, that set a pretty high bar in terms of thinking I'll never be able to write like them. Should I even try?"

**WHEN ROBSON ENROLLED** in King's University College at Western, becoming a writer was not on her list, and neither was studying history. Her father recommended she take just one history course; she signed



(PHOTO BY FRANK NEUFELD)

up for European history with Professor Paul Webb. “He was an extraordinary lecturer and electrifying in how he made everything so interesting. And I was hooked,” she said. “From that first lecture in the first week of my first year at King’s, I knew it was history.”

She found something more when she took an English class with Professor Lorraine DiCicco. “I thought my writing was pretty good for an undergraduate, so I was kind of aghast when I got a B on one of my first papers in her course,” Robson said. “She had gone through and carefully corrected my grammar throughout the paper – the equivalent of a fine edit that must have taken her so much time. I learned more about writing from Professor DiCicco than any other single teacher I’ve had.”

High praise from a student who went on from King’s to receive the Commonwealth Scholarship and to complete a doctorate in British economic and social history from St. Antony’s College at the University of Oxford.

“I had an extraordinarily rich undergraduate experience at King’s that prepared me really well, I must say, for graduate school,” she says. “I feel I didn’t stumble at all when I landed in Oxford. I had been equipped with the best possible, all-around humanities-based undergraduate degree.”

“In interviews I’ve done, people are quite interested in talking about Oxford because it seems quite glamorous. But I wouldn’t have studied there if it hadn’t been for my years at King’s. And would I be enjoying the career I have now without King’s? I’m not so sure.”

**SHE WENT TO OXFORD** fully intending to become an academic. When she earned her PhD in 1997, there were no opportunities to

teach British history. She worked in journalism and publishing, including a stint at Penguin Canada before becoming a freelance editor in 2003.

While at home caring for her young children, Robson considered what she wanted to do next in life – and it wasn’t to continue freelance editing.

“All along I knew it. I knew I wanted to write a book but I just wasn’t brave enough to tell myself, let alone anyone else,” she said. “There’s been this tug on the sleeves of my heart for years, like a voice saying, ‘Why don’t you write a book?’”

*“There’s been this tug on the sleeves of my heart for years, like a voice saying, ‘Why don’t you write a book?’”*

After working in the publishing industry, Robson understood the challenges of not only writing a book, but getting it published and being a success. The odds weren’t necessarily in her favour. Only a handful of writers find a literary agent, sign a deal with a publisher and sell more than a minimal number of copies. “That’s no reason not to try. The worst thing that could happen is that I write a book and only my friends and family read it. The book would still be there.”

In early 2009, Robson finished writing *Somewhere in France* – a novel about Lady Elizabeth Neville-Ashford who breaks with established tradition in Britain to become an ambulance driver stationed at a field hospital in France during the First World War.

She submitted the story to nearly 30 literary agents, and was turned down every single time. After reading dispiriting responses, such as ‘this is a waste of time’ and ‘no one will read this book,’ she shelved the book. “I was so mortified by the initial failure that I let it paralyze me,” she said.

Then *Downton Abbey* came along. The TV show’s storyline around the period of the Great War piqued an interest in

British history and society – the very era of Robson’s book. In 2012, on the firm advice of a friend, she approached the next 10 literary agents on her list – and the response was starkly different. She signed with an agent, landed an editor and sold her book to a publisher. Her first novel was released at the same time a new season of *Downton Abbey* started in North America.

Robson then waited.

“I steeled myself for failure. I knew I had achieved something by having a book published. No one can take that away from me,” she says. “But I was prepared to not sell many books because most books don’t sell many copies. I imagined my dad buying 1,000 just to make me feel better.”

The fretting was for naught. In the first week, her book reached the bestseller’s list. Now, *Somewhere in France* is into its 13<sup>th</sup> printing, with more than 100,000 copies in print. “That’s 100 times better than I thought it would actually do,” she laughs.

Her self-deprecating humour, in some ways, keeps Robson grounded – as does working from her home office while juggling life as a wife and mother of two children. “I’ve said to my closest friends and my family, if you get a whiff of entitlement or prima donna behaviour from me, please set me straight before I become some entitled monster that would be horrifying to me,” she said.

“Dwelling on my success can be paralyzing in a bad way. And it would seem un-Canadian to me,” she added, in jest. “The last thing I need to do is toot my own horn.”

**AFTER HER DEBUT** novel, Robson wrote two more best-sellers – *After the War is Over* in 2015 and *Moonlight in Paris* in 2016 – completing her trilogy.

While many narratives about the Great War focus on men, Robson’s books place women as the central characters – women who start off lacking agency and an understanding of their worth.

“By the end of the novels, they have greater confidence in their own abilities, they’ve blossomed with a certain degree of power over their lives,” she said. “Not because someone

came along and rescued them, or swept them off their feet and they lived happily ever after, but because they were courageous and made difficult choices along the way.”

In many ways, her heroines pay tribute to one woman who has never read her books – her mother. She passed away in 1991, at the age of 51, just weeks after being diagnosed with cancer. Robson was 21 years old and in her final year of university.

“Losing her was devastating for me,” she said. “I think back and I’m fortunate to have had a mother who thought the world of me and my sister – and who totally believed in us.”

Her mother’s memory is never far away. In *After the War is Over*, Robson’s main character, Charlotte, draws parallels to her mother. “Charlotte’s determination to be in service to others, to make the world a better place, to put her needs secondary to others, those are taken entirely from my mom’s character,” she said.

“There’s no greater compliment to me than when I hear people say they’ve given my book to their mom as a birthday or Mother’s Day gift,” Robson added. “I feel as though I’m going to faint – that makes me so happy. Not least because I would give anything for my own mom to be able to read these books.”

Her father, the historian, is a booster and supporter. He read a draft of the first book before it was published; Robson wanted to make sure the history was right. When he came to a part where tragedy strikes Lilly, the main character, he “got sucked in and found it so overwhelming that he started to cry.”

From her family upbringing to her university experience, from her childhood encounters with Canadian novelists to her literary achievements, she’s grateful for every moment. **WAG**

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courtesy of Ruth Buchanan BA 1955

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# No debating his success

BY KERI FERGUSON

Long before drawing 700,000 listeners to CBC Radio each week, Steve Patterson was behind the mic at CHRW/Radio Western. *The Debaters* moderator came to Western to study business after first trying law – and, as it turns out, stand-up, thanks to sneaky roommates who signed him up for a Yuk Yuk’s amateur comedy night – at York University.

But it was at Western, where Patterson, BA’94, “found my people.”

“I remember getting the Barenaked Ladies cassette demo at the radio station. It was available to all of us there, but I was the one, I mean I played it every week on my show. So, I don’t want to say the Barenaked Ladies owe me everything, but certainly a substantial portion. I’ve met (band front-man) Ed Robertson since then and I’ve told him that and he seems to be willing to share the credit.”

That sense of humour, which he “was forced to develop to survive as the youngest of five boys,” proved useful. Over the years, his fresh, observational humour, coupled with his extensive knowledge of current events resonated with fans across Canada, Ireland, Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom and the United Arab Emirates.

It also did not go unnoticed by comic legend Steve Martin, who after seeing Patterson’s performance at Just For Laughs in 2010 quipped, “If I’d known he was going to be THAT good, I would have cancelled him.”

Patterson was named Best Male Stand-Up Comedian in 2011 and 2013 at the Canadian Comedy Awards (CCA) and his comedy album, *This is Not Debatable*, based on his one-man theatre show of the same name, earned him two CCA nominations in 2015 for Best One Person Show and Best Taped Live Performance.

As host of HGTV Canada’s *I Wrecked My House*, Patterson, who professes to be no handyman himself, earned a Canadian

Screen Award nomination.

“I don’t think there are enough opportunities in Canada for comedians to showcase that they are not just funny, but also very smart,” he said. “Sometimes they put out some great ideas that people don’t quite give them credit for. I don’t quite know why the news programs in Canada haven’t figured out that funny people on the news would make more people watch.”

It’s a format he’s currently shopping around, having co-produced a demo called SmartAss-ociates, which combines comedy and current affairs.

“We’ve extended the concept of *The Debaters*,” Patterson explained, “but have made it a bit more current and closer in tone to *The Colbert Report* or *Last Week Tonight*. I bring in stand-up comedians to do a customized set on a particular topic, interview the experts and then bring the comedians back on and we do a short panel.”

The demo was shot in Ottawa this past spring and featured investor David Chilton, Conservative finance critic Lisa Raitt, VICE reporter Justin Ling, speed skater Ivanie Blondin and Jordan Sinclair of Tweed Marijuana Inc.

“I want to show people both sides,” Patterson said, noting there are some who “wouldn’t want to hear what Lisa Raitt has to say about politics or otherwise because she’s a Conservative finance critic, but, she was a great guest. She’s an interesting, smart lady and it was nice to see another side of her when, because she’s from Cape Breton, she taught me some Cape Breton smash-talk on the show.”

He’s still on the road with *The Debat-*

*ers*, which just celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> season, and feels lucky when his wife and agent Nancy, and their two-year-old daughter, Scarlett can come along. He also just released his first book, *The Book of Letters I Didn’t Know Where To Send*, a compilation of the letters that became a necessary staple of his act.

“I love keeping my comedy current but that means material doesn’t stay fresh very long and I can’t rely on one set to travel with. So I started writing the letters to balance out what I make up as I go along and to have something that will still be funny in a couple of months.”

It was also an opportunity to show he could write funny material, which put him in the enviable position of having a publisher pursue him. “They said, ‘You should put these letters in a book,’ which is great because it never would have happened if it was left up to me.”

His letters are to real people, groups and inanimate objects. In one, he wishes his 9-year-old self would know everything will be all right. Could his 9-year-old self ever have imagined what was ahead?

“I did not see myself in this position. I didn’t really think that comedy could be a job, figuring I was headed to a law degree and then business school.”

“Western was a good training ground for me,” Patterson continued. “The process of going to university, working with and bouncing ideas off of other people and finding my kindred spirits with the radio crew and networking, that was the atmosphere I enjoyed most. The process of it all helped me for sure to do stand-up comedy and relate to people, and really, I don’t know of too many jobs you can do without relating to people.”



(PHOTO BY JOHN HRYNIUK)

## NEW RELEASES FROM WESTERN ALUMNI



Visit [alumnigazette.ca](http://alumnigazette.ca) to read summaries of each new release.

**1) Lucy Tries Sports series**  
by Lisa Bowes, BA’88

**2) Hamburger**  
by Daniel Perry, BA’06

**3) Redirection** by Brian T. W. Way, MA’76, PhD’92,

**4) First Green Wave: Pollution Probe and the Origins of Environmental Activism in Ontario**  
by Ryan O’Connor, PhD’11 (History)

**5) The Patients’ Time Has Come: Listening to Patients will Redefine Health Care Safety and Revitalize Service Delivery** by Elizabeth Rankin, BSc’79 (Nursing)

**6) Game Changers**  
by Dr. Jean Chamberlain, Medical Resident ’91-96,

**7) Guns, Fire and Hoses**  
by Susan S. Smith, BSc’84 (Physics)

**8) MKT: The Earlier Years**  
by Morley Thomas, BA’41



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Be Remarkable.

# Reunion Weekend

SEPT 30  
to OCT 2  
**2016**



Reconnecting, reminiscing and reliving your time as a Western student – that's what Reunion Weekend is all about. There will be Faculty-specific events for alumni celebrating reunion years and other events open to all alumni.

**Join us for a weekend filled with purple pride.**

## Featured events open to all alumni, include:

### 42ND ANNUAL ALUMNI AWARDS OF MERIT DINNER

Celebrate and recognize your fellow alumni who are making a difference.

### FOOTBALL GAME & SOUTH END ZONE LUNCHEON

Come for lunch and stay to cheer on your Western Mustangs as they take on the Laurier Golden Hawks.

### GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY DINNER

Join your classmates from 1966 and earlier for an elegant evening featuring a three-course meal, musical entertainment and presentation of anniversary/reunion pins.

### PORTRAITS, SELF AND OTHERS (IT'S COMPLICATED)

McIntosh Gallery will be offering this exhibition of paintings, photographs, video and sculpture examining diverse approaches to portraiture through the work of over twenty contemporary Canadian and international artists.

Check out all the Reunion Weekend events at:  
[alumni.westernu.ca/reunion-weekend](http://alumni.westernu.ca/reunion-weekend)



# HOMECOMING SATURDAY

Oct 22  
**2016**



Break out your purple gear and come home to watch your Western Mustangs take on the rival McMaster Marauders at TD Stadium. Join us for a Tailgate Celebration taking place before the game featuring food, live music, giveaways and family fun.

In the evening, join us at The Grand Theatre for **Joni Mitchell: River**, a theatrical presentation that celebrates the music of one of Canada's most important artists, featuring Tony-award nominee and Western alumna **Louise Pitre, BMus'79, DMus'06**.

For information about Homecoming Saturday events, visit:  
[alumni.westernu.ca/homecoming-saturday](http://alumni.westernu.ca/homecoming-saturday)

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- Exclusive VIP End Zone experience during the game

For more information on the contest and rules, visit:  
[alumni.westernu.ca/sweepstake](http://alumni.westernu.ca/sweepstake)

# WIN YOUR TUITION!

Western Alumni is giving current students who attend the Homecoming game on **Saturday, October 22**, the chance to **win free tuition for a year!**

**Grand Prize\*** one year free tuition  
\*value of \$8,000

**2nd Prize** one year Campus Meal Plan

**3rd Prize** \$1,000 gift card for the Book Store at Western

For more information on the contest and rules, visit: [alumni.westernu.ca/sweepstake](http://alumni.westernu.ca/sweepstake)



# Speak up and help Western continue to be great



By David Simmonds, BA'07

**T**old well, stories shape, connect and uncover. Great stories help us find our voice.

As I begin my time as President of Western's Alumni

Association, I'm energized by the story we have to tell. Our story – in all of its shapes, sizes and colours – is unique. Alumni, students, faculty, staff and community voices make the Western story special.

Your voice is central and offering your perspective is vital. When I reflect on all the good we do at Western Alumni, I'm focused on how we stay focused on the alumni voice so that it can shape a post-Western experience as dynamic and relevant as the student experience at Western.

As graduates, we benefited from leading teaching, research and learning experiences. As leaders,

there's a role for us to lend our voices to building the good name of Western. Our Association, and its hundreds of volunteers, has created a space for alumni of all ages and stages to come back and say, 'I've got an idea about how Western can continue to be great.'

Like you, I care deeply about our university. I invite you to share how you see Western serving its students, alumni, community and the world. Public institutions play a powerful role in social change. We have an obligation to cultivate and disseminate cultural, social or economic capital. Join me in offering perspectives that move us collectively forward.

## As leaders, there's a role for us to lend our voices to building the good name of Western.

Stories are powerful and the ability to tell them is privilege. Our Association is about creating memories that live as stories. Some of my favourite memories are from Western. Medway, Weldon Library and Thames Hall – each holds special and personal memories that serve as reminders of impactful and personal events on campus. They are reminders about the transformative power this institution has on people's lives.

Join me in celebrating our connections to Western. And help us by offering up your voice.

*David Simmonds, BA'07 (Political Science), assumed the role of Alumni Association President following the organization's Annual General Meeting in June.*

## ALUMNI EVENTS

Find us on Facebook

Connect with old friends and make some new ones at Western Alumni events happening in locations around the world. Many of our events are family friendly and offer a great opportunity to enjoy the company of fellow alumni. Our full events listing can be found at [alumni.uwo.ca/connect/events](http://alumni.uwo.ca/connect/events)

## Come celebrate our extraordinary alumni

Join us Reunion Weekend 2016 at the 42<sup>nd</sup> annual Alumni Awards Dinner where Western honours our extraordinary alumni during a fabulous evening over a three-course meal. Honourees of the Alumni Awards of Merit, Don Wright Faculty of Music Alumni Awards and Western Mustangs Athletic Alumni Awards will be recognized this evening. The reception begins at 5:30 p.m. Friday, Sept. 30, in the Great Hall, Somerville House. Tickets are \$90 per person; eight people per table.

Purchase tickets online by **Friday, Sept. 23**, at [alumni.westernu.ca](http://alumni.westernu.ca).

The honourees include:

**Hafeez Amarshi**, BA'95, MA'99, Alumni Awards of Merit - Community Service;  
**Dr. Melanie Peacock**, MBA'90, Alumni Awards of Merit - Professional Achievement;  
**Shafin Diamond Tejani**, BA'01, Alumni Awards of Merit - Young Alumni;  
**Gary West**, BA'68, Alumni Awards of Merit - Dr. Ivan Smith Award;  
**Thérèse Gadoury**, BA'73 (Honors Music), Don Wright Faculty of Music Alumni Wall of Fame;  
**Kevin McMillan**, BMus'83, Don Wright Faculty of Music Alumni Wall of Fame;  
**Craig Boydell**, Western Mustangs Sports Hall of Fame (Builder);  
**Andy Fantuz**, Western Mustangs Sports Hall of Fame;  
**Jim Grozelle**, HBA'03, Western Mustangs Sports Hall of Fame;  
**Jennifer Kryszak**, BSc'05, MCISc'08, Western Mustangs Sports Hall of Fame;  
**Cathy Lund**, BSc'85, Western Mustangs Sports Hall of Fame;  
**Sara Nathanson**, BA'98, Western Mustangs Sports Hall of Fame;  
**Janet Thompson**, BSc'72, MEd'81, Western Mustangs Sports Hall of Fame; and  
**Andy Van Ruyven**, BA'77, Western Mustangs Sports Hall of Fame.



## Alumni Career Management

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Western alumni now have exclusive access to opportunities and tools designed to help you **advance** in your career or **transition** to a new one. As a Western alumna or alumnus, you can:

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- engage on Western's exclusive Ten Thousand Coffees hub
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- discover how to stay in touch with fellow alumni on LinkedIn

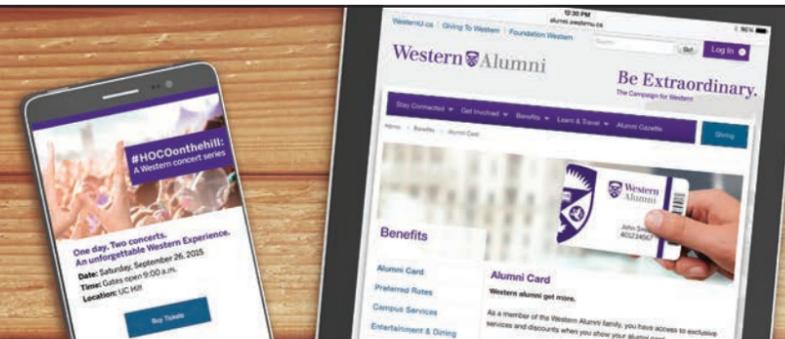
Whether you are a new graduate or experienced professional, Western can help.

To learn more and view our events, visit [alumni.westernu.ca/careermanagement](http://alumni.westernu.ca/careermanagement)

Western Alumni

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Email is the primary way we communicate with our alumni to let them know about all the benefits available to them. Updating your email address ensures you receive the latest news from Western, information about alumni services and discounts and details about Homecoming and alumni events in your area.

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And you can also request a **Western Alumni card** to gain access to exclusive services and discounts.

Questions? Contact [alumni@uwo.ca](mailto:alumni@uwo.ca) for more information.

Western Alumni

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**Robert Nash, BA'66**  
Western Mustang and Athletics Donor

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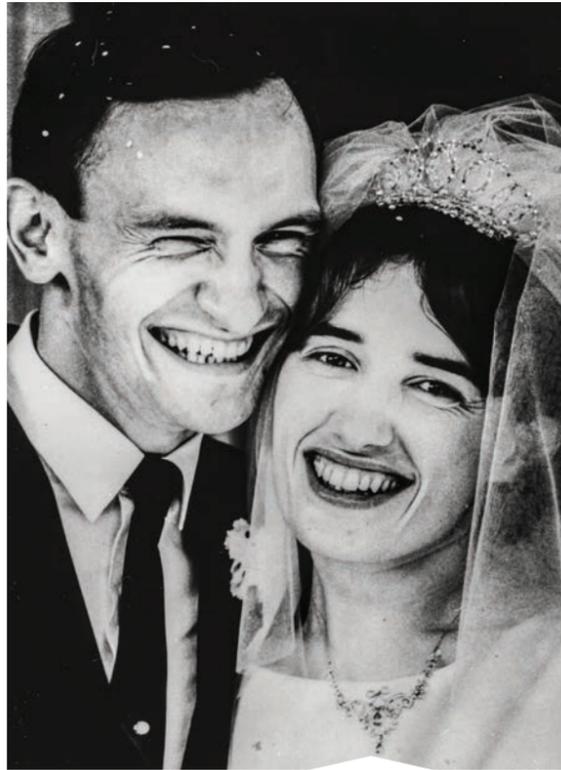


## ALUMNI CLASS NOTES

**PLEASE NOTE:** Class Notes notices, like all portions of the print magazine, appear in an online version of *Alumni Gazette* and the contents may turn up during a web search. Publicly available personal information may be collected for the purpose of updating alumni records as well as for the purpose of recognizing outstanding achievement or distinguished service by alumni in University publications. Western respects your privacy. At any time you have the right to request that your personal information cease to be used to recognize outstanding achievement or distinguished service in University publications. For more information or to make a request about the kinds of contact you would like to receive, please contact the Operations Administrator, Advancement Services, 519.661.4176 or 1-800.420.7519, fax 519.661.4182, e-mail [advser@uwo.ca](mailto:advser@uwo.ca).



The paths of three influential Western alumnae crossed in May during the 69<sup>th</sup> session of the World Health Assembly (WHA) in Geneva – **Dr. Margaret Chan, BA'73, MD'77, DSc'99**, left, Director-General of the World Health Organization; **Jane Philpott, MD'84**, middle, Minister of Health for Canada; and **Rosemary McCarney, LLB'77**, Canadian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations and the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. WHA delegates agreed to a series of resolutions and decisions on air pollution, chemicals, the health workforce, childhood obesity, violence and noncommunicable diseases. "At the start of the World Health Assembly, I was in a meeting on global health and three of us discovered we were all graduates of Western," McCarney wrote. "We agreed that it would be appropriate and fun to send it to someone at the University who might enjoy seeing what three of your grads are up to and working on together."



**64** **Norma Exley (Stanbury)**, BA'64, Bed'90, and **Bill Exley**, BA'62, MA'72, celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on June 25. They met at Western in 1960. They are pictured here on June 25, 1966.

### AWARDS & HONOURS

Western faculty member **Tsun-Kong Sham, PhD'75**, along with 11 other alumni members of the Western community were named to the Order of Canada by Governor General of Canada David Johnston on June 30.

Sham, a world-class materials chemist, is the authority when it comes to the application of synchrotron radiation to materials science. His area of research is also of strategic importance to the university, anchoring its strength in materials for sustainable energy.

As a Tier I Canada Research Chair, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and recipient of the prestigious John C. Polanyi Prize of the Canadian Society for Chemistry, Sham has been vital as part of the administration of the Canadian

Light Source, a national facility in Saskatoon, as well as scientific director of the Canadian Synchrotron Radiation Facility at the Synchrotron Radiation Center (University of Wisconsin-Madison) since 1998.

In addition to Sham, other members of the Western community named an Officer to the Order included **Roberta Jamieson**, LLB'76, LLD'93; **John McGarry**, MA'82, PhD'87 (Political Science); **Dennis O'Connor**, DCL'03; **Warren Winkler**, LLD'11; and Economics Professor Emeritus **Ronald Wonnacott**, BA'55, LLD'01.

Members of the Western community named a Member of the Order included **Geoffrey Battersby**, BA'57, MD'61; **Francoise Baylis**, MA'84, PhD'89 (Philosophy); **Gerald Fagan**, BA'61 (Music); **Andrew Pringle**, BA'72 (History); **Michael Walker**, MA'67, PhD'71



**78** Western turned out to celebrate Ontario Medical Association President Dr. **Virginia Walley**, MD'78, back row, middle, during the OMA Presidential Installation Gala on April 30. Pictured are, back row, from left, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry professor Dr. **Mike Shkrum**, MD'78; Schulich adjunct professor Dr. **David Shum**; Walley; Schulich professor emerita Dr. **Mary Ellen Kirk**, MD'64; and Schulich professor Dr. **C. Meg McLachlin**, MD'87; from row, from left, **Susan Shkrum**, BA'77, and Annie Shum.

(Economics), LLD'03; and **Sandra Ellen Marie Wilson**, MA'77, BA'72.

The Order of Canada, one of the country's highest civilian honours, was established in 1967 to recognize outstanding achievements as authors, medical researchers, social advocates, business leaders, or politicians for their dedication and service to the community and the nation.

The 113 new appointees to the Order of Canada include one Companion, 27 Officers and 85 Members. These appointments were made on

the recommendation of the Advisory Council for the Order of Canada. Over the last 49 years, more than 6,500 people from all sectors of society have been invested into the Order.

### 1950s

**57** At 81 years old, **F. Ian Wood**, BA'57, was the oldest of 341 competitors in Defi300, billed as the World's Longest Slalom Race, held in Vercorein, Switzerland, March 26. The course boasted 300 gates on a vertical drop of over 1,000 metres, a Guinness Book of Records first. Ian placed 91<sup>st</sup> overall.



**1957** **Elvis Presley** makes his 7<sup>th</sup> & final appearance on the *Ed Sullivan Show*



**82** **William 'Bill' Kosar**, LLB'82, was recently named as one of McMaster University's Distinguished Alumni for 2016. Last year, he was named one of the Top 100 Corporate Counsel for Africa. Kosar is pictured here at the General Counsel Powerlist Africa Forum in Johannesburg, September 2015.



**85** **Scott Weldon**, BA'85, left, was recently named the 2016 Alliance Hockey Coach of the Year for his outstanding contributions, involvement and service. "Award recipients have displayed commitment to the ideals of Alliance Hockey, worked tirelessly for the improvement of the game at their local association level and made a notable impact on both the game and the players involved," said Daryl Villeneuve, right, Director of Hamilton Minor Hockey Council.

### 1960s

**60** **Donald M. Henderson**, Q.C., BA'60, was recognized by The Law Society of Upper Canada as a member in good standing for more than 50 years and granted membership for life.

### 1970s

**74** **Karen J. Harding (Karen Stoskopf Harding)**, BA'74, celebrated 30-plus years as an elected member and volunteer archivist of the Sculptors Society of Canada with a major solo exhibition at the Canadian Sculpture Centre, Toronto, in September 2015.



**1974** **Happy Days** begins an 11 year run on ABC

The retrospective featured 33 sculptures in bronze, encaustic and mixed media dating from 1980 to the present. The event also coincided with the first anniversary of the unveiling of Harding's 8-foot stainless steel *Jubilee Peace Globe*, celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Advent Lutheran Church, Toronto.

**76** **Peter Jedicke**, BA'76, MA'97 (Philosophy), recently added two new Western connections among the stars. The Fanshawe College professor, along with his brother, are responsible for naming dozens of asteroids after Western connections. His two latest names submitted and accepted are Asteroid 21350 **Bill Gardner**, named for Bill Gardner, BSc'97 (Physics), BEd'98, an amateur astronomer who works as a high school teacher in Ingersoll, and Asteroid 21367 **EdwardPleva**, named for Edward Pleva, the legendary Geography professor.

**79** **Elizabeth Rankin**, BSc'79 (Nursing), published the book *The Patients' Time Has Come: Listening to Patients will Redefine Health Care Safety and Revitalize Service Delivery*. Books can be purchased at [ElizabethRankin.com](http://ElizabethRankin.com).

### 1980s

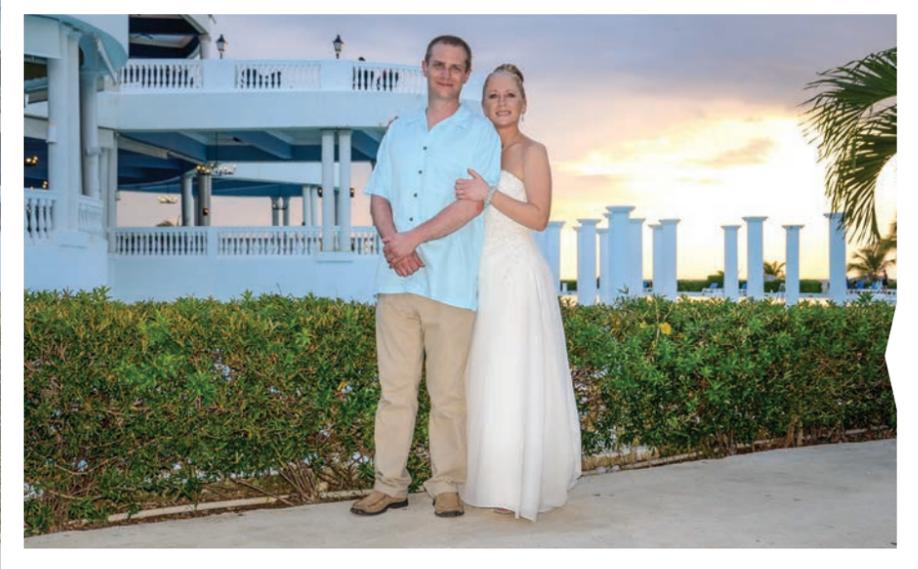
**84** After 31 years as with Lakehead Public Schools (Music and French), **Michael Watral**, BMus'84, BEd'85, has retired. He plans to keep busy purging papers and clothes, getting his house in shape and, hopefully, travelling to new and interesting destinations with family and friends.

**85** **Glenn Stevens**, who retires this month after a decade as Governor of the Reserve Bank of Australia, said he was "humbled" by being among recipients of the highest award in the Queen's Birthday Honours. Stevens, MA'85, LLD'14, a long-time Sylvania Waters resident, was among those who received a Companion (AC) in the General Division of the Order of Australia. He is one of 13 people to be awarded an AC this year for "achievement and merit of the highest degree in eminent service to Australia or to humanity at large."

**86** **Ed Zynomirski**, BSc'86, President of ECHO Power Equipment Canada, was named Vice-President of Sales for ECHO Incorporated in Lake Zurich, Ill. Sales responsibilities include North and Latin America.



**96** Ever wish Gemini Award-winning HGTV host **Bryan Baeumler**, BA'96, would come to your house? Now he can ... available at all Lowe's stores across Canada is the Official Bryan Baeumler bobble-head. This little guy may not be able to swing a hammer like the real thing, but he makes the perfect gift for the handymen and women on your list, as well as the ones who only think they are.



**96** **Jilaine Ferguson**, BA'96, recently married Stephen Gate on April 1 in Jamaica.



**00** When Aerosmith frontman Steven Tyler released his first-ever solo album, *We're All Somebody From Somewhere*, in July, he added a little purple into the mix of the 15-song release. Jingle Punks Chief Creative Officer **Jared Gutstadt**, BA'00, lower left, penned the third track on the album, *Hold On (Won't Let Go)*, along with Tyler, Jason Boyd and Jeff Peters.

**02 Christopher Costello**, BACS'02, is expanding his Escape Room business to Windsor, after opening and running Exodus Escape Rooms in London for 15 months.



## 1990s

**90 Fusun Kilic**, MSc'90 (Biochemistry), PhD'95 (Biochemistry), a University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) researcher, was selected to organize a new meeting at the Keystone Symposia focusing on the role of serotonin outside of the central nervous system. Kilic, an associate professor in the UAMS College of Medicine's Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, successfully pitched *Frontiers of Serotonin Beyond the Brain*, which will be held in Spring 2018. She is the first UAMS researcher selected to hold such a Keystone Symposia conference.

Kilic earned her Bachelor of Science in chemistry from Bogazici University in Istanbul, Turkey. She graduated with both a masters and a doctorate in biochemistry and molecular biology from Western. She completed a postdoctoral fellowship at East Tennessee State University and worked as a postdoctoral associate at

Yale University. In less than 14 years, Kilic published more than 25 manuscripts on serotonin in peripheral systems at very prestigious journals including *PNAS*, *JBC* and *Nature*. Her recent collaboration with scientists at St. Jude's Children Hospital was published in *Molecular Cell* on serotonin in autophagy.

**91** Algoma University recently recognized **Alanna Bondar**, BA'91, with a memorial plaque, trellis and a pedestrian square. The late professor's family and friends gathered June 3 as Piazza Alanna was dedicated outside the campus' North Wing. Poet, educator, knitter, quilter, potter, hiker, gardener, swimmer, ecocritic and ecofeminist scholar, Bondar was a founding member of The Association for Literature, Environment and Culture in Canada. She died on Friday, August 8, 2014 at the age of 46.

**91 Dr. Jean Chamberlain**, Medical Resident'91-96, Executive Director of Save the Mothers, released her latest book, *Game Changers*, this summer. Chamberlain has been working in Uganda with her husband Thomas Froese and three kids for nearly 12 years. She was inducted into the Order of Canada in 2015. Her book is available through the website [savethemothers.org](http://savethemothers.org) or contact her directly [jchamber@mcmaster.ca](mailto:jchamber@mcmaster.ca).

**92 Mario Paura**, LLB'92, was appointed Head of Real Estate Department in Toronto by Stikeman Elliott.

**98 Nga Tuyet Luu**, BSc'98, started Inner Peace Osteopathy in Toronto, which is celebrating its second anniversary. Luu is now an Osteopathic Manual Practitioner.

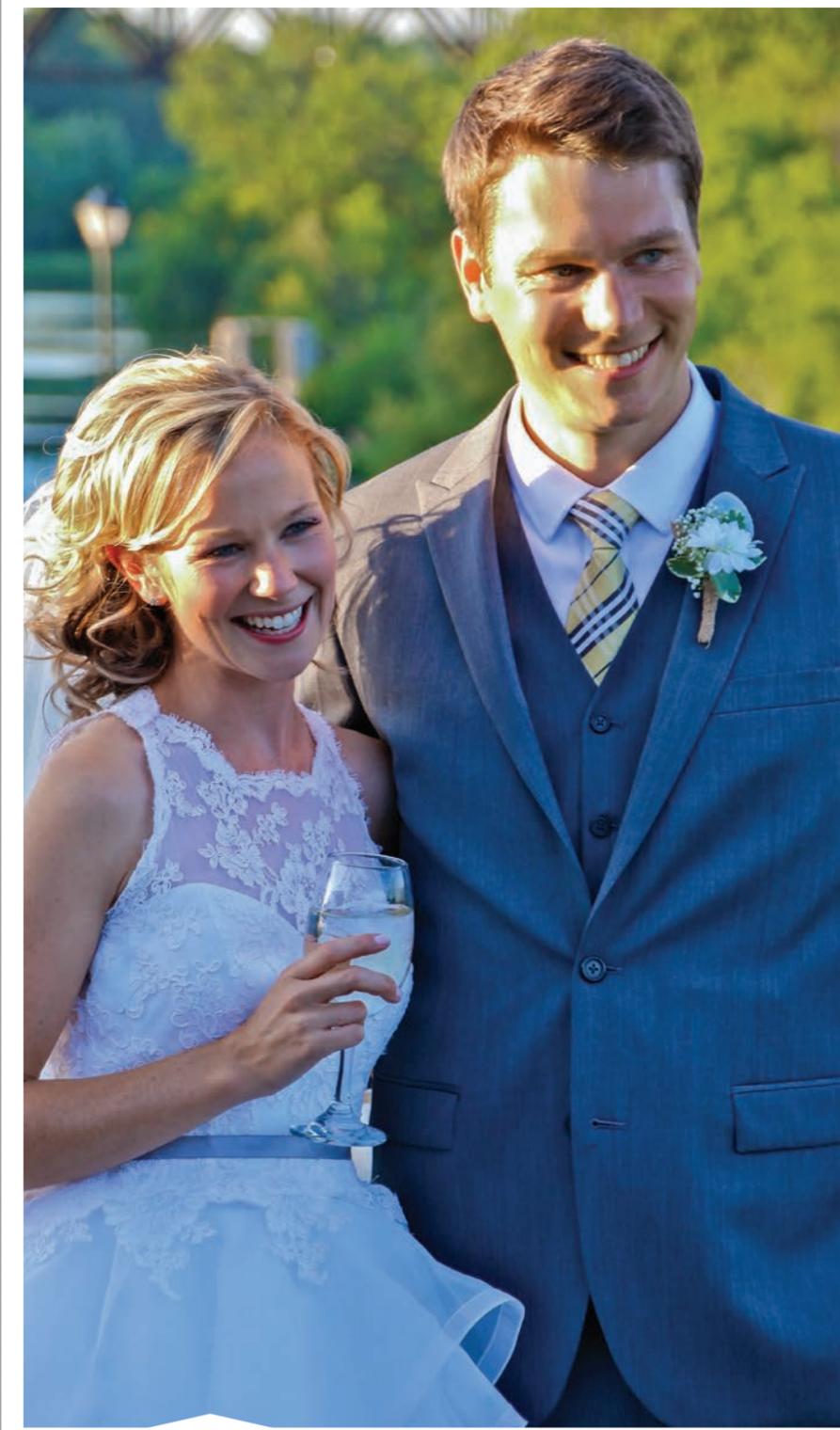
**98 Joseph Odhiambo**, MA'98, of Environment and Climate Change Canada, has been awarded the Petroleum Technology Alliance of Canada's (PTAC) 2015 Outstanding Service Award. This award was in recognition of Odhiambo's work on Oil and Natural Gas Emissions Reduction Projects in Colombia, Mexico, China,



**1990** Sitcom *Seinfeld* debuts on NBC



**1998** Monica Lewinsky signs a deal for the North American rights to a book about her affair with US President Clinton



**14 Shantel Popp**, MEd'14, and Ian Clark were married on June 25, surrounded by their family and friends at Stillwaters Plate and Pour in Paris, Ont. The groom's stepsister is a current Western student (Kinesiology) and some of the couple's closest friends attended Western from 2006-10 for their degrees.

Ecuador and Nigeria, which was launched in partnership with the United Nation's Environmental Programme's (UNEP) Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC).

**99 Karen Chan**, BESC'99, BA'00, MBA'10, P.Eng, President and Chair of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers, was recognized by the Ontario Women's Directorate with a 2016 Leading Women, Leading Girls, Building Communities Award for her volunteer work for women in engineering and women in leadership. Oshawa MPP Jennifer French presented the award.

## 2000s

**05 Shauna Cade**, BA'05, is celebrating the birth of her second child, Nash William Biemann, with proud daddy, Dylan, and big sister, Audrey.

**09 Lorin MacDonald**, JD'09, and **Donna Walwyn**, LLB'97, also of Western Law, were recently honoured at the Lexpert Zenith Awards. Winners were recognized, at a gala event June 20 in Toronto for demonstrating excellence, action and thought leadership in ways that advanced diversity and inclusion in the legal profession and society.

For nearly 30 years, MacDonald has made it her mission to make Canada more accessible to all. She's an active volunteer, supporting cross-disability initiatives such as the StopGap Foundation, Music Without Barriers and the Rick Hansen School Program, as an ambassador speaking to elementary and high school students about inclusion. Her human rights law practice focuses primarily on disability discrimination experienced by children, seeking remedies at the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario.

Walwyn is President of the Canadian Association of Black Lawyers (CABL) and a practitioner of employment law. She became a partner at Baker & McKenzie in 2008 and, as President of CABL, has



**2005** *Star Wars: Episode III - Revenge of the Sith* premieres at the Cannes Film Festival

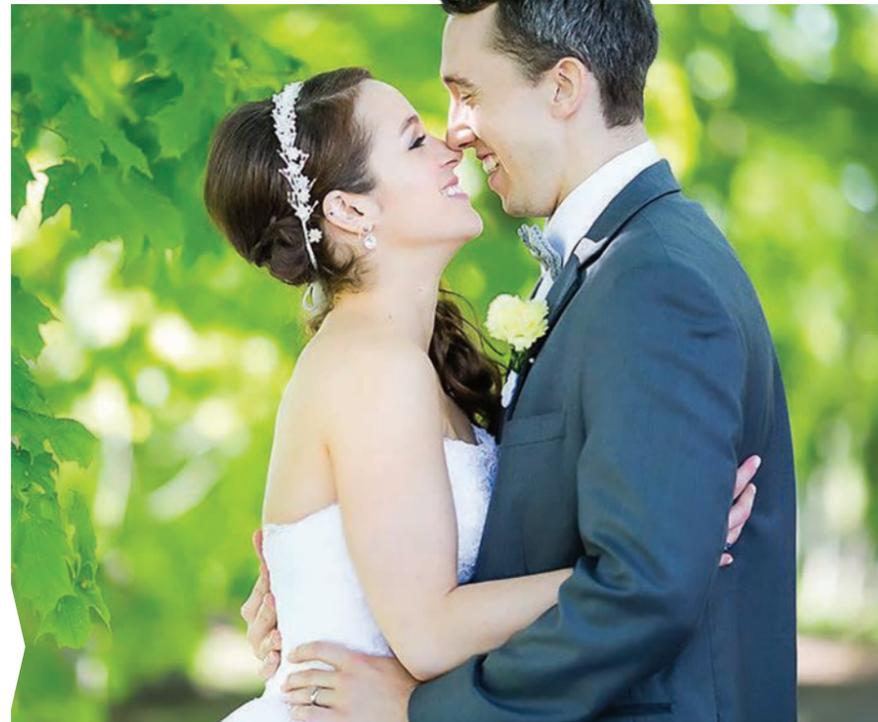
called for greater inclusivity among Bay Street law firms. In 2012, she was selected as the first Canadian participant in the Fellows Program of the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity. Earlier this year, she was appointed to the Action Committee on Access to Justice in Civil and Family Matters.

2010s



Clarke

**13 Katrina Clarke, MA'13** (Journalism), currently a reporter at the *Toronto Star*, is one of 12 journalism students and young journalists chosen by Fellowships at Auschwitz for the Study of Professional Ethics (FASPE) to participate in a two-week program in Europe this summer, which uses the conduct of reporters and other media professionals in Nazi Germany as a launching point for an intensive course of study on contemporary journalism ethics. Now in its seventh year of operation, FASPE is an international program for students in five professional



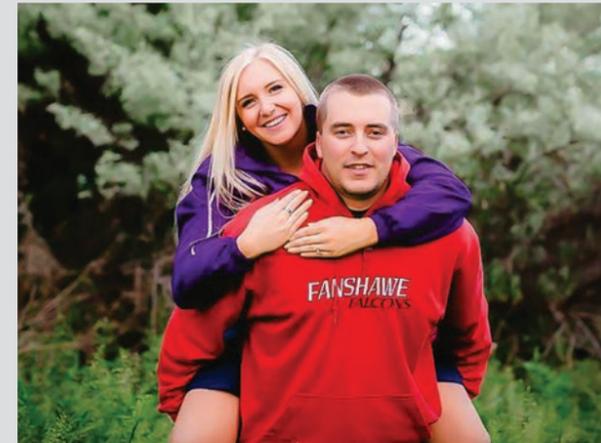
**12 Danielle Boucher, BMOS'12, and Michael Davison, BMSc'12**, met at Western and are grateful for their time on campus and how it impacted their futures in so many ways. In 2014, they visited campus and he proposed to her on UC Hill. They married June 13, 2015.

disciplines (business, journalism, law, medicine and religion) designed to address contemporary ethical issues in their chosen fields through a unique historical lens.

FASPE is predicated upon the power of place, and

in particular, the first-hand experience of visiting Auschwitz and other historic sites associated with the Holocaust, where fellows consider how to apply the lessons of history to the ethical challenges they will confront in their professions.

The 2016 FASPE Journalism program will be led by Ari Goldman, Professor and Director of the Scripps Howard Program in Religion, Journalism, and the Spiritual Life at Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism; and Lonnie Isabel, Senior Lecturer



**13 Stephanie Leppik, BA'13**, married her university/college sweetheart Adam Chilvers, Fanshawe College - Police Foundations, on July 9 in an outdoor ceremony and reception at the York Regional Police Association.

at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism and the former deputy managing editor of *Newsday*.

"FASPE is a once in a lifetime opportunity to study issues of journalism ethics against the backdrop of journalistic failures during the Holocaust," Clarke said. "I'm most looking forward to meeting fellow journalists, debating tough ethical issues, speaking with Holocaust survivors and absorbing lessons that I'll carry with me for the

rest of my career. I expect this to be a life-changing experience."

Prior to joining the *Toronto Star*, Clarke worked for the *Bangkok Post* in Thailand and the *National Post* in Canada. She joins a group of 63 FASPE Fellows chosen through a competitive process that drew more than 700 applicants from around the world.

**14 Winnie Kam, MBA'14**, was married.

**11 Ryan O'Connor, PhD'11** (History), recently won the J.J. Talman Award for his book, *First Green Wave: Pollution Probe and the Origins of Environmental Activism in Ontario*, published by the University of British Columbia Press. Presented by the Ontario Historical Society (OHS), the award recognizes the best book on Ontario's social, economic, political, or cultural history, published in the past three years. O'Connor, along with Owen Temby, also won the Riddell Award for best article on Ontario's history published this year for *Property, Technology and Environmental Policy: The Politics of Acid Rain in Ontario, 1978-1985*, published in *The Journal of Policy History*.

IN MEMORIAM

**Rodney Louis Antonio (Tony) Mahabir, BSc'74**, died June 4, 2015.

**Emilio D'Ortenzio, BA'72** (King's), BA75, died Sept. 16, 2015, in Hamilton, Ont.

**Marilyn Shortt (nee Lankin), BEd'71**, died Oct. 14, 2015, in Bracebridge, Ont.

**Igor Kusyszyn, MA'64, PhD'67**, died Nov. 11, 2015.

**Peter Douglas Lawrence, BA'93**, died Nov. 27, 2015, in Richmond Hill, Ont.

**Philip F. Smith, BA'57**, died Jan. 13, 2016.

**Michael John Kuta, HBA'77**, died Jan. 27, in Vancouver B.C.

**Dr. E. Lawrence Barton, MD'37**, died Feb. 8, in St. Catharines, Ont.

**Ruth Waltham, 86**, Althouse'67, died Feb. 11, in Clinton.

**Dr. Gordon Winder**, Professor Emeritus of Earth Sciences, died March 2.

**Dr. D. Keith Mills, MEd'56**, died May 8, in Ottawa.

**Michael Fenik, BA'48**, died Thursday, May 19.

**David Bourne, BA'51**, died May 28 in Burlington, Ont.

**Marjory 'Marney' (Magwood) McGuire, BA'46**, died June 20, in Simcoe, Ont.

**Richard Lloyd Clark, BA'59**, MD'64, former Mustang football team captain in 1962, died July 19, Mansfield, Ohio.



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## The Final Say

With Shannon Proudfoot, BA'03



**A**s an undergrad, I had many of my classes in the John Labatt Visual Arts Centre – we called it ‘The VAC.’ One of the newest buildings on campus at the time, the VAC’s hallways and grounds were often littered with student art objects and installations. Usually, it was easy to distinguish a well-crafted project making some social commentary from a janitorial oversight.

But once in a while, it was tough to tell the difference.

For all its slick newness, the VAC didn’t have a cafeteria or coffee outlet. So on breaks from class, we’d cross Perth Drive and trudge up the hill through the parking lot to Middlesex College.

On one of these missions, just below the walkway leading into Middlesex, my classmates and I encountered a ‘parking lot within a parking lot.’ Someone had taken over one of the parking spaces with hundreds of tiny vehicles lined up in perfect rows. The cars were cast in plaster and painted in bright candy hues: fuchsia, yellow, blue, maybe some grey thrown in for realism.

I remember a surprised, almost childlike delight when we happened upon this installation. I have no memory of what we might have said about the work, given all the high-minded tools at our disposal as undergrads studying art history and criticism.

What I do remember is a member of the custodial staff trundling over the crest of a small hill in one of those squat golf cart-type vehicles with a wide flexible hose that acts like an outdoor vacuum cleaner. He and his little cart wobbled down the incline toward the parking lot, where we were standing. The driver pivoted the gaping maw of his suction hose toward the miniature parking lot and began sucking up the little cars by the fistful: Phwttt! Phwttt! Phwttt!

That was the cue for our small pack of earnest defenders of the visual arts to flap our arms and scream in protest over the din of the machine. “Stop! STOP! That is someone’s art project!” When the roar of the vacuum subsided, one of us said something along the lines

of, “That’s not garbage – it’s art.”

Whereupon our man in janitorial services cast a beady eye over our self-serious selves huffing and puffing with our efforts to ‘save art.’ Then he turned back to the miniature parking lot, apparently to confirm his earlier assessment. “That ain’t art,” he said. Then he flicked a switch, his giant vacuum roared back to life and he resumed gobbling up the miniature parking lot someone had spent hours upon hours conceiving, casting, painting and installing.

I still remember our collective reaction progressing very quickly from offended horror – Who does not respect art, let alone in these surroundings?! – to confused disbelief and, by the time we made our way back to the VAC and started telling the tale to our classmates, surreal hilarity. The whole thing started to feel less like an affront and more like a *Kids In The Hall* sketch.

In retrospect, this was a nearly perfect interaction for a pack of undergrads. First, we got the chance to flex our newly developed enlightenment muscles, sailing to the righteous defense of some unseen stranger’s artistic expression. But then we and that mystery artist got thoroughly taken down a peg by someone else’s dismissal and difference of opinion.

During university, you’re at a stage and in a place where you’re constantly awash in new concepts and facts about your world, exposed to the looming intelligence of those who came before you and feeling your own brain growing new wrinkles of understanding by the day. This can be intoxicating in the purest mind-opening intellectual sense, but it’s also intoxication of the sort that makes you believe that you are a stellar dancer and world-class conversationalist. Acquiring a bit of knowledge can make it all too easy to become convinced that you’re in possession of all of the knowledge, or at least more than most people.

And that’s almost certainly not true, either as an undergrad or later in life.

So having the man on the vacuum cart wave us off with the kind of cheerful derision that barely bothers to actually wave? That was the perfect little takedown for my merry band of artistic defenders, and every student should be so lucky. When that kind of thing happens, you either realize that, yes, you were being a bit precious, or you find smart and reasonable arguments to defend your position. Me, I eventually decided that the little cars didn’t have much to say about anything, but they were a fun, weird thing to encounter in the wild, and that’s reason enough for a piece of art to exist.

But here’s what I’ve never sorted out for certain: What if the entire thing – the miniature parking lot installation, the outdoor vacuum, the maintenance worker, the disappearing cars – was a performance set-up and we were the real art? Now that would have been a masterpiece.

*Shannon Proudfoot is an Ottawa-based staff writer for Sportsnet magazine.*



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# Alumni Gazette

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