

# Alumni Gazette

WESTERN'S ALUMNI MAGAZINE SINCE 1939



## Speaking truth

*Tracy Moore, Enid Lee and Chris George are elevating the conversation about race, equity and the quest for systemic change*

FALL | 2021



## A MESSAGE FOR OUR NEWEST ALUMNI

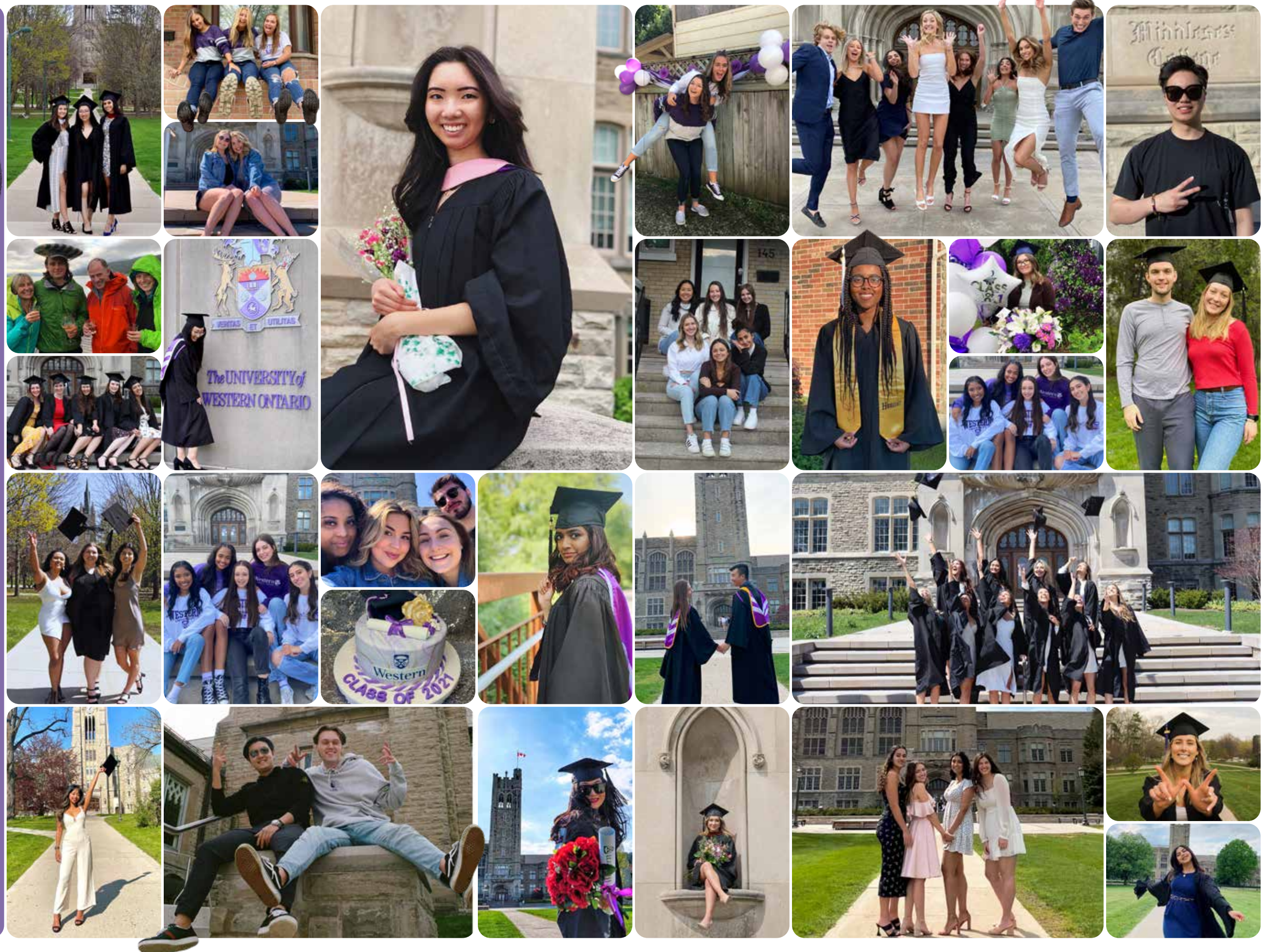
To our fall Class of 2020 and spring Class of 2021 graduates:

We know the final year of your degrees wasn't what you had planned or could ever have expected.

But you pushed through the pandemic pivot – remote learning and ever-changing protocols – to reach a major milestone. You accomplished this despite missing many of the on-campus experiences we know and love.

Western marked your achievements virtually this year, but we look forward to reading your names aloud as you cross the stage in a traditional, in-person convocation ceremony soon.

Until then, be proud of all you have accomplished in these historic times. And know your alma mater, and your alumni family numbering more than 328,000 around the world, are proud of you too.



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### Sunrise spectacular

The stunning photo of a partial solar eclipse (above) between the iconic towers of University College and Middlesex College was captured by Allan Leparskas, BMOS'15, in the early morning hours of June 10, 2021. This photo of Allan was taken by his father Henry Leparskas, BSc'74, MSc'77, who retired in 2017 after 33 years as an invaluable member of the physics and astronomy department.

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(PHOTO BY CRYSTAL MACKAY)

### RESEARCH TARGETS COVID-19 VARIANTS OF CONCERN

Using state-of-the-art imaging capabilities, researchers at Western's Imaging Pathogens for Knowledge Transmission (ImPaKT) Facility are using fluorescent markers attached to the COVID-19 virus in animals to learn how variants of concern grow and hide in the body.


This work will help inform how new vaccine derivatives and therapeutics can be used to strengthen our protection against all forms of COVID-19.

The ImPaKT team is one of a handful in Canada working with the live COVID-19 virus, and their findings will be shared with the Coronavirus Variant Rapid Response Network.



(ILLUSTRATION BY NASA/JPL-CALTECH)

### 'PERSEVERANCE' PAYS OFF



Raymond Francis, PhD'14 (Engineering), is part of the NASA team that successfully landed the Perseverance space rover on Mars earlier this year.

"I've been very fortunate to work on such exciting projects," he said. "Even if you operate planetary missions on a daily basis, a Mars landing isn't an everyday event."

Since its landing, Francis and the other engineers on the science operations team have been directing the rover in its quest to collect rock and soil samples that can be sealed and stored for a possible return to Earth.

### WESTERN LAUNCHES NEW CLIMATE CHANGE MAJOR

The climate crisis is one of the most urgent challenges of our lifetime, and one of the biggest concerns for today's youth.

"It's going to be a big part of their lives because they'll be the ones responding to it," said professor James Voogt, chair of the department of geography and environment. "But they're energized to take action."

A new major at Western, Climate Change and Society, aims to harness that passion.

First of its kind in Canada, the program concentrates on the human dimensions of climate change and the associated consequences, challenges and responses. The wide-ranging impact of climate change will be studied across many disciplines, including anthropology, biology, economics, history, philosophy, political science and sociology.



### NEW EDI INITIATIVES SUPPORTED WITH \$6-MILLION INVESTMENT

Western is investing \$6 million to support new equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) initiatives.

"This funding signifies Western's deep commitment to pursuing meaningful, systemic change as we work together to embed EDI principles into the institutional structure of the university," said Sarah Prichard, acting provost and vice-president (academic).

Initial funding of \$4 million has been earmarked for the recruitment of Black and Indigenous faculty members.

A one-time allocation of \$1 million will support the EDI Pathways program, which aims to enhance instructors' skills in inclusive education.

With the remaining \$1 million in funding, the Office of Indigenous Initiatives will create a library of resources accessible to all faculty, and a new Indigenous curriculum developer role will facilitate the respectful integration of these resources into courses.

### \$5.5 MILLION GIFT EXPANDS ENTREPRENEURSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Western students in every faculty can now benefit from entrepreneurial support and education thanks to a visionary gift of \$5.5 million from the Pierre L. Morrissette Family Foundation.

The gift brings two decades of entrepreneurship research, education and programming created at Ivey Business School to students in all disciplines, and to entrepreneurs at every stage of their journey. The Morrissette Institute for Entrepreneurship will create a single ecosystem, leadership structure and brand across campus – all under the guidance of a consolidated advisory board.

"Entrepreneurship has been very successful at Ivey," said Pierre Morrissette, MBA'72, LLD'10, executive chairman of Pelmorex Corp. "Now we're going to take that energy and enthusiasm for entrepreneurship across all faculties, providing an opportunity for students in engineering, in health sciences, in music, to create businesses, to commercialize knowledge and to convert that energy into realizable success."



## In Brief

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## INTERACTIVE DASHBOARD TRACKS COVID-19 CASES IN SCHOOLS

Education professor Prachi Srivastava launched an interactive tool to report and map confirmed school-related cases of COVID-19 in Ontario.

The tool, dubbed the COVID-19 School Dashboard, connects real-time case data with other school-specific data.

"The effects of COVID-19 are more severe on high-risk communities, populations and schools," said Srivastava. "Visualizing COVID-19 case data with data on school social background characteristics will give us a better understanding of the composition of affected schools."

Learn more about Western's multi-disciplinary COVID-19 research: [westernu.ca/covidnext](http://westernu.ca/covidnext)



(PHOTO BY NICOLE OSBORNE)

## CREATING MORE WORK EXPERIENCES FOR STUDENTS

Western has joined The Business + Higher Education Roundtable (BHER), a national consortium of business, university, college and polytechnic partners aiming to create more work experience opportunities for young Canadians. President Alan Shepard will serve as the university's representative on BHER.

"Students have been profoundly impacted by the loss of job opportunities and work-integrated learning placements throughout this pandemic," said Dave McKay, MBA'92, LLD'19, president and CEO of RBC and chair of BHER. "In response, we have an historic opportunity in front of us to take a more progressive approach to lifelong learning and keep reinventing our higher-education system – better linking workplaces and classrooms."



(PHOTO BY RACHEL LINCOLN)

## HONOURING THE LIVES OF MADIHA SALMAN AND SALMAN AFZAAL

Madiha Salman was an accomplished engineer, fiercely committed to equality and devoted to her family. She was working towards her PhD in civil engineering, having arrived at Western in 2009 to complete her Master of Engineering Science.

Her husband, Salman Afzaal, filled with similar determination to succeed, earned his master's in health sciences from Western in 2010.

Together, they had come to Canada from Pakistan with hopes of a better future for their family.

The entire Western community and all of Canada expressed shock, anger and grief following a hate crime on June 6, 2021 that claimed Madiha's and Salman's lives, along with those of their 15-year-old daughter,

Yumna, and Afzaal's 74-year-old mother.

In July, Western announced the establishment of two scholarships to honour their memories: the Madiha Salman Memorial Scholarship in Civil and Environmental Engineering will go each year to a full-time female graduate student enrolled in a civil and environmental engineering doctoral or master's program; and the Salman Afzaal Memorial Scholarship in Physical Therapy, to be awarded each year to a full-time graduate student enrolled in a doctoral or master's program in health and rehabilitation sciences. Preference will be given to a student involved in leadership, research and/or innovation in physical therapy.

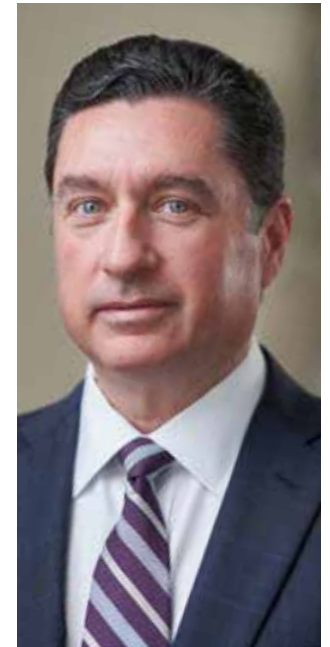
## WESTERN MOVES UP IN WORLD RANKINGS

Western has moved well into the top 200 of the QS World University Rankings, which assesses institutions based on reputation, teaching, research/scholarship and global outreach.

The 2022 rankings, released in June 2021, placed Western 170th worldwide – advancing by 33 spots from its previous position among

more than 1,300 universities from 90 countries.

The *Times Higher Education's* Impact Rankings, released in April 2021, positioned Western in the top five per cent of more than 1,100 universities from 94 countries and regions, based on their commitment to sustainable development.



(PHOTO BY GEOFF ROBINS)

## FORMER YORK EXEC NAMED WESTERN'S VP, UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT

Alumnus Jeff O'Hagan has been appointed Western's vice-president (university advancement).

O'Hagan, BA'93, began his university advancement career at Western – first as director of gift planning and then as director of development at the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry. He then went on to become chief executive officer of the Sunnybrook Foundation and vice-president of advancement at York University.

"The thrilling part about working in advancement," O'Hagan said, "is working for the next generation of leaders who will change the world."



(PHOTO BY ANDREW CAMPBELL)

# A bold future together

With the launch of a new strategic plan, the next chapter in Western's future takes shape



Alan Shepard

Following months of consultation, Western has released its new strategic plan, *Towards Western at 150*. President Alan Shepard sat down with Kris Dundas, BA'94, MA'95, to discuss the plan and what it means for the university.

**One of the key goals in the plan is to 'grow strategically'. Why is growth important for Western?**  
Western is a strong institution with superb resources, brilliant faculty, strong staff, and among the best students in the world. We also have the fiscal resources, a beautiful campus and excellent facilities.  
There's a strong correlation between the size of an institution and the amount of impact it can possibly have. It's particularly true in Canada, where funding models are tied to the size of institution. It follows if you want to have more impact then you need to grow. At Western, we need to grow our research, scholarship and creative activity. To do that, we need to grow faculty and staff complements along with funding and facilities. Then we need to grow our student body, while providing the supports they need to thrive. Students then graduate and engage with Western as alumni, partners and life-long learners around the world. All of this contributes to impact.

**In the midst of, and now coming out of, a pandemic – why was this the right time to create a new strategic plan?**  
There was a pent-up hunger to think about Western's future, and there was an eagerness not to wait. Although we delayed planning by about six months, there was strong interest in moving ahead and not letting the pandemic distract us from our longer-term vision.

**You chaired a 36-person strategic planning steering committee. Why was a group with broad representation like this so important?**  
The committee had a strong balance of students, staff and faculty, and representation from the Board and Senate, and senior administrators. We wanted a broad-based group that would represent the Western community's ideas, visions, and concerns. The group was extremely collaborative, and forward looking and we had lots of productive debate.  
And when the members of this group conducted the nearly 100 consultations with the larger Western community, the facilitators were from the group we were consulting with. They were from their faculty, they were fellow students – there was a simpatico element to that.

**In general, what are your impressions of Western's research strengths and potential moving forward?**  
We're a large, complex institution and we have dozens of strengths. We have some that have received a lot of attention historically – areas in which we are still strong.  
But I want to be careful going forward. We certainly need to make investments right across the board, but to keep all of our areas as strong as they can be, we're going to need to make some 'super' investments in areas where we think we have a chance to really stand out internationally.  
It's also important to have balance. Some of these areas are of great importance today, and some will be critically important for the future. We're trying to balance between, for example, fundamental research and applied research, between a technology-driven view of the world, and an arts and humanities view of the world, and so forth.  
There are many different kinds of contributions that can be made in research, teaching and service to the public good. And they all matter.

**There has been a lot of discussion about online teaching and learning during the pandemic. What have we learned that can be applied long term?**  
We've learned we can pivot from face-to-face to online. We've also learned, that for most of us, online is a supplement and not the primary model for learning.  
Online learning will likely emerge more strongly in continuing studies or life-long learning, where people are past traditional university age, perhaps raising families, working full-time or have other circumstances that limit their ability to devote themselves to full-time study or to be in London.  
For undergraduates, we've learned online work is supplemental to, and not replacing, face-to-face instruction and en-

gagement. Much of what you learn happens in a classroom, but a lot happens in the libraries, labs, studios, with friends, with instructors in their offices or in the hallways. Throughout the pandemic, we have been craving and missing that.

**Enriching the student experience is an important part of this plan. What might that look like?**  
The student experience at Western is already strong and, of course, our hope is that we protect what's great about it and continue to build on it. The new strategic plan calls for new investments in career advising and development, and in experiential learning opportunities. These experiences are meaningful and we know students deeply value them.

***"We found a strong interest in social justice, broadly, and in developing a strong institutional focus on combating structural inequities in our society and in university education, specifically."***

– Alan Shepard

The notion that Western is still a face-to-face, residentially intensive university means we need to continue to invest in the physical structures of the university to support the student experience. For example, we're building a new fieldhouse, where students can run and play soccer in the winter months.  
The plan also calls for new investments in equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI). That includes access for marginalized groups and first-generation students – those who may not come from privileged backgrounds and who, historically, might not have considered coming to Western.

**That leads nicely to the second theme of the plan, which is about people, community and culture. You mentioned EDI – what did the committee hear from the community on this specifically?**  
We've heard the Western community is ready for – and I would say demands – greater institutional attention to EDI.  
We also heard about demands for greater attention to sustainability, which might seem at first blush to be unrelated. But it's actually quite related because it's all about social justice.  
We found a strong interest in social justice, broadly, and in developing a strong institutional focus on combating structural inequities in our society and in university education, specifically.



**The third theme area is about Western's place in the world. There are strong commitments to London and region in the plan. In a global world, why are local connections so important?**

The previous strategic plan called for internationalization and a lot of progress was made on that front. Western went from roughly two per cent international students to 14 per cent today. That's important because all universities with great impact are magnets for students to come from around the world.

This plan calls for a renewal of that emphasis on internationalization, with a goal of achieving a 20 per cent target for international students. What's important about this is that you create a blend of domestic students and international students who learn from each other, who might represent different economic systems, different religious faiths, different ways of seeing the world, different languages. They're all coming together to build their own lives, but also to help build Canada and the world.

At the same time, it's critical to remember that Western operates in a particular place – London, Ontario – and that we want to do public good locally as well as nationally. The community has a huge amount to offer us, and we have a lot to offer as well.

**During the strategic plan consultations, the committee heard a lot about innovation. Why is innovation important to Western?**

All universities need innovation.

We've started a new program in data strategy and a certificate and degree programming in data analytics is emerging. That's just one example. As the world changes,

Western needs to change with it and, when we can, be leaders in that change.

Interdisciplinary academic programs are especially appealing to our students. We have a new climate change program that integrates science, social science and the humanities, an ideal example of interdisciplinary work in which a student could study in four or five different departments. Not 20 courses in a single discipline, but much more kaleidoscopic, personalized programs of study where students can put together their own programs that dovetail with their academic interests and their sense of the future for themselves and for the world.

The more you get people invested in their own education and making those choices, the more meaningful their experience and engagement will be.

**Alumni contributed to the strategic planning consultation process – what role do they play in helping Western achieve the goals in the plan?**

Alumni bring with them their education, their skill set, their experiences, but also the sense of the reputation of the institution. After they complete their degree, they continue to be part of our ecosystem. As that ecosystem gets stronger and stronger, and alumni are more nationally and internationally engaged, everybody wins. It's good for alumni to have Western be strong; it's good for Western to have our alumni be strong.

Our alumni have gone on to great careers, and commitments of volunteer roles and leadership in many different arenas. There's a circularity to that system in which their achievements and their successes help build Western and Western helps build the next generation of alumni citizens.

**Are there any other important aspects of the plan that you wish to touch on?**

I want to talk about entrepreneurship. We want innovation in curricula and degree programs, but we also need change outside the curriculum.

Not only will we make new investments in career advising and getting people ready for life beyond university, but also, we will teach them some interesting ways of seeing the world around entrepreneurship, including social entrepreneurship. As a university we want to serve the public good – our students are eager to do the same when they graduate.

**In the end, what will it take to ensure this plan is successful?**

This plan reflects not only what the Western community told us was important to them, but I also think it anticipates where postsecondary education is headed. At the end of the day it will be the students, faculty, staff and alumni that have made Western a special place to learn and work that will make all the difference. We need everyone to embrace the plan. To bring their ideas, their intellect, their creativity and an open mind. As a collective, if we can harness all that energy, we will be successful. 🍷

# Announcing the 2021 Award of Merit recipients



## Dr. Ivan Smith Award

**Sharon Cowin, BA'64**

Sharon Cowin is steadfast in her commitment to Western. Through her volunteerism and generous philanthropic support, she is exemplary in her quest to help students become global citizens.



## Professional Achievement Award

**Dr. John Ciriello, FAPS, BSc'74, MSc'77, PhD'79**

A three-time Western alumnus, professor emeritus John Ciriello is an innovative researcher with a remarkable capacity to unravel the complexity of cardiovascular disease.



## Young Alumni Award

**Sunil Gurmukh, LLB'08**

Sunil Gurmukh is a prominent human rights lawyer who has profoundly impacted the lives of countless vulnerable Ontarians.



## Community Service Award

**Avnish Mehta, BACS'02**

Avnish Mehta is a fierce champion for his local community. His commitment to building a better, more diverse Alberta has resulted in supports for over 40,000 temporary foreign workers.

Join us for this year's Alumni Awards of Merit celebration virtually on Sept. 23 at 7:30 p.m. ET. For details and to RSVP, or to nominate someone for a future award, visit [alumni.westernu.ca/events](http://alumni.westernu.ca/events).



# Speaking truth

Tracy Moore, Enid Lee and Chris George are elevating the conversation about race, equity and the quest for systemic change

(COVER PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALICIA WYNTER AND ANNIE ROWLAND)

## TRACY MOORE

Tracy Moore, MA'00, is a familiar face in Canadian television as host of *Cityline*, North America's longest running daytime show. She has been empowering women and promoting diversity for years, and, since the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, has become more vocal on air about issues of racism and discrimination.

(PHOTO BY ALICIA WYNTER PHOTOGRAPHY)

Interviews by Idil Mussa, MA'13  
Edited by Mari-Len De Guzman

When video of the murder of George Floyd at the hands of police surfaced on news channels and social media sites in May 2020, it sparked something advocates against anti-Black racism say they had not seen before.

"Having talked about this for 35 years... it was the first time I had heard so many specific reference to systemic racism, and that part of the conversation changed," said long-time anti-racism educator Enid Lee, BA'74 (Brescia). "People often talk about racism as an episode, but the visual experience caused people to see this is not just a one-off thing, but that it has deep roots in the way in which society is structured historically."



Idil Mussa

On June 14, 2021, Lee joined fellow alumni Tracy Moore, MA'00, daytime television host, and Chris George, BA'01, portfolio manager, Hockey Diversity Alliance advisor and BlackNorth Initiative chair, for a discussion moderated by Idil Mussa, MA'13, producer with CBC Radio's *World Report*.

Now based in Santa Cruz, Calif., Lee is an internationally renowned consultant on equitable education.

"I think I've heard the terms 'systemic racism' or 'structural racism' more since George Floyd than I've heard in the 35 years prior to that. Those terms led me to say, 'Okay, we're finally going deep now,'" she said.

Real conversations around racism began to take centre stage as well, says Moore, who hosts the popular lifestyle television show *Cityline*, and has made it a personal mission to elevate diversity and equity on camera and off.

"I've been speaking about race and gender forever, but there was never really a platform to talk about it. What I found was the conversations I was having in private, with my husband or my Black girlfriends, I was now being asked to have in public spaces and very white spaces," Moore said.

This change of climate around racial equity is also happening in sectors that have traditionally been white-dominated. There is now a "resounding understanding" around systemic racism that was never there before, said George, a former professional hockey player, NHL draft pick and Western Mustang (1998-2000) who is now a portfolio manager at Scotia Wealth Management.

He believes the global pandemic that inadvertently forced people to be grounded and more connected, albeit virtually, has also allowed them to draw on some fundamental emotions, like empathy.

"We certainly are in a moment where people are trying to better understand our situation, and then literally asking what they can do to help. I'm optimistic that our community seems to be more connected than ever," said George, whose family of Jamaican origin immigrated to Canada in the late 60s.

Following are excerpts from the panel discussion on how these alumni navigate challenges around racial equity, ultimately becoming influential figures in their own industries and elevating the conversation around systemic racism and diversity.

*The Q&A has been edited for length and clarity.*

## Fighting for diversity on and off camera

**Idil Mussa: It's daunting to sometimes feel like you're the only Black person in the room or at the table, especially in decision-making spaces that have been reserved mainly for white people. In confronting anti-Black racism, have you found that a challenge?**

**Tracy Moore:** I've never really been quiet about these things, even before it was discussed widely in mainstream spaces. There was a Beyoncé moment, when she was doing Formation at the Super Bowl, and people were like, 'Oh, she's Black.' I feel like I might have had a moment like that with my viewers who saw me as having a lot of widespread mass appeal. And then it was, 'Oh, she's talking about white privilege. She's talking about microaggressions.'

I felt incredibly isolated living in London [during my time at Western]. Hailing from diverse Toronto by way of Montreal, London's racial homogeneity may have been something I could have gotten used to, if I hadn't been subjected to so many microaggressions.

I loved my graduate class and I'm still quite close with a few women from our program, but being the only Black student in the journalism master's program took its toll.

I felt connected to my racial community in Montreal but at Western [at the time], the Caribbean students' association appeared to be full of rich, Caribbean ex-pats who didn't see value in my lower socioeconomic status. So, while we connected on race, we diverged on class.

I would walk an hour to campus every day to save on bus fare. Yeah, I couldn't swing bus fare. One day on that walk, a man leaned over on his balcony and called me the N-bomb. There was no good reason. It was just a sunny, summer day and this man decided to throw some vitriol my way because he could. It was the first time since grade one that I'd been called out so blatantly and stupidly with that derogatory term.

London felt small and hostile the entire time I was there, and yet I thrived in my program due to great pros and a few good friends. My girlfriends from Toronto also came to visit a few times, which helped alleviate the depression I was slowly sliding into throughout my year there.



## Cover story: Speaking truth

Having this conversation with other Western alumni makes me wish I could do my year there all over again, but with support. I wonder what that would feel like?

**IM: Many media organizations are working toward being more inclusive. I'm part of the CBC, and I know we're doing a lot of work in that area. Media companies in this country traditionally have not done a good job of representing Canada's diversity. What do you think needs to happen to make real, lasting change?**

**TM:** We need more sponsorship opportunities, and we need to go way past mentoring. Mentoring is great, but now we need to pull that person up and say, 'I see good things in you. I'm going to get you to where you need to be and you're going to pay that forward to the next person.' We need to be aggressive about sponsorship opportunities in the media, because if we don't diversify the storytellers, we are bound to make the same mistakes on a loop over and over again.

**"I absolutely take responsibility for the things I say and for making change. It's the whole reason I got into journalism."**

– Tracy Moore

I have seen some differences in the direction and way we do things at Rogers. Our president [of Rogers Sports & Media, Jordan Banks, BA'90] is a really good champion and is hell-bent on making these changes, and I put a lot of stock in him. I've seen my input actually help change the trajectory of certain things we've done over the past year, but what I say to the leaders all the time is, 'I'm in a very visible position of power. I need to know that the interns or receptionists, or people who are coming up in the ranks also have a place where people will listen to them and they can contribute.'

**IM: Do you feel a sense of responsibility, as a Black woman with this huge platform, to speak out against systemic racism?**

**TM:** I take great responsibility in what I say. I think there are a lot of people in the spotlight who say, 'I'm not a role model, stop looking at me.' It doesn't matter if I want to be one or not. People are looking to see how I act and what I say. As part of a marginalized community, there is added weight in how we're perceived because, unfortunately, whatever we do is going to be sort of emblematic of the race for some reason. I don't want to disappoint anyone, so I absolutely take responsibility for the things I say and for making change. It's the whole reason I got into journalism.

I was supposed to be a news reporter, so how did I end up on a lifestyle show? That was never the plan. I was supposed to be in war-torn areas, talking about populations that needed help and were underserved – and here I am talking about stilettos and sofas. But what I realized is that even in this lifestyle space, a lot of change can happen. There are a lot of people listening and watching. Even

outside of my job, volunteerism has always been a very big part of my life – making sure I'm in grassroots situations where I'm speaking to kids, or immigrant populations that need my help. That happens off camera all the time, and has since I was in high school. I take the role very seriously and I'm okay with that. It's not going to be forever. I'll be on air for a while, and then I'll be off air and it'll be the work I do off air that really counts. Right now, I'm just using this opportunity to the best of my ability.

## A lesson in history

**Idil Mussa: You have been fighting against anti-Black racism for decades and when you are changing the status quo, people always want to push back against that. Has that become easier now, or is it still the same for you?**

**Enid Lee:** I have a slogan: "Expect racism, but do not accept racism." Expect it, so I don't have to wonder, 'Why is this happening?' I understand it's structural and systemic. Racism impacts every part of our organizations, our procedures, even those "benign" arrangements such as our information and communication systems. I know we have got to work on those. In some ways it has felt easier because more people seem to understand that now. The regret is that it had to come to this. I understand the challenge, but I'm glad more people are talking about it. You are doing good work if there is pushback; that's what I say in my sessions.

**IM: After nearly 30 years advocating and pursuing anti-racist education, what have the biggest learnings been for you and how have they shaped your approach to education?**

**EL:** Let me go back to Western. We had something there known as the 'Black table'. Many Black students used to have lunch at that table and there we had community. Students at the 'Black table' were from everywhere. Caribbean, West Africa... From that community came a lot of help; help just navigating Western, which as you can imagine, in the 70s was pretty white. For instance, when some of us got student jobs at D. B. Weldon Library, we would help each other from the 'Black table' find jobs there.

Another source of my learning were the activities that had taken place at Sir George Williams University, now Concordia, the year before I arrived at Western. Students were protesting the university administration's decision regarding a complaint of racism. The spirit of student anti-racist activism was part of my education around racism.

In addition, I came from Antigua, a small Caribbean island, with godparents and parents who were both educators under a colonial government. My mother was very clear where white people stood – and that was not above her. From family, I learned to be unapologetic about being Black and having other Black people with me.

Family history, community activism, study and writing about anti-racism had an impact on my work as the first race relations supervisor in the former North York Board of Education in 1985. Part of my responsibility involved working with others to implement the policy for Affirmative Action for Racial Minorities, as it was called then. There was a significant difference between the number of white

people who worked at that Toronto school board and the number of people of all other racial groups combined. In fact, only about six per cent of the staff at that district were people of colour. At that time, the district was saying, 'Yes, we want people of diverse backgrounds.' That helped me do the work. When you saw the excellence that came through the door, what could you say? 'Are they here just because they are Black?' No! They are here because they are excellent! And we have missed out on getting them before.

**IM: One of the goals of Western's new strategic plan is to create a more equitable and inclusive culture. What advice do you have for the university in achieving this?**

**EL:** Unless we have a historical perspective, we are not going to go as deeply as we should. Western needs to look at its historic record. Philippe Rushton, a psychology professor in the 80s whose research focused on race and intelligence, comes to mind. Know the historical roots of racism within your own institution, so that you will know what needs to be dug up, addressed or turned around. The point of history is not to shame and to defeat; it is to expose, so we can correct, and put emphasis and energy and resources in the right areas.

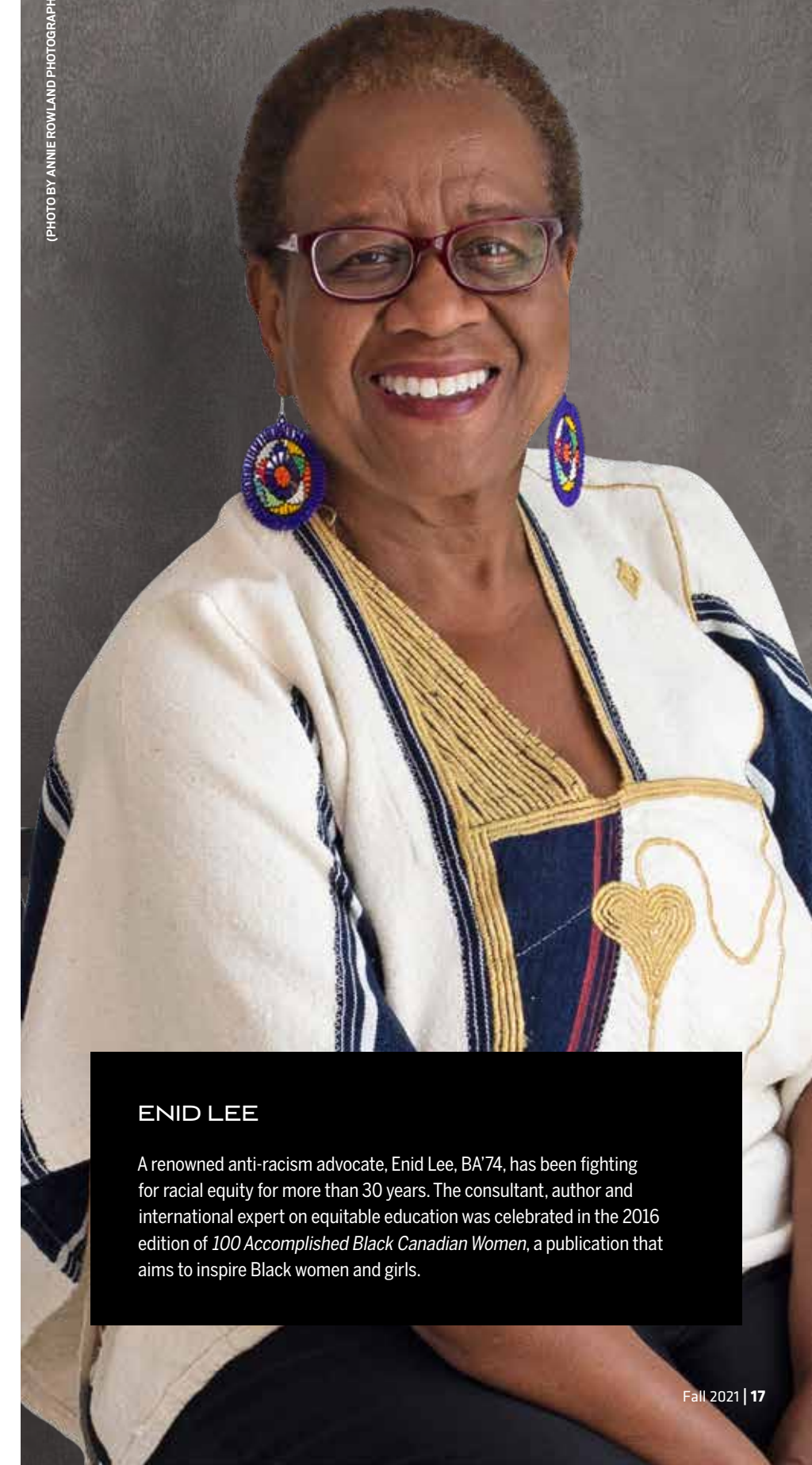
**"Expect racism, but do not accept racism."**

– Enid Lee

Another component is having a culturally responsive method of capturing students' experiences in any plans. Many times policies don't take into account students with a whole range of contexts and backgrounds. That human experience beyond the grades is important. What is your experience as a student of whatever racial identity? Does your life matter to and at this institution?

Other essential elements are structures to ensure that the work is done. People write policies, and they must be followed up by questions, like "Where are the resources? What is the report card that Western is going to put out? Which students will benefit

(PHOTO BY ANNIE ROWLAND PHOTOGRAPHY)



### ENID LEE

A renowned anti-racism advocate, Enid Lee, BA'74, has been fighting for racial equity for more than 30 years. The consultant, author and international expert on equitable education was celebrated in the 2016 edition of *100 Accomplished Black Canadian Women*, a publication that aims to inspire Black women and girls.

from this?" We know it's not going to be done in one fell swoop and that the change is often not permanent. It must constantly be refurbished. Yes, the climate is less racist, the access is greater, and the hiring reflects the rich racial diversity of humanity and all its talent. It means you are ready for the next level. These are always my words to those who say they want to change systems.

And then there are the students, that invaluable resource that every institution has to draw on – the young people who are there with their fantastic social media. When I think of what we didn't have in the 70s, and what you have now, I think of maximizing these tools for equity, also knowing they can be weaponized and used in the service of racism. Look at how we can make the most of the new tools for bringing humankind together, disseminating ideas, and transforming our world for justice, joy and generosity. It's an exciting time to be alive.

If ever there was a time for facing the truth about our history and its racist roots, that time is now. If ever there was a time for writing a new history with anti-racist policies and practices, that time is also now.

## 'Progress isn't in a straight line'

**Idil Mussa:** *You occupy spaces that are known to lack diversity – the NHL and financial services. Tell me about the reception you've received in addressing anti-Black racism or racial equality.*

**Chris George:** I grew up playing hockey. I've typically been the only Black hockey player on my team, never mind the league. I've been on Bay Street for almost 20 years – 10 at BMO and nine at Scotiabank. Throughout the entire time I've been the only Black guy in my office, so it's certainly been a unique journey. I just got my work done, kept my head down and hit my targets.

But over this last year, it's been a little bit liberating. I'm at a place in my career and life where I now have a voice, connections and the strength to dig deeper, and to use my voice to hopefully help the generation that's coming behind us. There's just so much talent in our community and our allies are starting to understand that diversity is strength. We really need to capture this moment and bring that to the table.

**IM:** *What was your experience like as a Black hockey player and how did it shape your advocacy around encouraging diversity in a sport that's very, very white?*

**CG:** Hockey literally is a white sport; it's 97 per cent white and 75 per cent non-American. It's a global sport that is not as connected to the Black American experience, specifically.

Last summer, nine current NHL players started a group called the Hockey Diversity Alliance and I joined them as an advisor. Later that summer, the NBA's Milwaukee Bucks walked out [in protest of the police shooting of Jacob Blake in Wisconsin]. The NHL was slower to respond; it took them a few days to walk out. The Hockey Diversity Alliance was guiding and advising the players on what they should say and how they should act. Again, remember you're guiding all white, mostly non-American players. When they did walk out, I just remember sitting on a Zoom call in my office. It was a very proud moment for us, as we were asked as an authority for help.

I may be optimistic by nature, but I feel like we have this moment where we have the fundamental empathy that's required, we're organized and we have talents. We also have people like Enid [Lee]. We can finally give her the platform, resources and support to execute what she's been working on her whole life.

**IM:** *Hockey has been undergoing a bit of a racial reckoning, and you've been pivotal in that. The NHL has announced initiatives to combat racism and boost inclusion, but just this past season Edmonton Oilers defenseman Ethan Bear, who's Indigenous, received racist messages on social media following a series-ending loss to the Winnipeg Jets. Are NHL initiatives enough to stamp out this kind of racism?*

**CG:** Sometimes progress isn't in a straight line. We have to realize we're making certain sectors feel uncomfortable, and they're enabled and empowered on social media in some ways.

I think we have to be stronger than ever as we prepare for this potential backlash, as we've seen recently with the horrific act against Muslims in London [Ont].

I myself experienced racism in London. I was coming home after a game one night and a biker gang came up to me, hurled the N-word at me, knocked me out with brass knuckles and kicked me unconscious. It was an extremely blatant racist act. I was a 20-year-old man at the time. Fortunately, people carried me to the hospital, where I got eight stitches in my head. Looking back at it now as a 45-year-old, I remember feeling almost guilty. It was like I didn't want people to know what had happened. I didn't want to be that Black guy who was getting in trouble. I didn't want to get kicked off the team. At the time, I was happy we were able to keep it quiet and that I didn't get punished. I literally did nothing wrong, except I was Black in the wrong spot.

Right now, as much as you probably pick up a tone from me that I'm optimistic, that we're organized and we have these allies – we still have to realize change is not received well by everyone. We need to be really vigilant with how strong and connected we are. It's a movement, not a moment.

The next leg is going to be more behind-the-scenes, the really hard work. When we're no longer the top news story, that's the real grassroots stuff.

**IM:** *We know the importance of building Black generational wealth and the doors that it opens. Tell me a little bit about your work in pursuing racial equity in the financial industry.*

**CG:** I've been on Bay Street for 20 years now. And I've always been the only Black advisor in my office, which, if you pause and think about it, is pretty unbelievable. But I think organically, as our population changes, we are going to inevitably realize that we need someone like myself who can relate and support our communities.

**"It's a movement, not a moment."**

– Chris George

I'm 45 and I built a valuable business. I do a great job for my clients and I work at a great company. We're not going anywhere, right? And when we're not in the news anymore, we're still going to be in the boardrooms figuring this out. I think that's what's happening now, and I'm optimistic we're laying the foundations for sustainable change.

**IM:** *In the public and private sector, there hasn't ever really been a problem recruiting Black people. The problem has always been a lack of advancement opportunities, and that they're not occupying decision-making roles. How are you finding boardrooms today? Do you still feel like the only one?*

**CG:** I am one of the only ones, yes. But the Black North Initiative is certainly a large and very organized group. More than 500 companies have signed a pledge, part of which is about reaching hiring targets. There's more than 300 volunteers like myself... and now we get in the room and help them achieve these targets. We're also deliberately going into the universities and being a part of the process that helps place them. And we're being welcomed into that process. The fruits of our labour will be that next generation. 🍀

(PHOTO BY ALICIA WYNTER PHOTOGRAPHY)

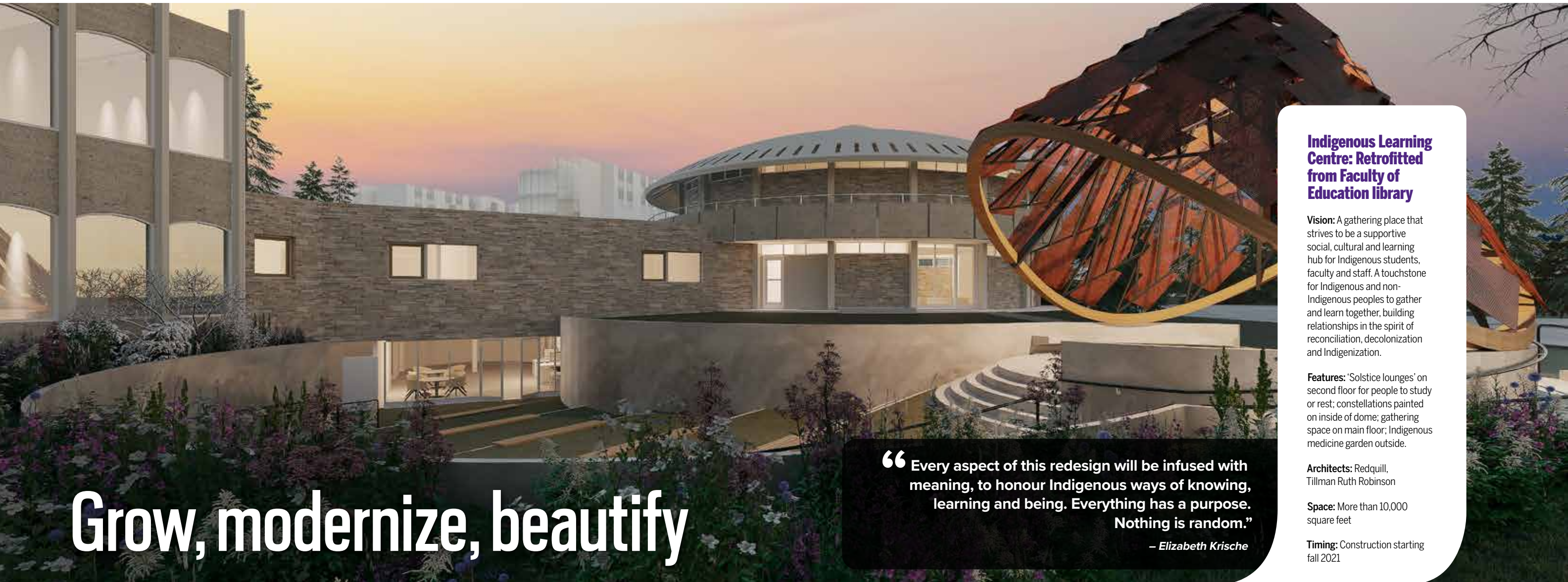


### CHRIS GEORGE

A former professional hockey player and NHL draft pick, Chris George, BA'01, was often the only Black player on the team. Now a successful financial professional, he advocates for meaningful change against systemic racism, and is helping to empower Black Canadians through the Hockey Diversity Alliance and the Black North Initiative.



**The BlackNorth Initiative:** Led by the Canadian Council of Business Leaders Against Anti-Black Systemic Racism, the BlackNorth Initiative (BNI) is on a mission to end anti-Black systemic racism by utilizing a business-first mindset. Western has joined the BNI, with President Alan Shepard representing the university on the education committee.



# Grow, modernize, beautify

“Every aspect of this redesign will be infused with meaning, to honour Indigenous ways of knowing, learning and being. Everything has a purpose. Nothing is random.”

– Elizabeth Krische

## Indigenous Learning Centre: Retrofitted from Faculty of Education library

**Vision:** A gathering place that strives to be a supportive social, cultural and learning hub for Indigenous students, faculty and staff. A touchstone for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to gather and learn together, building relationships in the spirit of reconciliation, decolonization and Indigenization.

**Features:** ‘Solstice lounges’ on second floor for people to study or rest; constellations painted on inside of dome; gathering space on main floor; Indigenous medicine garden outside.

**Architects:** Redquill, Tillman Ruth Robinson

**Space:** More than 10,000 square feet

**Timing:** Construction starting fall 2021

## Western is undergoing a transformation

By Debora Van Brenk, BA’86, MA’87

From a net-zero energy space for budding entrepreneurs, to an Indigenous solstice lounge and bright new wellness centre, Western’s building plans are helping transform campus into a more sustainable, inclusive place. More than 300 capital projects are scheduled for this year.

Some “small” projects pack a big visual punch – replacing the track and turf at TD Stadium, for example – while other upgrades, such as replacing chillers at the Imaging Pathogens for Knowledge Translation (ImPaKT) Facility

provide crucial behind-the-scenes improvements.

The signature project, and the largest of the year, will be the start of construction on a new Entrepreneurship and Innovation Centre – a building as remarkable for its sustainable design as for its role in bringing people, business and ideas together.

It will be Western’s first net-zero energy building (total energy generated will be equal to or more than the energy it consumes) and will feature small and large interior spaces where students, faculty and staff can turn ideas into innovative businesses.

Visitors to campus will also notice a “massive transformation” of outdoor pathways, gathering areas and natural spaces – part of Western’s Open Space strategy. Campus will also be more bike- and pedestrian-friendly.

“We want to be ready for the next century, to be good stewards of this beautiful campus – and to do that, we have to make strategic investments,” said Lynn Logan, vice-president (operations and finance).

Overall, capital investments for the coming year will total \$153 million, including \$55.4 million on new construction and \$34.5 million for major renovations.

Among the major builds/rebuilds in progress or newly completed are: retrofits for Thames Hall to create a full-service wellness centre; more collaborative research and study space in the D.B. Weldon Library; a brighter, better student area in Somerville House; planning for a new gathering hub on the east end of campus; repurposing the former Faculty of Education library into an Indigenous learning space; and beautifying open spaces.

Logan said the overarching purpose of each is to support the university’s teaching, learning and research mission, and to improve the student experience now and for the future.

Elizabeth Krische, associate vice-president (facilities management), said, “The projects are all intended to grow, modernize and beautify the amenities we have for students, faculty and staff. We’re repurposing some spaces and building new ones, as we plan for a campus that will serve this generation and generations to come.”

Krische added, “If there’s a predominant theme, inside and out, it’s a focus on more and better open spaces. Even the new and repurposed buildings have lots of natural light and that makes a huge difference.”

### Western Entrepreneurship and Innovation Centre: A pre-eminent interdisciplinary entrepreneurial space

**Vision:** A place where innovative and collaborative business ideas can germinate and thrive. For use by everyone who has ideas for inventing, making, growing and sharing business ideas.

**Features:** Western's first net-zero energy building, includes geothermal (ground-source) heat and cooling; green roof; triple-glazed windows; courtyard opens into great hall and event spaces; windows, windows, windows (with birdstrike-prevention measures); generous use of natural light and space; maker and co-working spaces; common lobby on main floor.

**Architects:** Perkins+Will, Cornerstone Architecture

**Space:** 100,000 square feet. Located between Law Building and Western Student Services Building

**Timing:** Construction summer 2021 to 2022



### Thames Hall: Gym, kinesiology offices and classrooms retrofitted to become wellness centre

**Vision:** Holistic approach to student wellness, activity and well-being with amenities that are welcoming and available to all students.

**Features:** Calming, inclusive spaces with three-storey atrium repurposed from former gym; gathering spaces and rooms bordering on atrium have open walls; private office, clinical, gathering spaces are approachable and accessible.

**Architect:** Tillman Ruth Robinson

**Timing:** Construction completed fall 2021



### D.B. Weldon Library: Major renovation

**Vision:** Update and renew the space to meet current and future learning needs; a place that recognizes and enables collaborative, multi-resource learning.

**Features:** New learning commons; updated mechanical and electrical systems; staff room.

**Architects:** Perkins+Will, Cornerstone Architecture

**Timing:** First phase completed fall 2021



### Somerville House student space: Open indoor space retrofit from hallway beside Lucy's eatery

**Vision:** Create a new indoor student hub in the heart of campus where people can gather, eat and study.

**Features:** Interior walls to be removed to create large common space, large lounge, three private study rooms; fully accessible space including seating, ramps, washrooms and elevator that provides access to all three floors, including the Great Hall; Lucy's eatery to be updated and other, more diverse food options to be added.

**Architect:** Cornerstone Architecture

**Timing:** Construction completed fall 2021

### Open spaces: Sustainability and beautification

**Vision:** Builds on Western's Open Space Strategy to accommodate future growth on campus while making it more friendly to and safer for pedestrians and cyclists. More memorable, welcoming, beautiful, functional, safe and sustainable public spaces that embed stewardship into the landscape.

**Features:** Unified look throughout outdoor studying, gathering, pedestrian spaces; paving stones and benches; new welcome plaza at base of University College hill; McIntosh plaza and Kent rain garden in front of Physics and Astronomy Building; Oxford Square at north corner of Social Sciences Building; Talbot Music walkway between Music Building and International and Graduate Affairs Building.

**Timing:** Consultation on University College hill starts fall 2021



# ‘That could have been me’

## Education will pave the way toward meaningful reconciliation

By Christy R. Bressette, BA’95 (Brescia), BEd’96, PhD’08, vice-provost and associate vice-president, Indigenous Initiatives



(PHOTO BY FRANK NEUFELD)

**A**s an Indigenous woman, I’m often asked for my views on the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Report of 2019. This is a complex question, and my response depends very much on who is asking and the context of our discussion. But most often, when I learn the story of another Indigenous woman who went missing or was murdered, I think to myself: *That could have been me.*

Many years ago, as a young Indigenous woman with two small children, I experienced abandonment upon the breakdown of my marriage. That’s a common enough experience for many in Canada. But what was uncommon was I became homeless due to the lack of matrimonial real property laws on-reserve. Forced

out of my community in search of housing, my children and I could have disappeared forever into the night – just another set of statistics to feed a national report.

Fortunately, that was not our destiny. We survived. My daughter is finishing her degree in criminology at Western. My son earned his college diploma in welding at Lambton College. And I am delighted – and humbled – to serve as the inaugural vice-provost and associate vice-president of Indigenous Initiatives at Western. Nonetheless, I never forget how I got here. Contrary to widespread perception, the trauma Indigenous people endure is not confined to those who are marginalized; it touches all of us, to a greater or lesser degree. Structural and institutional racism

in Canada – of which the Indian Residential School System is the most prominent example – has shaped the experiences of Indigenous Peoples throughout Turtle Island and across generations.

My own grandmother is just one example. She was sent hundreds of miles away to the Mohawk Institute Residential School, to be indoctrinated as a child into the colonial world. Not only was she robbed of her Anishinabek language, culture, and ways of knowing and being, she was also stripped of her dignity. Both of my parents suffered the same fate. They were forced to attend federal Indian Day School, where they, too, were subject to countless forms of abuse. My experience was comparable, enduring forced integration into a public school system that was intolerant

of my culture, and where I suffered daily from the racism of low expectations and demoralizing stereotypes. And still the trauma continues. One of the most crushing days for me as an Anishinabek parent was when my beloved son cut his long hair – a symbol of Indigenous masculinity. He did so in an attempt to pass as non-Indigenous so he could escape endless taunting and racism at school and everywhere outside of our home.

I’m sharing this story because it reflects the reality of so many Indigenous people today stuck in an involuntary, intergenerational cycle of trauma and abuse. Yet, there is a solution. As the former chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Justice Murray Sinclair said, “Education is what got us into this mess, and education [or re-education] is what will get us out.” It took time and resources to implement the malign objectives of Residential Schools, and it will again take time – as well as continued public pressure – to overcome them. But that journey has begun.

**“It took time and resources to implement the malign objectives of Residential Schools, and it will again take time – as well as continued public pressure – to overcome them.”**

Here, again, I can speak from personal experience. I am commonly known as Christy R. Bressette, but my Spirit Name is *Neeta No Kee Kwe (Hard Working Woman)*. It was given to me by my grandfather, and it was a fortuitous choice. I have indeed worked hard, going from being a homeless mother of two young children to being a vice-provost and associate vice-president at Western. And it was education (a PhD from Western) that got me here – again, fortuitous, since I belong to the Turtle clan, which holds traditional responsibilities for education.

It has been almost 30 years since I first arrived at Western. Back then, I shared many horrible stories with other students about the abuses endured by Indigenous people, and unfortunately those stories continue to be replenished today. But as I think back on family members and friends who have died too early, I know I have done my best to honour them, as well as my grandfather, who gave me my name. Since my graduation, I’ve remained faithful to my people and clan responsibilities, and I have worked hard as an educator, secure in the knowledge that it is indeed education that will get us out of this.

It’s now 2021, and I’ve come full circle. I am back on campus, leading the Office of Indigenous Initiatives with a mandate to promote the work of reconciliation through Western’s new strategic plan and its Indigenous strategic plan. Watching the thousands of people across the country who donned orange shirts in solidarity with Indigenous peoples this past Canada Day, I allowed myself a measure of optimism. I now believe we can achieve a reconciliation that is grounded in truth. And I can also believe something else equally inspiring – namely that some young Indigenous woman graduating from Western, now or in the future, will be able to look at me and think: *Thirty years from now, that could be me.* ♥

# How bats in the basement could save lives during the next viral outbreak

By Sharon Oosthoek



Ryan Troyer and Stephen Barr, virologists at the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, in their campus lab. (PHOTO BY FRANK NEUFELD)



Burton Lim, ROM assistant curator of mammalogy, examines bat specimens from part of an extensive collection that makes this one of the largest in the world. (PHOTO BY JOSHUA SEE, ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM)

Three storeys below the Royal Ontario Museum, a couple of freezers full of bat tissues just might hold the key to keeping the next pandemic at bay. They are the reason Western virologist Ryan Troyer has a standing date every Friday morning at precisely 9 a.m. with the ROM's assistant curator of mammalogy, Burton Lim.

"Yeah, I'm driving into Toronto every Friday to collect frozen bat tissues," says Troyer. "We really know how to have a good time."

In the past two decades there have been three major coronavirus outbreaks in humans – all likely related to viruses found in bats. The first was severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in 2003, then came the Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) in 2012 and now SARS-CoV-2, the cause of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Because humans are increasingly encroaching on wildlife habitats, experts predict more opportunities for animal-to-human virus transmission and more outbreaks.

Even though the current pandemic means there's a lot of red tape with working with bat tissues, Troyer and his team are committed to getting all the special permissions and fol-

lowing all the biological safety protocols. By sequencing and studying bat coronaviruses that jump to humans, the team might just make the difference between a localized outbreak and a pandemic.

Friday mornings, Lim leads Troyer and his students down into the museum's sub-basement. Screened for COVID-19, physically distanced, masked and gowned, they carry with them spreadsheets detailing the provenance of each precious sample, most of which Lim collected himself during research trips to Southeast Asia and China.

Lim and his colleagues have been collecting and freezing mammal tissues in liquid nitrogen since the late 1980s, in order to study taxonomy and genomics. The ROM's frozen bat tissue collection is one of the best in the world, containing nearly 15,000 specimens representing 15 of 21 families, 120 of 220 genera, and 400 of 1,400 species from 30 countries.

"When I told Ryan they were frozen in liquid nitrogen, his eyes popped open," recalls Lim. That's because unlike traditional preservatives such as ethanol, liquid nitrogen allows the specimens to flash freeze at -196°C, which halts the natural degradation of RNA and DNA. With the genetic material intact, scientists can better isolate and identify it.

**"We are developing a resource we can go to next year, or in 10 or 20 years, when the next outbreak occurs."**

– Stephen Barr



In the freezer room, Troyer and his students don insulated gloves to guard against freezer burn and carefully remove each sample to slice off a small piece. Then they place the piece in a tube filled with a special preservative that will keep it from degrading, while rendering any viruses in the tissue inactive.

It takes them most of the day to collect 200 samples, which they drive back to London in carefully packed cardboard boxes. Once they deliver the boxes to Western's state-of-the-art Imaging Pathogens for Knowledge Translation (ImPaKT) Facility, Troyer and his colleague Stephen Barr – also a virologist at the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry – study the samples to see which contain coronaviruses.

Barr and Troyer also look for viruses in bat droppings donated by bat biologists from around the world, including Brock Fenton, a world-renowned bat biologist, professor

emeritus in Western's Faculty of Science, and research associate at the ROM.

The Western team has so far found dozens of types of coronaviruses in the bat tissues and droppings, most of which have already been identified. They are not even halfway through scanning samples and expect to find many more.

Recently, they have developed high-throughput methods for safely determining which spike proteins can enter human cells. These methods only involve the spike proteins, not live infectious coronaviruses, which not only speeds up the screening process, but also eliminates any risk of infection.

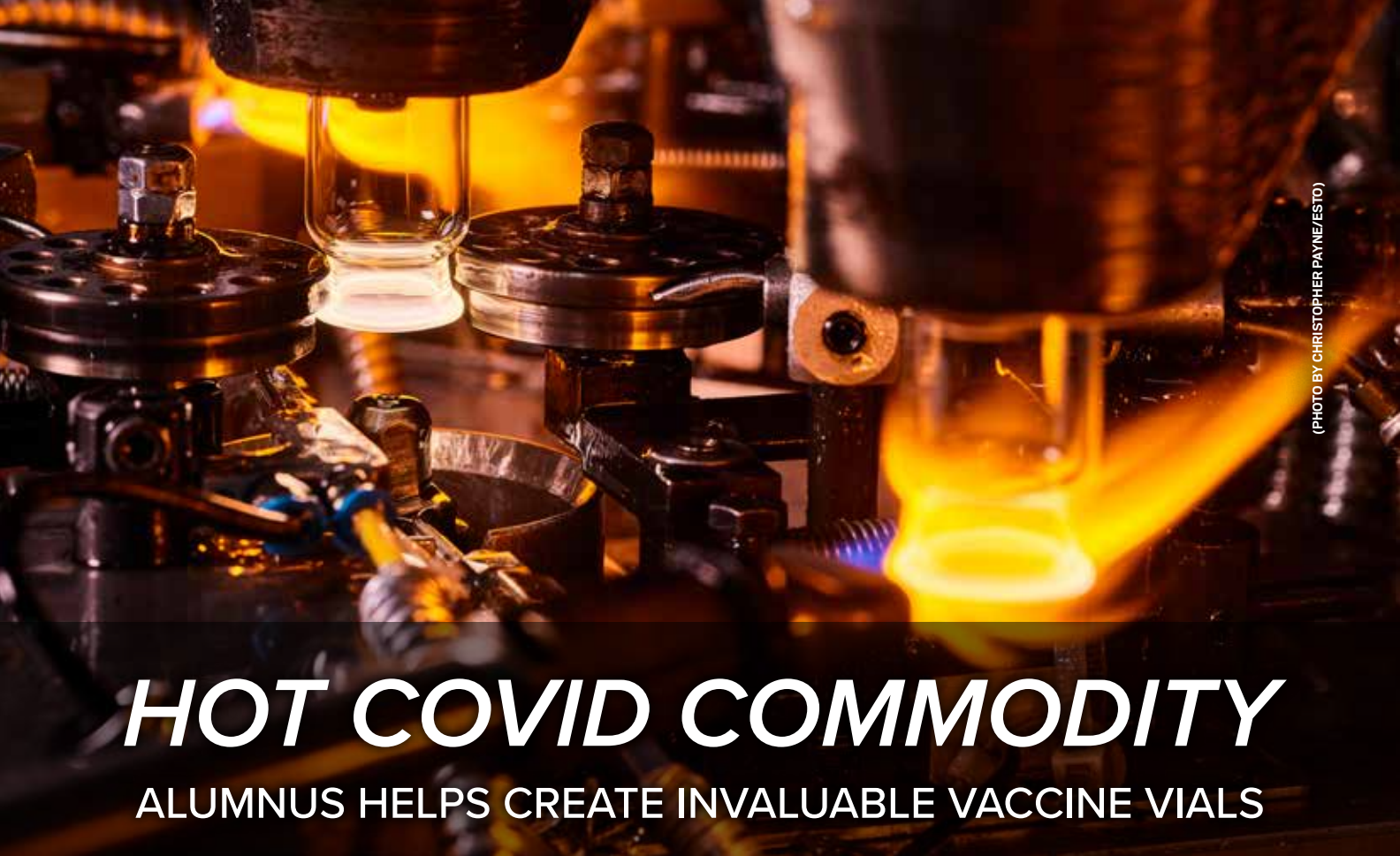
"We know SARS likely originated in bats and spread to other animals, where they evolved and became better at getting into mammals, including humans," says Barr. "We want to identify those viruses that have the ability to get inside human cells because once inside, they start to study our viral defences and evolve ways to hide from it and become a 'smarter' virus. The SARS-CoV-2 variants that are currently emerging around the world are a good example of how the virus has adapted to get into our cells better and how it has found a new way to hide from our immune system."

The team will then isolate the spike RNA from each transmissible coronavirus and use it to generate a seed vaccine. The goal is to create a bank of spike vaccines in much the same way today's COVID-19 vaccines were produced.

"We are developing a resource we can go to next year, or in 10 or 20 years, when the next outbreak occurs," says Barr. "We can then pull out the closest-matched seed vaccine for rapid expansion."

Barr estimates Western's bank of seed vaccines could hasten vaccine development by as much as six months, which could save untold lives.

"We're never going to prevent all transmissions of disease from animals to humans," says Troyer. "But we need to prevent them from going from a limited scale outbreak to a pandemic." 🍀



# HOT COVID COMMODITY

## ALUMNUS HELPS CREATE INVALUABLE VACCINE VIALS

By Tom Spears

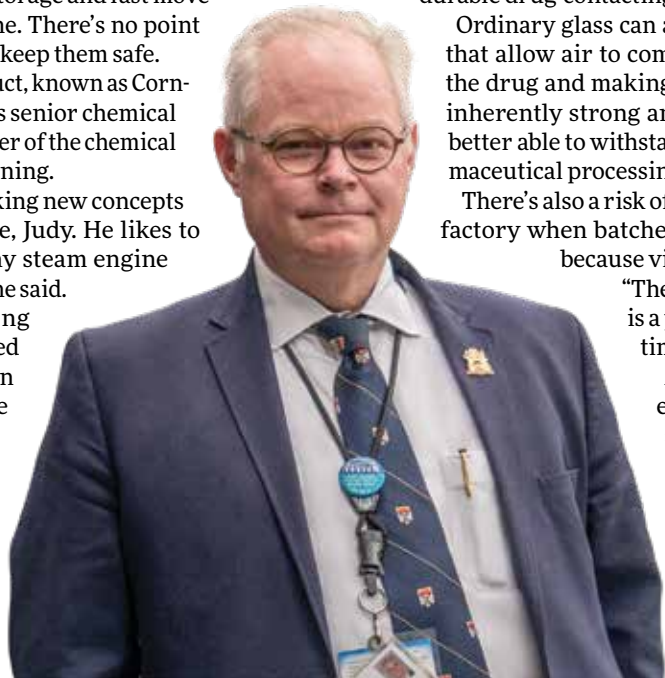
Back in the late 1980s, a young Western science student kept thinking his buddies in engineering had more interesting homework than he did. So, Kai Jarosch switched into chemical engineering for his third year.

We should be glad he did. Jarosch, BA'92, MA'95, PhD'20, and his team at Corning Inc. in New York State designed one of the key processes for the production of the small-but-mighty vials required to hold precious COVID-19 vaccines – hundreds of millions of glass vials that can withstand the stresses of hot sterilization, frozen storage and fast movement along a production line. There's no point having vaccines if you can't keep them safe.

Jarosch's work on the product, known as Corning Valor® Glass, was done as senior chemical process engineer and manager of the chemical process design group at Corning.

Even at home he loves making new concepts work, according to his wife, Judy. He likes to tinker, and once built a tiny steam engine “just to see how it worked,” she said.

Corning has been making glass stronger since it created PYREX® oven-proof dishes in 1915. The company sold the PYREX® consumer product line, but today, some of Corning's most well-



known products include Corning® Gorilla® Glass and mobile display components. Vials, said Jarosch, are a growing market for Corning.

Ordinary glass has been used for pharmaceuticals for more than a century, but it's not ideal, Jarosch explains.

Glass is very strong if it is in perfect condition, but tiny imperfections on the surface can lead it to break down and shed tiny flakes of glass into the contents, called delamination, potentially damaging the medication.

Valor Glass eliminates glass delamination in pharmaceutical vials. Sodium-borate evaporation is not possible. As a result, Valor Glass containers have a uniform, chemically durable drug-contacting surface.

Ordinary glass can also develop microscopic cracks that allow air to come in, letting oxygen react with the drug and making it less effective. Valor Glass is inherently strong and damage-resistant, making it better able to withstand extreme events during pharmaceutical processing.

There's also a risk of breakage at the pharmaceutical factory when batches of vials are filled and sealed, because vials inevitably bump together.

“The breaking of vials during filling is a place where you lose production time,” Jarosch said.

A single broken vial means workers have to shut down the high-speed line, remove all the vials, clean up and start over – at a time when pharma companies

are trying to turn out vaccine doses by the millions.

To strengthen Valor Glass, Corning immerses it in a bath of molten salt solution. Potassium ions (electronically charged particles) in the solution migrate into the glass surface, replacing the smaller sodium ions originally in the glass. As the glass cools, the larger potassium ions compress the glass together, creating a compressive stress layer that forms a tough surface.

It is essentially like trying to fit a size 10 foot in a size nine shoe, creating stress in the glass surface that actually strengthens it, so the vials can jostle safely.

Valor also has a coating that lets vials slip past each other without sticking during production.

“Valor Glass's exterior coating and chemical strengthening enables smoother filling operations by reducing glass-related interventions, enabling lines to run at much higher speeds with improved yields,” said Jarosch.

Another benefit of Valor Glass is that it can withstand intense heat during sterilization and extreme cold temperatures during deep-freeze storage.

Corning started work on Valor Glass about a decade ago, long before any thought of the current pandemic, which gave the company a head start. “Our hard work and the need linked up perfectly,” said Jarosch. “We were ready to meet demand even in the face of a global glass vial shortage.”



**“WE WERE READY TO MEET DEMAND, EVEN IN THE FACE OF A GLOBAL GLASS VIAL SHORTAGE.”**

– KAI JAROSCH

His work today has roots back at Western.

Born in London, where his father was studying biology at Western, Jarosch grew up mostly in Prince George, B.C. When his high-school friends headed for universities in Vancouver and Victoria, he wanted a bigger leap. He had childhood memories of London and decided to travel east.

At Western, he met his wife, who was studying for a master's in journalism. The couple remained in London while he completed his master's and PhD degrees.

Jarosch spent much of his career doing chemical engineering in Ohio for a company called Velocys. But in 2015, he was out of work when new owners decided to lay off many of the research staff.

“I wasn't too busted up about it because I had reached about the apex of what I was going to be able to do there,” Jarosch said. “Their little nudge out the door was just what I needed.”

Then he saw the job posting at Corning.

“Five seconds before I found the job posting at Corning, I had no idea I'd be working with glass,” he said. He'd been making synthetic crude for Velocys.

He credits Western with giving him the tools to adapt to this new area.

“We had a really wonderful focus at Western on the



Kai with his parents, Sharon and Conrad Jarosch, at his PhD graduation in fall 2000.

fundamentals,” he said, and this paid off decades later. “I just went back to basic chemical engineering fundamentals and started applying those. Having that foundation was just critical.”

He loves the work he's doing at Corning, where he finds the technical problems challenging, interesting and impactful.

“This is one of the most satisfying things I've ever done ... being able to provide vials that are meeting a critical need for the U.S. and the rest of the world,” Jarosch said. “It's super satisfying.”

His former supervisor at Western, engineering professor Hugo de Lasa, recalls the young undergraduate made an early good impression.

“Kai has this personality which is pretty determined to do things,” de Lasa said. “He had already this special combination of technical interest and interpersonal skills – which are pretty important in industry.”

Professors, like sports coaches, draft the top talent available for their research teams, “and Kai was one of them,” de Lasa said.

“He loves to solve problems,” said Judy Jarosch, MA'91. “It is creative to take [an idea] from the concept to something that works every time.”

His love for tinkering extends to the home front, she said. He has a little furnace for melting bronze, copper and other metals and makes copies of objects he has found in nature – a horseshoe crab, a bird's skull, an acorn.

“He just does it for fun and gives them to people as gifts,” Judy said. But she hopes he will one day show them at a local gallery.

When teaching young engineers, Jarosch shows a scene from Apollo 13 in which NASA engineers help the three astronauts gather up the only equipment available and work out a way to save them.

Valor Glass, his wife said, has given them both a sense of hope in dark times. So does the garden where they have planted garlic, peas and an apple tree.

And now, the third Jarosch generation is at Western. The couple's daughter, Ada, is entering her second year of biology this fall. 🍷



(PHOTO BY FRANK NEUFELD)

## Opiyo Oloya leads Western's equity work

Renowned social justice and human rights advocate named university's first associate vice-president of equity, diversity and inclusion

By Debora Van Brenk, BA'86, MA'87

Opiyo Oloya – an award-winning school board administrator who came to Canada as a political refugee from Uganda – joined Western as its first associate vice-president of equity, diversity and inclusion (AVP, EDI) on August 30, 2021.

An integral member of Western's senior leadership team, Oloya will help lead, manage, direct and evaluate EDI values and initiatives at the university. He will work closely with diverse groups across campus to promote equity, anti-racism and accountability.

"I'm really happy to be joining the Western family and to use my skills and lived experience to bring people together as part of a really strong team working towards the common goal of EDI," said Oloya, who holds a PhD in education and will report directly to president Alan Shepard.

"There is much good to build on at Western, and I've already found it to be a place where there are many people of goodwill, people with deep knowledge and expertise," Oloya said.

With his advocacy for social justice and human rights education, and high level of engagement in the Toronto community and internationally, Oloya is well-qualified to advance EDI at Western, Shepard said.

"Dr. Oloya's ability to build relationships among a wide range of stakeholders, and his track record of successfully leading complex change in the education system have earned him an outstanding reputation in his field," Shepard said. "We're truly delighted to welcome him here."

Shepard added that Oloya's role comes at a critical time, as Western focuses on social justice, sustainability, and combating structural inequities in society and in university education.

"People in the Western community and beyond have told us they're eager for greater institutional attention to EDI, and the appointment of Dr. Oloya to this role is part of our ongoing commitment to action," Shepard said.

### Running towards education

Oloya has never taken education for granted.

Growing up in a small farming village in northern Uganda, he would rise before dawn each day to run the six-kilometre path to school – trotting past herds of antelope and troops of monkeys – pausing only to sidestep black mamba snakes, drink at a stream or pluck fruit from nearby trees.

"I'd arrive at school and snap a piece of stick from the bushes and we'd go and write in the sand, and that's how we learned our alphabets in Luo and English. It was the most natural place anybody could grow without worrying about a lot of things," he recalled.

But the political scenery was less idyllic as military officer Idi Amin seized power in 1971 and began a despotic eight-year rule.

After Amin was overthrown and exiled, Oloya and fellow student leaders at Makerere University in Kampala went village to village to promote democracy and human rights. Their activism attracted the new government's ire, forcing student leaders to flee for their lives.

Oloya hid under the bed at a professor's house, then cloistered in a convent before ultimately finding refuge in Kenya.

He made his way to the Canadian high commission in Nairobi. Sponsored by World University Service of Canada, Oloya began classes at Queen's University the day after he arrived in Canada.

### Student to educator

With degrees from Queen's and then from the University of Ottawa, Oloya began his career as teacher, vice-principal, principal and superintendent with the York Catholic District School Board. He was subsequently appointed as the school board's interim associate director.

In a school with some of the highest student absentee rates and lowest test scores, he often visited pupils' homes to persuade their parents of the value of education.

In a board with some of the most diverse student populations, he championed equity and inclusion in hiring practices, and trained principals and teachers to view administrative and classroom decisions through that same equity lens.

"I saw my job – and still see my job – as leading people and uniting community."

### Author and advocate

After realizing a void in community events celebrating Black Canadians, Oloya was one of the founders and promoters of Toronto's Afrofest, North America's largest celebration of African music and culture. In 1991, Oloya approached the University of Toronto's community radio station and founded a long-running African music and cultural show called *Karibuni*, which means "welcome" in Swahili.

He is an advisor on the African Union Mission to Somalia in efforts to restore peace to that country, and is the founder and former president of International Resources for Education of African Deaf and Blind Children, which provided scholarships for advanced teacher education and sponsorships for deaf and blind children to attend school.

*"The best way forward, in my lived experience and knowledge, is to listen and see the common meeting place where we will achieve our goals together."*

Oloya authored *Child to Soldier*, an analysis of how children abducted in northern Uganda by warlord Joseph Kony became soldiers in Kony's Lord's Resistance Army.

At York University, where he earned his PhD in 2010, Oloya was subsequently awarded an honorary doctorate of law (LLD honoris causa) for his social justice, international philanthropy and education work.

### Bringing people together

As a leader in EDI, Oloya says it's always been his priority to create a culture of being open to others.

"The best way forward, in my lived experience and knowledge, is to listen and see the common meeting place where we will achieve our goals together. It's to respect and to build relationships."

"I am also still a teacher at heart, and I'm glad I'll also have the opportunity to work with students and listen to them."

Western's new EDI advisory council – formed to provide guidance on anti-racism, accessibility and EDI policies – will advise and support Oloya in his new role.

He will also work closely with the Office of Indigenous Initiatives, Student Experience and Equity and Human Rights Services, along with a wide range of other groups at Western.

Oloya will lead the new EDI action network – a group of more than 60 representatives from academic and administrative units across campus – and various university governance bodies and task forces.

The creation of the AVP, EDI role is part of Western's commitment in response to the final report of the Anti-Racism Working Group. In June 2021, the university announced an investment of \$6 million to support new EDI initiatives, including \$4 million to support the recruitment of Black and Indigenous faculty members. 🍀





Left to right:  
Erin McCloskey,  
Kadie Ward and  
Ayumi Bailly  
(PHOTO BY FRANK NEUFELD)

# Fair's fair

## Alumnae lead Ontario's Pay Equity Office at a critical point in its history

By Pat Morden, BA'77

When Kadie Ward was a child, her mother and father were ministers at a church in northern Ontario. The church elders told her father it wasn't appropriate for a woman to deliver a sermon. Ward's mother responded by creating and delivering a six-part sermon series on women's leadership in the Bible.

Although Ward, BA'05, MA'07, was too young to understand what was happening then, she certainly does now. As the Ontario government's pay equity commissioner, she brings her commitment to feminism and her formidable skills and experience to ensure that women's work is valued fairly. In that work, she is ably assisted by two fellow Western graduates, Erin McCloskey, BSc'05, and Ayumi Bailly, BA'88.

Ward arrived at Western with plans to become a doctor.

Soon, though, she switched from biology to philosophy. "Philosophy opened so many doors," she said. "It gave me an uncommon perspective on the world and a way of thinking about problems that has carried me through my career."

She went on to complete a master's in media studies at Western. During the program, she learned about the novel Creative Economy theory, and was drawn into the world of economic development. After working with municipalities in Ontario, she started her own company, consulting with more than 100 cities in 30 countries.

Eventually Ward settled in Ukraine, where she worked on Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy, focusing on empowering women and girls to enhance peace and prosperity. She witnessed Ukraine's Euromaidan revolution and the invasion of Crimea. "It was a challenging time," she said. "Ukraine was experiencing a high percentage of internally

displaced women, many of them single mothers, and put a big focus on supporting them and getting them into the economy."

Ready to return to North America after five years abroad, Ward completed an MBA at the Kellogg School of Management in Illinois and started working in Ontario's pay equity office in August 2020.

Like Ward, McCloskey has feminist roots reaching back into her family.

"I had some really strong examples, people who led by example and called out injustice where they saw it," McCloskey said.

At Western, she served as vice-president of education with the University Students' Council, president of the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance and president of the Women's Issues Network. After working in provincial and federal constituency offices and with the Ontario Association of Food Banks, she taught in South Korea and China for several years with her husband. When their first child was born, they returned to Canada and McCloskey began her career with the provincial government. She joined the pay equity office in January 2021.

Ayumi Bailly was inspired by a David Suzuki lecture to study for a BA in geography at Western, then went on to do a master's in environmental studies at the University of Waterloo.

"My career has been driven by two things," Bailly said. "I wanted to make a difference in the world around me, and I said 'yes' to every opportunity that came my way."

A provincial public servant since 1995, she worked in areas as diverse as human rights, ethics, administrative law, regulatory enforcement, health and safety, and freedom of information before landing at the Pay Equity Office in 2019.

Pay equity, Ward explains, is about redressing the systemic devaluation of work historically or typically done by women. In 1987, Ontario became the first jurisdiction in the world to have an enforceable pay equity statute.

As McCloskey puts it: "The pay equity office works to deliver economic justice for women. It's an issue of fairness and, as we all know, fairness is not necessarily a self-fulfilling concept."

Since its founding, the Pay Equity Office has developed a complex methodology to analyze companies' compensation data, identify equity gaps and, if necessary, mandate changes. Ward said that most companies, when faced with clear evidence of inequity, choose to redress the balance voluntarily. In the past 35 years, the gendered pay gap in Ontario has decreased from 22 per cent to 12 per cent. That means, of course, that women are still paid 88 cents for every dollar male workers receive.

As commissioner, Ward is at arm's length from the legislative and compliance side of the issue, and focuses on outreach, often with other jurisdictions interested in learning from Ontario's experience.

The office recently worked with the Czech Republic's ministry of labour and social affairs, and has ongoing relationships with the International Labour Organization,

the United Nations, and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, among others.

McCloskey focuses on outreach, public education, collaborations and partnerships in Ontario and beyond. Bailly is the administrative head of the office, implementing strategic directions set by the Commissioner.

They all agree this is a critical moment in the history of pay equity.

"We're at a fork in the road," Bailly said. "The pandemic has put a spotlight on many inequities and the #MeToo movement has also created momentum."

The global pandemic has affected women disproportionately, with 1.5 million Canadian women losing their jobs in the first two months of the accompanying recession. Women's labour market participation rates have fallen to the lowest since the 1980s.

***"Until we take a very broad view of the social and economic drivers of wage inequity, we're still going to have a long way to go."***

***- Erin McCloskey***

"Women may not see the value in staying in or returning to the workforce because they're not compensated fairly," said Ward. "And that's dangerous because there's ample evidence demonstrating that gender diversity is an important success factor in the marketplace."

Ward noted that nearly two-thirds of the pay equity gap remains unexplained. "Some of it is due to factors like the gendered impact of child and elder care, total work experience and field of study," she said. "But there are other factors – stereotyping, differences in wage expectations and negotiations, gendered roles in work – that clearly contribute."

Calls for a just recovery from COVID-19 are creating new urgency around the issue. But justice is not the only argument.

"We're trying to build awareness that pay equity is good for everybody," said McCloskey.

Research shows that companies who work to achieve gender equity see gains in productivity and profit. There is also evidence to suggest that narrowing the gender wage gap tends to raise men's incomes as well.

At the same time, the office is drawing attention to the supports that are vital to women's participation in the workforce, such as access to training and child care.

"Until we take a very broad view of the social and economic drivers of wage inequity, we're still going to have a long way to go," said McCloskey. 🍷



(PHOTO BY THE BANK OF CANADA)

# Building a more inclusive economy

At the helm of the Bank of Canada, Tiff Macklem is helping shape Canada's economic policy

By Debora Van Brenk, BA'86, MA'87

**Y**ou may have learned somewhere that the study of economics is about deciphering production and consumption, supply and demand, profits and markets, exports, imports, scarcity, spending, numbers and trends, and more numbers.

But Canada's top banker says those definitions fall far short.

"Ultimately, economics is about understanding people," says Tiff Macklem, governor of the Bank of Canada, which is charged with setting monetary policy to keep Canadian inflation low and stable, and fostering a healthy financial system.

Understanding not just people's buying behaviour, but also the intangibles: what they need and want; and how their perceptions, experiences and communities shape them.

It's a perspective shaped in large measure at Western, where Macklem earned his master's degree in economics in 1984 and his PhD in 1989.

The insights he developed at Western and honed since then have proven invaluable in his career as banker, advisor, policy-maker and educator.

And since Macklem's appointment to the top post at the Bank of Canada in May 2020, understanding the human condition has proven to be an essential tool – almost as significant as computer-guided economic modelling – in navigating the nation's economic recovery from a global pandemic.

## 'WE CAN SOLVE THESE PROBLEMS'

Macklem grew up in the Westmount neighbourhood of Montreal, a city that did not only aspire to be world-class; it had a long track record of international clout.

Aglow with pride in its new Metro subway and the success of Expo 67, Montreal was Canada's commercial and financial heartbeat.

It was the headquarters of life insurance companies, banks, breweries and distilleries and, not coincidentally, the venerable Birks jewelry company where Macklem's father was an executive.

In the 1970s, Montreal was also home to growing Quebec nationalism, political uncertainty and economic unrest. Consumer prices were skyrocketing even as jobless numbers increased.

"My impression as a teenager was that everybody was angry, there were a lot of strikes, and everybody felt ripped off from inflation and unemployment. It was just a very turbulent time."

As young Macklem read his newspapers, it seemed to him that the country's woes were an incomprehensible, and probably unavoidable, feature of the landscape.

But soon after he started university – he went to Queen's planning to major in geography – he discovered economics.

"What I learned in my undergrad was these things didn't just arrive from outer space; they were created by us... and we can solve these problems."

He came to Western, which he calls Canada's powerhouse in economic studies, intending to learn how.

## FAMILY AND ALMOST FAMILY

Macklem was impressed and intimidated by his classmates' focus and intensity.

Professors David Laidlaw and Michael Parkin – macro-economists whose research had already made a mark on global monetary policy – were an enduring inspiration and influence.

"There were the very senior faculty members who've been real leaders in their field and in monetary economics. And then there are all these young faculty members who were bringing in new ways of looking at things and new types of models.

"We were soaking up new ideas...I discovered after a while, yeah, I was actually not bad at this stuff."

*"Ultimately, economics is about understanding people."*

For a long time, economics had focused on the demand side: consumption, investment and exports. But Western researchers added nuance to the other side of the equation: supply, productivity and labour-market participation.

Although more difficult to measure – "productivity is sort of an amorphous concept," he notes – it's the supply side that determines long-run prosperity in the commodities-intensive Canadian economy.

Macklem joined the Bank of Canada for a year after graduating with his master's. He then returned to Western to begin his doctorate a year later.

Partway through the doctorate degree, he married and moved to a Western-owned mature-student apartment. "This was our first place together, our own place. So while sometimes (studies) were a burden on my personal life, it was a special time."

Then there was the connection among fellow economics scholars: "The wonderful thing about doing your PhD is you're immersed in this *almost* family. You speak this unique language among yourselves and you're thinking about the same stuff, and you have vibrant debates," he recalls.

But it also made them seek solutions outside the department.

"You really have to reach beyond your field and your relatively narrow slice of deep expertise, and draw in other experts from other domains, because these problems are so cross-disciplinary."

## RISING CAREER

After earning his PhD, Macklem rejoined the Bank of Canada and took on increasingly senior roles there. He became one of the go-to economists charged with working out the central bank's new inflation targets (Canada was only the second country, after New Zealand, to announce inflationary targets), and he helped guide the economy through the worldwide recession of the late 2000s.

He then served with the federal Department of Finance for four years before becoming senior deputy governor and chief operating officer of the Bank of Canada.

In 2014, Macklem left civil service to become dean of the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto.

Appointed governor of the Bank of Canada in May 2020, Macklem still hadn't met most of his staff in person a year later.

"There's so much ingenuity out there. People are figuring out how to work in ways that I never imagined and that does give you some optimism for the future."

## PANDEMIC LESSONS

The global pandemic has led to some pondering about the human element and the experiences of people in Canada – with or without a pandemic.

"There are so many elements of this crisis that are so unique. They're not like anything we've experienced previously in our careers. That forces you to really go back to your fundamental training and use everything you've got. But it also forces you to go out and get diverse perspectives... to get input from a broader range of people coming at it with different lenses."

And for an economist, it also meant identifying gaps in the human equation and examining who has been left out of the recovery.

"Some Canadians are feeling [this] much more acutely than others, because the impact of this has been so uneven across different parts of society. So you can't just look at everything at the macro level, you've got to understand the perceptions and experiences of different parts of the economy, different people in the economy."

This, he says, is the sharpest and most unequal economic cycle of our times.

During a recent address to students at Atlantic Canada universities, Macklem noted the importance of building a diverse workforce and more equitable workplaces.

"A more inclusive economy is a bigger economy, a more prosperous economy with more room to grow without creating inflationary pressures," he told the students.

## KEEPING CONNECTIONS

As the pandemic wound down to something manageable, Macklem found an unexpected benefit of all the virtual connections necessitated by COVID: renewed connections to fellow economics alumni from Western. A 'let's reconnect' email that started with a few names has now evolved into a comprehensive list of almost the whole class, he says.

"We've been having fun reminiscing over email. I have so many happy memories of Western." 🍷

(PHOTO BY WHITNEY SMITH)

By Keri Ferguson

# BODY OF WORK

Drawing nude self-portraits exposed Quinn Rockliff's talent as an artist and advocate

Quinn Rockliff was never one to pick up a pencil or paintbrush to process her feelings – until she came to Western.

Examining events involving consent and assault through a critical lens inspired her to draw her naked body repeatedly, reclaiming a part of herself once stripped away. She also uncovered her artistic talent, launching a career as an interdisciplinary artist well before her convocation.

“I arrived at Western with one idea about who I was and what I wanted, and left as a completely different human,” said Rockliff, BA’17.

Courses in feminist theory and media studies challenged her thinking, uprooting past hurts and violations.

“It was an overwhelming and big experience to unpack all these interactions, learning about consent culture and how it fit with my coming of age,” she said. “Rather than talking about it, or whatever people do to cope, I just began drawing myself again and again.”

At first, Rockliff unconsciously drew the idealized female form, before embracing and sketching the body that was uniquely hers. She spent most of her free time in second year in her dorm room drawing, with professor Atle Kjosén’s third-year alternative media project pushing her to explore her craft more fully.

“I painted nude portraits of myself and other women I knew to make a book where you could flip through and unveil their pages. It explored notions of consent and empowerment through self-representation. After that, I started to take my art seriously.”

Her studies also challenged her use of social media, with her posts shifting as she shared her art and raw truths about her lived experiences.

“It was terrifying because I went from having my social currency of wanting the attention of men and being validated online by my peers, to someone posting drawings of herself naked and talking about feminism, toxic masculinity and consent culture,” she said.

Although she lost a few followers and friends through her fresh approach, she found her voice and a wide community of support.

“I started having conversations with other young women about the things we were experiencing, the expectations placed upon



Untitled self-portrait



Worth saving



Album concept art

Quinn Rockliff gained a loyal following when she began posting her art and her opinions on Instagram in 2016. (QUINN ROCKLIFF/INSTAGRAM)

us, and how the impossible double standards of being desirable – but not giving too much of yourself away – was a game we would never win. It was just so fun to admit and reject wholeheartedly,” she said.

“I didn’t necessarily know why I was doing it; I just knew the more I drew my body, the more I felt in control.”

She also began selling her work online, attracting more followers and fans; among them, a representative from *Rethink Breast Cancer* asking Rockliff to design t-shirts for an education and awareness campaign aimed at young women, in collaboration with clothing chain H&M.

“To have an organization and big company wanting my depiction of the body was a really validating moment for me,” Rockliff said, though she admits to suffering from imposter syndrome, despite having also worked with other national brands, including

Knix and Mary Young.

To combat those doubts, Rockliff took advantage of time during lockdown to hone and expand her craft.

“Because I was so successful early on doing commissions for people and selling prints, I never really took the time to create a body of work for myself. The pandemic has caused me to slow down and do that,” she said.

Now her practice includes painting on silk, with her signature single-line technique the foundation of her work.

“The single-line drawing evolved as a need to abstract my body from my expectation of perfection, and to look like people I didn’t look like,” Rockliff said. “As I started drawing myself more and more, using it as meditation to work through things, I needed a quick way to get myself, my body, down on paper. The best way to do that was to do it quickly and not lift my pen from the paper.”

She continues to create new pathways to represent who she is by drawing herself every day.

“It’s a great way to ground myself and be present with my body – how it’s changing, and also finding new parts to explore and appreciate.”

# One idea that changed the world

Insulin pioneer sparked continuum of research on diabetes management, and optimism for cure

By Debora Van Brenk, BA'86, MA'87

**D**r. Frederick Banting would have been first to admit his medical practice wasn't shaping up as he'd hoped. Unable to secure a hospital position in Toronto after serving as a surgeon on the front lines of the First World War, Banting set up shop in London, Ont. – only to find he had too few patients to make ends meet.

Upon such career 'failures' are heroes made. Had Banting's medical practice been a success, he may not have moonlighted as an instructor at Western's medical school 100 years ago.

He wouldn't have been cramming late into a sleepless night, on Oct. 31, 1920, so that he could deliver a lecture to students the next day about the role of the pancreas in digestion and regulating blood sugar.

He wouldn't have penned 25 words that would unlock life for millions of people with diabetes:

*"Diabetes. Ligate pancreatic ducts of dog. Keep dogs alive till acini degenerate leaving islets. Try to isolate the internal secretion of these and relieve glycosurea."*

This year, the world celebrates the 100th anniversary of the discovery of insulin – an idea incubated at Western and hatched in an upstairs bedroom of Banting's medical office in London, Ont.

There have been many strides in treating diabetes since then, said Dr. Rob Hegele, a leading international endocrinologist and distinguished university professor of medicine and biochemistry at the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry.

"But here was really that one event that set everything in motion," Hegele said. "It's almost a mythological story."

Hegele and Grant Maltman, BA'91, curator of the Banting House National Historic Site of Canada, are co-authors of a paper in *The Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology*, that firmly positions London as the birthplace of insulin.

## Paying homage

Banting's confidence in his abilities far outpaced his experience or research credentials, the paper notes. But something in Banting's moxie must have persuaded University of Toronto physiologist John James R. Macleod to provide the young surgeon lab space, an assistant, some laboratory dogs and two months to work on the problem of diabetes.

Their success in purifying and administering insulin led to a Nobel Prize in Medicine in 1923. (Macleod and Banting shared the prize with colleagues Charles Best and James Collip, who would later become Western's dean of medicine).

Diabetic patients the world over continue to pay homage to that eureka moment at the Banting House in London, Ont.

Noted Maltman, "This is serendipity, this is an act of divine intervention, the Moon and Mars and Venus, all wrapped into one. This is one man with one idea that changed the world – all because of a guy who didn't have two nickels to rub together,

◀ In the middle of a sleepless night on Oct. 31, 1920, Dr. Frederick Banting scribbled this note about 'diabetes' – an idea that was the genesis of treating diabetes patients with insulin. (THOMAS FISHER RARE

BOOK LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO)

and there happened to be a teaching position open at Western."

## 'Bit-by-bit, step-by-step'

London researchers continue that legacy to save lives.

Among them is Dr. Irene Hramiak, professor of endocrinology and metabolism at Western's Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry and an endocrinologist at St. Joseph's Health Care London. Among her many distinctions, she received the American Diabetes Association's Charles H. Best Award for distinguished service in 1993.



Dr. Irene Hramiak

She has led or co-led more than 50 clinical research trials for people with diabetes.

Hramiak draws a straight line between her research and the important work undertaken decades ago by London doctors John Dupré and N. Wilson Rodger, part of an international team that conducted the Kroc collaborative trial to understand microvascular complications – specifically eye damage – in people with diabetes. It led to the decades-long Diabetes Control and Complications Trial, which examined causes and solutions to complications in people with Type 1 (insulin-dependent) diabetes.

"This was the beginning of what we consider randomized control trials in diabetes treatment," Hramiak said.

She is examining the benefits of changing the traditional approach to treating people newly diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes.

Ordinarily, doctors will prescribe lifestyle changes, such as diet and exercise, until the disease progresses and additional medications need to be added – ultimately to the point where the patient needs insulin.

But several of Hramiak's trials examine whether it's possible to "re-set" the pancreas from the beginning – to prevent the progression to more medications – by starting with an intensive course of insulin and medications, in addition to conventional lifestyle changes.

"We're seeing if we can cause a remission – we can't call it a cure – in people who are newly diagnosed."

In her long career, she has found there are no quick answers.

The work is collaborative and cumulative, and even trials that don't meet their hoped-for results are a kind of success.

"You have to keep asking the questions and keep doing the work. It's bit-by-bit, step-by-step, and everybody adds their piece to the puzzle."

## Genetic keys to a solution

Hegele, likewise, is among the leaders in diabetes research and treatment.

He treats more than 2,000 patients in his lipid clinic, and has written or co-authored 800 research papers that have been cited more than 35,000 times.

Lipid levels (fatty compounds such as high cholesterol that can lead to early heart disease and stroke) are often a "package deal" with diabetes, noted Hegele, who is also director of the London Regional Genomics Centre at Robarts Research Institute.

Consensus is emerging that the Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes classifications may be too narrow, he said, and there may be five or more subtypes along a genetic spectrum.

Until now, figuring out what treatment or combinations of treatments will work best with a patient has often been a matter of trial and error, Hegele said.

His work in genetic analysis, though, could unlock some doors to treatment.

For a small subset of diabetics, the disease is a result of one genetic "misprint," he said.

"But we're also learning that, rather than a single misprint on a single gene, a greater percentage of people will have a variety of misprints on a variety of genes.

"Individually, each one of these changes may not be enough to make the person diabetic – but cumulatively, there are enough misprints that they're acting as a team, as if the patient has inherited a single large-effect gene variant that puts them at risk."

Creating genetic profiles of diabetes could help clinicians understand which specific genotypes will respond to diet and exercise, and which are more likely to have success with additional interventions.

Like much of the research in the field, it is a work in progress. "Maybe in five years we can have more definitive answers," Hegele said.

## Expanding the knowledge base

For all the advances in medical research in the past century, diabetes still kills more than 1.6 million people each year.

The Banting House flame, marking the place where professor Banting first ignited hope for diabetics, will continue to burn until there's a cure.

Hegele is optimistic that hard work and a measure of serendipity will make it happen.

"One hundred years ago, you could learn everything that was known about diabetes at the time from a chapter in a medical textbook. Now it would take several textbooks just to skim the surface.

"We don't have a cure – that's the ultimate goal – but we're in a golden age where there are so many possibilities." ♥

## Milestones in the quest for a cure

**1920:** Dr. Frederick Banting hypothesizes that isolating/extracting hormones from a dog's pancreas is key to solving 'diabetes' problem.

**1921:** Insulin is discovered by Banting, Dr. Charles Best and professor J.J.R. Macleod and purified by biochemist James Collip.

**1922:** First patient is injected with insulin in Toronto.

**1923:** Banting and Macleod receive the Nobel Prize in Medicine, sharing it with Best and Collip.

**1940s:** Diabetes is linked to kidney and eye complications.

**1944:** Standard insulin syringe is developed.

**1959:** Diabetes is categorized into two distinct types.

**1966:** First successful pancreas transplant.

**1983:** Synthesized insulin is introduced for human use.

**1992:** Study: a single gene mutation could be the culprit in some diabetes cases.

**1993:** Landmark 30-year study, Diabetes Control and Complications Trial, leads to standardized diabetes management.

**2000:** Multiple genetic markers are identified in Type 2 diabetes, raising prospects for improved treatment.

## Next milestone: The cure

Sources: Diabetes Canada, American Diabetes Association



## Artist weaves love of science into tapestries

### Former scientist left the lab for the loom and has never looked back

By Keri Ferguson

**M**artina Celerin has experienced a lot of loss in her life. When she was four, she and her parents fled their Czech homeland as political refugees, leaving loved ones and family behind.

"We rolled out as Soviet tanks rolled in," said Celerin, BSc'88, HBSc'89, PhD'95.

A year later, after they immigrated to Canada, her mother was killed by a drunk driver.

While Celerin was studying at Western, her cherished mentor and graduate supervisor, Dave Laudenbach, died right before she gave her dissertation.

But instead of lamenting what she's lost, Celerin often embrac-

es what is right in front of her – incorporating fond memories, found objects and lessons learned into her award-winning tapestries.

"I have this almost horrible background of adversity," Celerin said. "But that's what makes the art real and gives it a passion and intensity that people respond to. I think they can feel my personal experiences and my enthusiasm for life. I weave my sadness and joy into my pieces."

The former molecular geneticist has been a professional textile artist since leaving her lab at Indiana University and returning to her loom nearly 20 years ago.

"The idea was I would try it for a year and see if it worked. That was in 2002, and I haven't looked back."

Celerin's art form evolved as she became dissatisfied with the flatness of her early works in acrylics and oil pastels. "I began gluing found objects onto the canvas and then painting over them," she said. "This was better, but still not enough."

Her solution was to create her own canvas through weaving, incorporating reclaimed materials and textures. Combining this approach with needle felting allows her to create three-dimensional tapestries.

"Each of my pieces has an entire story behind it, with special objects helping to tell stories I carry in my heart," Celerin said.

Her work has been featured in solo, group and juried exhibitions across the United States, and she gives lectures, workshops and demonstrations on her craft.

Her love of weaving was born at Sir Wilfrid Laurier Secondary School in London, Ont., where she often won both the art and science awards. When her "forward-thinking art teacher" set up enormous looms in class, Celerin was hooked.

"That experience was so wonderful for me that subsequently I got an old window frame and a bunch of nails from the basement of my father's veterinary clinic and I worked myself a loom. I continued weaving through the summer, but that all faded away when I threw myself heavily into university and moving forward with my life."

Faculty at Western made a lasting impression on Celerin.

She credits biology professor

emeritus Bob van Huystee for gently leading her toward an honours degree in plant sciences. "There, I finally met 'my people,'" Celerin said.

Biology department chair Alan Day was "incredibly supportive and patient" as her advisor. When Celerin's research took a direction beyond his expertise, he encouraged her to add Laudenbach as her co-advisor and supervisor for her doctorate in plant biology.

"Dave Laudenbach was an amazing person, and taught me more about life, focus and dedication than I can ever express," Celerin said.

Laudenbach also had a practical influence on how Celerin organizes her home art studio in Bloomington, In.

"Dave taught me how to label everything when I was doing research in his lab. It worked for me in science, and it works for me in art. I have so many materials, and they are so well-organized, sorted and labelled thanks to him. I can put my hands on them immediately. If I didn't, it would be chaos."

After Western, Celerin took a postdoc-



*Leaning in for a view: Each creation has an entire story behind it, Celerin said.*

toral position in the biology department at Indiana University. She had little money to decorate her new apartment, but enough for a hammer and nails, and she once more made herself a loom. Weaving discarded scraps of fabric with rattan and even ether-stained cotton plugs from another lab, she created a piece of art that still hangs in her home today.

She weaves her scientific knowledge and a sense of whimsy into almost every piece she creates.

In her work *Spelling Bees*, needle-felted bees made from wool dyed with spent coffee grounds hover on honeycombs made from yellowed pages of her high-school dictionary.

"The bees are absolutely anatomically correct," Celerin said. "I'm grateful for my undergraduate and graduate education for giving me that attention to detail and those subtleties. That's what makes a tremendous difference in my art."

The bees' wings are made from used dryer sheets and the ends of their antennae from one of her husband's old guitar strings.

"That's what I've done my entire life; make things out of what's around me and what gives me joy." 🍯



*Spelling Bees: Celerin creates her own canvas by incorporating reclaimed objects and textures.*

**F**red Cahill's morning begins before sunrise when he dons his cowboy hat and boots, gulps two mugs of coffee and heads out to feed the horses.

Heads bob to greet him: A palomino with braids in her mane. Two shaggy miniature donkeys named Daisy and Dolly. A dun-coloured mare, a couple of glistening chestnuts with liquid-brown eyes. And Blue, Cahill's favourite, a muscled roan whose forward ears and swishing tail pronounce her eager to start the day.

Blue works hard and gets along with everybody, Cahill says. Versatile, dependable, sensible, affable. Not flashy, but always finishes a job she starts.

Those same virtues might well apply to Cahill.

This is Cahill's life as a modern cowboy and operator of Texas Longhorn Ranch, and it's a good one. "It's not a nine-to-five job – more a five-to-nine job – but I wouldn't have it any other way."

### *Cowboys and campers*

Cahill, BA'81 (Economics), figures he was born to this life, growing up in the countryside 45 minutes west of London in the hamlet of Kerwood, where the ranch stands today.

"I'm lucky I had good parents: Grant and Betty Cahill," he says. "They were just really there as parents and they developed a work ethic in all of us."

When Cahill was a kid, he would beg to stay up past his regular bedtime on Sunday nights to catch the TV western, *Bonanza*.

He practised cattle-roping skills on anything that moved, and on a lot of things that didn't.



# Living the rancher life

Western-educated, real-life cowboy innovates camp experience at Texas Longhorn Ranch

By Debora Van Brenk, BA'86, MA'87

(PHOTO BY FRANK NEUFELD)

He loved dawn, when the pasture sparkled with dew. He loved the feeling of a horse under his saddle, the smell of the first cut of hay, the rugged beauty of cattle with horns that stretched as wide as a ranch hand is tall.

But he realized as a teenager, if he intended to make ranching his livelihood as well as his life, he had to attend university.

"You figure out what you love to do – and then you figure out how to make a living at it," he says.

"I attended Western because I knew I needed an education. I don't know what possessed me to go there. Nobody in my family had ever gone.

"I worked my butt off at it. I had to work hard, study hard. It was tough. I'm 62 years old and sometimes I still have nightmares about exams. But I know I wouldn't be here today if not for that education."

One of his course assignments was creating a business plan for a kids' summer camp. That project was the academic test of his post-graduate ambition.

He and his family leased (and later purchased) conservation area lands beside the home farm.

*"You figure out what you love to do and then you figure out how to make a living at it."*

– Fred Cahill

They moved barns from across the county, cleared riding trails along the Sydenham River, planted a stand of white pines, shored up endless fence lines and grew their herd of Texas longhorn cattle.

They piped water to the cavernous pool, from the oxbow pond that nature had shaped into a giant horseshoe.

Soon, the Texas Longhorn Ranch kids' camp was up and running – and galloping.

The kids bunked in covered wagons that filled as quickly as they could be built.

Cahill estimates something like 20,000 children went through the place in the summer camp's 18 years.

He credits some of its early popularity to timing: In the early 1990s, *City Slickers*, a fish-out-of-water comedy about the exploits of New York friends who find themselves on a cattle drive, hit movie theatres. Then came line dancing and country singer Shania Twain.

But the ranch's enduring appeal has always been more elemental than faddish, he says.

When you introduce kids to horses, cattle, ranch chores, roping and campfires, you instill in them honesty, empathy, work ethic, a sense of their infinite potential in the great big world.

Cahill is big on pragmatic positivity as a tool that can even any odds: "You don't say, 'I can't.' Life has to be about, 'I can.' It's all about attitude."

Gail, his wife of 34 years and partner in their ventures – and who Cahill still calls "this bride of mine" – picks up the story here:

"So many campers came back year after year and if you asked, 'How are you today?' they knew to say, 'Just great!' By the end of the week, every camper would shout it out, 'Just great!' and they'd believe it too," Gail says.

"That's going on Fred's gravestone: 'It's all about attitude.'"

### *Grown-up glamping*

Parents began dropping hints they craved the kind of rural retreat their children enjoyed so much.

It was Gail who suggested glamour camping, 'glamping', as a natural evolution. Not a dude ranch and most definitely not a country spa – but something in between.

The Cahills converted covered wagons to upscale lodgings for two. Crisp linens on the beds, a fresh-brewed coffee in the morning before a home-cooked breakfast, and a trail ride or a dip in the pool. Inky sky and bright stars above a campfire's crackle. No agendas, no deadlines. No suits, no uniforms.

A lot of guests work as first responders, says Gail. "This is a place for their mental well-being. After all they do and all they've experienced, our ranch and our horses are their therapy.

"They go back to real life and they feel they've recharged their batteries."

Busyness abounds on the working farm but it also exudes the unflappable, genial hospitality of its owners.

Virtually everyone employed at the ranch, including some Western students and alumni, first arrived as kid campers.

"We're in the people business. We have to be good listeners," Cahill emphasizes. "It's not just about getting stuff done and being productive, so we make sure everybody who works here knows, 'If anyone comes near you, stand up, shake their hand, look them in the eye and listen to their story.'"

### *Family affair*

Cahill is the first to say he's had a lot of help: from the welcoming folks in the Texas longhorn cattle community; the tourism office of Middlesex County; the St. Clair Conservation Authority; and countless family, friends and ranch guests along the way.

Their children and grandchildren share an equally boundless love for the ranch.

Oldest and youngest sons, Stewart and Coulter, manage the livestock operation and excel in roping competitions. ("They're the best ropers in the country, actually – and they're just good cattlemen," Cahill notes with pride.)

Their middle son Greg is chief ambassador and keeps track of daily details large and small.

And Cahill keeps riding, anywhere and everywhere except into the sunset.

There's fencing to mend, cattle to tend, a thousand other tasks needing doing but [to him] barely worth mentioning.

He wheels Blue with the merest nudge of his cowboy boot, as man and horse round the cattle into a tight clutch near the treeline.

"If you've never experienced working cattle on horseback, it doesn't get any better than that.

"It's hard work and it's fun. You're not going to get rich, but it's a really rewarding way to live." 🍷

# MAKING HISTORY AS MARVEL'S FIRST ASIAN SUPERHERO

By Jeff Renaud

Before landing his breakout role as Jung Kim in the award-winning CBC Television series *Kim's Convenience*, Simu Liu, HBA'11, swung into action doing birthday parties dressed as Spider-Man. But he never removed his mask because he "was Asian and Spider-Man wasn't Asian."

But with great power comes great responsibility, right?

The Western alumnus is literally changing the face of superheroes as he joins the Marvel Cinematic Universe this fall as its first Asian superhero. Following a pandemic delay, *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings* is set for global release on Sept. 3, 2021 and Liu stars as the titular superhero.

When not kicking butt in the Marvel U, Liu is penning *We Were Dreamers: An Immigrant Superhero Origin Story*. The forthcoming memoir, published by HarperCollins, is coming May 15, 2023.

A UNICEF Canada ambassador and powerful voice against anti-Asian racism, Liu is developing a number of TV and film projects with his production company 4:12 Entertainment, specifically for sharing the stories of Asian Americans. ♥



# SEPTEMBER 23-26

## CANADA'S BEST HOMECOMING

CELEBRATE WITH US WHEREVER YOU ARE



Mustangs vs. Gryphons pre-game and football livestream from Guelph

Western Stories & Songs II • Create/Collaborate! Coffee House

Alumni Awards of Merit celebration • Golden Anniversary reception

Visit [homecoming.westernu.ca](https://homecoming.westernu.ca) for details on the exciting events and activities we've got planned for you – and RSVP today!

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**1 Jodi Greydanus Roelands**, BA'05, founded Roelands Plant Farms and Plantables, recognized as one of Canada's top 400 fastest growing companies by *The Globe and Mail*. Jodi and her husband Adrian also received Ontario's Outstanding Young Farmers award in 2016.

**2 Robert Labatt**, MBA'99, started a new company, Inland Logistics, which does last-mile delivery for top 100 U.S. retailers. He has been living in the San Francisco Bay area for the last 20 years and is married with two children.

**3 Melissa McIlwain Bush**, BA'14, and her husband welcomed a baby boy named Owen on April 28, 2020.

**4 Yin Gao**, MA'20, married her husband Miguel in California.

**5 Robyne Hanley-Dafoe**, EdD'18, released her first book, *Calm Within the Storm*, which weaves research, personal narrative and practical application together to help readers better understand the complexity of resiliency.



## 1960s

**James Bartleman**, BA'63, LLD'02, was named an Ambassador of Note for 2020-21 by the Canadian Ambassadors Alumni Association.

**Peter Harris**, HBA'64, was appointed chair of the Ontario Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority.

**Sherrill Grace**, BA'65, published her biography on Canadian writer Timothy Findley, *Tiff: A Life of Timothy Findley*, through Wilfred Laurier University Press.

**Douglas A. Morrison**, HBA'66, retired after 50 years as a university professor and was presented with the University Service Award from Syracuse University and the State University of New York. Prior to teaching, Douglas counselled returning veterans and those fleeing conflict in the Middle East.

**Bruce Thorne**, BESC'67, has been volunteering full-time for a variety of organizations, including the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Alberta, Canadian Diabetes Association, Canadian Cancer Society, and the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

## 1970s

**Don Hunter**, BESC'70, was appointed the

inaugural chair of the United Property Resource Corp., a company established by the United Church of Canada in partnership with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, to build 5,000 affordable housing units across the country over the next 15 years. Many of these new housing units will be built on under-utilized church properties.

**Janet Louise Wilson**, BA'73, was a 2021 recipient of the Governor General's Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers for her work with Regina Lyric Musical Theatre.

**Dave Ryde**, BESC'74, retired from his engineering career and moved back to St. Marys, Ont. from the Columbus, OH area with his wife Brenda.

**Sandra Wilson Wallis**, BA'74, won a publishing contest with Word Alive Press for her book *Not What I Bargained for: My Journey Raising Four Incredible Kids, Including Two with Severe Medical Conditions*.

**Barbara Hoover**, BA'77, MEd'94, LLB'99, retired after a 17-year career in teaching and nearly 20 years practising as a family lawyer. She is happy to be spending more time with her husband Eric Hoar, BA'69.

**David Patchell-Evans**, BA'77, the founder of GoodLife Fitness, was inducted

into the Canadian Business Hall of Fame on May 27, 2021.

**Rob Reid**, BA'77, Dip'79, is the chair of the Terry Fox Centre in Vancouver, BC.

**Ian Ellingham**, MBA'79, authored the book *Understanding Ugly: Human Response to Buildings in the Environment*, which proposes a more evidence-based approach to what we build.

**Kiyoko Miyanishi**, MSc'79, published her third book, *Plant Disturbance Ecology, 2nd edition*, with her husband Ed Johnson. She is a professor emeritus at the University of Guelph.

## 1980s

**David Mills**, BA'83, published his comedy novel titled *Of Hearts and Livers*.

**Candace Bloom Bell**, MLIS'85, was appointed vice-chair of the Veterans Reference Board at the Royal's Centre of Excellence for PTSD.

**Madeline Sonik**, BA'85, MA'86, published a book of short stories titled *Fontainebleau* through Anvil Press.

**Jim Chung**, BSc'87, DDS'91, published *Discovering Wildlife in Toronto's Don Valley*, the first photographic study of urban wildlife in Toronto presented as a coffee table-style pictorial.



**1 Livia Tang**, BA'01, currently resides in Hong Kong and is working with gifted children aged 10 to 18.

**2 Brittani Schroeder Hamilton**, BA'17, married husband Luke in Sept. 2020.

**3 Becky Keast**, BA'10, and her partner welcomed their first daughter, Kennedy, in July 2020.

**4 Gillian Tassis**, BA'95, launched her company, Gillian Tassis Executive Search, in 2017.

**5 Dr. Boluwaji Ogunyemi**, BSc'08, was appointed assistant dean of social accountability in the Faculty of Medicine at Memorial University.

**6 Alshaan Kassam**, BA'18, became a regional product and service assurance manager at Fusion Systems Group in Japan.

**7 Noam Franklin**, BA'04, received a 2020 Rising Stars in Real Estate award by Crain's New York.

**8 Erika Jansen**, BA'20, got married in June 2020.



**J. Craig Foxcroft**, BA'88, retired from his 30-year career at General Motors/General Dynamics in Dec. 2018.

**Dennis Bock**, BA'89, published a novel titled *The Good German* with HarperCollins.

## 1990s

**Geraldine Moriba**, BA'90, was named senior vice-president of news and entertainment at theGrio.

**Katherine Ponte**, BA'91, is a mental health advocate, writer, entrepreneur and lawyer. She is the founder of an online mental illness peer support community, *ForLikeMinds.com*, which was inspired by her own struggle with severe bipolar 1 disorder. She also recently published a book on mental illness recovery.

**Madhur Anand**, BSc'93, PhD'97, published her book titled *This Red Line Goes Straight to Your Heart* through Penguin Random House Canada, which won the 2020 Governor General's Literary Award for nonfiction. She's also a professor of ecology at the University of Guelph.

**Catherine Bell**, BA'93, joined the Canadian Centre for the Purpose of the Corporation, led by the former premier of New Brunswick, as an expert panel member.

**Ryan Clarke**, LLB'93, was appointed to McMaster University's Board of Governors.

**Michael Copeland**, LLB'93, MBA'99, was named chief commercial officer at Woodbine Entertainment.

**Tim Covell**, BA'95, published his third academic article, "Government Versus Industry Self-Regulation: Film Classification in Canada and the United States," in the *Journal of Canadian Studies*. He is also preparing to publish his first romance novel, *Ocean's Lure*.

**Shari Cust St. Peter**, BA'95, was appointed as a justice of the peace for the Ontario Court of Justice in Feb. 2020.

**Alexandra Kitty**, MA'96, released four books in 2020: *The Mind Under Siege: Mechanisms of War Propaganda*; *The Dramatic Moment of Fate: The Life of Sherlock Holmes in Theatre*; *The Art of Kintsugi: Learning the Japanese Craft of Beautiful Repair*; and *A New Approach to Journalism*.

**Lance Triskle**, BA'97, published his first book, *Guide to Martin's Annual Criminal Code, 3rd edition*. He is currently a professor of community safety at Georgian College.

**Claire Brown**, PhD'98, received an Imaging Scientist Award from the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative. She was the only Canadian out of 40 other scientists from around the world to receive this honour.

**Mirko Petricevic**, MA'98, and a group of former

newsroom staffers at the *Waterloo Region Record* started a grassroots campaign called "Ink-Stained Wretches," which aims to encourage elected leaders to create an ecosystem in which local journalism can thrive.

**Craig William Sigurdson**, BSW'98, Cert'01, was appointed as a justice at the Ontario Court of Justice in Dec. 2020. He remains an active member of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers.

**Lehana Thabane**, PhD'98, became vice-president of research at St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton.

**Gervan Fearon**, PhD'99, was named president of George Brown College. Prior, he was president of Brock University.

**Mark Mathieson**, BA'99, has been a leading voice in the U.S. on COVID-19. After being published in the esteemed "CIDRAP: The Viewpoint," he and his co-authors have been endorsed by *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Atlantic*. He has been a contributor and personality with ESPN, CNN, NBC and CBS, where he provides insights on the best ways to manage and maneuver through the global pandemic.

## 2000s

**Mike Bickerton**, BA'01, won a 2021 Canadian Screen Award for *Canada's Drag Race*.

**Roy Butler**, PhD'02, was appointed president and CEO of St. Joseph's Health Care London.

**Julia Katsivo Carter**, BA'02, has been busy coaching female entrepreneurs. She has also recently gotten married, been featured in *Forbes*, and won awards for public speaking, business and community initiatives.

**Robin Crozier Kool**, MA'03, wrote a screenplay for the feature film, *The Sanctuary*. It's now available in Canada on Hollywood Suite.

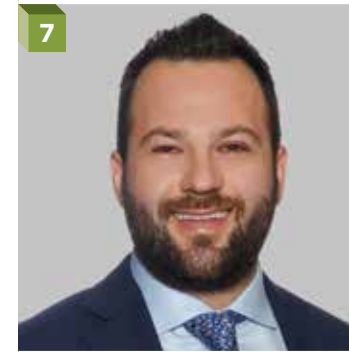
**Jade Woo-Yam-Tung Timmons**, BA'04, welcomed a baby girl in Aug. 2020.

**Derrick Fournier**, BEd'06, HBA'06, MBA'10, was promoted to vice-president of business insights and analytics (global product development and supply) at Bristol Myers Squibb.

**Julie Montes**, BMSc'07, BEd'11, and wife Kacey Leslie, welcomed their son, Edison "Eddie" Manuel Leslie-Montes, on Dec. 5, 2020. "Both mamas are over the moon with the first addition to their family!"

**Jacqueline Hopmeyer**, BMOS'08, gave birth to her second son. Her first son, Harry, was born in 2018 and is every excited to be a big brother.

**Henry Svec**, MA'08, PhD'13, released his first novel, *Life is Like Canadian Football and Other Authentic Folk Songs*, with Invisible Publishing.



**Laurence Hutchman**, BA'72, published *Swimming Toward the Sun: Collected Poems: 1968-2020*. He and his wife, Eva Kolacz, also published a book of poems titled *Fire and Water* together.



**Elaine Kozak**, MLIS'76, published her second fiction book, *The Lighthouse*, which won a Canada Book Award.



**Rhodora Meliton-Vanderpool**, BA'98, BEd'99, published her first children's book, *Stick to Your Vision: Young Maestro Goes to School*, with Canadian hip-hop legend Wes 'Maestro' Williams (also known as Maestro Fresh Wes).

**Lorin MacDonald**, JD'09, launched HearVue, a social enterprise that promotes captioning for people with visual impairments. Their first captioning event was for Michelle Obama in Hamilton, Ont.

## 2010s

**Matt Bertrand**, BESc'10, is a project engineer at Skelton Brumwell & Associates Inc. in Barrie, Ont. He was recently named one of *Rock to Road* magazine's Top 10 Under 40 award recipients.

**Chad Sasko and Taylor Field**, both BMOS'10, appeared on an episode of *Dragon's Den* to pitch their "Brokini," a one shoulder bathing suit for men.

**Kirstin Wood Novak**, BA'10, and her husband welcomed their second child, Myla, on June 10, 2021. Her older sister Neveah is "a great little helper."

**Kurt Downes**, MA'12, was named Community Builder of the Year at *Canadian Running Magazine's* 2020 Golden Shoe Awards.

**Tatiana Enhorning**, BA'12, started a full-service financial advisory practice.

**Andrea Feldman-Kohlver**, BA'13, welcomed her twins, Bryce and Brooklyn, in Oct. 2020.

**Elizabeth George-Antone**, BEd'13, MPEd'15, became the Indigenous community liaison advisor for the City of London's anti-racism and anti-oppression division.

**Rachel Dengate Janzem**, BA'14, got married to her partner Brycen on Oct. 17, 2020.

**Erin Kearney**, BA'14, became the associate city solicitor for the City of Kitchener in Jan. 2021.

**Sarah McFarlane**, BSc'14, MSc'16, started working for InsideScientific.

**Stacey Clark**, BMOS'15, purchased her first home in the spring of 2021.

**Kaitlyn Gooding**, BSc'15, got engaged to her long-time partner, **Austen Querino**, BMOS'15, who she met while living at Perth Hall in first year.

**Sandra Harnum**, MLIS'15, started her first full-time librarian job in April 2020.

**Maximilian Specht**, MA'15, joined Personio, Europe's largest HR tech software company, to lead their English content marketing efforts.

**Michaela Latta**, BA'17, accepted her first teaching position with the Northwest Catholic District School Board in Fort Frances, Ont.

**Danielle Perro**, BMSc'18, is a doctorate student at the University of Oxford and has launched a podcast on endometriosis with a fellow lab partner.

**Amy Sivanesan**, BSc'18, became a senior financial analyst for Roots Canada.

**Jordan Wajs**, JD'18, HBA'18, became an associate in Stikeman

Elliott LLP's litigation and dispute resolution group.

**Anirban Banerjee**, PhD'19, accepted a postdoctoral fellow position in the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Waterloo.

## 2020s

**Elif Beyatli**, BA'20, began a master of teaching degree at the University of Toronto.

**John Fortner**, BA'20, accepted a full-time position as a financial services representative at Libro Credit Union.

**Maryam Ghahremani**, PhD'20, successfully wrote and defended her thesis. She was the first in her program to do this virtually due to the pandemic.

**Madison Klodt**, BScN'20, has been working on the frontlines of COVID-19 as a registered nurse in Hamilton, Ont.

**Monika Nabizade**, BSc'20, was accepted to medical school in Ukraine.

**Sunera Rahman**, BSc'20, became a lab analyst at SC Johnson and is working on a London-based start-up with some fellow Western alumni.

**Parteek kaur Smagh**, MEng'20, got engaged.

**Tessie Spysma**, MCISc'20, got her first job as a speech-language pathologist.



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**1 Mahathi Mundluru**, HBA'18, competed on season 4 of the *Great Canadian Baking Show*.

**2 Vanessa Lee**, MSc'16, and **Brandon Harvey**, MD'18, got married in Oct. 2020.

**3 Frank Qin**, BA'14, co-founded Ontario-based Mary Agrotechnologies, which has secured a highly-coveted licence to grow hemp for CBD in China.

**4** Submitted by **Sylvia Smitas**, BA'79: On Oct. 5, 2019, alumni friends met up in Kitchener, Ont. for a 43-year reunion. "Six young men lived together in a house on Victoria Street in London, Ont. from 1975 to 1976. After many emails back and forth, we managed to find everyone and decided on a time and place to get together. Both Sylvia and Pat were good friends of the group. Unfortunately, Graham Smith, who came to Western from Bermuda, was not able to join us, but we FaceTimed him. Times have changed since we were 19 or so. A few pounds, ten children, a few health issues and grandchildren! We are lucky to all be healthy and happy! The guys are all retired, except Graham. Sylvia and Pat are both still working hard. We have so much to be thankful for, including meeting at Western and like this 43 years later! (Left to right: John Hazell, BA'77; Brian Farn, BSc'74, BESc'78; Ken Speare, BA'76; Sylvia Smitas, BA'79; Greg Mavin, BA'78; Graeme Walker, BESc'78; and Pat Petch Hazell, BA'79.)

**5 Judy Monk Bidgood**, BA'72, released a children's book titled *Slimy Slick*, which made Amazon's #1 bestseller list.

**1 Daryl Waud, BA'16, and Elena Koskinas, BSc'15,** got engaged in Ireland where Daryl is studying law and Elena is studying medicine. They met at Western in 2011 when they were both residents of Essex Hall and have been together ever since.

**2 Kevin Vuong, BMOS'11,** got a corgi puppy named Maple. "She has a #purpleandproud bark!"

**3 Damhnait Monaghan, LLB'92,** published her debut novel, *New Girl in the Little Cove*, through HarperCollins Canada and Graydon House Books in the U.S. It was selected as one of Indigo's most anticipated rom-coms.

**4 Jesse Minns and Nicole Madigan, both BSW'16, MSW'17,** got married.

**5 Alexander Marchand, BSc'18, MA'20,** broke the Guinness World Record for the "most full twisting back somersault burpees in a minute" with nine.



**↑ Kelly Watson, BA'99,** released a book, *The Next Smart Step: How to Overcome Gender Stereotypes and Build a Stronger Organization*, with her business partner.



**Suzette Vaciana, MPEd'20,** and her husband Henry celebrated their 19th wedding anniversary in Dec. 2020.

**Nico Waltenbury, BA'20, HBA'20,** accepted his offer to join the first class of McCall MacBain Scholars at McGill University.

**IN MEMORIAM**

**Harold Heft, PhD'94,** passed away from an inoperable brain tumour in 2015. Before this, he co-edited a book of non-fiction stories titled *A Perfect Offering: Personal Stories of Trauma and Transformation*, which was published by Mosaic Press in Jan. 2021.

**Helen Dewar McLean, Dip'55,** passed away on March 21, 2019. She battled Type 1 diabetes for over 60 years and was a recipient of the Diabetes Half Century Award.

**Conrad Kristian Odegaard, BSc'69, MEng'74,** passed away on June 30, 2019. He was an elementary school teacher, meteorologist, and later co-founded Grains, Beans and Things, and Street Farm Products.

**Barbara Alexandra Coatsworth McElya, BA'08,** passed away on Nov. 19, 2019,



**John Carrothers, BA'86,** passed away on May 22, 2019, in his 88th year. Throughout his life, John was an industrious fellow who loved to tinker with machines and renovate houses. At the ripe age of 85, he could be found at his grandparents' 122-year-old home rewiring the old place to "bring it up to code." John worked for Western for 34 years as a works project supervisor and was involved in the construction of almost every building at the university until his retirement in 1994. John believed in the power of higher education and spent much of this time in his life taking night courses before graduating from Western in 1986. He is remembered as a kind, generous and loving husband and father who always put others before himself, as well as for his priceless sense of humour.

after a courageous battle with cancer. She leaves behind her husband David and their seven-year-old daughter, Blythe.

**Nellie Jamsa McLaughlin, BA'53,** passed away on Feb. 8, 2020.

**Jim Hayhurst Sr., BA'85,** passed away on

Feb. 29, 2020, at his farm near Collingwood, Ont.

**Carol (Cossar) Murray, BA'78, BEd'81,** passed away on June 9, 2020, in Calgary, Alta. after a short but courageous battle with cancer. She is survived by her husband Gary W. Murray, BA'78, MA'80.

**Genevieve Westcott, MA'78,** passed away on July 10, 2020, in New Zealand with family by her side.

**Clifford G. Arnott, MBA'62,** passed away on July 16, 2020 in Amherstburg, Ont.

**Carl Ohlson, MBA'61,** passed away of complications from Parkinson's disease on July 21, 2020.

**Donald Henderson, BA'60,** passed away on Aug. 7, 2020. He practised law in St. Catharines and Thorold for over 55 years.

**Dr. Edward Roemmele, MD'50,** passed away on Aug. 7, 2020, peacefully at his home. He was part of a special class of veterans known as "Meds '50" and went on to practise medicine in Windsor, Ont. for over 50 years.

**May Parkinson, BA'49,** passed away on Aug. 17, 2020. Her passion for education led to a long career as a school board trustee, where she received many awards from the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, Ontario School Trustee Council, and Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation.

**David Frederick Morrison, BA'65,** passed away on Sept. 4, 2020, in Baysville, Ont. He is survived by his partner Margaret Carson Morrison,

BScN'66, and children Michael, Janet, David and John, as well as seven beloved grandchildren.



**Mary Elizabeth Matthews, BScN'11,** passed away in a tragic hiking accident on Sept. 6, 2020, at the age of 31. She was an ambitious, well-respected nurse who pursued a master's in health leadership and policy after her time at Western.

**Ryan Nickerson, HBA'80,** and his son Hugh passed away after a tragic accident on the Capilano River in North Vancouver on Oct. 1, 2020. He is survived by his wife, Barb, and daughter, Emily.

**Charles Edmund Thomas, MA'82, LLB'85,** passed away unexpectedly on Oct. 10, 2020, in Stratford, Ont. He was a retired military major and had been studying towards his doctorate in law.

**Harvey MacLeod Lewis, Dip'46,** passed away on Oct. 13, 2020, in Louisbourg, N.S.

**George Arnold Pearce**, MD'55, passed away on Oct. 14, 2020. He served in the Royal Canadian Air Force before starting a career in family medicine.

**Greg Greenham**, HBA'76, passed away on Oct. 19, 2020, in Toronto, after a 10-year battle with Parkinson's disease. He owned and operated Greg Greenham Annuity and Insurance Agency for many years and was an accomplished athlete.

**Noel Andrew Gallagher**, Dip'74, passed away on Oct. 27, 2020, in London, Ont.

**James (Jim) Mucklow**, MEdSc'90, passed away on Oct. 28, 2020, in Thunder Bay, Ont. after a four-and-a-half-year battle with cancer. Jim was a professional engineer whose work took him across Canada, which he loved because it meant discovering new places and people.

**Lois Farley**, BA'51, passed away on Nov. 12, 2020. She spent more than 20 years teaching at various



(LONDON FREE PRESS COLLECTION OF NEGATIVES/WESTERN ARCHIVES)

**Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh**, LLD'83, passed away peacefully on April 9, 2021.

This photo from 1959 shows Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip on campus as part of their Canadian Royal Tour. After entering J.W. Little Memorial Stadium, Prince Philip asked, "If this is the little stadium, where is the big one?" His Royal Highness returned to Western in 1983 for a special Canada Day convocation ceremony, where he received an honorary Doctor of Laws.

schools in the London and Middlesex area and volunteering in the community, including as the first female director of the Progressive Conservatives of Elgin.

**Joe Arvay**, LLB'74, passed away on Dec. 7, 2020, in Vancouver, BC. After graduating Western, he went on to earn a LLM from Harvard and taught law

for several years at the University of Windsor before becoming a constitutional lawyer with the British Columbia Attorney General. Arvay later left the government for private practice. He was appointed Queen's Counsel at the age of 38 and was later awarded the Order of Canada.

**Walter Bruce Hill**, BA'61, passed away on Dec. 11, 2020, in Perth, Australia.

**Eileen Hartigan**, BA'50, passed away peacefully on Dec. 27, 2020. She loved spending time with family and friends, a good cup of tea, a clever joke, Jane Austen novels, traveling by ship, classic movies and music, and had a great sense of humor.



**Zelma Irene Williams Hardy**, BA'80, passed away on Jan. 26,

2021, in London, Ont. She was a beloved teacher who spent several years tutoring after retirement.

**Laurie Brown**, BA'00, passed away on March 18, 2021, after 30 years battling brain tumours that began at age 15. He was a man of deep faith and loved nothing more than spending quality time with family.

**Paul Soles**, BA'53, passed away on May 6, 2021. Perhaps best known for portraying Hermey the Elf in *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* (1964) and Peter Parker in *Spiderman* (1967), he enjoyed a career that took him all over the world, including to Broadway. He will be remembered as a creative, charming and principled man.

**Katie Warfield**, BA'01, passed away May 8, 2021, after a courageous battle with cancer. She was a distinguished scholar and beloved faculty member in Kwantlen Polytechnic University's department of journalism and communication studies.



(PHOTO BY GEOFF ROBINS)

### Colleges and Universities Minister Jill Dunlop lauds research excellence during stop at Western

Ontario Minister of Colleges and Universities Minister Jill Dunlop, BSc'97, stopped by her alma mater on July 19 to announce a new investment of \$9.7 million for 16 Western research projects through the Ontario Research Fund - Research Excellence (ORF-RE).

Here, PhD student Tiana Trumpour (right) shows Dunlop her work developing image-guided treatment for abdominal cancer. Aaron Fenster (left) heads the imaging research lab that just received over \$2 million through the ORF-RE.

"Research like this will help to make advancements in medical and cancer diagnoses ... improved diagnostic accuracy and increased patient comfort. And this is only the beginning of tapping into the potential we have at Western and across Ontario to advance innovation and advance 3D testing for personalized medicine," Dunlop said.

### Share your news with fellow grads

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classnotes@uwo.ca

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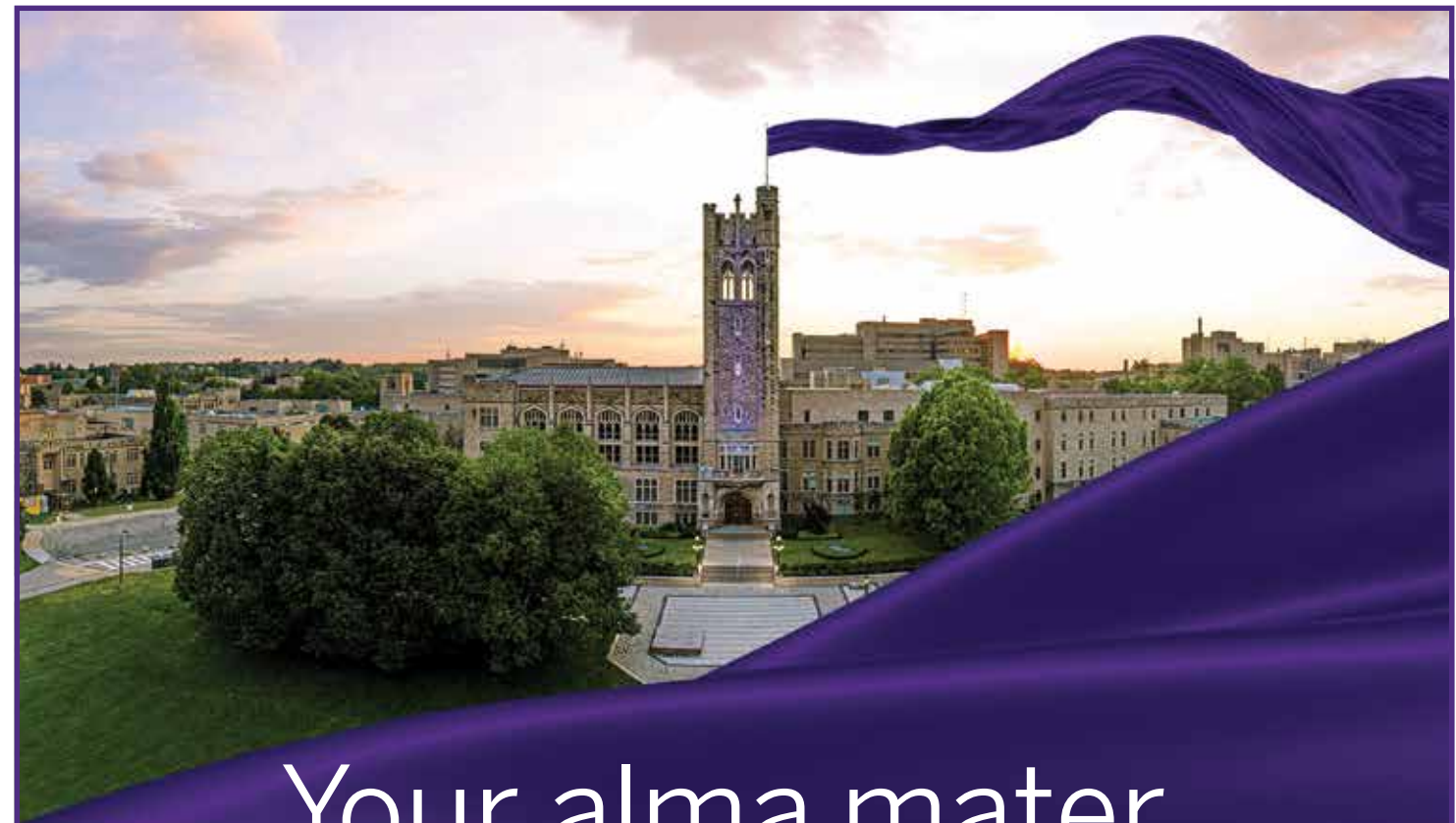
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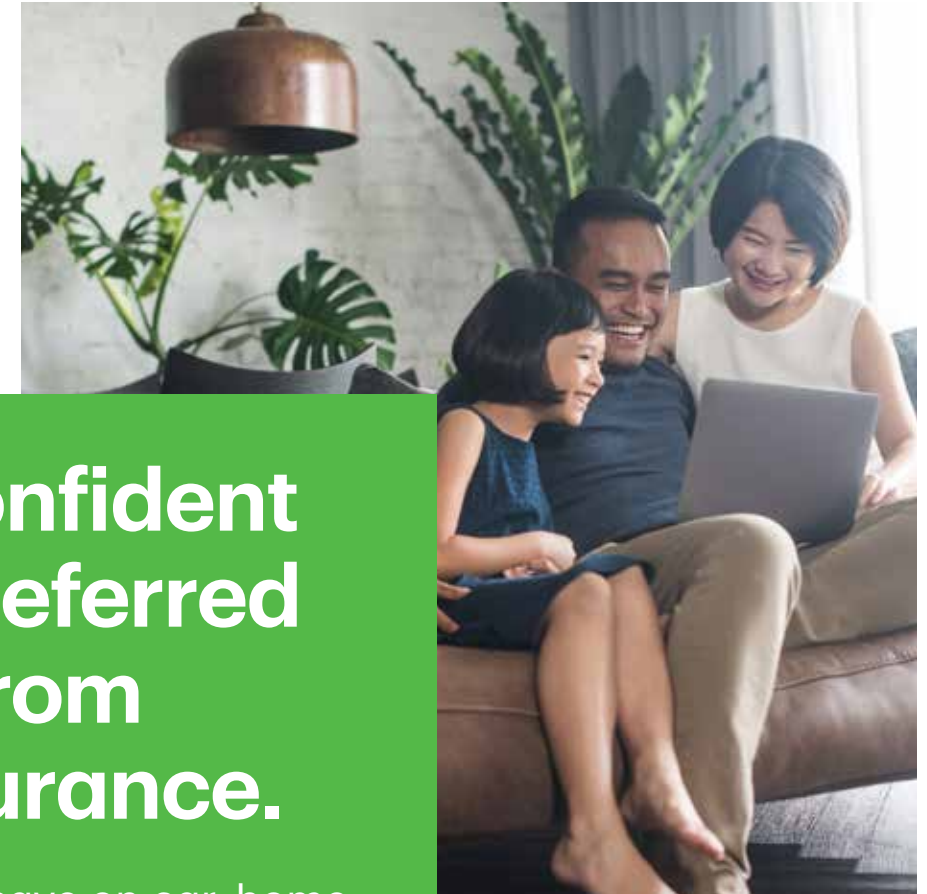
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