WEINBERG

The Magazine of the
Judd A. and Marjorie
Weinberg College
of Arts and Sciences

Northwestern
University

Fall/Winter 2014
Volume 2
Number 2

Surviving the Quarter-Life Crisis

[WEINBERG LENS]

TECH'S WALL OF FAME

This bas-relief is one of dozens of images designed for the exterior of Northwestern's Technological Institute by New Deal artist Edgar Miller (1899–1993). Carved in 1940 while the building was under construction, they celebrate "man's ongoing efforts to conquer nature" and the achievements of those who have done so: Fulton and his steamboat, Gutenberg and his printing press, the Wright brothers and their plane. A prolific designer who worked in a wide variety of media, Miller was a founding member of the influential "Old Town Artists Colony" that included screenwriter Ben Hecht and poet Carl Sandburg. His work can be found in buildings across the country, including landmarks in Chicago's Old Town neighborhood and in the murals adorning the Pabst Brewery in Milwaukee.

PHOTO: MATT LESTER

PHOTO: NATHAN MANDELL

THE ILIAD BY MOONLIGHT

Scores brave a chilly evening for a "Homer-athon" by the lake (page 8).

WEINBERG FALL/WINTER 2014
Volume 2, Number 2

In This Issue

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Does Democracy Still Work?

BY DANIEL P. SMITH

In a provocative new study, two political scientists document the influence of the "economic elite" on policy-making in America. What are the implications for the future of democracy?

18

Surviving the Quarter-Life Crisis

BY SHERRY THOMAS

The 20-something years can be a time of uncertainty for many young people. But by the end of the decade, many graduates find they are better off for the struggle.

DEPARTMENTS

FROM THE DEAN

A College at the Crossroads

Transitions are by definition transformative events. For individuals and institutions alike, they represent an evolution from what has been to what might be, from a past full of success and accomplishment to a future rich with exciting new possibilities.

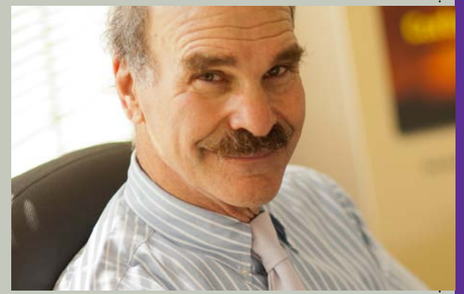

PHOTO: ROB HART

Much like the students of the Class of 2018 who arrived on campus just a few short months ago, Weinberg College is also embarking on a journey of growth and transition. As interim dean for the current academic year, it will be my privilege to oversee what I believe will be the start of an extremely creative period in the College's history.

Our transformation has already begun. A comprehensive renovation of Kresge Hall, home to many of our humanities programs and faculty, started this fall and is scheduled for completion in December 2016. Much work has been done with faculty, staff, students, and alumni to develop a strategic plan for the College that will lay out the specific steps we will take to make Weinberg an even better college of arts and sciences than it is today. Finally, **We will. The Campaign for Northwestern** launched this past March. **We will** is an outreach initiative that will provide the College with the financial resources needed to realize the ambitious goals that will form the foundation of our strategic plan.

Given the variety of roles I've played at the College over the years—student, professor, department chair and associate dean, to name a few—I guess it's not so surprising that I would end up serving as dean at some point as well. As a Weinberg College alum, I'm thrilled to have an opportunity to give back to this great school. A national search for a new, permanent Weinberg College dean is underway, with the aim of identifying an exceptional individual with the leadership skills required to guide our transformation forward. When our new dean arrives on campus, he or she will discover a vibrant intellectual community firmly committed to the ideals of a liberal arts and sciences education. It is a community of which I am very proud to be a part.

Enjoy this new issue of *Weinberg* magazine and let us know what you think. I look forward to working both for and with all of you in the months ahead.

Cheers,

Mark Ratner

INTERIM DEAN, WEINBERG COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

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We'd like to hear from you. Please contact us at weinberg-communications@northwestern.edu

Cover Art: Joseph McDermott

CAREER TREKKING

BY REBECCA LINDELL

DC & NYC

Alumni illuminate career opportunities in government, media and business

Julia Watson '15 already knew she was interested in government. She had spent the summer interning at the U.S. Department of State, and this year will serve as president of Northwestern's student body.

But a "career trek" in September — during which Watson met with two former members of Congress, toured the White House and learned about career paths—opened her eyes to the vast variety of opportunities in the field.

Now, Watson is considering working on a campaign at some point, in addition to pursuing a fellowship and working in the foreign service.

"The trek really helped me think about what I want to do post-graduation, and it made me excited to realize that there's a big Northwestern alumni community in Washington," Watson said.

Watson was one of about 55 students who took advantage of two separate Northwestern-sponsored trips to Washington, D.C. and New York City this fall. The trips were jointly organized by Weinberg College's Office of Student/Alumni Engagement and University Career Services. A grant from **Dennis Kaltman '87** helped to defray the cost of the students' travel.

In Washington, the students visited alumni at think tanks and government offices and met with presidential speechwriter **Cody Keenan '02**. In New York, the students were divided into two groups—one focusing on media and marketing, and the other on banking and private equity. The first group met with alumni at companies like Bloomberg, Google and NBC Universal; the latter group visited with graduates at firms such as Goldman Sachs and Blackstone.

Amy Mynaugh, Weinberg's director of student/alumni engagement, said the treks were "the perfect way" for students to begin to explore their career options.

"The alumni were very generous about sharing their stories and giving students a sense of what they need to do and study now to get their foot in the door," Mynaugh said. "They really helped our students to understand the value of the alumni network, and begin to build their connections." ■

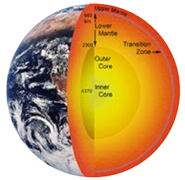
"Do Less Planning, And More Living"

Author **Daniel Pink '86** encourages the Class of 2014 to stay open to new opportunities throughout their lives.

Watch video: **wcas.nu/pink-address**

An Ocean Within the Earth

Geophysicist **Steven Jacobsen** finds new evidence for vast amounts of water deep below the Earth's crust.



Read more: **wcas.nu/oceans-inside-earth**

White House Honors Professor

President Barack Obama bestows the National Humanities Medal on African American Studies Professor **Darlene Clark Hine**.

PHOTO: JOCELYN AUGUSTINO, COURTESY OF NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

Read more: **wcas.nu/hine-neh**

RIDING THE "VOMIT COMET"

A team of Northwestern students—including **Rebecca Diesing '17** (pictured left)—underwent the ultimate roller-coaster experience when they flew aboard NASA's famed "Vomit Comet" in April to study the impact of space on bone density.

The students were members of Northwestern's Microgravity Team, one of 18 teams selected to participate in NASA's Reduced Gravity Flight Opportunities Program. More than 100 teams from schools across the country applied for the privilege.

The students traveled aboard a NASA plane that creates a weightless experience by flying parabolas at high altitudes, producing short periods of zero gravity. Prior to boarding the plane, the students were taught how to deal with the intense increase in "G force" as the aircraft ascended, and how to manage their physical reactions to being in a gravity-less state.

Following the training, the students were given 30 different opportunities to experience zero gravity in flight. Twenty-five of those were used to perform experiments; the rest were pure fun.

"The best moment was when you went from 2Gs to zero Gs," Diesing said. "You went from feeling extremely heavy, as if you were twice your weight, to feeling yourself lift up and be weightless. It was very hard to resist the urge to grab onto the nearest object."

The team also included Weinberg students **Andrew Kozminski '14, Michael Muzyka '14** and **Adam Awwad '14**, as well as **Sergio Williams '14** (pictured above), **Kat Dhiantravan '16, Malcolm Lazarow '16** and **Newlin Weatherford '17** from Northwestern's McCormick School of Engineering and Applied Science.

PHOTOS: NASA / HUNCH

Student Circles the Globe

A $9,000 Circumnavigators Travel-Study grant enabled **Elizabeth Larsen '15** to research childhood malnutrition in eight countries.

PHOTO: RUSSELL LARSEN

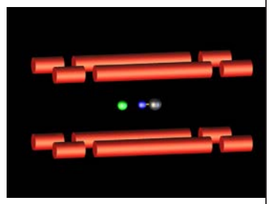
Read more:
wcas.nu/2014-circumnavigator

The Trauma of Parenthood

The distress many new parents feel is driven by the "objectively bleak circumstances" they often face, Professor **Eli Finkel** says.

Read more:
wcas.nu/parenthood-trauma

Chemists Gain Control Over Molecular Tumbling



A new laser technique could lead to the development of extremely fast computers, Northwestern researchers say.

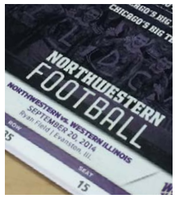
Read more:
wcas.nu/tumbling-molecules

Why We Look The Way We Do Now

Historian **Deborah Cohen** traces the roots of modern style back to the "elegantly simple" lines of the 1930s.

Read more:
wcas.nu/1930s-style

"Purple Pricing"



A pricing tactic developed by economists **Jeffrey Ely** and **Sandeep Baliga** could revolutionize how tickets are sold at sporting events.

Read more:
wcas.nu/ purple-pricing

New Way to Cope with Memory Loss

Mindfulness training can offer a new lease on life for the memory-impaired and those who care for them, Professor **Ken Paller** finds.

Read more:
wcas.nu/mindful-memory

Q & A

Jasmine Stephens

Psychology
Class of 2015

INTERVIEW BY STEFFANEE WANG

"You're beautiful." "You look great today!" "You're gorgeous, inside and out."

Earlier this year, the mirrors in Northwestern's residence halls were filled with sticky notes encouraging students to feel good about their appearance.

The handwritten messages were part of "Operation Beautiful," a campaign to combat the self-esteem issues that often arise in a world that presents an unobtainable standard of beauty.

But when Jasmine Stephens '15 took a closer look at the impact of such positive statements on female students in particular, she discovered that the words often had the opposite effect. She and Renee Engeln, a professor of instruction in psychology, presented their findings at the Association for Psychological Science Conference in May.

How did you measure the impact of "body positivity" statements on self-esteem?

We asked 113 female students to write down their thoughts for five minutes. Every 20 seconds, they would hear a chime. We asked them to think "I love my body" each time they heard the chime. We then compared their body-dissatisfaction scores to those of participants who were asked to think a neutral statement—in this case, "I am (blank) years old"—when they heard the chime. We found that body-affirming statements tended to lower the participants' body satisfaction.

PHOTO: ROB HART

Did you expect that result?

We did, actually, because previous research has found that when you ask people with low self-esteem to make positive statements such as "I am loved," they'll often make a counter-argument, which can result in lower self-esteem.

Still, it was really disheartening. The actual experiment took only about five minutes, but that was enough time to show a significant decrease in body satisfaction. If they were asked to think, "I love my body," they would go from making neutral statements, such as "I'm just sitting here," to "I don't really love my body, my thighs look gross, I need to go to the gym." They spiraled. It was scary.

How did you get interested in this topic?

Well, most girls have had issues with body image. Just going into a store and seeing magazines, we see an impossible standard that no one can live up to. I also have friends who've had eating disorders and depression, so that influenced my interest in this issue.

What was it like to participate in the conference?

It was amazing. It was so wonderful to see how inspired and passionate people are about their research. A few other Northwestern students also attended, and we would sit around every night and talk about all the talks we'd gone to. It was so "psych nerdy" in a beautiful way. ■

Jasmine Stephens '15 found that messages designed to improve women's body image often produce the opposite effect.

LEARN MORE ABOUT

Renee Engeln's research on body image:
wcas.nu/body-and-media

POSNER FELLOWSHIPS OPEN DOORS

BY STEFFANEE WANG

Victoria Dubose-Briski '15 was only a few months into her freshman year when she realized she wanted to do research at Northwestern. But the first-generation college student wasn't sure how or where to begin.

Her inquiries led her to the Posner Fellowship Program, and she was soon on her way to one of the most rewarding experiences of her undergraduate career.

As a Posner fellow, Dubose-Briski spent eight weeks under the mentorship of Weinberg faculty as she researched the effects of the high concentration of metals on Chicago's South Side. She is still involved with the community today.

"It was rewarding to see the impact research can have on a community and the people living there," said Dubose-Briski, who is now a senior majoring in environmental science and minoring in chemistry. "That's one of many experiences I don't think I would have had without the Posner fellowship."

Dubose-Briski's research was made possible by **Brian Posner '83**, who founded the Posner Fellowship Program in 2004. Posner's goal: to provide opportunities for underrepresented minorities to learn how to perform in-depth and sophisticated research in an academic setting. The program is open only to Weinberg College students.

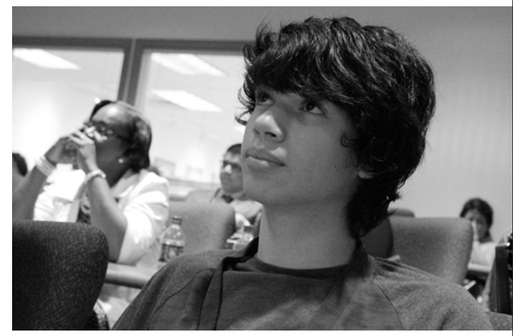
"For every student from a private school, there is another from a rural or urban part of the country who has had a very different educational background and level of support," Posner said. "Yes, they may do well on their own, but that doesn't mean there shouldn't be something there to make their path a little easier."

The program gives students the skills to do academic research, but what may be even more valuable are the relationships they build with faculty and peers. Indeed, Dubose-Briski, who is one of very few African-American females majoring in the natural sciences, says the program created a community that was critical to her success.

"When you put a group of students together who are similar, who are excited to learn and given the resources to succeed, you can really help them grow," she said.

Posner agrees, and believes the program could serve as a model for other schools at Northwestern and beyond.

"Top universities could create more good opportunities for underrepresented minorities to do research," he said. "Being able to work closely with one professor can alter the course of not only their study, but also their lives." ■



PHOTOS: NEED NAME HERE

Each year, the Posner fellows present their research at a symposium in August.

The Golden Age Shtetl

Professor **Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern** offers a new history of pre World-War II Jewish life and culture in eastern Europe.

Read more:
wcas.nu/golden-shtetl

A Shift in the Abortion Debate

Research by sociologists **J. Alex Kevern** and **Jeremy Freese** suggests that big pro-life families are influencing public opinion on abortion.

Read more:
wcas.nu/big-prolife-families

Finding Vivian Meier?

The popular narrative about the newly discovered photographer is filled with "secrecy and deception," artist **Pamela Bannos** says.

PHOTO: PAMELA BANNOS

Read more:
wcas.nu/maier-mystery

THE ILIAD BY MOONLIGHT

BY WENDY LEOPOLD

23 MAY 2014 | 11:32 PM | 42°F

The text was long. The night was cold. But that didn't prevent nearly 100 classics lovers from gathering by the lake the night of May 23 to read Homer's *Iliad* out loud, under the stars, illuminated by electric candles and warmed by blankets and sleeping bags.

"It was a magical experience that only a participant could fully understand," said **Tyler Bolden '16**.

Bolden, at 4 a.m., recited the words of the great god Zeus in the voice of Marlon Brando in "The Godfather." "People come to Zeus for favors in much the way that people came to the Godfather for favors," graduate student **Katie Hartsock** explained. "Reading Zeus' words in the voice of Don Corleone made a certain kind of sense."

Attendance at the marathon reading peaked at about 100 people between 1 and 2 a.m. Those who stayed even later were treated to meteor showers—a most propitious event.

"The shooting stars were a sign that the Olympian gods favored our undertaking," surmised **Francesca Tataranni**, a senior lecturer in classics and organizer of the event.

Hartsock, the final reader, left the podium at 5:07 a.m. According to Tataranni, the moments that followed were "the most magical" of what was already an awe-inspiring night. That's when the 25 remaining individuals defied the 40-degree temperatures and stared in silence at the horizon after the seven hours of reading.

"Spending a night with Homer, the blind poet, inspired us to look at our human condition with new eyes," Tataranni said. "When the sun rose, we served bagels, cream cheese and orange juice. As Achilles says to Priam in *The Iliad*'s final reconciliation scene: 'So come—we, too, old king, must think of food.'"

And so, with body and soul fulfilled, "*The Iliad* by Moonlight" came to an auspicious and nourishing end. ■

The final reader left the podium at 5:07 a.m. The moments that followed were "the most magical" of an awe-inspiring night.

"Spending a night with Homer, the blind poet, inspired us to look at our human condition with new eyes."

READ MORE ABOUT

The Iliad by Moonlight:
wcas.nu/iliad-reading

PHOTO: NATHAN MANDELL

WHERE DID THEY GO AND WHAT DID THEY DO?

BY REBECCA LINDELL

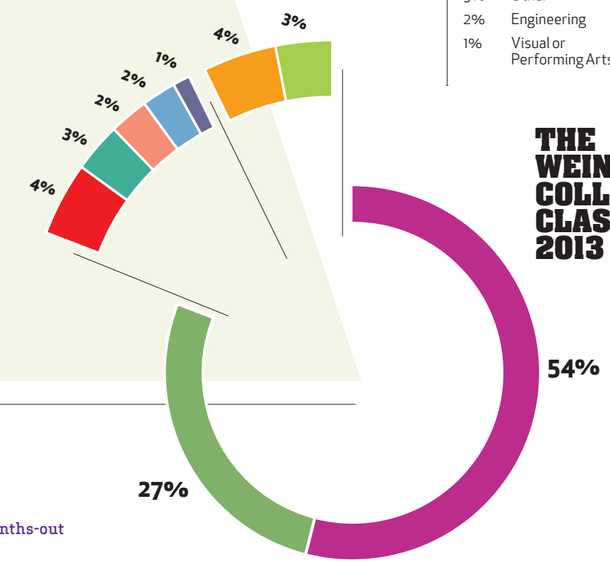
Many students aren't exactly sure what their first post-graduation steps will be. But within a year, the majority of Weinberg College graduates tend to find their way — through jobs, internships, public service and other activities. Here's what the office of University Career Services found when it surveyed the Class of 2013 six months after graduation.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

54% Full-time employment or paid public service

27% Graduate or professional school

4%	Part-time employment or paid public service
3%	Volunteer or unpaid public service, additional undergraduate coursework, military, other
2%	Self-employed or freelance work
2%	Post-graduate internship/practicum/ student teaching
1%	Fellowship
4%	Actively job searching
3%	Actively applying to graduate or professional school



IN WHICH FIELDS ARE THEY WORKING?

24%	**Consulting**
21%	**Business Services, Financial Services, Investment Banking**
10%	**Non profit Government**
8%	Science and Research
8%	Education or Teaching
7%	Communications, Marketing, Media
6%	Biotechnology, Pharmaceutical and Healthcare
5%	Information Technology
5%	Law
3%	Other
2%	Engineering
1%	Visual or Performing Arts

THE WEINBERG COLLEGE CLASS OF 2013

LEARN MORE ABOUT

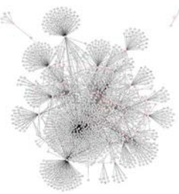
University Career Services' survey of the Class of 2013 at: wcas.nu/six-months-out

Faculty Join American Academy of Arts & Sciences

Weinberg professors **Edward Muir, Amy Rosenzweig, Richard Silverman** and **Timothy Earle** are elected to the prestigious society.

Read more:
wcas.nu/aaas-2014

New Cancer Biomarker Discovered



Molecular biologists **Curt Horvath** and **Robert Tell** identify a new target for therapeutics to treat a highly aggressive form of breast cancer.

Read more:
wcas.nu/cancer-biomarker

The "Economic Odd Couple"

The *Wall Street Journal* highlights the sharply opposing views of economists **Robert Gordon** and **Joel Mokyr**.

PHOTO: ROB HART

Read more:
wcas.nu/economic-odd-couple

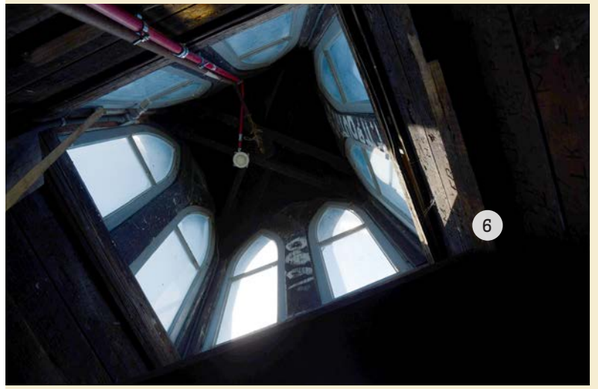
BY REBECCA LINDELL

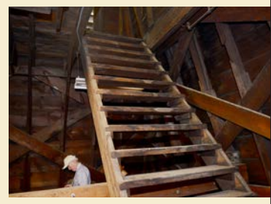
INTER(ior) *View*

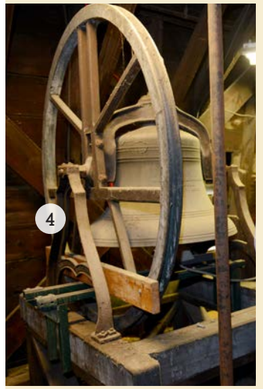
The curiosities of University Hall

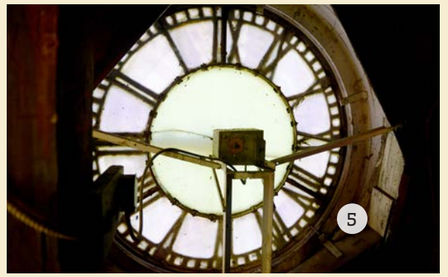
The oldest and most iconic of Northwestern's buildings, University Hall is replete with history. Built in 1869 in High Victorian Gothic style, it once housed a chapel, a museum and a library, as well as society rooms and a chemical lab. An extensive renovation in 1993 removed much of the historic patina from University Hall's interior, but hints of its storied past remain: in its arched windows and entrances, a long-silent bell tower and a mysterious "1913" carved into its limestone walls.

1 1913
Many who notice the "1913" etched into University Hall's north exterior wall mistakenly assume the numbers signify the year in which the building was built. The date may commemorate the "Ivy Oration," an annual speech at the site accompanied by the ceremonial planting of ivy. The tradition has long since ceased.

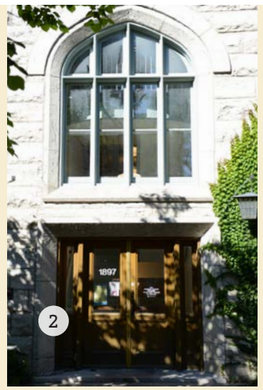








PHOTOS: ROB HART



2 Original entrance
University Hall was originally entered on the east via a staircase that opened onto the second floor. In the early 1900s, the staircase was removed and a new entrance was built on the first floor to minimize the impact of the violent nor "easter" storms that periodically wracked the campus.

3 24-hour webcam
In 2002, the University installed a 24-hour webcam focused on the Rock in this second-floor window. Viewers around the world can see the latest messages painted on the Rock at **wcas.nu/wild-cam**.

4 Bell
A gift from the Class of 1880, the University Hall bell has been silent for decades. Housed in the spire just below the clock, it was cast in 1877 by the Troy, N.Y. bell foundry Meneely & Kimberly. A century ago, students were rumored to have hoisted a cow into the bell tower. No evidence of any such caper remains.

5 Original clock
The original clock was a gift of the Class of 1879. In 1966, a new, electrified clock replaced the old works, which are now housed in the Smithsonian National Museum of American History.

6 Spire
Several steep staircases and a series of ladders ascend into the University Hall spire. At 120 feet tall, it is one of the highest points on the Evanston campus. Etched and painted on the interior of the spire are the names and initials of those who have helped to maintain the structure over the past 145 years.

WHICH BOOK CHANGED YOUR LIFE?

INTERVIEWS BY LISA STEIN

ERNEST HEMINGWAY'S

The Old Man and the Sea

Dan O'Keefe '93
MUTUAL FUND MANAGER

The Old Man and the Sea has been meaningful throughout my life, because it was so different from the books I'd read before, which were verbose and descriptive and dense. To read Hemingway after Stendhal and Dostoevsky was really a shock—a revolution in understanding how so much less can be so much more. I'm an investor, and the ability to communicate the essentials is important in my business and personal life. A lot of information is thrown at you, and the amount can seem overwhelming. The job of the intelligent investor is to focus only on what's essential, and then to communicate your conclusions clearly. I learned from Hemingway that if you choose your words carefully, you can have a greater impact.

The Confessions of St. Augustine

John Wynne
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF CLASSICS

I first read Augustine's *Confessions* as an undergrad, and have read it a number of times since then. It takes some initial work to see that even though he's writing in the form of a prayer, he's considering big questions: Where does evil come from? Can we know anything? How do we acquire wisdom? And, of course, is there a God, and if so what is he like?

PLATO'S

The Republic

Laurie Zoloth
PROFESSOR OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

In my junior year of high school, I was recruited into an honors seminar that met early in the morning to read philosophy. We began with Plato and read *The Republic* out loud. We were stunned awake by the text, the quick wit, the compelling logic of a real argument, and the intriguing idea of philosopher-scholars running the world. It was the first primary text I had read closely and completely, the first serious argument about the idea of "the good society." We would shout out the lines to each other, taking parts, and then stop and argue: How should you live? What if your city is unjust? How did you know? It interrupted the chaos of adolescence in 1967, and the steadily mounting war in Vietnam. Plato gave us a language for thinking, for questioning everything, which we, of course, began to do in earnest. It created a world in which ethical challenges were seriously considered, where we entered as *citizens*, with a duty to stand up and speak.

A 15-cent picture book

Indira Raman
PROFESSOR OF NEUROBIOLOGY

When I was three, my father used to buy little 15-cent picture books for my 5-year-old brother and me. My brother, who was learning to read, would sit on the couch with my father and a book. I would perch behind them and watch as they sounded out words. I happily memorized the stories, but I didn't really understand what they were doing. One day, when I was alone, I noticed a new little book with horses and letters on the cover. Looking at the letters, I felt as if I heard someone say the word "ponies." I opened the book and discovered that the letters made words I could hear in my mind! I suddenly realized that the letters formed a code that could tell people things. And that I could read them, too! *Ponies* had permanently and wonderfully changed my life.

JACK KEROUAC'S

On the Road

Neha Guddeti Reddy '16
ANTHROPOLOGY

This novel depicts one of the most entertaining rejections of the mundane, structured routines that define most of our lives. Rather than settling down and working 9 to 5, Sal and Dean remind us what it means to live, to genuinely wonder, and to crave new experiences.

LEWIS CARROLL'S

Alice in Wonderland

Gary Saul Morson
PROFESSOR OF SLAVIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE

I had never liked reading as a child, but when I was 10 I picked up *Alice in Wonderland*. I had never realized that something could be so funny and fun in its sheer flight of nonsense. It turned common sense on its head and followed it through to its absurd conclusions. It was the first time it occurred to me that reading literature could be a joy.

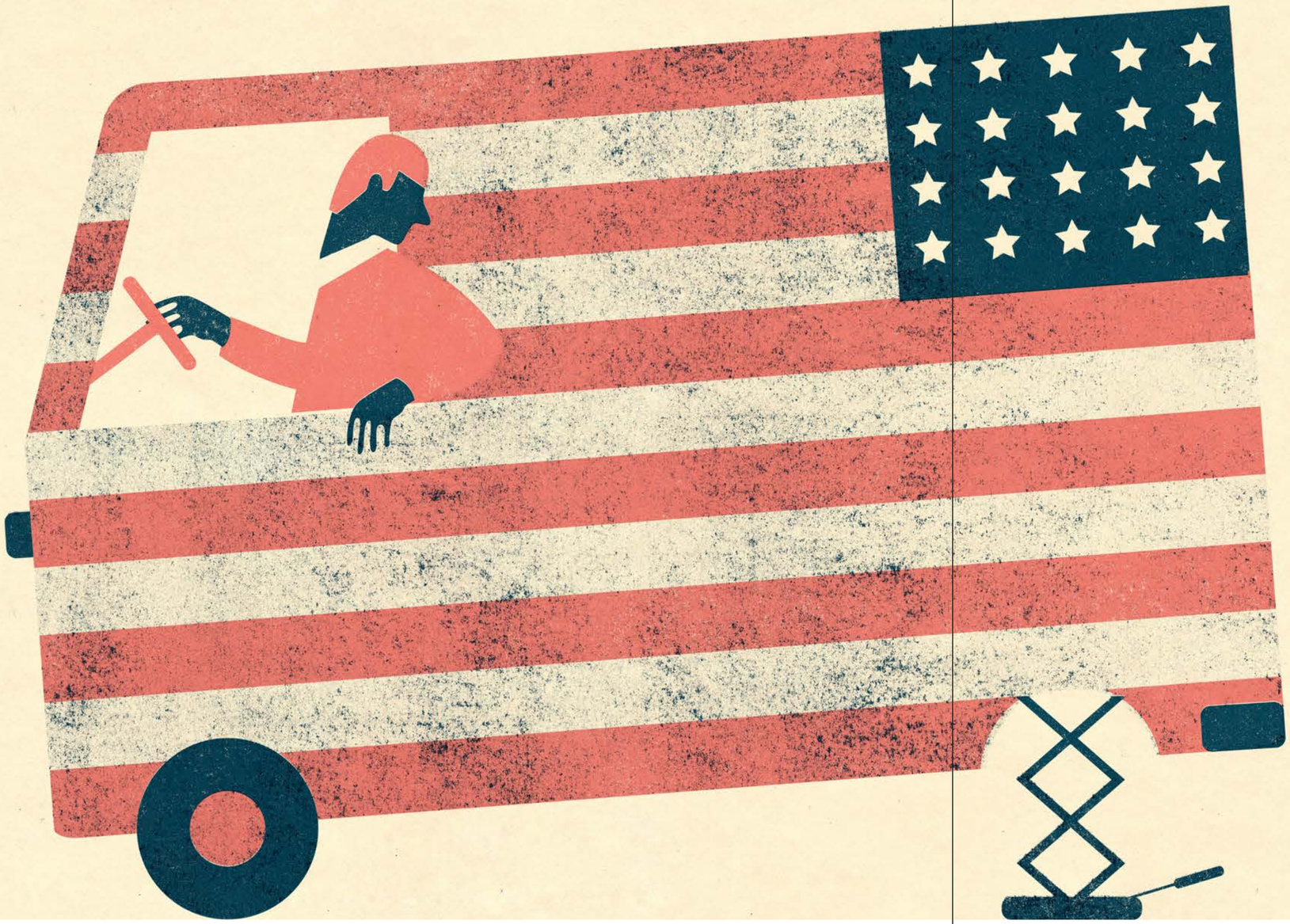
WHICH BOOK CHANGED YOUR LIFE?

JOIN THE DISCUSSION

wcas.nu/book-life

FEATURE

America's claims to being a democratic society are "seriously threatened" by the disproportionate influence of the economic elite, two political scientists say



ART: ANDRE daLOBA

Does Democracy Still Work?

BY DANIEL P. SMITH

In churches and coffee shops, in schools and parks, Americans embrace the idealistic notion that Mr. Smith can still go to Washington and spur positive change.

But while the United States may be a democracy in theory and name, recent research co-authored by Northwestern University political scientist **Benjamin Page** suggests a more troubling reality: of public policy shaped by a few, a nation guided by special interests and a muting of the voice of the average citizen.

Page and his co-author, Princeton University politics professor Martin Gilens, have issued a headline-grabbing study that casts doubt on the state of our democratic ideals. Their work affirms the growing sense among many that the elite exert an overriding influence on public policy.

Their study, "Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups and Average Citizens," analyzes survey data for nearly 1,800 policy issues between 1981 and 2002. The findings, published in *Perspectives on Politics* this fall, are head-turning.

Page and Gilens found that "economic elites"—those at the 90th percentile of income or above—and groups that represent business interests do indeed wield an outsize influence over U.S. public policy.

Sure, average citizens matter, but generally only when their public policy desires align with those of the elite or organized interests, the authors discovered. When there is disagreement, the wealthy tend to prevail nearly 50 percent of the time. Even when fairly large majorities of Americans—as much as 80 percent—favor a policy change, the shift happens less than half the time, particularly when it involves issues such as wealth and income protection, trade restrictions and tax policy. That's also true when it comes to issues that don't have a direct impact on the elite's well-being, such as Social Security, Medicare or unemployment insurance.

In short, what the elite want, the elite get. The general public, the authors say, has no discernible, independent impact on policymaking.

"If policymaking is dominated by powerful business organizations and a small number of affluent Americans, then America's claims to being a democratic society are seriously threatened," Page and Gilens conclude.

> **"Money is always a power resource and, in a democracy, we have the power to amplify it or dampen it. And right now, it's being amplified."**
>
> *Political scientist Jeffrey Winters*

An "invisible empire"?

The pair's findings are bracing, but hardly surprising. More than a century ago, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson charged that the U.S. government had fallen into the hands of "the bosses" and "the special interests," and contended that an "invisible empire" had been built above democracy. Wilson's New Freedom platform in the 1912 presidential election called for limits on campaign contributions by corporations, stronger antitrust laws, tariff reductions, banking reform and a federal income tax—all strategic attempts to reduce the escalating influence of the wealthy.

A century later, those concerns seem prescient. Political parties and the Supreme Court have weakened campaign finance reforms, thereby granting the elite and organized interests even greater political clout. In April 2014, just as Page and Gilens' study was hitting the media, the Court struck down the aggregate limits on the amount individuals may contribute during a two-year period to all federal candidates, parties and political action committees. As former U.S. Sen. Alan Simpson testified in an earlier campaign-finance case: "Who, after all, can seriously contend that a $100,000 donation does not alter the way one thinks about—and quite possibly votes on—an issue?"

"Money is always a power resource and, in a democracy, we have the power to amplify it or dampen it. And right now, it's being amplified," says Northwestern political science professor **Jeffrey Winters**, whose 2011 book *Oligarchy* examines political power and wealth.

For their part, Page and Gilens eschew the term "oligarchy" and instead favor the phrase "economic elite domination." During an April appearance on "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart," Page and Gilens expressed unease with the media spin on their study, which has been portrayed as evidence that the United States is "already an oligarchy."

"What we know is that you can predict policy outcomes by knowing about the [desires of the] top 10 to 20 percent. It's a pretty broad group," Page said. "An oligarchy might be one-tenth of 1 percent of the population."

"There's no line above which people have influence and below which they don't," Gilens added. "Among people who are trying to influence the government, the more money you have, the more influence you have. What our work shows is that as you get down toward the middle class, you just don't see any influence."

Not everyone embraces the pair's findings. *The New Yorker* called Page and Gilens' paper a "provocative one," but noted that it relied on decades-old data and certain equations with "weak" explanatory power. "The statistics [Page and Gilens] used suggest an interesting narrative, but do not tell a complete story," added *American Conservative* scribe Marjorie Romeyn-Sanabria.

But the data, even if incomplete, are sobering. Among Page and Gilens' findings:

- When a proposed policy change receives low support among economically elite Americans, it is adopted only about 18 percent of the time. When elite support is high, the policy is adopted 45 percent of the time.
- When interest groups' support for a policy shift is low, change occurs 16 percent of the time. When interest groups heavily support a measure, it is adopted 47 percent of the time.

"One of the bedrocks of American democracy is equality, and when you learn that the affluent and interest groups hold such power, it's disconcerting," says **Fay Lomax Cook**, a faculty fellow at the Institute for Policy Research at Northwestern.

> **"What we know is that you can predict policy outcomes by knowing about the [desires of the] top 10 to 20 percent."**
>
> *Political scientist Benjamin Page*

Benjamin Page, (pictured far left), with Martin Gilens (center) on "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart."

LEARN MORE ABOUT

Martin Gilens and Benjamin Page's research at:
wcas.nu/testing-theories-of-american-politics

Reviving democracy

The late U.S. President Ronald Reagan called democracy "worth dying for" and "the most deeply honorable form of government ever devised by man." To maintain that valued form of government, Cook says the public needs to move beyond "simply being concerned." Policymakers at the local, state and federal level listen and respond to those they hear from and, by and large, Cook notes, the affluent are more likely to contact members of Congress, attend political functions and contribute money to political campaigns.

Nobel Prize-winning economist Paul Krugman expressed concern that Page and Gilens' findings could reinforce the status quo by affirming public cynicism and dampening enthusiasm for public service.

"There is a danger here of going too far, and imagining that electoral politics is irrelevant," Krugman wrote. "Why bother getting involved in campaigns, when the oligarchy rules whichever party is in power?"

But that's exactly the opposite conclusion that Page hopes the public will draw from the work.

"The message isn't 'drop out of the system and don't vote,'" Page says. "Assembling the political will is vitally important here."

To that end, Page and Gilens are collaborating on a new book that will explore ways to raise the public's voice in policy-making. Among their proposals:

- Democratize the role of money in politics through equal-voice reforms, such as "democracy vouchers" that would allocate a small sum of money to citizens to distribute to causes and candidates of their choosing.
- Reduce the impact of lobbyists through reforms that would make their work more transparent and accountable.
- Diminish the power of ideological party activists by making voting districts more competitive—for example, re-drawing legislative boundaries—and emphasizing the importance of primary elections.
- Remove barriers to voting to ensure that all members of the electorate have an equal chance to vote. Declaring Election Day a federal holiday, for example, would allow more members of the working class to get to the polls.

"My argument is that with simple changes, we can become much more democratic," Page says, adding that any broad social movement must be a bipartisan effort that includes the affluent.

Page adds that there is precedent for such reform. The early 20th Century Progressives, who included the likes of Wilson (a Democrat) and Theodore Roosevelt (a Republican), shifted the election of U.S. senators from the state legislatures directly to the voters, and also secured women's right to vote.

"There are a lot of people unhappy about our political system, and I do believe there's quite a reasonable chance we'll see movement toward major political changes," Page says. "The moment seems to be right. People are interested in learning about the problem and the potential solutions."

Perhaps there is hope for democracy, after all. ■

How often does change happen?

WITH PUBLIC SUPPORT, BUT *WITHOUT* the support of the "economic elite"
18% of the time

WITH the support of the "economic elite"
45% of the time

WITH PUBLIC SUPPORT, BUT *WITHOUT* the support of organized business
16% of the time

WITH the support of organized business
47% of the time

"TESTING THEORIES OF AMERICAN POLITICS," MARTIN GILENS AND BENJAMIN I. PAGE

DOES DEMOCRACY STILL WORK?

JOIN THE DISCUSSION

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Surviving the Quarter-Life CRISIS

BY SHERRY THOMAS

It often starts with a flash of insight. Not the inspirational kind that you read about in the biographies of famous inventors and entrepreneurs, but that distinct moment in time when you suddenly realize that "adulthood" isn't anything like you thought it would be.

Maybe the coveted first job out of college is boring. Maybe the undergraduate relationship you thought would end happily-ever-after just ended, abruptly. Maybe for the first time in your life, you feel old. Yes, *old*. All the milestone birthdays you anticipated have come and gone and now here you are, sitting on the quarter-edge of life—prestigious degree in hand, best friends dispersed to various cities, and a future that feels foggy at best.

Sound familiar?

Don't panic. This modern human condition known as the "quarter-life crisis" is not uncommon — particularly among high-achieving millennials who graduate from college ready to seize the world and make it a better place, only to discover that things don't immediately turn out as planned.

"I certainly went through it," says **Alexandra Levit**, who graduated from Weinberg College with a psychology degree in 1998 and went straight to New York "determined to be a VP by the age of 30."

She got the entry-level job she wanted. Check. However, quickly into the whirl and grind she realized that the rulebook for success in the corporate world was vastly different than the one for academia.

So she decided to write her own.

"My first boss hated me. And I saw people with half my work ethic get promoted ahead of me," explains Levit, who drew on her "quarter-life crisis" to write the bestseller *They Don't Teach Corporate in College* as well as a *Wall Street Journal* column about professionals reinventing themselves in the modern workplace.

Levit says that adjusting to life as an adult in today's society is a challenge for many young people, particularly those who graduated after the 2008 recession.

"Everything is different after college," explains Levit. "How you make friends is different. How you date is different. Add to that the major upheaval of still trying to assess who you are and what your values are."

This modern human condition is ***NOT*** uncommon—particularly among high-achieving millennials who graduate from college ready to seize the world, only to discover that things don't immediately turn out as planned

ART: JOSEPH McDERMOTT

A number of psychologists now view the 20-something years as a distinct life stage: "emerging adulthood," complete with its own set of challenges and psychological tasks.

The "Expectation Hangover"

To some, these quarter-life symptoms might sound like the same coming-of-age dilemmas young adults have been facing for generations. Growing up has never been easy. But for a generation that has been wired since birth with access to global opportunities—and instilled with the belief that "anything is possible"—the path to a rewarding career and satisfying adulthood can include many twists and turns.

Christine Hassler, a 1998 Northwestern graduate and author of several books about the challenges of the 20-something years, says that today's millennials are suffering the quarter-life version of what she calls the "expectation hangover."

"Their parents and society told them, 'Do what you love, find a job that makes you happy, and good stuff will come,'" says Hassler, whose latest book, *Expectation Hangover: Overcoming Disappointment in Work, Love and Life*, addresses that very issue. "But then they get out into the workforce and realize, 'Oh my gosh, this isn't what I wanted.'"

Hassler, who admits she went through her own quarter-life crisis before deciding to write her first book, says that while today's millennial generation is often portrayed by the media as narcissistic, her research has shown just the opposite.

"They're very globally minded. They want to work for companies that are socially responsible, and they want to make a difference," she says.

Some, like **Lindsay Kuehn '06** (page 24), pursue a series of seemingly disparate activities, from travel to graduate school to service work, as they narrow in on their goals. Others, like 2008 graduates **Jason Sochol** and **Omri Bojko** (page 22), start off on one path but then decide to do something completely different.

This period of searching may appear to elders to be an extended adolescence. But some psychologists see it differently: a new sociological trend of "emerging adulthood."

This view re-frames the 20-something years as a distinct life stage. While previous generations saw people marrying young and having their first child before 30, those in the emerging-adulthood camp note that those milestones are happening later for millennials, particularly those with college degrees and the means to explore all of life's possibilities before settling down.

Allison Hart '06 (center) with Kolinda Grabar-Kotarovic, former assistant secretary general for public diplomacy at NATO (left), and retired Gen. John R. Allen, former commander, International Security Assistance Force (right).

PHOTOS: NATO

One Giant Leap of Faith

Allison Hart '06
Major: Middle East Language and Civilization

FIRST JOB AFTER COLLEGE:
Research assistant

NOW:
Special adviser to NATO

If there were ever an example of how to transcend the quarter-life quandary, it might be found in **Allison Hart's** life story.

From the day she graduated from high school, Hart's path has been one giant leap of faith and risk-taking that eventually landed her in Brussels, Belgium, where she now serves as a special adviser to NATO.

"I didn't know where I was going to end up. I didn't know what I wanted. I allowed myself to wait until I figured that out," says Hart, who used her degree in Middle East Language and Civilization to open doors to research jobs at political think tanks in Washington, D.C. and to a graduate program at Johns Hopkins University, and ultimately to a career working for the U.S. government.

"I think that's part of what gave me the freedom to follow my passion," adds Hart, who graduated from high school early, opened two successful businesses, traveled extensively, and took anthropology classes at a local community college — all before transferring to Northwestern. "The one thing that's the common thread in this quarter-life crisis discussion is the feeling that if you make a decision early on, you have to stick with it because that's what you've decided."

She encourages young people to let go of what doesn't feel right, and to exercise the freedom to change their minds — sometimes more than once.

"I've changed where I live. I've changed the kind of job I had. I always do whatever's interesting," Hart explains.

"You don't have to have it all figured out right now. Don't be afraid to try things. Don't think that you have to succeed the first time out. Yes, it's stressful. Yes, you have bills. Life is happening every day, and it's for you to find it and to live it. But you can only find it if you're willing to explore."

> **"I didn't know where I was going to end up. I didn't know what I wanted. I allowed myself to wait until I figured that out."**
>
> *Allison Hart '06*

PHOTO: TVP INDUSTRIES

Marrying Fashion and Philanthropy

Omri Bojko '08
Major: History

Jason Sochol '08
Major: History

Just as necessity can be the mother of invention, a crisis can be a catalyst for change.

For **Jason Sochol** and **Omri Bojko**, the quarter-life questioning led to the creation of The Vanity Project—an entrepreneurial endeavor marrying fashion and philanthropy.

Sochol and Bojko graduated with history degrees in 2008, and both landed jobs in the financial sector. Sochol worked in real estate; Bojko for a proprietary trading firm.

The two felt fortunate to have secured jobs just before the stock market crashed. Then, reality set in.

"The first eight months of my job were exciting," Bojko says. "It was great. And then you realize that this isn't changing. This is it, every day."

The two had been friends at Northwestern and had often tossed around ideas for new businesses. Then one day in 2011, a conversation at a Bucktown coffeehouse inspired what would become The Vanity Project.

"There are a lot of charities out there. The idea was…what if we were to start putting cool-looking charity logos on T-shirts?" remembers Sochol. "At the same time, we were volunteering for a lot of nonprofits. My mom had just been diagnosed with breast cancer, and we saw an opportunity to try to grow a company around better-branded products for charities and nonprofit organizations."

Three years and a move to Manhattan later, The Vanity Project is now TVP Industries and works with 40 nonprofit and social-impact organizations around the country. The company's goal: to help nonprofits develop strong brands and streamlined services.

Bojko and Sochol advise recent graduates to be fearless about taking chances and switching paths if something doesn't feel right.

"It's a self-discovery process," Sochol says. "There's no right answer to having a true life."

FIRST JOBS AFTER COLLEGE:
Real estate investment analyst and equity derivatives trader

NOW:
Entrepreneurs

Open-Ended Stories

Professor **Dan McAdams**, chair of Weinberg's Department of Psychology, says that early adulthood is a time to develop and articulate the themes that will define the rest of one's life. He believes that today's emerging adults are more mindful than previous generations about how the decisions they make today will shape their future "life stories."

"One thing that is characteristic of emerging adulthood is that many people in their 20s are not adults yet. They're not married. They're not raising children. They're still training, and still figuring stuff out," McAdams says. "Because of this, their stories are a little more open-ended than the ones previous generations might have written. They are pursuing goals for sure, but they are not necessarily making commitments for the long term until they get to a point where they are able to do so."

And McAdams thinks that's a positive thing. While his generation got on the job-and-marriage track a lot earlier, the world has changed dramatically since then. Home ownership is far more expensive; many graduates are working to pay back student loans; and organizations no longer hold out the promise of lifetime employment. But even amid the current economic challenges, McAdams believes that young people today—particularly those with a background in the arts and sciences—have more options than any generation before.

Why rush to the altar when you could spend the first part of your career working in impactful roles around the globe? Why not approach opportunities with the same open-mindedness and flexibility that you acquired through your education?

"It seems to me that this generation is better suited than my generation to handle today's changing job market," McAdams says. "They know there's a lot of uncertainty out there, but they are also in no hurry. They are keeping their options open."

That has certainly been true for **Jackie Brown '07**, who drew on the skills and self-knowledge she acquired as a history major to change the trajectory of her life.

"Anyone can learn a particular discipline on the job. But a liberal arts degree develops your critical thinking skills and enables you to be very adaptable in the work environment. It allows you to be flexible, and not count on just one skill set," explains Brown, who turned a job in commercial real estate

> **"Take a look at what you're doing. Part of creating a path for yourself is recognizing that you're not really stuck on that path."**
>
> *Jackie Brown '07*

into a career as a director of asset management and acquisitions for an ultra-luxury hotel investment fund. "Northwestern prepared me to be outgoing enough to do that and to seize opportunities as they came along."

Brown says her best advice for young people going through a quarter-life crisis is to do what she did—take a step back and evaluate.

"Take a look at what you're doing," she adds. "Think about what you like and what you don't like. Part of creating a path for yourself is recognizing that you're not really stuck on that path."

While Brown didn't stray far from her original field, her current role extends far beyond the traditional boundaries of real estate. In a recent luxury hotel project in the British Virgin Islands, for example, she worked diplomatically with the government to balance the island's economic goals with her employer's goals for the property—applying her analytical and strategic skills in new ways.

Her Northwestern education "was the best platform for what I'm doing now, which is something I never would have predicted when I was in college," Brown says.

No Cookie-Cutter Answers

And that is perhaps the best news for graduates facing a "quarter-life crisis." Popular culture, such as the YouTube series *Quarterlife* and HBO's *Girls*, may focus on the angst of the post-collegiate years, but in reality those who have studied the arts and sciences are often better off for the struggle. Their 20s become their opportunity to breathe life into the ideas they explored, and to test their relevance to the "real" world.

Associate Professor **Kate Baldwin**, director of Weinberg College's American Studies program, says one of the traits she has noticed among her students is a particular willingness to take risks and pursue dreams.

"I have seen my students graduate with a lack of certainty about where they were going. But as their paths shifted and they followed jobs, they ended up someplace where they wanted to be," she says. "There are no cookie-cutter answers. Life has a lot of gray areas, and I think that's something liberal arts majors are more comfortable with."

That's what **Jackie Grinvalds '10** found when she surveyed 200 young Northwestern alumni for her senior sociology thesis. Grinvalds was curious about their "happiness level"— how satisfied were they with their jobs, relationships, finances and living situations? About half the respondents were Weinberg College alumni.

"I was just trying to figure out my own life, and finding that there wasn't much research on the topic," Grinvalds recalls.

Back in 2010, her newly graduated friends were describing classic quarter-life symptoms—"jobs not being as much fun as they hoped, how they just didn't have as much time to hang out with friends, and feeling pressured by a lot of the expectations they felt they needed to live up to."

Grinvalds wondered if earning a diploma from a prestigious university such as Northwestern would heighten young alumni's expectations and predispose them to a quarter-life crisis. But when she surveyed those who had been out in the working world for a few years, she found just the opposite: the vast majority—more than 80 percent—of her respondents expressed satisfaction with their lives.

Grinvalds—who is now attending graduate school and happily pursuing a career in student affairs—was heartened to learn that even though few alumni would describe their lives as movie-perfect, most felt well equipped to navigate the road ahead.

"We were mostly able to find *something*," says Grinvalds, who applied the same skills she used to write her thesis to land her first job as a business analyst at Sears. "And a lot of people who weren't sure what they wanted to do did something like Teach for America, or they went and studied abroad."

In fact, Grinvalds says she believes "crisis" is too harsh a word for the condition.

"I think that most of us think we have had a quarter-life crisis, but I don't know that any of us has actually had a *real* crisis," she adds. "I think we're being dramatic about the things we're questioning, which is figuring out what being an adult really is. I would argue that the questioning is normal in the development process. Sometimes it leads to a new career or a different life than we expected, and that's OK too. With the degree and the friends we've made from college, hopefully we can better navigate the journey." ■

HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED A "QUARTER-LIFE CRISIS"?

JOIN THE DISCUSSION

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Keeping an Open Mind

Lindsay Kuehn '06
Major: American Studies

FIRST JOB AFTER COLLEGE:
Volunteer at the Heifer International education ranch

NOW:
Earning a dual degree in law and public service

Lindsay Kuehn can't say for sure if she's ever experienced a quarter-life crisis. But that's only because she has continually faced the big-picture question of what's coming next.

"It depends on how you define this 'crisis,'" explains Kuehn, whose post-Northwestern activities have ranged from a volunteer job at the Heifer International education ranch in Arkansas to a summer role at the Legal Resources Foundation Trust in Kenya. "Leaving Northwestern, I definitely had that moment of not knowing what direction this path would take me."

What she does know is that she likes what she's seen so far.

"One thing that is inherent in a liberal arts education is that it allows you to recognize and face the complexities in life," says Kuehn, who is now earning a dual degree in law and public service at the University of Arkansas. "I would be lying if I said there weren't several times over the last five years when I've wondered, 'Why am I not an electrician?' But had I gone down a path where I was an electrician or engineer, I would have missed out on a lot of opportunities."

In addition to taking a gap year before college to work at various Americorps projects around the country, Kuehn has also had the opportunity to work for UNICEF in Paris; an urban-beekeeping organization in Minneapolis; and the local public defender's office in Little Rock, Ark.

"With a liberal arts degree, the next step isn't always obvious," Kuehn says. "But I remember feeling that when I landed in Arkansas, it felt right. When you think about the challenges we face in this world, none of them are black and white. A liberal arts education helps you understand the complexities of that and how to navigate them."

PHOTO: JACOB SLATON

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Paula M. Romberg '82
Gary B. Rosenbaum '84, '17P
Sheryl Thurston Rosenbaum '85, '17P
Mark Jon Rosenberg
Marnie Merovitz Rosenberg '89
Katherine Rossiter '12P
Peter Rossiter '12P
Trip Rothschild '72, '05P
Aryeh Routtenberg '63 MA
Jack L. Rozran '60
Meredith Kwartin Rusoff '00 MA, '01 PhD
Katharine A. Russell '70, '80 MBA
Sanford J. Sacks '56, '90P
Steven M. Sacks '90
Judith Hall Saydah '74
Lois W. Sayrs '81 MA, '85 PhD
Saliann Scarpulla '17P
Gloria Schaffer '08P, '10P
Leslie Schaffer '08P, '10P
Patricia White Schmidt '51
Ellen Wiskind Schwartz '86
Eric G. Schwartz '84
Howard S. Schwartz '86
Anthony Segall '11P
Robert L. Seigle '70
Neilesh H. Shah '02
F. Sheppard Shanley
Mary L. Shanley
Stephen T. Shapiro '77
Sara M. Shea '88
Jennifer O'Hearne Shepard '87, '90 JD
Lawrence Sibley '15P
Wendy Sibley '15P
Barbara Kurtzon Sieben '61
Robert Sieben
Antonio B. Silva '02 MA, '04 PhD
Leonor B. Silva '03 MS
Stanley E. Skarda '76, '83 MBA
Claudia G. Smith '68
Genie D. Smith '14P, '17P
Madeleine T. Smith '73
Thomas Smith '89 MBA, '14P, '17P
Mitchell Scott Soiefer '06
Sherri L. Spear '90
Christian K. Stadlinger '89 MA, '90 PhD
Felice Iannuzzi Stadlinger '85
Stephen M. Stahl '73, '75 MD
Ilana Hurwitz Starfield '13P
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Carol Goldfarb Sterneck '87, '15P, '17P
Steven Sterneck '87, '88 MBA, '15P, '17P
Philip W. Stichter '60
Valerie Groves Stichter '60
Dalia Vasiliauskas Stoddard '91
Jill Stovsky
Mark D. Stovsky '86, '91 MD
Michael D. Stovsky '86
Clare Stunkel
Eugene S. Sunshine '71, '01P
Hollis Leach Sunshine '71, '01P
G. John Svolos '56
Patrick Szymanski '06P, '11P
Harit Talwar '14P
Michael J. Taylor '83
Kathleen J. Throdahl
Peter J. Throdahl '65
Sadhna Govindarajulu True '86
Margaret Orcutt Tuddenham '71
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Francine Tyson Turk '90, '97 MBA
Tim Michael Turk '93 MBA
Heather A. Vallier '89
Christopher Vargas '82
John F. Vavricka '86
Christopher T. Vecsey '71 MA, '77 PhD
David J. Ventura '93
Leila Vetter
Nicholas John Vetter '01
Mary M. Vondrak '82, '15P
Jill Wald '17P
Richard Wald '17P
Mark Waldman '75
Robert L. Waldron '87
Jimmy A. Wang '96
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Susan Hague Warga '81, '08P, '10P
Arete Swartz Warren '68
Jeffrey S. Waterman '95, '06 MS
Paula Chambers Waterman '97
Whitney Seaman Watson '03
Karen M. Weidenheim '75
Lee A. Weiss '82, '85 JD, '95 MBA
Leecia J. Welch '92
Ping Wen '14P
Jeff S. Westerman '77
Nancy Grandis White '68, '99P
Mrs. Penelope Wilmot Whiteside
Linda Dietze Wild
Payson S. Wild, Jr. '71 MA
Barry A. Wilen '72, '03P
Diane Kriger Wilen '71, '03P
Dennis R. Williams '62
Jeffrey A. Witherite '95
Gary R. Wolfe '68
Jeffrey C. Wolken '94
James Zhiming Yan '94 PhD
George P. Yang '89, '94 MD
Carol Okamura Yee '71
Edgar L. Yee '69
Ileen W. Yim '94
Carl K. Yorita '69, '03P
Patricia Jane Yorita
Iris Wing-Yun Yuen '89 MA
Brett I. Zatulove '80
Dominic G. Zerbi '95
Heather Tucker Zerbi '95
Tian Tim Zhu '95 PhD, '16P

WHAT DID YOU DO WITH YOUR ARTS AND SCIENCES DEGREE?

Sheri Prentiss '89
survived breast cancer and became an inspirational motivational speaker

BY SARA LANGEN

Sheri Phillips Prentiss always wanted to be a doctor. From the time she was 2, she knew that her purpose in life was to help others heal.

But after a series of trials that included divorce, depression, breast cancer and her mother's failing health, Prentiss was badly in need of healing herself. The final blow was the post-chemotherapy swelling from lymphedema in her right arm and hand, which effectively ended her career as a practicing physician.

Staring out her office window, facing the end of her 16-year career, Prentiss tried to envision a new future. "What am I good at outside of being a physician?" she thought.

The idea of reviewing medical records and confirming diagnoses didn't appeal to her. She didn't feel she could really reach people sitting in front of a computer.

Then she remembered a conversation she'd had at church with a woman who was curious about the compression sleeve Prentiss wore to ease the swelling in her arm. As Prentiss shared her story, others stopped to listen. At the end of the conversation, several people invited her to speak to their women's group.

"I thought about how I felt sharing my story," she remembers. "It came so easily—it flowed. I just felt liberated, and I saw in people's eyes some glimmer of hope because there was something in my story they could identify with."

Prentiss made a decision. If she couldn't heal with her hands, she would heal with her words.

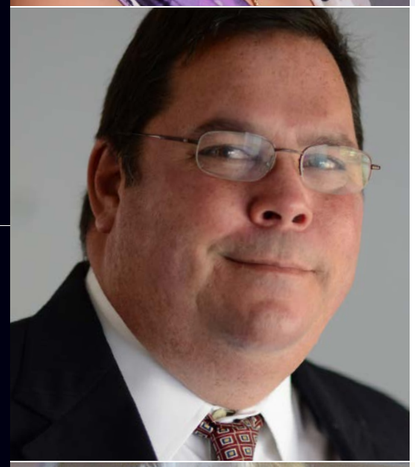
"I didn't know how this was going to put food on the table, but I just knew it gave me purpose," she says. "I was influencing and healing people in a different way than I had before."

Today, the Susan G. Komen 3-Day for the Cure national spokesperson tours the country and inspires others with her own story as a divorced mother of two who faced breast cancer and the loss of her career to become a motivational speaker and physician consultant. Flashing her rhinestone-bedecked compression sleeve, Prentiss is known as Dr. Sheri—the woman who arm-wrestled breast cancer and won.

Prentiss has designed a similar decorative sleeve for other women, and her new business is flourishing. More speaking engagements, a new website (DrSheriMD.com) and a memoir are on the way. Her personal life is also thriving, with a recent marriage to Donald Prentiss '87.

With her message of confronting fear head-on, Prentiss hopes she can mend as many people if not more than she did as a physician.

"I got into medicine because being able to heal was of utmost importance to me," she says. "Now I am healing with my words, I am healing with my life, I am healing by setting an example. ■



Sean Harte '87
spurs economic growth for his clients and his tribe

BY DANIEL P. SMITH

Growing up in Chicago's Albany Park neighborhood, a working-class, ethnic enclave on the city's northwest side, Sean Harte found few role models, particularly any who shared his Native American bloodlines.

That all changed when Harte, an enrolled member of the Menominee Indian Tribe, arrived at Northwestern in 1983. He encountered classmates who would become prominent surgeons, public-sector leaders and corporate executives, as well as thought-provoking professors such as Pulitzer Prize-winning author Garry Wills.

"When you don't have role models in your life, you look for them, and I found plenty at Northwestern," the now 51-year-old Harte says.

Inspired, Harte built the self-confidence he needed to pursue once-unthinkable adventures: an MBA from Dartmouth followed by positions at Lehman Brothers, Chase Bank and Mesirow Financial, where he established the Chicago-based firm's commodities unit.

"My whole experience at Northwestern opened doors I didn't think were available to a kid from Albany Park," Harte says.

It's a ride he easily could have missed.

At 17, Harte had decided to forego college for a job as a trading-floor clerk at the Chicago Board of Trade. For three years at the bastion of capitalism, Harte relished the market's intense beat; he was tempted to stay, but sensed he needed to learn more about the foundations of business. He decided to apply to Northwestern and major in economics.

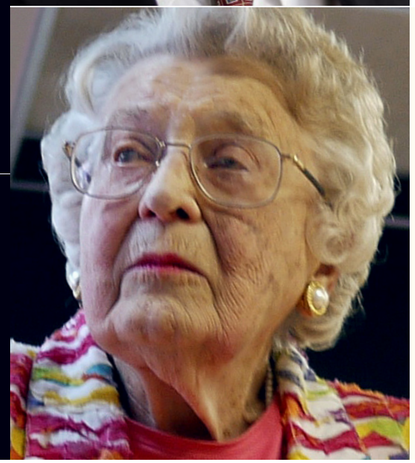
Harte enrolled as a commuter student and paid for his tuition through savings, scholarships, student loans and work-study jobs. Each summer, he returned to the CBOT to work in the trading pits. The value of his liberal arts education quickly became apparent: he was becoming a more nuanced thinker, able to approach economic issues from multiple perspectives.

"I became better at sifting through ideas, which is critical when you're trying to analyze issues that influence lives and markets," Harte says.

In 2010, after working for some of America's largest financial companies, Harte began to hunger for an entrepreneurial endeavor that would strengthen his ties to his Native American roots. He founded the Keshena Group, a commodities and financial futures brokerage with offices in suburban Chicago and the Menominee Nation Reservation in Wisconsin. With a multi-million-dollar tribal investment, the firm is expanding into traditional investment banking services as Tribal Capital Markets, LLC.

Harte now works to improve the economic prospects for his clients and his tribe, has served on the Menominee Nation's budget and finance committee, and has emerged as a role model for others.

"I feel I'm among the next generation of tribal leaders, and that's a duty I embrace," Harte says. "I recognize how important it is for people to see leaders who are connected and committed." ■



Helen Froelich Holt '34, '38
broke new ground for women in government and politics

BY SARA LANGEN

Helen Froelich Holt never saw herself as a trailblazer.

"I was just working and doing what needed to be done," she says. "When I think back, I was a pioneer in an awful lot of things, and I didn't realize it at the time."

She didn't realize she was carving a new path in the 1930s as she set off for college from rural Gridley, Ill., the only girl in her class to do so.

And she didn't know she was exploring new territory as one of only two women in Northwestern's graduate program in zoology. It was an experience that prepared her for many challenges that came her way.

"It was a good general education that helped me know how to think for myself," she says. "With all that background in different areas, I could learn to do anything."

Holt went on to become a teacher at National Park College near Washington, D.C., where she met her husband, Rush D. Holt Sr., the youngest man ever popularly elected to the U.S. Senate.

"At first, I wasn't interested in him because I wasn't interested in a politician," she laughs.

Once they became friends, Holt changed her mind. "I thought he was the smartest man I'd ever met," she remembers. "I enjoyed talking with him. That was our beginning."

Tragedy struck when Rush died at 49 after battling cancer. Once again, Helen found herself treading new ground, as a single working mother of three serving out her husband's term in the West Virginia House of Delegates from 1955 to 1957.

"Rush said from his hospital bed that he wanted me to take it," she remembers. "I never would have thought of doing anything like that, but when he asked me, of course I did it. I felt right at home because my colleagues were Rush's friends and they had confidence in me."

Politics may not have been Holt's calling, but she took quickly to her new role. She served as a delegate to the 1956 Republican National Convention and was appointed the first female secretary of state in West Virginia in 1957. In 1960, President Dwight D. Eisenhower named her to head an initiative to reform nursing homes across the country. It would be the first of her appointments by seven consecutive presidents to positions in the Federal Housing Administration and the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Holt celebrated her 101st birthday this year surrounded by some of the many people she has inspired, including her son Rush D. Holt, Jr., who is finishing eight terms as a New Jersey congressman. She is lauded for the strides she took for women in public office, though she didn't see herself as a role model at the time.

"I just liked to work for something that was worthwhile," she says. ■

PHOTOS: AMERICAN COLLEGE OF PHYSICIAN EXECUTIVES, ROB HART, ROBERT SNYDER/THE SPIRIT OF JEFFERSON

WHAT DID YOU DO WITH YOUR ARTS AND SCIENCES DEGREE?

JOIN THE DISCUSSION

wcas.nu/degree-paths-3

You Are What Your Grandmother Ate

BY JULIA THIEL

If you're overweight, your ancestors may be to blame. Researchers have found that our weight is influenced by what our mothers ate — as well as by the diets of their mothers, their grandmothers and their grandmothers' mothers, quite possibly for many generations back.

PHOTO: NATIONAL ARCHIVES

If your mother was malnourished as an infant, you were more likely to have been born underweight, anthropology professor **Christopher Kuzawa** says. And as an underweight baby, you would have had a greater-than-average risk of growing into an adult with high blood pressure and cholesterol.

That, in turn, increased your risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes, a trend Kuzawa has noticed in the Philippines, where he has been engaged in a 30-year longitudinal study on the effects of prenatal and early childhood nutrition. Until recently, early-life malnutrition in that nation was common, and babies were often born underweight. Now those babies have grown into adults, and they're eating more high-fat Western foods than their ancestors did. Their rates of diabetes and other cardiovascular diseases are climbing, a trend Kuzawa traces in part back to their mothers' poor nourishment in babyhood and in utero.

"Our findings add to the growing evidence that a baby's birth weight is linked to the nutrition her mother experienced as an infant or young child," Kuzawa said. "The mother's own nutrition during infancy, and the grandmother's while pregnant with the mother, predict the birth weight of the current generation"—to a greater extent, perhaps, than does the mother's own diet during pregnancy.

That's not to say that a mother's diet in adulthood has *no* impact. If your mother was obese while she was expecting you, your risk of being overweight and diabetic may increase slightly as a result. And if your mother then lost weight between pregnancies, your siblings may reap the benefit: studies have shown that obese women who lose significant amounts of weight tend to have children with lower body fat and cholesterol than siblings born before the weight loss.

Still, while obesity during pregnancy does put offspring at some degree of risk, Kuzawa's findings in the Philippines suggest that an expectant mother's diet may have less bearing on her baby's size than the nutrition the she received during her own months in the womb.

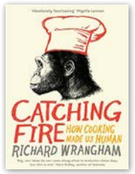
The good news for mothers-to-be is obvious, according to Kuzawa: rather than following a strict "eat-this-not-that" pregnancy diet, they should focus simply on eating healthfully and well.

"The mother's body seems to do a good job of buffering overall nutritional supply to her growing baby," Kuzawa said. "Within the bounds of a healthy balanced diet, the overall quantity of food that a mother eats is unlikely to have large effects on her baby's birth weight." ■

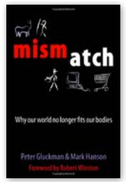
OUR EVOLVING DIET

Would we all be healthier if we quit eating processed food and ate the way our ancestors did instead? It's a trendy notion these days, as evidenced by the popularity of the "Paleo diet." Humans survived for millennia on nuts, wild plants and lean meat, the thinking goes, so those foods should be better for us than the sugar, dairy and grains we eat today. That may be true, says Anthropology Department chairman and professor **William Leonard,** but there's no need to go to extremes. Humans have, in fact, evolved toward "dietary flexibility," and our ability to find or create food almost anywhere has allowed us to colonize the globe and thrive in many different environments. Leonard says the "Paleo Diet" is a narrow prescription for natural eating, and adds that people can live healthfully on a wide range of diets, from mostly meat to mostly plants.

Recommended Reading



Catching Fire: How Cooking Made Us Human
BY *Richard Wrangham*
A primatologist explains why the shift from raw to cooked foods was pivotal to evolution.
BASIC BOOKS, 2009



Mismatch: Why Our World No Longer Fits Our Bodies
BY *Peter Gluckman and Mark Hanson*
Two medical scientists argue that our genes limit our ability to adapt to our modern lifestyle.
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2006

Evolution of the Human Diet: The Known, The Unknown and the Unknowable
BY *Peter S. Ungar (ed.)*
Authorities from a variety of fields offer new insights into the diets of our ancestors.
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2006

[BREAKTHROUGH]

Revealing Our Past

Some 12,000 years ago, a young woman we now call "Naia" wandered into a cave on the Yucatán Peninsula in Mexico, likely in search of water. Suddenly, she slipped and tumbled deep into a massive chamber. There, her body remained undisturbed for millennia, even as water flooded the cavern.

After Naia's skeleton was discovered by divers in 2007, a National Geographic-supported research team was assembled to study the site. The team included Northwestern earth scientist and diver **Patricia Beddows**, whose expertise in geology and hydrology proved essential to dating the remains. Naia is now the oldest and most complete human skeleton ever reported in North America.

Beddows (above, far right) returns frequently to Central America to conduct research. She is often accompanied by students eager to learn how the interaction between air, rocks and water yields clues to Earth's past and future. "I want to instill a sense of adventure in them and make them active participants in scientific discovery," she says.

PHOTOS: PAUL NICKLEN/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC. (TOP INSET) PATRICIA BEDDOWS

LEARN MORE ABOUT

Patricia Beddows' research in the Yucatán:
wcas.nu/cave-woman

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PHOTO: PETER McCOLLOUGH

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