

# Williams

MAGAZINE SUMMER 2017



## THE FACE OF SACRIFICE

How Afghan history informs our understanding of ISIS **p.18**

## READY TO SOAR

Yuv Khosla '17 left campus in June with more than just a diploma. He also completed his private pilot's license. The economics and religion major recently returned home to New Delhi, India, to join his father's microfinance business. He plans to pursue higher levels of flight training and one day hopes to start a commercial aviation business in India. Read more and watch a video about Khosla at <http://bit.ly/yuvkhosla17>.





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## Diversity and Complexity

THE WILLIAMS STUDENT OF TODAY MUST LEARN TO THRIVE IN AN EVER-SHIFTING world. Members of this generation will probably hold more jobs over their lifetimes, live in more places and encounter people from a greater variety of backgrounds than many of us imagined possible at their age.

Yet this same generation is in many ways being resegregated. They're growing up in neighborhoods and schools walled off according to race, religion and class, and they're steeped in technologies that segment the world according to "friends," "likes," and the notion that "if you like A, you'll probably also like B."

Our students keenly feel the chaos of these competing centrifugal and centripetal forces. Even the controversies over campus speakers and "safe spaces" can be understood as an expression of their efforts, not always successful, to grapple with these tensions.

Williams has a long record of preparing students to face life's great challenges. This issue of the magazine depicts some of the ways we're thinking and teaching about diversity and complexity, two defining themes of the current era.

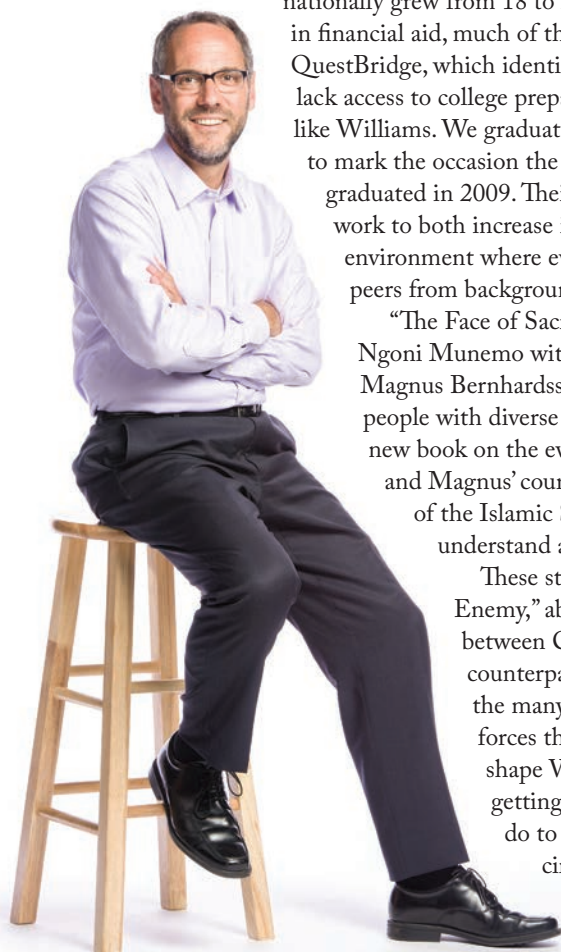
The socioeconomic diversification of our student body is front and center in "Begins the Quest." Between 2004 and today, the share of Williams students hailing from families whose incomes were in the lowest 60 percent nationally grew from 18 to 26 percent. In addition to our deep investment in financial aid, much of this success is attributable to our partnership with QuestBridge, which identifies talented, low-income students (who often lack access to college preparation) and matches them with elite schools like Williams. We graduated our 400th QuestBridge scholar in June, and to mark the occasion the story revisits our first class of scholars, who graduated in 2009. Their stories show the multiple benefits of our work to both increase individual access to education and create an environment where every student can learn from encounters with peers from backgrounds quite different from their own.

"The Face of Sacrifice," an interview by political science professor Ngoni Munemo with anthropologist Dave Edwards and historian Magnus Bernhardsson, demonstrates how conversations among people with diverse perspectives can yield powerful insights. Dave's new book on the evolution of martyrdom in Afghanistan—and his and Magnus' course on "the origins, ideology and organization of the Islamic State"—go a long way toward helping students understand a complex, disruptive global movement.

These stories, along with "Making Friends with the Enemy," about the dangerous Cold War friendship between CIA operative Jack Platt '58 and his Soviet counterpart Gennadiy Vasilenko, demonstrate some of the many ways Williams helps students understand the forces that shape their world—and how those forces shape Williams lives, in turn. After all, the world isn't getting less complicated. We always have more to do to prepare students for success in challenging circumstances. Fortunately, Williams is here to teach them, and we always will be.

—ADAM FALK, PRESIDENT

Williams helps students understand the forces that shape their world—and how those forces shape Williams lives, in turn.



## Williams

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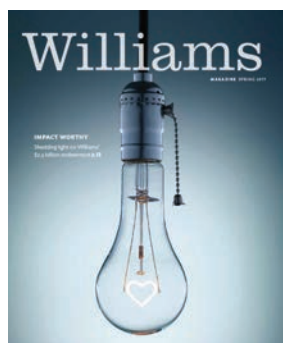
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*attends meetings by invitation of the Trustees*





**IMPACT WORTHY**

I was excited to read “Impact Worthy” (spring 2017). One of my clearest memories as an undergrad was when the provost came into my geology class and drew a pie chart on the board showing us where the money that paid for our Williams education came from and how it was spent. That’s when I first learned that 50 percent of each student’s annual cost of education is subsidized by the endowment. Understanding how the endowment is funded, invested and deployed should be something every Williams student is readily exposed to. But one section of the magazine interview baffled me a bit. President Falk stated, “As important as climate change is, it’s not more important than access to Williams.” The college still needs to hone its thesis around sustainable investing. We can all acknowledge that divestment is not an appropriate reaction for lots of reasons (expensive, difficult to execute with co-mingled funds, limited actual impact, etc.), but the interview, unfortunately, glosses over the fact that there are lots of ways to promote



“ My goodness @williamscollege, the spring2017 issue of #williamsmag is visually, aesthetically and conceptually stunning!

—RHON MANIGAULT-BRYANT, WILLIAMS ASSOCIATE DEAN OF THE FACULTY AND AFRICANA STUDIES PROFESSOR, @DOCTORRMB, MARCH 15, 2017

sustainability across the endowment’s portfolio besides divestment. If the endowment is fundamental to promoting the college’s mission, then the way in which we invest that endowment should promote that mission. Not just \$50 million of it, but the entire thing.

—GRACE HORWITZ ’13,  
BOSTON, MASS.

Williams’ commitment to sustainability is commendable, but regarding divestiture, President Falk’s statement that “as important as climate change is, it’s not more important than access to Williams” is disturbing in its binary logic. One, strong evidence shows that divestiture need not slow growth. Two, Williams need not “divest fully” all at once. And, three, smartly scheduled, benchmarked impact investing can transform the portfolio to clean energy. Williams is committed to preparing students to live in a future today’s trustees will never see. President Falk’s words notwithstanding, there is one thing more

important than students having access to Williams: Students having access to a planet worth inhabiting. Stanford, Yale and others are acting. The climate continues to deteriorate. How long will Williams wait?

—LAURENT A. PARKS DALOZ ’62,  
CLINTON, WASH.

“Impact Worthy” correctly mentions that 11 percent of Williams students come from the bottom 40 percent of the income bracket. But also: 18 percent of Williams students come from the top 1 percent of the income bracket—that is, households making more than \$630,000 per year. That’s just too many super-rich students. Williams needs to be far more aggressive to position itself as a leading institution of socioeconomic mobility. We should immediately set a modest, initial goal to have at least 15 percent of our first-year students come from the bottom 40 percent of household incomes (like Barnard) and less than 10 percent from the top 1 percent of household incomes (like Swarthmore).

—BOB KIM ’92, BROOKLYN, N.Y.

**HUMBLE BEGINNINGS**

An essay by President Emeritus John Chandler (“From Humble Beginnings,” spring 2017) tells the astonishing story of his personal journey. I hope all readers will appreciate it. Alongside the remarks from President Adam Falk about the college’s extraordinary commitment to financial aid (“Lifting Us Up”), I am even prouder to be an Eph.

—BOB RECKMAN ’70,  
NORTHAMPTON, MASS.

I wish I had known more about President Chandler’s early childhood when he was our Chi Psi faculty advisor. His childhood experiences must have given him the ability to see what the future could be, prepare himself for that future and bring others along with him. Those of us who were on the opposite side of the “fraternity issue” admired and respected Professor Chandler and do so to this day. His vision was the right one for Williams. The college and its students are blessed to have him.

—JAMES BLACK ’62, MIAMI, FLA.



# NOTICE

## COOL GEEKS

Williams College's 228th Commencement took place June 4 against the stunning backdrop of Sawyer Library. President Adam Falk conferred degrees on 525 seniors. Another 13 students in the History of Art program and 30 fellows from the Center for Development Economics received master's degrees. Commencement speaker Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie told the Class of 2017, "As you call out privilege, always make yourself complicit and beware of self-righteousness. ... May you always be propelled by hope. May you always remain the cool geeks that you are." See more coverage at [commencement.williams.edu](http://commencement.williams.edu).

PHOTOGRAPH: ROMAN IWASIWKA









## CARTER WINS NSF CAREER GRANT

ASSISTANT BIOLOGY PROFESSOR MATT CARTER HAS RECEIVED A prestigious CAREER grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF). The five-year, \$586,000 grant, awarded to junior faculty, will support his research into sleep and wakefulness.

His research project, “Bidirectional Control of Sleep and Wakefulness by the Hypothalamic Arcuate Nucleus,” studies two populations of neurons to better understand mammalian sleep. Carter uses cutting-edge optogenetic and pharmacogenetic methods in conjunction with electroencephalography and behavioral analyses in mice to test the necessity and sufficiency of these neurons in promoting sleep or wakefulness.

CAREER awards are the NSF’s most prestigious in support of junior faculty who exemplify the role of teacher-scholars through research, education and the integration of both within the context of the mission of their organizations.

“I am so thrilled to receive the CAREER award,” Carter says. “This grant will create so many great research opportunities with students over the next several years.”

## BICENTENNIAL MEDALISTS TO BE HONORED

During Convocation on Sept. 16, five alumni will receive Bicentennial Medals for distinguished service in their fields. This year’s recipients are: **Ira Mickenberg ’72**, founder and director of the National Defender Training Project, which seeks to improve the quality of legal representation for indigent criminal defendants; **Dr. Richard Besser ’81**, CEO of the Robert Wood Johnson foundation, former ABC News chief health and medical editor and former leader of the Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention; **Wendy Young ’83**, president of KIND (Kids in Need of Defense), working to assist and defend unaccompanied refugee and immigrant children in the U.S.; **Adam Schlesinger ’89**,

co-founder of the band Fountains of Wayne and an award-winning songwriter and producer for TV, film and theater; and **Mary Dana Hinton ’92**, president of the College of Saint Benedict, who has dedicated her career to educational equity and access.



### IN THE NEWS

After trailing Washington University in St. Louis through the fall and winter, eight Eph teams combined to score a spring record of 630 points, helping to capture the college’s fifth straight Learfield Sports Directors’ Cup. The Ephs have won the cup 20 times in the 22-year history of the award, presented by the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics to the best all-around sports program based on team performance in NCAA Championships. Eleven Eph teams finished in the top five nationally, and the women’s tennis team won its eighth NCAA DIII title in the last 10 years. The final total for Ephs was a record-breaking 1,335.25, surpassing second-place Washington University by 108.25 points.







Leila Jere '91



Jillian Charles '91

## NEW TRUSTEES JOIN BOARD

ON JULY 1, WILLIAMS WELCOMED Leila H. Jere '91 and Jillian E. Charles '91 to its Board of Trustees.

Jere is vice president for customer success at Full Circle Insights, a marketing data company based in California. She previously served as president of the Society of Alumni, a member of the Executive Committee and president of the San Francisco regional association.

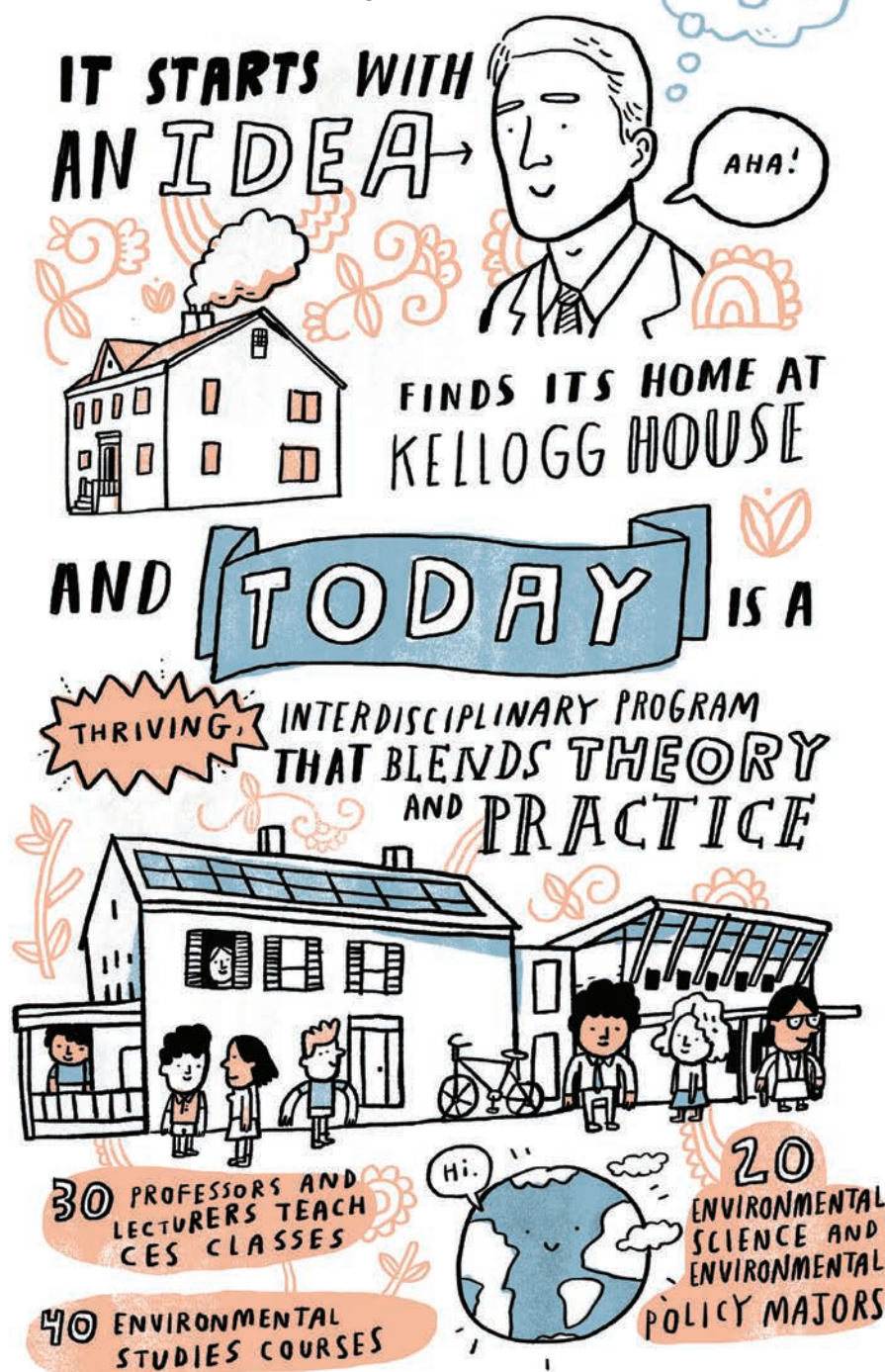
Charles, who was elected by the Society of Alumni and appointed by the trustees, is senior counsel at Eaton Corp., a multi-national power management company. She is a Williams admission volunteer and class agent, and she served as an Alumni Fund vice chair and Tyng administrator.

Martha Williamson '77 was reappointed to the board. Yvonne Hao '95 and Caron Garcia Martinez '81 stepped down when their terms ended on June 30.

### AT A GLANCE

## 50 YEARS of ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

In 1967, newly hired professor Andrew Scheffey '50 taught Williams' first environmental studies course: Resource Policy and the Environment. That fall, President Jack Sawyer '39 named Scheffey director of a newly created Center for Environmental Studies (CES)—a first for a liberal arts college. "Almost no other subject has as broad a spectrum of contact with our present program," Sawyer said. "Nor are many fields more closely related to the central humane values of liberal learning."





## FOUR ALUMNI RECEIVE GUGGENHEIM FELLOWSHIPS

FOUR WILLIAMS ALUMNI WERE AWARDED GUGGENHEIM FELLOWSHIPS THIS YEAR: Robin Broad '76, a professor at American University's School of International Service; novelist Fiona Maazel '97; poet and MacArthur fellow Claudia Rankine '86; and choreographer Will Rawls '00.

The grants are made freely and with no conditions, allowing the fellows—a total of 173 scholars, artists and scientists this year—"blocks of time in which they can work with as much creative freedom as possible," according to the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. Selections are made "on the basis of prior achievement and exceptional promise."

Each of the Williams fellows is using the award to further current projects. Broad, a professor of international development, is conducting research on a project that debunks the myth that "people in poorer countries don't care about the environment," she says. She plans to publish a book based on her findings.

Maazel, whose novel *A Little More Human* came out in the spring, says the fellowship will allow her to step away from other commitments and focus on writing a new novel, her fourth. "I couldn't be more thrilled or grateful," she says.

Rawls, who describes himself as a creator of "solo and group works that engage and attenuate relationships between language and dance," says he is committed to expressing "the nature of multiple selves within socially inscribed constructs."



Choreographer  
Will Rawls '00

He and Rankine, who recently collaborated on a performance called *What Remains*, are both using their Guggenheim Fellowships to continue their creative work.

Rankine, the author of two plays and five collections of poetry, co-founded The Racial Imaginary Institute, described on its website as "a cultural laboratory in which the racial imaginaries of our time and place are engaged, read, countered, contextualized and demystified."



## MOREY NAMED VP FOR COLLEGE RELATIONS

Megan Morey joined the campus community as vice president of college relations on May 1.

Morey most recently served in an analogous role as chief advancement officer at Amherst College. Before that, she worked at Williams from 2000 to 2007, first as a senior development officer and then as director of leadership giving.

Now she is leading Teach It Forward: The Campaign for Williams, the college's \$650 million comprehensive campaign. She also leads all the work of the Office of College Relations, including advancement information services, alumni relations, career services and development.

## IN MEMORIAM

Retired professors Raymond Chang and Richard O. Rouse Jr. passed away in April. Chang was 77, and Rouse was 95.

Chang, the Halford R. Clark Professor of Natural Sciences, emeritus, came to Williams in 1968. A prolific author, he produced textbooks on chemistry well into his retirement and was the author of several

children's books drawn from his childhood experiences in China and Hong Kong. He taught a popular Winter Study course on Chinese language and calligraphy. Chang was a mentor to many new chemistry professors, many of whom still work in the department today. He is survived by his wife Margaret, a daughter and three grandsons.

Rouse, the Mary A. and William Wirt Warren Professor of Psychology, emeritus, came to Williams in 1948 as one of only two faculty members in what was then the brand new Department of Psychology. He served as department chair from 1961 to 1973, a time in which the staff and course offerings in psychology more than doubled.

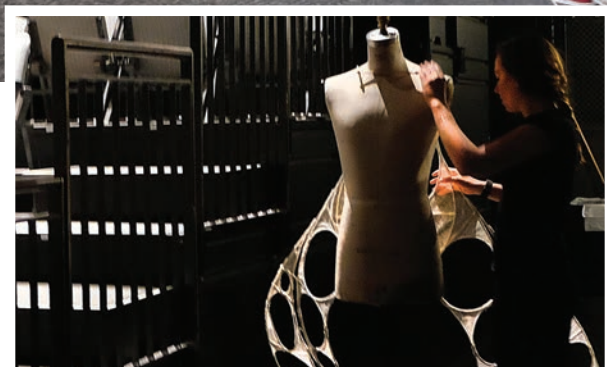


Rouse also was a key figure in the planning and construction of Bronfman Science Center. He continued to work at Williams



long after his retirement in 1983. He is survived by his wife Regina, three children and three grandchildren.





#### A CLOSER LOOK

## PERFORMING SCULPTURE

AMY PODMORE, PROFESSOR OF ART, AND DEB BROTHERS, COSTUME director and lecturer in theater, taught a new course in the spring: *The Sculptural Costume and Its Performance Potential*. Students studied visual artists such as Nick Cave and Hélio Oiticica and learned how wearable art is central to Bauhaus dance, Carnival and Dada performance. They also crafted their own costumes (2, 3) and performed in their creations in May at the '62 Center's CenterStage (4, 5) and within Cave's exhibition *Until* at MASS MoCA (1).






# BEGIN

**Jonathon Burne '17 is  
headed to New York  
City for a fellowship in  
immigration law.**







# S THE QUEST

On the occasion of the graduation of Williams' 400th QuestBridge scholar in June, the magazine looks at the college's work to expand access to students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

BY MICHAEL BLANDING '95

"I FEEL LIKE I CAN LITERALLY GO ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD."

Like many of his classmates, Jonathon Burne '17 expressed a sense of possibility as he prepared to graduate in June. But for the Arabic studies and political science major, who is headed to New York for a fellowship in immigration law, the words carried a deeper meaning.

Before coming to Williams, he had neither traveled outside Southern California nor considered an elite four-year college as an option.

Burne's mother emigrated to the U.S. from Honduras. His father grew up in a middle-class family in Orange County. They met when she became his drug addiction counselor. A few years after Burne was born, his parents began using methadone and heroin together. Then they began manufacturing drugs and ended up in jail.

Burne went to live with his paternal grandparents. His grandfather was a linguistics professor and instilled in him a love of reading. Burne's parents divorced soon after they got out of jail, and Burne bounced between Los Angeles and Orange County. He attended five different school systems while navigating ongoing instability in his family.

In high school, his honors history teacher told him about QuestBridge, a program that connects academically qualified students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds with highly selective colleges. The opportunity seemed inconceivable to him.



"I had no way to conceptualize the idea of free money for college," says Burne. "Yet there was a community of people who had come from backgrounds similar to mine and found ways to thrive."

He joined Williams' Class of 2017 with nine other QuestBridge students receiving full scholarships. Another 50 students affiliated with the program, who received nearly full scholarships, enrolled as well.

In four short years, Burne traveled to seven different countries through Winter Study courses and summer fellowships. He spent the spring semester of his junior year in Amman, Jordan. He stayed on for a summer internship with an international development law firm and enrolled at a Jordanian institute for language studies. The experiences reaffirmed his "commitment to serving vulnerable migrant populations through academic, humanitarian and legal advocacy," he says.

When Burne and his classmates crossed the stage at Williams' 228th Commencement, the college celebrated the graduation of its 400th QuestBridge student since joining the program in 2004. It's just one of a number of initiatives at Williams that, over the past several decades, have added up to measurable results—not only in broadening access for exceptional low-income students but also in building the most talented and diverse student body possible.

"Socioeconomic diversity isn't a nice add-on," says Williams President Adam Falk. "It's essential to every element of our mission to have a broad impact on the world. If we're going to be relevant to society in the century to come, we have to educate students from every part of that society."

**H**igher education is widely considered to be a powerful engine of upward mobility. But a growing body of research is calling into question how well colleges and universities fulfill that role. One series of studies comes from The Equality of Opportunity Project, led by Stanford economist Raj Chetty. The research, published earlier this year, shows that it's increasingly difficult for people born after 1980 to move up the economic ladder and achieve more than their parents did.

Another Chetty study shows that the "opportunity gap" is growing, especially among the nation's 38 elite colleges and universities. Approximately one in four of the richest students—those in the top 1 percent of the income distribution—attends an elite college, compared to less than half of 1 percent of the poorest students—those in the bottom fifth of the income scale.

"If you look at access at elite colleges in the last 20 years or so, there's been virtually no change," says Benny Goldman, a pre-doctoral fellow on the research team.

Williams is one of a handful of schools that are the exception, Goldman says. Comparing the Class of 2003

**"Socioeconomic diversity isn't a nice add-on. It's essential to every element of our mission to have a broad impact on the world."**

—PRESIDENT  
ADAM FALK

to the Class of 2011, the share of students from the bottom three-fifths of the household income distribution increased from 14 to 20 percent. And the share from the bottom fifth of the scale increased from 2.5 to 5 percent.

"That's a doubling of representation," Goldman says. "It's clear Williams has made quite a bit of progress."

The progress rests in part on a solid financial foundation. Williams is one of only 44 schools in the country that practices need-blind admission and meets 100 percent of demonstrated need, awarding \$52 million in scholarships each year. To do this, the college has more than quadrupled its financial aid budget over the past 15 years, offering aid to 4,000 students during that time.

Access is also a focus in Teach It Forward: The Campaign for Williams, a \$650 million fundraising effort now in its third year. The college set a goal of \$150 million in endowed support for financial aid, with an eye toward endowing the entire program over several decades.

But financial aid alone can't move the needle on accessibility, which Williams recognized not long after it established its need-blind admission policy in the 1970s. In the early 1980s, the Consortium on Financing Higher Education (COFHE) ranked its 35 members—private liberal arts schools that were highly selective and need blind—according to the percentage of students receiving aid of any kind. Williams was second from last, with 28 percent.

"It was upsetting," says Tom Parker '69, then Williams' associate director of admission. "We asked some hard questions about why."

Williams convened a financial aid task force, which set a goal of increasing the number of aided students to 40 percent by 1990. The admission office cast a wider net in recruiting and began using student data from the College Board to target communications about financial aid to academically qualified, low-income students.

Meanwhile, in 1989, a group of Williams economists, including Catharine Bond Hill '76, launched the Williams Project on the Economics of Higher Education to examine accessibility more broadly. Funded with a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and often using Williams as a test case, the researchers published data-driven books, articles and working papers on a number of topics, including whether low-income students underperformed their more affluent peers academically (they didn't); what low-income students at COFHE schools paid out of pocket for tuition (too much, prompting Williams to virtually eliminate loans from aid packages); and whether there really were enough high-ability, low-income students out there to meet enrollment targets (there were).

So, if the academically qualified students were out there, and the financial aid was readily available to them, why weren't they applying to Williams—or to any other highly selective schools? That question has driven much of the college's work on accessibility.





**Naya-Joi Martin '09**  
has a business degree  
from Emory University's  
Goizueta Business  
School and now works  
for its admission office.



**Jared Currier '09**  
received an MBA at  
University of Virginia's  
Darden School of  
Business and now  
works in marketing  
at General Mills.





Each year, an estimated 30,000 students from low- and moderate-income backgrounds are academically qualified to attend Williams and its peer institutions. Yet many of these students don't apply to a single highly selective college.

Some don't know these schools exist or are a viable option. Some are overwhelmed by the admission and financial aid processes. Some are reluctant to disclose socioeconomic information or lack something in their applications—an essay or references—that provides information about their backgrounds or circumstances.

Enter QuestBridge. In 1987, Stanford undergraduates Marc Lawrence and Michael McCullough began bringing economically disadvantaged high school students from East Palo Alto to campus each day for college-level classes and clinical experiences. The program soon grew into a five-week residency for high schoolers around the country that continues to this day. But McCullough felt the program didn't reach far enough.

He and his future wife, Ana, developed QuestBridge in response. "There was so much interest in what we were doing and so many students that could use the support in ways that we knew how to do," Ana McCullough says.

The "bridge" in QuestBridge is simple. The program identifies exceptional students who meet the criteria for admission at one of its highly selective college partners and helps those students apply to the college of their choice. The colleges, meanwhile, provide full scholarships to QuestBridge "matches" and meet the demonstrated need for a larger pool of students who just miss the financial qualifications for a full scholarship.

Amherst, where Parker joined the admission office in 1999 after serving as admission director at Williams, was one of the first schools to join QuestBridge in 2003.

"The faculty advisory committee was overwhelmed," he says of response to the first matches' credentials. "They said, 'Here's a kid with a 1390 on the SATs where English isn't spoken in the home. We'd love to teach this kid.'"

Williams, where Hill was serving as provost, joined a year later and welcomed 14 matches to the Class of 2009. Among them was Jared Currier '09, who grew up in a tiny logging town in Maine and worked after school at the restaurant where his mother worked, and Naya-Joi Martin '09, who says her mother, a touring backup singer, made possible Martin's private school education and extracurricular lessons in the Bronx. (Read their stories and others in "The Quest Continues," p. 16.)

Successful QuestBridge applicants are usually in the top 5 or 10 percent of their class academically and take the most rigorous classes offered by their schools. They typically come from households with incomes less than \$65,000 per year, and they're often the first in their family to attend a four-year college. The students may demonstrate an "unusually high level of family responsibility (caring

"We have to make sure that every student ... understands and believes that all of the resources of the college are there for them."

—PRESIDENT  
ADAM FALK

for siblings or working to support the family)," as the program's website states, and they're involved in leadership or community activities.

Their applications include information about their schools—such as how many students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch and what programs are offered—as well as directed essay questions that help admission officers get a more complete picture of their circumstances and how the students might transition to college.

"In the traditional application, the onus is on the student to share any information they want to about their socioeconomic status or their family life," says Liz Creighton '01, Williams' dean of admission and financial aid. "The QuestBridge application prompts the student to talk about their lived experience and reflect on how it has impacted their life. It helps the applicant understand that admission officers want to gain a deeper understanding of their story and that the information will be used to help contextualize the rest of their application."

Providing such context has a measurable impact on students' chances of being admitted to college. Mike Bastedo, director of the Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education at the University of Michigan, found that providing consistent high school data increased an economically disadvantaged student's chances of being admitted by 25 percent. Admission staff had "a better sense of what the student accomplished relative to what opportunities were available," he says.

The number of QuestBridge scholars at Williams has steadily increased since Burne and his classmates joined the Class of 2017, from 60 in his cohort to 77 in the incoming Class of 2021. To help cover their tuition, the Class of 1969, Parker's class, is supporting financial aid for QuestBridge as part of its 50th reunion gift.

QuestBridge is just one of a number of programs and policies implemented over the years aimed at making the college more accessible, or "need-seeking," Falk says.

"Because low-income high school students don't have access to the same resources as their more affluent peers, we know we have to affirmatively seek them out if we want to enroll them at Williams," he says. "We're not blind to their economic circumstances. We're actively looking for students who need financial assistance."

Creighton now oversees both admission and financial aid to better align the college's efforts to be need-seeking. Williams also created a deanship dedicated to supporting first-generation and low-income students. (The incoming Class of 2021 has the highest percentage of first-generation students ever, 20 percent.)

"For each of the 550 students we enroll, there are 550 sets of needs and experiences," Creighton says. "One of the beauties of a small school like Williams is that we can be

high touch and responsive to individual student needs.”

Says Falk, “We have to make sure that every student, whatever their economic circumstance, understands and believes that all of the resources of the college are there for them. It’s absolutely essential that low-income students develop a sense of ownership that can come so easily to others—that this is my college, and it’s here for me.”

The college helps remove barriers to accessibility with need-based grants covering study abroad, Winter Study courses, independent research and summer internships.

Textbooks and course materials are free for all aided students, and there’s need-based funding for job interviews and graduate school visits and preparation.

To make it easier for high school students from low-income families to visit campus, the college offers Windows on Williams in the fall, a three-day, all-expenses-paid program. Students attend classes, meet with faculty and undergraduates, stay in the residence halls and attend workshops on admission and financial aid. A similar program called Previews is held in the spring for

## THE QUEST CONTINUES

*Nearly 10 years after their graduation, some members of Williams’ first class of QuestBridge scholars talk about how far they have come and how they got there.*



### KENNY YIM '09

**WHERE HE IS NOW:** Working as a page at the Brookline Public Library, Brookline, Mass.

**HOW HE GOT THERE:** Yim grew up outside of Portland, Ore., the son of Chinese immigrants. His father died when Yim was in high school. His mother, who has a mental illness, was often hospitalized. Yim was mentored by a librarian who challenged him with increasingly difficult books. He attended an affluent high school half an hour from home, and he took a college scouting trip to New England with friends. At Williams, he initially struggled to fit in. Then, during his sophomore year, he enrolled in the course American Genders, American Sexualities, which challenged him academically and prompted him to come out to classmates on the last day of the class. He went on to major in psychology and English and began exploring his roots as a member of the Chinese-American Student Organization. After graduation, he taught English in China and Hong Kong for two years and then moved to Boston, where he spent three years teaching English to restaurant workers in Chinatown through the Asian American Civic Association.

**ON TEACHING IMMIGRANTS:** “It was coming full circle for me. These people were experiencing the kind of lives my parents had, and with my enthusiasm I was able to help them with a difficult task.”



### ANNA HERNANDEZ-FRENCH '09

**WHERE SHE IS NOW:** Associate publisher of science and medical journals, Oxford University Press, New York, N.Y.

**HOW SHE GOT THERE:** After her parents divorced, her mother left with the children in the middle of the night. With no money, they settled among the redwoods in the northern California city of Eureka. While her mother went back to school, Hernandez-French handled all of the cooking for her brother and two sisters. She threw herself into her studies, rising to the top of her class. She dreamed of leaving her small town, and Williams was a good fit. An English and Spanish major, she volunteered with the Berkshire Food Project and joined the Hurricane Relief Coalition. Graduating without any student loan debt allowed her to move to New York City right away. She worked in restaurants until she found her current job, overseeing publication of science and medical journals. She serves on the press’s diversity committee and works with Active DIY, a community service organization that helps undocumented immigrant youth get jobs and apply to college.

**ON WORKING WITH UNDOCUMENTED YOUTH:** “These kids are amazing. It frustrates me how many barriers there are to entry for them, when their skill sets are second to none.”



### NAYA-JOI MARTIN '09

**WHERE SHE IS NOW:** Assistant director of MBA admissions, Goizueta Business School, Emory University, Atlanta, Ga.

**HOW SHE GOT THERE:** Martin grew up in the Bronx with her mother and godmother. Though her mother was frequently on tour as a backup singer, the money she earned paid for Martin’s private school education and ceramics, photography and swimming lessons. Martin says she was relieved to match with Williams through QuestBridge, because it meant her mother wouldn’t have to pay for college. Before starting classes, she spent five weeks on campus with the Summer Humanities and Social Sciences Program, which provides underrepresented minority and first-generation college students with a preview of the Williams experience. Martin, who is of Puerto Rican and Jamaican descent, felt at home on campus. A psychology major, she joined the basketball team, Kusika and Ritmo Latino dance groups, and the Black Student Union. She also worked in the admission office. After graduation, she got a business degree at Emory and spent three years as player programs manager with the Atlanta Hawks.

**ON HER JOB:** “I feel like it’s my calling. I’m passionate about helping people do their best and find opportunities that will make them happy.”



admitted students. Those who enroll can also participate in the Summer Science or Summer Humanities and Social Sciences programs, five-week mini-semesters to introduce them to life as college students.

“These may be the only opportunities many students have for an immersive experience on a college campus before they arrive for their first year,” Creighton says.

It was a Williams on Williams visit that first brought Burne to campus before he submitted his QuestBridge application. He says he struggled at first to adjust to the

unfamiliar landscape. But a conversation about Marxism with English professor Christian Thorne in the Faculty House dining room during the visit sealed the deal for him.

“I was doing all these readings by myself and never had a chance to vocalize what I was learning,” Burne says. “It was hard to walk away after that and say that I would not like to come here.” **W**

*Michael Blanding '95 is a Boston-based freelance writer.*



#### JARED CURRIER '09

**WHERE HE IS NOW:** Associate marketing manager, General Mills, Minneapolis, Minn.

**HOW HE GOT THERE:** Currier grew up in a small logging town in Maine where his family's roots stretch back 200 years. During high school, he worked at a local restaurant where his mother worked. He joined the math team and mock trial program and served as yearbook editor. He didn't see Williams in person until First Days. He participated in Cap & Bells, WCFM radio station and the first-year student council. He also volunteered with the Hurricane Relief Coalition, served as a student member of the Educational Policy and Dining Services committees and worked as a tour guide for the admission office, student manager of the Paresky Center and a Reunion Ranger. The history and psychology major graduated cum laude and began working in New York City at House Party, a viral marketing firm where he did copy-editing, editing and social media. He left to pursue an MBA at the University of Virginia's Darden School of Business, which he completed in May.

**ON OPPORTUNITY:** “Before Williams, I can count the number of times I had been out of Maine on two hands. QuestBridge and Williams expanded my world in so many ways, and I have certainly tried to make the most of what's been afforded to me.”



#### KRISTEN EMHOFF '09

**WHERE SHE IS NOW:** Senior forecasting analyst, Opower, Arlington, Va.

**HOW SHE GOT THERE:** Emhoff lived in a steel town in eastern Ohio. She was the first in her family to attend college—many of her relatives hadn't graduated from high school. She applied for QuestBridge at the recommendation of a local college admission coach and chose Williams sight unseen. “The fact that it took my parents' finances out of the equation was the biggest gift I could have,” she says. “I could be completely financially independent.” At Williams, she majored in mathematics and geosciences, joined the track and cross-country teams, sang with the Accidentals and worked as a teaching assistant. During her senior year, she spent spring break building houses in New Orleans with Habitat for Humanity. After graduation, she joined AmeriCorps and taught music in a small town in eastern Oregon. Her interests in environmentalism and renewable energy, also cultivated at Williams, led to her current job with a company helping to create a more efficient energy grid.

**ON QUESTBRIDGE:** “My path after Williams was largely influenced by the fact that I had no loans. I wasn't scrambling for money, so I could do what I wanted without fear.”



#### JOHN VU '09

**WHERE HE IS NOW:** Radiology resident, Mallinckrodt Institute of Radiology, Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis, Mo.

**HOW HE GOT THERE:** Vu was born in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, and lived in a small house with no running water or electricity. His father was eligible for the Refugee Act and found work assembling computers in a manufacturing plant in Southern California, where the family relocated when Vu was 6. He struggled in public school until he learned English, and he says he spent most of his time studying. He came to Williams as a pre-med student and majored in biology and chemistry. After the 2008 financial crash, he started an investing club for students. He also worked as part of the Hurricane Relief Coalition, joined the Vietnamese Student Association and was an academic peer advisor. He earned a master's degree in public health at the University of California, Irvine, and then enrolled in medical school. He is pursuing a radiology residency while researching ways to use functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging to explore brain function.

**ON THE FUTURE:** “My ideal goal would be to work in a place like the Mayo Clinic, where I could do clinical work but also do research and administrative work at the same time.”

# THE FACE OF SACRIFICE

**Before you can understand  
ISIS, you need to understand  
the evolution of martyrdom  
over 13 centuries of  
Middle Eastern history  
and culture.**





Habad was 22 years old and living in Waziristan when he was sent to Afghanistan in 2009 on a suicide bombing mission. He planned to blow himself up in a vehicle after encountering American troops, but when he saw the many Afghan officers there, too, he decided he couldn't risk killing his "Muslim brothers." He turned himself in to local police and expects to be in prison for 20 years.



"T

he central question that has arisen out of my preoccupation with the war in Afghanistan ... is how it happened that men (and sometimes even women and children) would come to consider it a good thing to strap bombs onto their bodies, walk into crowded places and trigger the bombs, knowing not only that they will lose their own lives but also that they will take with them a large number of strangers." So writes David Edwards, the James N. Lambert '39 Professor of Anthropology, in his book *Caravan of Martyrs: Sacrifice and Suicide Bombing in Afghanistan*. Published in May by University of California Press, the book explores that question. The answer, Edwards says, lies not in psychology or pathology but in understanding Afghan history and the changing definition of martyrdom.

In the spring, Edwards and Professor of History Magnus Bernhardsson taught a new course, *The Challenge of ISIS*. The two spoke with political science professor Ngonidzashe Munemo about how ritual sacrifice in Afghanistan has evolved from a form of peacemaking to a deadly public spectacle.

**NGONIDZASHE MUNEMO:** We should start by talking about the role of sacrifice in Afghan culture.

**DAVID EDWARDS:** Sacrifice has an important and long-established place in Afghan culture. Each year Afghans celebrate the Eid-i Qurban—the Feast of the Sacrifice—which commemorates the Prophet Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son to God. And as long as anyone can remember, animals have been slaughtered as a ritual to please God or to bring about peace. In Afghanistan, if there were two feuding tribes, and one side wanted to stop the feud, they would take a sheep to their enemy and sacrifice the sheep. It was a way of switching registers from physical violence to talking.

**MUNEMO:** You tell the story of how you and an Afghan friend were traveling with a former jihad commander in 1995. You spent the night in the friend's village, and your guards, mistakenly thinking they were under attack, almost massacred your whole group. What happened next?

**EDWARDS:** My friend's father led the sheep to where we had been sleeping. He matter-of-factly recited some prayers and calmly cut its throat, letting the blood spill on the ground. I was struck by the power of that ritual. We could have been killed the night before, and the sheep was our *qurbani*, our sacrifice, for having stayed alive another day. It was a substitute for us.

**MUNEMO:** At what point do you think the use of surrogates or substitutes like sheep or goats in the larger, societal sacrifice became inadequate or insufficient?

**EDWARDS:** What we're seeing now—the Taliban, 9/11, ISIS—began in Peshawar in the early 1980s. When the



## THE EVOLUTION OF SACRIFICE

A look at some of the key historical moments that shaped Afghan history and the changing definition of martyrdom.

### 7th century C.E.

The Umayyad dynasty seizes the caliphate in the Battle of Karbala in modern-day Iraq. Prophecies begin to circulate about a Muslim savior, the Mahdi, who will rise up in Khorasan, now Afghanistan, to lead the final battles against the infidels during the End of Days.

### 1975

A 15-year civil war in Lebanon begins, giving rise to the Hezbollah movement.

### 1979

The Soviet Union sends 10,000 troops to Afghanistan to prop up the failing Marxist regime, beginning a 10-year occupation.

### 1978

The assassination of Afghan President Muhammad Daud Khan by Marxist army officers sparks local insurrections. Fundamentalist Islamic parties based in Pakistan gradually gain control of scattered local fronts in Afghanistan.



Soviets invaded Afghanistan, a lot of Afghans, particularly in the tribal areas along the border where I've done my research, went into the war thinking it would be something like what they'd known before, like a feud, but this time with the state. The Afghans would show their bravery, demonstrate their prowess and gain the reputation of great warriors. But they encountered a different kind of war—a mechanical, industrial war—where they were bombed and civilians were as likely to die as warriors. They had to find some way of grappling with the fact that lots of people were dying. At that point, martyrdom became a central motif in Afghan culture.

**MUNEMO:** How did that happen?

**EDWARDS:** One faction within the mujahidin resistance—the young Islamists, the precursors to al-Qaeda, the Taliban and ISIS—recognized the potency of martyrdom as a resource to increase their own power and legitimacy, because they didn't have traditional sources of power such as being respected clerics or Sufi leaders. The faction essentially created a cult of martyrdom, publishing magazines and propaganda material around it and generally promoting martyrdom. An important second stage was introduced by Abdullah 'Azzam, the Jordanian founder of al-Qaeda, and Osama bin Laden. Between them, the two turned martyrdom from a retrospective conferral of status upon the dead into a desired state to be pursued actively and single-mindedly. They did this by recounting stories and writing books about the fabulous miracles associated with the Arab martyrs who died in Afghanistan. As a result, young men started coming to

Afghanistan specifically to emulate these martyrs and be killed in battle. 9/11 would be impossible without the changing conception of martyrdom in which people saw death as their desired fate.

**MUNEMO:** Arabs play a critical role in this transformation in the meaning of martyrdom. Yet these transformations are happening, initially, outside of Afghanistan. How do the two currents come together and seep into this territory and grab hold?

**EDWARDS:** 'Azzam was a Palestinian Jordanian and wanted to do battle with Israel back in the 1970s. But he was discouraged that the Palestinian parties were very secular. This was the age of Arafat and the PLO, the Palestine Liberation Organization. When the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, the liberation movement presented an opportunity. 'Azzam visited for the first time in 1984 and saw it as a place where his vision of global jihad could be initiated. He popularized the idea that jihad was not an option but rather an obligation—not just for Afghan Muslims but for all Muslims. In addition to the fact that the Afghans were battling the Soviet superpower, Afghanistan has a larger, symbolic significance in the history of Islam. Afghanistan is also known as Khorasan, and many ancient legends, some associated perhaps apocryphally with the Prophet Muhammad, say that the Mahdi will arise out of Khorasan and lead his troops into the final battle that will signal the end of history as we know it and the beginning of the reign of God. These were resources that 'Azzam and bin Laden both drew on to recruit Muslims from all over the place, mostly Arabs



**1983**

Suicide bombers attack the U.S. Embassy and U.S. Marine compound in Beirut, Lebanon, killing hundreds. The bombings are traced to Hezbollah, a Shia Islamist militant group and political party operating under the direction of Iranian officials. U.S. troops withdraw from Lebanon.

**1989**

The last Soviet troops withdraw from Afghanistan. Abdullah 'Azzam is assassinated in Peshawar, Pakistan. The jihad movement splinters, and civil war breaks out. Many "Afghan Arabs" return to their home countries to pursue jihad.



**1980**

Foreign support pours in to rebel mujahidin forces. Meanwhile, more than 4 million Afghan refugees flee to Pakistan, Iran and other countries to escape brutal fighting in their homeland.

**1984**

Abdullah 'Azzam and Osama bin Laden establish the Maktab al-Khedamat service bureau in Afghanistan to provide financial and logistical support to the mujahidin. Arabs flock to Afghanistan in support of global jihad.

**1990**

The U.S. initiates the Gulf War to bring down the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq.

from Saudi Arabia, Yemen and other Middle Eastern countries but also Chechens, Indonesians and Filipinos. This was the first generation of the global jihad that began in Afghanistan. One of the people who came in 1989 was Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, founder of al-Qaeda in Iraq, the organization that later morphed into ISIS. He was inspired by an Afghan political leader who spoke fluent Arabic, and he was motivated, like a lot of other people, to go to Afghanistan to fight in this jihad. That's where ISIS begins its fateful story.

**MAGNUS BERNHARDSSON:** Keep in mind that, while all of this was going on in Afghanistan in the 1980s, there was also a protracted, bloody civil war in Lebanon. Really it was an international war. And there was the long and bloody Iran-Iraq War, where notions of martyrdom also emerged and were institutionalized by the Iranian government, in particular. What was going on in Afghanistan wasn't happening in complete isolation. There were various fires, and people were experimenting with using sacrifice both passively and actively as an instrument of violence.

**EDWARDS:** Suicide bombing as a technique began not in Afghanistan but in Sri Lanka and among the Palestinians.

**BERNHARDSSON:** And also in the Iran-Iraq War. The Islamic Republic of Iran manipulated traditional notions of martyrdom to justify specific war strategies and tactics. They introduced human wave attacks to strike fear in the Iraqis—the people they were fighting against—and to involve their own population in fighting a final battle against the godless Iraqi.

**EDWARDS:** For Iranians, though, martyrdom was embedded in the DNA of the religion. The central origin story of Shia Islam is around the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, descendant of the Prophet Muhammad.

**BERNHARDSSON:** But in the military sense, it had never been mobilized like that before. The Iranian government framed the Iran-Iraq War as the enactment of what happened in Karbala in the 7th century. Thus they nationalized the 7th-century martyrdom of Imam Hussain, grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, for modern purposes.

**EDWARDS:** Afghanistan didn't have that tradition. Martyrdom wasn't encoded in the culture the way it was in Iran. Afghans were far more concerned with showing bravery in battle than in dying for their faith.

**BERNHARDSSON:** Yes. And the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan provided a lesson for the Afghans about the power of the fear of death. The Soviets felt they couldn't sacrifice their people anymore. It wasn't really worth it for them. And so, when the war against the Soviet Union was over and the Americans began to play a bigger role in Middle Eastern affairs, bin Laden had the idea that the U.S. would not have the stomach for a long battle. He believed that the U.S. had a very low tolerance for death, post-Vietnam, and would prove to be a relatively easy enemy to defeat, particularly given the eagerness of his adherents to die in battle.

**EDWARDS:** Bin Laden was especially influenced by the Black Hawk Down incident in 1993, where the U.S. immediately left Mogadishu right after the failed rescue

1993

The Battle of Mogadishu in Somalia and the Black Hawk Down incident provide bin Laden with a narrative that the U.S. will retreat in the face of hardship and tragedy. Meanwhile, Pakistani Ramzi Yousef, who has ties to a Philippine terrorist group, explodes a truck bomb in the underground parking garage of the World Trade Center.

1996

Bin Laden publishes *A Declaration of War against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places*.



1999

A video released by the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan that shows the Taliban execution of an Afghan woman leads to a global awareness of the Taliban and its practices.

1995

The Taliban emerge as a powerful political force in southern Afghanistan, expanding to other regions and gaining support for their opposition to mujahidin commanders. In Kabul, they introduce shari'a-based social reforms and initiate public punishments.

1998

Al-Qaeda operatives bomb U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. The U.S. increases efforts to capture bin Laden and launches missile strikes at a suspected al-Qaeda base at Zhawar in eastern Afghanistan.





operation in which a number of soldiers were killed. Many say the legacy of the Battle of Mogadishu in Somalia was a continuing reluctance on the part of the U.S. to be drawn into other trouble spots.

**BERNHARDSSON:** Bin Laden was also influenced by the 1983 bombing of a U.S. Marine compound in Lebanon. The bombing was a simple operation traced to Hezbollah, a Shia Islamist militant group and political party based there. And the superpower—the U.S.—left.

**MUNEMO:** So now sacrificial violence has evolved from being on the fringes to something much more central.

**EDWARDS:** In the late 1990s, the Taliban were mounting public executions in Kabul stadium, the soccer stadium. At the time, it seemed so outrageous, so out of bounds. ISIS has exceeded that in terms of horror, in terms of clearly intending to create public spectacles that trample on every norm of human decency and civility. ISIS seems to be trying to imitate the worst kind of genre horror pictures. Students come into our class with this image of ISIS, and one of the things Magnus and I try to do—and I do this in the book as well—is bring the conversation back to the idea of sacrifice itself, why sacrifice matters, why every society I've ever encountered has within it rituals involving sacrifice or at least some notion of giving something up. It may be the simple idea of killing a sheep to please God. Or it might be evident in a turn of phrase—a sacrifice fly ball to left center field to score a base runner from third base. It's important for students to have a theoretical framework within which to understand the power of sacrifice and its universality.


**BERNHARDSSON:** We want students to understand the concepts that led to the rise of a movement of this nature at this particular time.

**EDWARDS:** And to give them enough background in Islamic history so that, when they watch ISIS propaganda videos and hear, for example, a word like “tawhid” that signifies the oneness of God, which ISIS uses over and over again, students will know where that concept came from and what it means.

**BERNHARDSSON:** Same with “takfir,” the pronouncement that someone is an unbeliever and no longer Muslim.

**EDWARDS:** ISIS is a particularly good topic for collaboration between an anthropologist and a historian, because it has a deep, historical dimension. It hearkens back to this ancient time in wanting to recreate the political system that existed in 7th-century Arabia. At the same time, ISIS is using social media and recruiting followers from all over the world. And so it's very much a modern political movement, and the subject matter lends itself to this kind of collaboration.

**MUNEMO:** Is there a way back from sacrificial violence?

**EDWARDS:** The analogy I use for sacrifice is that it's a simple machine, like a lever or pulley, in that it harnesses and amplifies energy. Like other kinds of machines, it can wear out. It can be overused. And it's responsive to circumstance. The machinery of sacrifice can be used opportunistically, but I don't think it's something that's entirely ever controllable. It exists beyond ourselves. 



**2001**

Ahmad Shah Massoud, leader of the Northern Alliance opposition to the Taliban, is assassinated in a suicide attack in Afghanistan. Two days later, on Sept. 11, al-Qaeda launches attacks against New York City and Washington, D.C. The U.S. retaliates against Afghanistan in hopes of dislodging the Taliban and capturing bin Laden.

**2017**

A massive truck bomb explosion kills more than 150 Afghans in a crowded embassy district of Kabul. The Afghan intelligence agency accuses the Taliban-allied Haqqani Network of carrying out the attack.

**2000**

The U.S.S. Cole is bombed while anchored off the coast of Yemen.

**2011**

Bin Laden is killed by U.S. Special Forces in Abbottabad, Pakistan.





**MAKING FRIEND**





# S WITH THE ENEMY

CIA agent Jack "Cowboy" Platt '58 was assigned to recruit KGB operative Gennadiy Vasilenko to spy for the United States. Instead, the Cold War enemies forged a secret and remarkable friendship that lasted the rest of their lives. ILLUSTRATIONS BY RAUL ALLEN





Б С



JACK PLATT GRADUATES FROM WILLIAMS IN 1958 AND IMMEDIATELY JOINS THE U.S. MARINE CORPS, WHERE HE SERVES FOR FOUR YEARS AND A DAY.

TWO MARINES APPROACH PLATT ABOUT JOINING THE CIA, WHICH HE DOES IN 1963. HE LATER RECALLS THAT HE "DIDN'T HAVE THE VAGUEST IDEA WHAT THE CIA WAS."

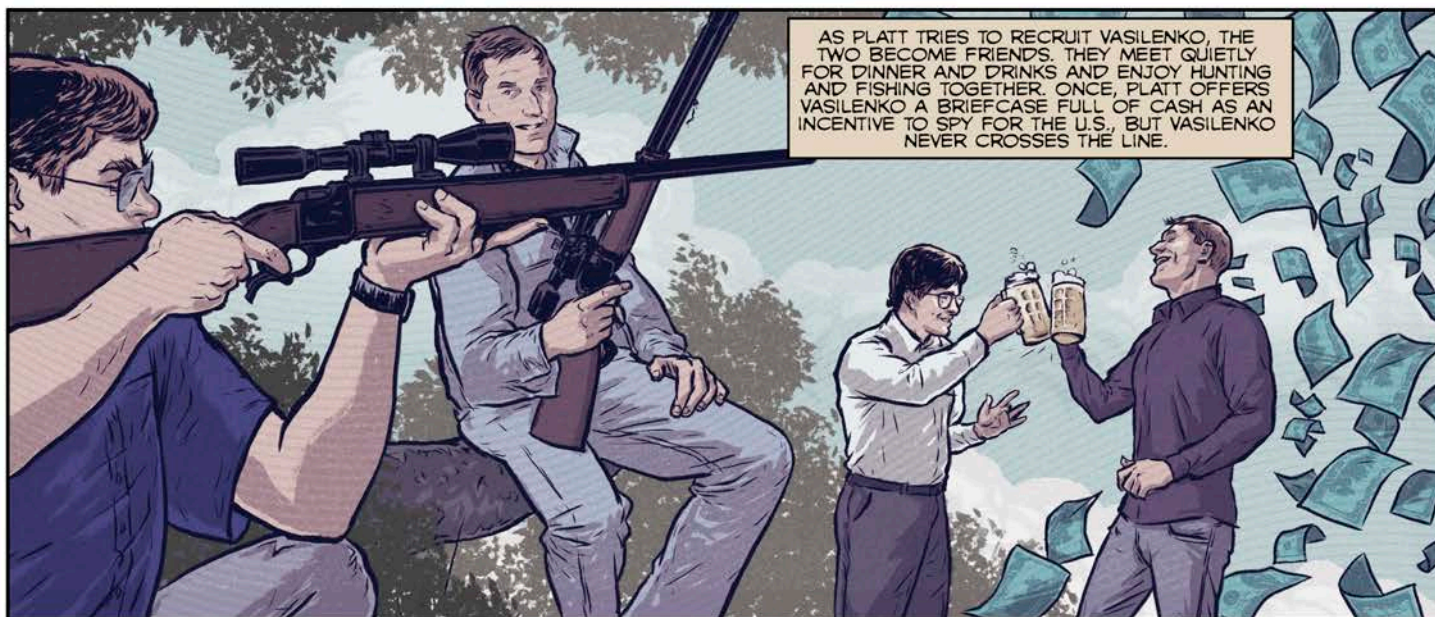
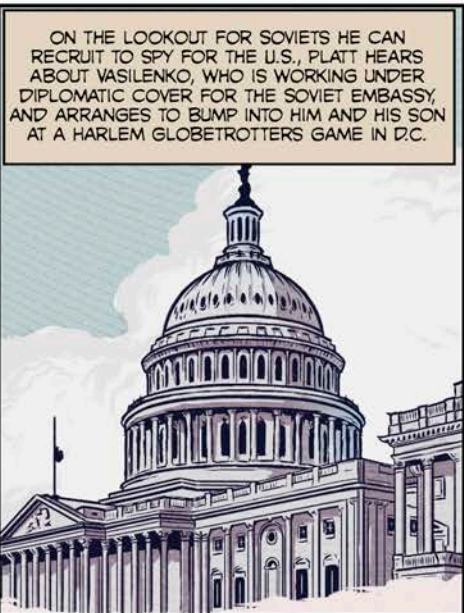
GENNADIY VASILENKO IS TRAINING FOR THE SOVIET NATIONAL VOLLEYBALL TEAM AND THE 1964 TOKYO OLYMPICS WHEN HE IS SIDELINED BY A SHOULDER INJURY.

VASILENKO IS STEERED INSTEAD TO THE KGB TRAINING PROGRAM.

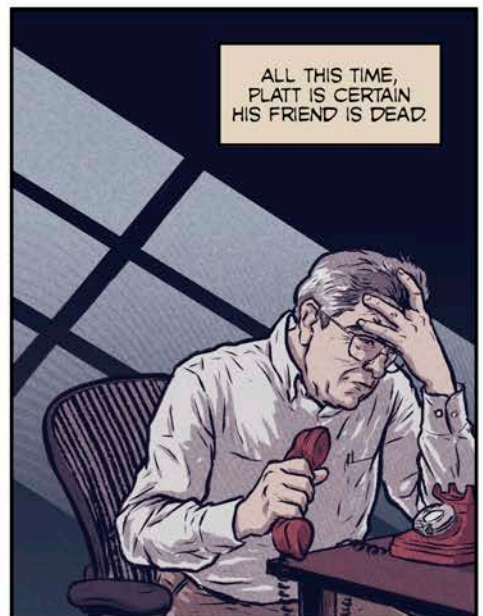
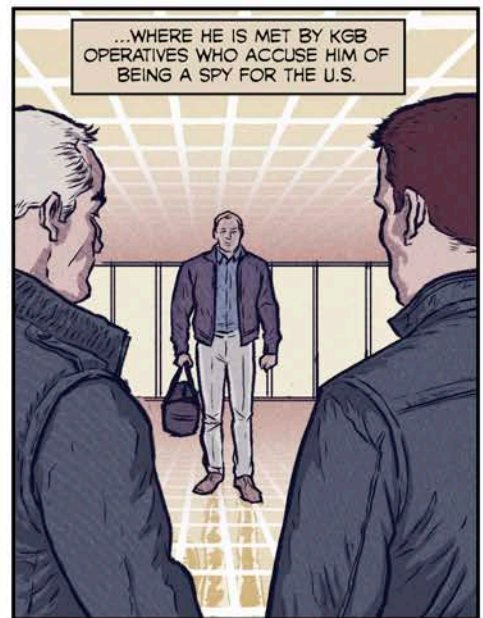
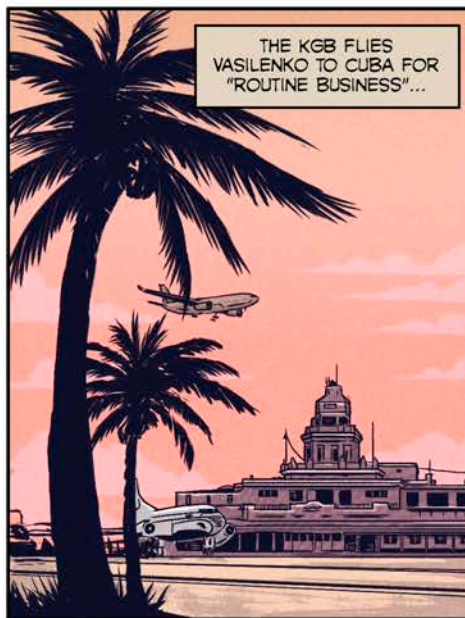
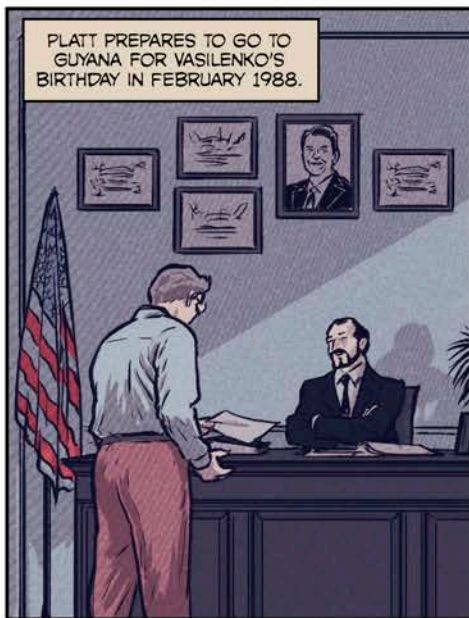
PLATT SPENDS 13 YEARS WORKING IN AUSTRIA, LAOS AND FRANCE FOR THE CIA'S SOVIET DIVISION BEFORE RETURNING HOME TO ROCKVILLE, MD. HE MAKES A NAME FOR HIMSELF REVAMPING AND RUNNING THE CIA'S TRAINING PROGRAM FOR SPIES EMBEDDED IN "DENIED AREAS" LIKE MOSCOW AND BERLIN.

AFTER JOINING THE ELITE FIRST DIRECTORATE, HANDLING FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE, VASILENKO IS ASSIGNED IN 1976 TO "LINE KR," COUNTERINTELLIGENCE, IN THE PREMIER OVERSEAS STATION OF WASHINGTON, D.C.











IN 1991, THE SOVIET UNION FALLS AND PLATT RECEIVES A CALL FROM AN ACQUAINTANCE IN THE UKRAINE.



PLATT WORKS UP THE COURAGE TO CALL VASILENKO IN MOSCOW. HE DIALS THE NUMBER AND WAITS, LATER RECALLING, "IT WAS THE LONGEST FIVE SECONDS I'D EVER GONE THROUGH. I DIDN'T KNOW IF HE'D SPIT ON ME, HOWL, SAY 'DEATH TO YOU TREACHEROUS GUYS WHO TURNED ME IN TO THE KGB.'"



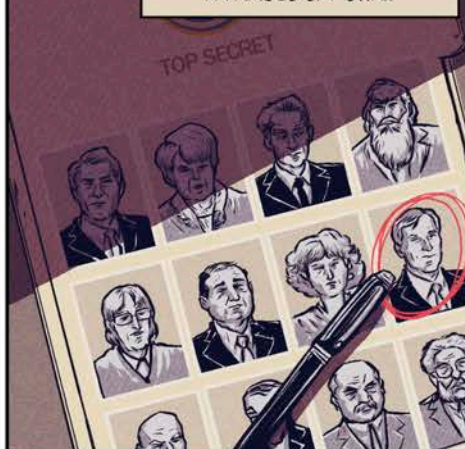
HELLO, CHRIS. I'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOUR CALL.  
... I KNOW IT WASN'T YOU.



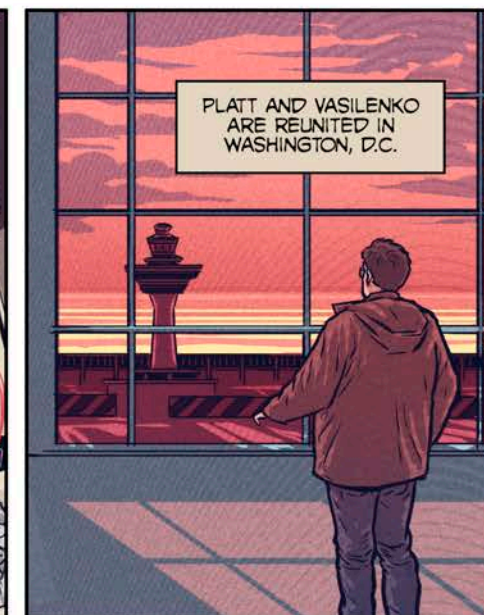
NOW RETIRED FROM THE CIA, PLATT STARTS A SECURITY FIRM. HE AND VASILENKO PARTNER TO PROVIDE SECURITY FOR U.S. BUSINESSES IN RUSSIA, WHICH IS STILL AWASH IN CORRUPTION.



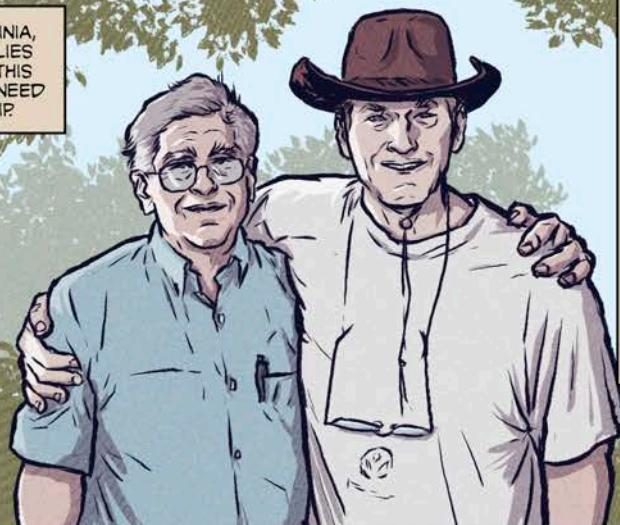
IN 2005, VASILENKO IS ARRESTED ON FALSE CHARGES. PLATT LOSES CONTACT WITH HIM. FIVE YEARS LATER, VASILENKO IS FREED FROM PRISON AND SENT TO THE U.S. AS PART OF A FAMOUS SPY SWAP.



PLATT AND VASILENKO ARE REUNITED IN WASHINGTON, D.C.



VASILENKO SETTLES IN VIRGINIA, AND HIS AND PLATT'S FAMILIES GROW CLOSE. AFTER ALL THIS TIME, THE MEN NO LONGER NEED TO HIDE THEIR FRIENDSHIP.



ON JAN. 4, 2017, JACK "COWBOY" PLATT '58 DIES OF ADVANCED ESOPHAGEAL CANCER. MORE THAN 400 PEOPLE ATTEND HIS CELEBRATION OF LIFE, INCLUDING WILLIAMS CLASSMATES, MEMBERS OF THE CIA, KGB, FBI, MARINE CORPS, AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMUNITIES, AND FRIENDS AND FAMILY. CLOSE FRIEND ROBERT DE NIRO, WHOM PLATT AND VASILENKO ADVISED ON THE FILM "THE GOOD SHEPHERD," IS ONE OF THE SPEAKERS AT THE SERVICE. GENNADIY VASILENKO IS ALSO ON HAND TO SAY GOODBYE TO HIS OLD FRIEND.



# STUDY



Demonstrators for and against President Donald Trump at a March 4, 2017, rally in Berkeley, Calif.

## THREATS TO THE REPUBLIC

A new course developed by political scientists Justin Crowe '03 and Nicole Mellow provides students with tools for deciphering extreme political rhetoric in an America they say is out of sorts.

HOW WORRIED SHOULD WE BE—AND WHAT PRECISELY SHOULD WE BE WORRIED about—as a new era of American leadership begins?

That's one of the central questions political scientists Justin Crowe '03 and Nicole Mellow posed to students in their new spring-semester course, *Threats to the Republic: Politics in Post-Obama America*.

Crowe, who studies the Supreme Court and the Constitution, and Mellow, who studies American political development, began putting together the course in late 2015. Their aim: To examine the issues facing President Barack Obama's successor in what their course description states is "an America that is out of sorts."

"In the year before the election, we were struck by the sense of peril conveyed to the public by actors on all sides in the hyper-partisan political order," Mellow says. She and Crowe set out to provide students, particularly first-years and sophomores, with useful tools to navigate a world in which, "no matter where they turn, the message is that destruction was around the corner—whether it's environmental destruction, terrorist attack, economic catastrophe, a threat to liberties or moral decay," she says.

Crowe adds, "A threat to the republic is different from a threat to a citizen or group of citizens. We wanted to look at threats to the very fabric and sustenance of American government. To understand that, we go to the Constitution."

Each course unit was organized around a different constitutional aspiration and the threats posed to it. For the first unit, *Disunion and Justice*, students focused on how racial animosities and immigration threatened the constitutional aspirations of forming a more perfect union and establishing justice. In another, *Foreign Entanglements*, students compared terrorism to earlier foreign threats and considered the ways in which political actors leveraged them.

For each unit, teams of students prepared presentations about readings and discussed "what we should fear and how the presidential administration was responding to those fears," Crowe says. "Did the administration exacerbate those fears, mollify them or privilege one set of fears and threats over another?"

PHOTOGRAPH: STEPHEN LAM/REUTERS



Students also explored how events unfolding in each day's headlines—such as the travel ban proposed by the Trump administration, free speech on college campuses and wealth inequality—were considered in the past.

"The travel ban, for example, was not the first time the American government restricted who could enter this country," Mellow says.

The last unit, Catastrophe and Outbreak, addressed the constitutional aspiration of ensuring domestic tranquility and examined threats from pandemics and environmental disasters. The professors ran a simulation set in a fictional Louisiana town suffering from seawater infiltration and the breakdown of infrastructure. The question on the table: Should the town spend a FEMA grant on relocating its citizens or on rebuilding?

Students divided into groups representing various stakeholders. Fred Wang '20 acted as a town councilman, representing constituents who were against the plan to relocate. Despite residents' opposition, he voted for relocation, which he considered to be a better solution in the long term.

"The simulation helped me realize how public officials can get caught between appeasing their constituents and making the choice that they themselves see as correct," Wang says.

Says Mellow, "The exercise demonstrated how politics and clashing interests can yield sub-optimal outcomes, even when the situation is dire and there is a clear policy solution."

Crowe says he hopes the course helped to "make the students more astute observers of politics and more sophisticated thinkers about the dilemmas of our time."

Adds Mellow, "Many observers of today's politics say this is a moment for a watchful public. Our aim was to help students be thoughtful in that task."

—JULIA MUNEMO

## DOCS: UNDER THE INFLUENCE?

A new study co-authored by economics professor Matthew Chao and published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in May links doctors' decisions to prescribe certain drugs to their interactions with pharmaceutical sales representatives, including the promotional gifts and free meals that reps provide to doctors.

Chao, a behavioral economist who blends insights from psychology into economic models to understand complex decision-making processes, made an early contribution to the study as a staff researcher at the Harvard Business School from 2009-2010. He and his co-authors devised the empirical strategy and collected data about policies that restricted pharmaceutical companies' freedom to market to doctors at academic medical centers.

The data were later pooled with that of a group led by researchers at Carnegie Mellon and CVS Caremark, revealing that prescriptions of marketed drugs dropped by 1.67 percentage points in the months following the implementation of policies that restricted marketing.

"One possible interpretation is that doctors feel compelled to reciprocate to these friendly, gift-laden visits from sales reps," Chao says.

Chao, who has been at Williams since 2015, is continuing his research into conflicts of interest in the medical field, using new data to further investigate the psychological reasons behind why doctors are influenced by marketing activities.

"It's possible that doctors aren't making deliberate decisions to reciprocate," says Chao. "The marketing influence

could come in when there is no obvious choice in which drug to prescribe."

Ken Kuttner, chair of Williams' economics department and the Robert F. White Class of 1952 Professor of Economics, says Chao's work "breaks new ground in the way it brings behavioral economics to bear on doctors' decision-making. This research could have a significant impact on the day-to-day practice of medicine in this country." —J.M.



### READING LIST

How does the brain interpret the visual world? Do artists' brains differ from those of non-artists? Students considered these

questions last spring in neuroscience professor Betty Zimmerberg's course Image, Imaging and Imagining: The Brain and

Visual Arts. The syllabus included readings from *The Artist's Eyes: Vision and the History of Art*, by Michael F. Marmor and James G.

Ravin; *An Introduction to the Visual System*, by Martin J. Tové; *Art Brut: The Origins of Outsider Art*, by Lucienne Peiry;

and *Depression and the Spiritual in Modern Art: Homage to Miró*, edited by Joseph J. Schildkraut and Aurora Otero.





## EN PLEIN AIR

From “The Forests of Antarctica,” by Mike Glier ’75, professor of art. Oil on a variety of grounds, including canvas, paper and panel, ranging in size from 12x12 in. to 78x128 in. 2012–present.

“THE FORESTS OF ANTARCTICA,” A NEW painting series by Williams art professor Mike Glier ’75, addresses the environmental implications of place and globalism, “a tremendous stretch of perception and experience that defines our time,” he says.

Glier’s process begins *en plein air*, or outdoors. His 2007–2008 collection of paintings, “Along a Long Line,” told the story of a yearlong trip along a single line of longitude. His next project, “Antipodes,” begun in 2009, brought him to locations on opposite sides of the globe from one another.

While working on “Antipodes” in New Zealand in 2012, Glier got the inspiration for “The Forests of Antarctica.”

“It was very windy there, and despite the rocks I’d put to hold down my easel, the wind kept picking my panel up and tossing it,” he says. “The wind was winning, so I decided to draw it.” He was encouraged by the unexpected results of drawing something that is invisible but can be felt. So, he says,

### ARTIST STATEMENT EXCERPT

Each form in these pictures is self-contained, but since it shares edges with other forms, the integrity is dependent on its neighbors. Like an ecosystem, the forms are at once discrete and dependent, and like things glimpsed while hiking, they flicker into consciousness and dissolve into space.

When drawing and painting out of doors, there isn’t a break between thinking and doing. In the best moments there is no lag between the movement of the sun and the wind and response of the brush and the knife. Stimulus and response becomes a single thing, and the experience is one of feeling very connected with the subject. It’s a delightful state of being in which what is inside gets thoroughly mixed up with what is outside. This loss of consciousness during moments of deep engagement is common and familiar to anyone who has taken a deep dive into reading a book, cooking a meal or making love, only to be surprised at just how far away one has been when swimming back to consciousness, breaking the surface with a shake of the head to say, “Oh, my goodness, where was I? I lost track of time.” These paintings are a record of those kinds of moments and a demonstration of the human potential for empathy.

I hope these landscape pictures advocate for responsive and respectful engagement between people and the environment [and] advocate for intimacy with what’s outside. If there’s any sort of environmental agenda here, if there’s anything useful to what I’m doing culturally, it’s about modeling a relationship with what’s outside that is reciprocal.

“I began to include sound and smell and touch as sources.”

That was in 2013, and since then he has made hundreds of sketches based on the things he can sense as he draws in one of the four forests he’s come to know over the years in the Berkshires, along the coast of northern Maine, in the central mountains of New Mexico and on the island of St. John. When he returns to his Williamstown studio, he uses the sketches to make compositions whose shapes suggest but don’t fully describe animals, plants, watercourses and outcroppings. “Sometimes the positive form is the image, and sometimes the negative form is the image,” he says. “The paintings depict a possible distant future where the temperature is warm enough to support exuberant life in Antarctica, but it’s life we can’t quite recognize.” —J.M.

## FROM EPH’S BOOKSHELF



**A Little More Human.** By Fiona Maazel ’97. Graywolf Press, 2017. Faced with evidence that he committed a violent act he doesn’t recall, the main character uses his secret skill of mindreading to get to the bottom of whether he is to blame.



**The Myth of Disenchantment.** By Jason A. Josephson-Storm, Williams Chair and Associate Professor of Religion. University of Chicago Press, 2017. The author refutes the argument that people no longer believe in spirits, myths or magic.



**The World to Come.** By Jim Shepard, Williams’ J. Leland Miller Professor of American History, Literature and Eloquence. Alfred A. Knopf, 2017. Characters experience the emotional pitfalls of everyday life and historic catastrophes on a global scale.



**Children of Reunion.** By Allison Varzally ’94. The University of North Carolina Press, 2017. A look at how Vietnamese migrants accepted familial separation, including through adoption, as a strategy for survival during the Vietnam War.

To see more works and submit new publications, visit <http://ephsbookshelf.williams.edu>.





# DEPRESSION IN ADOLESCENT GIRLS

*Associate Professor of Psychology Catherine Stroud recently completed a three-year longitudinal study examining the development of depression in adolescent girls. With the help of Williams undergraduates—whom she trained in interview and coding techniques—Stroud collected data about girls' stress levels, their responses to stress and whether their responses can correlate with the development of depression.*

**WILLIAMS MAGAZINE:** *How did you set up your study?*

**CATHERINE STROUD:** I knew from the outset that I wanted to take an integrative approach to trying to understand how depression develops. We followed 132 mother-daughter pairs over three years, starting when the girls were approximately 12 years old, before symptoms of depression typically emerge. We investigated the interplay of biological factors, interpersonal relationships and psychological factors, such as emotion regulation and personality. For example, we collected girls' saliva to index cortisol levels, the main stress hormone in the body, as well as genetic factors involved in sensitivity to stress. We also interviewed the girls and their mothers about stressful experiences and coded the severity of those experiences to measure stress levels in the most objective way possible. And we examined aspects of girls' family environments and their use of different emotion regulation strategies, such as rumination—the tendency to get stuck in a repetitive cycle of negative thoughts.

**WILLIAMS:** *What did you discover?*

**STROUD:** We found that girls who experienced higher levels of adversity in childhood had more symptoms of depression and anxiety as adolescents. Also, girls with certain genetic factors were more susceptible to stress in their relationships, such that they experienced greater depressive symptoms under high stress levels but lower depressive symptoms under low stress levels. And girls who ruminated more generated higher levels of stress in their relationships, such as conflicts and romantic relationship break-ups, which likely increases their risk of developing depression.

**WILLIAMS:** *What surprised you about your findings?*

**STROUD:** I was surprised by the effect parenting can have on the development of depression. We examined the ways in which mothers helped their daughters cope with stressful life events, and we found a connection between mothers' coping suggestions and daughters' tendency to ruminate. Adolescent girls tended to ruminate more when their mothers suggested using distraction or avoidance to cope with stressful situations. In contrast, the girls tended to ruminate less when their mothers suggested using problem-solving techniques or accessing social support. In other words, providing suggestions to face the stressor may have helped adolescents to resolve the problem, allowing them to let go rather than get stuck in negative thoughts.

**WILLIAMS:** *What advice do you have for girls and their parents?*

**STROUD:** Adolescent girls are going to face stress in their lives, and we need to help them use adaptive coping strategies to promote their resiliency in the face of such stress. One way to do this is by coaching parents to encourage their daughters to engage with the problem as well as seek the support of others rather than using strategies such as denial and distraction. But it's important to keep in mind that my work to date has not attempted to tease apart which factor is the cause and which is the consequence. It may be the case that girls who engage in greater rumination are more likely to elicit disengagement suggestions from their mothers, who are only trying to help them to stop negative thought patterns.

—INTERVIEW BY JULIA MUNEMO

# GIVING GOD A BACKBEAT

WHEN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF AFRICANA Studies VaNatta Ford heard the new Kendrick Lamar song “FEEL,” she immediately thought of the old spiritual “Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child.” Both the spiritual, from the era of slavery, and the rap song, which came out in 2017, use repetition to reinforce a message about our deepest feelings, fears and worries.

“The idea behind both songs is that no one is taking care of the singer,” Ford says.

Last spring, Ford taught the course Giving God a Backbeat: Rap Music, Religion and Spirituality. Her students learned to analyze rap music much as one analyzes poetry, considering the song’s structure, rhyme scheme, use of metaphor or simile, mood and social or religious context.

“My students come to see that hip hop didn’t emerge from a vacuum,” says Ford, who has been at Williams since 2014 and teaches courses on black religious traditions, colorism, and race and social media. “Hip hop emerged out of social unrest, poverty and a racist United States framework that was, among other things, displacing black and brown folks from their homes and taking art programs out of schools.”

Ford says that rap music is a form of resistance in much the same way as spirituals, which were born on the slave plantation. In both contexts, Ford asks, “What does it mean to be in a society that does not value you, yet you’re still able to create such art?”

Ford, who earned an M.Div. in theology and a Ph.D. in rhetoric from Howard University, says rap music and spirituals both give people something they need. “Music becomes a place for spiritual and religious refuge, and rap music today does something for young people that is similar to the black church traditions that some of our parents and grandparents experienced. We can find our spirituality in a lot of the music we listen to.”

## AFRICANA STUDIES PROFESSOR VANATTA FORD EXPLAINS THE SPIRITUAL ROOTS OF “FEEL”

### FEEL

Kendrick Lamar, 2017

Ain’t nobody prayin’ for me  
Ain’t nobody prayin’ for me  
Ain’t nobody prayin’ for me  
Ain’t nobody prayin’ for me

### Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child Traditional

*Sometimes I feel like a motherless child  
Sometimes I feel like a motherless child  
Sometimes I feel like a motherless child  
A long way from home, a long way from home*

Repetition as a device in spiritual songs indicates the intensity of the feeling. The lines in the spiritual don’t mean that the singer doesn’t have a mother—it means the singer feels he or she is not being cared for. In the same way, Lamar is expressing a lack of connection. He’s not saying “I’m not praying,” he’s saying no one is praying for him, no one is caring for him.

I feel like a chip on my shoulders  
I feel like I’m losin’ my focus  
I feel like I’m losin’ my patience  
I feel like my thoughts in the basement  
Feel like, I feel like you’re miseducated  
Feel like I don’t wanna be bothered  
I feel like you may be the problem

*Sometimes I feel like I’m almost done  
Sometimes I feel like I’m almost done  
Sometimes I feel like I’m almost done  
Sometimes I feel like I’m almost done  
And a long, long way from home,  
a long way from home*

These lines in “FEEL” remind me of “Sometimes I feel like I’m almost done” in “Motherless Child.” If this isn’t in the genealogy of a spiritual, I don’t know what is. It’s a genealogy of the lament but also a petition to a divine being. This is the idea of being motherless, that nobody’s taking care of the singer or of Lamar, nobody’s comforting him. Nobody’s praying for him.

I feel like it ain’t no tomorrow, fuck the world  
The world is endin’, I’m done pretendin’  
And fuck you if you get offended  
I feel like friends been overrated  
I feel like the family been fakin’  
I feel like the feelings are changin’  
Feel like my thought of compromise is jaded  
Feel like you wanna scrutinize how I made it  
Feel like I ain’t feelin’ you all  
Feel like removin’ myself, no feelings involved  
I feel for you, I’ve been in the field for you  
It’s real for you, right? Shit, I feel like—

*True believer  
True believer  
A long, long way from home  
A long, long way from home*

“FEEL” CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE



I feel niggas been out of pocket  
 I feel niggas tappin' they pockets  
 I feel like debatin' on who the greatest can stop it  
 I am legend, I feel like all of y'all is peasants  
 I feel like all of y'all is desperate  
 I feel like all it take is a second to feel like  
 Mike Jordan whenever holdin' a real mic  
 I ain't feelin' your presence  
 Feel like I'ma learn you a lesson  
 Feel like only me and the music, though  
 I feel like your feelin' ain't mutual  
 I feel like the enemy you should know  
 Feel like the feelin' of no hope  
 The feelin' of bad dope  
 A quarter ounce manipulated from soap  
 The feelin', the feelin' of false freedom  
 I'll force-feed 'em the poison that fill 'em up in the prison  
 I feel like it's just me  
 Look, I feel like I can't breathe  
 Look, I feel like I can't sleep  
 Look, I feel heartless, often off this  
 Feelin' of fallin', of fallin' apart with  
 Darkest hours, lost it  
 Fillin' the void of bein' employed with ballin'  
 Streets is talkin', fill in the blanks with coffins  
 Fill up the banks with dollars  
 Fill up the graves with fathers  
 Fill up the babies with bullshit  
 Internet blogs and pulpit, fill 'em with gossip  
 I feel like this gotta be the feelin' what 'Pac was  
 The feelin' of an apocalypse happenin'  
**But nothin' is awkward, the feelin' won't prosper**—  
 The feelin' is toxic, I feel like I'm boxin' demons  
 Monsters, false prophets schemin'  
 Sponsors, industry promises  
 Niggas, bitches, honkies, crackers, Compton  
 Church, religion, token blacks in bondage  
 Lawsuit visits, subpoena served in concert

Fuck your feelings, I mean this for imposters  
 I can feel it, the phoenix sure to watch us  
 I can feel it, the dream is more than process  
 I can put a regime that forms a Loch Ness  
 I can feel it, the scream that haunts our logic  
 I feel like say somethin', I feel like take somethin'  
 I feel like skatin' off, I feel like waitin' for 'em  
 Maybe it's too late for 'em  
 I feel like the whole world want me to pray for 'em  
 But who the fuck prayin' for me?

It's interesting  
 that Lamar  
 uses the word  
 "prosper"  
 here. There's a  
 scripture that  
 says no weapons  
 formed against  
 me shall prosper.

**"A long way from home" ties the songs together for me. For Lamar, home is the idea of prayer, peace of mind, or spiritual or religious solitude that he's lacking. The singer of the spiritual feels the same way. There's no reconciliation. We find the same thing in the psalms and other lamentations in the Bible, specifically in Judeo-Christian faith traditions among black folks. The message is: "I might not be able to reconcile this, but I'm going to tell you how I feel."**



# CULINARY DIPLOMACY

BY DARRA GOLDSTEIN

*During her 34 years at Williams, Darra Goldstein taught classes on Russian language, literature, art and culture, and she introduced food studies into the curriculum. When she was approached last year to write what would be her sixth cookbook—and her second on Russian cuisine—her first reaction was that she had already covered that ground. How she changed her mind is a story about how food connects people through history, culture and politics.*

**W**HEN I FIRST VISITED RUSSIA AS A COLLEGE STUDENT IN 1972, I was always well fed, despite the empty grocery shelves and consumer shortages. That was partly because the Russians were honoring me as a guest. They were expert at procuring food through barter and on the black market. Their ability to work the system helped me understand how Russians have endured deprivation. Even with little to offer, people shared, because they knew the positions of supplicant and donor could easily be reversed.

Such scarcity, along with Russia's recurrent famines, gave rise to one of the most vivid images in Russian fairytales: the *skatert'-samobranka*, a self-spreading tablecloth on which food miraculously appears. All you have to do is unfold it, and a lavish feast fans out before your eyes. *Skazano, sdelano!* No sooner said than done! My hosts didn't exactly offer me a magical tablecloth, and Soviet life was hardly a fairytale, but the Russian tables I experienced were surprisingly lavish, considering the country's desperate material circumstances during Leonid Brezhnev's decades-long rule.

These and other paradoxes of life in Soviet Russia led me to write my first cookbook, published just a few weeks after I arrived at Williams in 1983. Since then, my study of food has allowed me to explore the broader historical, economic and artistic conditions that give rise to culture in Russia and elsewhere. As the 20th-century French critic Roland Barthes famously said, food is a system of communication. So I think a lot about the interplay between culture and cuisine, about dietary proscriptions, the etiquette of the table and the various systems by which food moves from farms to kitchens throughout the world. The complex social and cultural rules that underlie the consumption of food communicate who we are—and what we aspire to be.

The best cookbooks are so much more than instructional manuals or simple compilations of recipes. They are windows into other worlds, which is one reason I write them in addition to my more conventional scholarly work. My first Russian cookbook told a story of Soviet life even as it expressed nostalgia for pre-revolutionary Russia's lost culinary treasures. Many of those 19th-century recipes were based on French *haute cuisine*, thanks to the Francophile aristocracy. Beef Stroganoff, for example, simply replaces a French-style cream sauce with the sour cream and mustard the Russians favor. It's admittedly a classic dish, and I made it for my students this past semester so they could get a taste of luxury dining.

But what interests me more than the rarefied ingredients and techniques imported from Western Europe are the vital flavors of Russia itself—the dark sourdough rye bread and buckwheat kasha, the salted mushrooms, the berry pies.

Interestingly, the sanctions imposed on Russia in 2014 after the invasion of Crimea have jump-started an artisanal revival of old Russian foodways, and that is what I'm eager to investigate in my post-retirement project: a new cookbook. I hope to share the most essential characteristics of Russian food, which are determined by the country's remoteness and extreme climate: fermented vegetables and beverages, hearty whole-grain porridges, gorgeous cultured dairy products.

The ancient Greeks believed in a mythical place they called Hyperborea, a land of eternal spring “beyond the North Wind,” rich in agricultural bounty. Based on descriptions in Pliny and Herodotus, some Russian scholars have traced its location to the Kola Peninsula, above the Arctic Circle. Because this region is so isolated, it's had very little contact with the West. I've decided to begin researching my book there, in the extreme North.

**What interests me ... are the vital flavors of Russia itself—the buckwheat kasha, the berry pies.**

Vladimir Lenin viewed fairy tales, including the magic tablecloth, as the embodiment of popular hopes and desires. But after the Revolution, fairy tales, myths and folk tales were seen as dangerous to the new Soviet state. By the late 1920s they were officially suppressed as subversive literature. The stories continued to circulate unofficially, and today the

magic tablecloth remains part of the Russian cultural imaginary. If I'm lucky, I'll discover it this summer, beyond the North Wind. I hope to communicate to my American readers something of the real Russia. I like to think of it as my small contribution to culinary diplomacy.

*Darra Goldstein is Williams' Willcox B. and Harriet M. Adsit Professor of Russian, emerita. She is founding editor of Gastronomica: The Journal of Food and Culture and editor-in-chief of Cured, a magazine on the art and science of fermentation. Her sixth cookbook is due to be published by Ten Speed Press in 2019.*





An illustration of the tale of Kurochka Ryaba, or Ryaba the Hen, from *Russkie Skazki pro Zveri* (English translation: *Fairy Tales about Animals*). Illustrated by Lev Tokmakov. Moscow, 1973.

## THE LESSON OF A BROKEN EGG

In her exploration of Russian culture, Darra Goldstein amassed a collection of books that paint a vivid picture of life in Soviet Russia. On the occasion of her retirement as the Willcox B. and Harriet M. Adsit Professor of Russian, she is donating more than 100 volumes to the Chapin Library.

Her collection includes *Russkie Skazki pro Zveri* (*Fairy Tales about Animals*), illustrated by Lev Tokmakov and published in 1973. Tokmakov illustrated nearly 300 children's books and made countless paintings and lithographs of animals. Among the stories he depicted was that of Kurochka Ryaba, or Ryaba the Hen (above). Ryaba comes from "ryabaya," which means spotted or speckled.

The common telling of the story is that an old couple owned a hen named Ryaba who laid a golden egg. The old man tried to crack the egg open but couldn't. The old woman tried to crack it open, but she couldn't break it either. Then a mouse ran by, knocking the egg to the floor with its tail, and the egg broke. The old couple cried. Ryaba told the couple: "Don't cry. I'll lay you a new egg. Not a golden one, but a simple one."

Entire articles have been written about the meaning of the story, and Goldstein offers her own interpretation. "As one of the earliest tales told to Russian children, it teaches them to value what is simple and real in life, for those are the things that nourish and sustain us, rather than riches we haven't earned, which can disappear as suddenly as they appear," she says. "Like the larger works of Russian literature, this little story holds many layers of meaning."

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