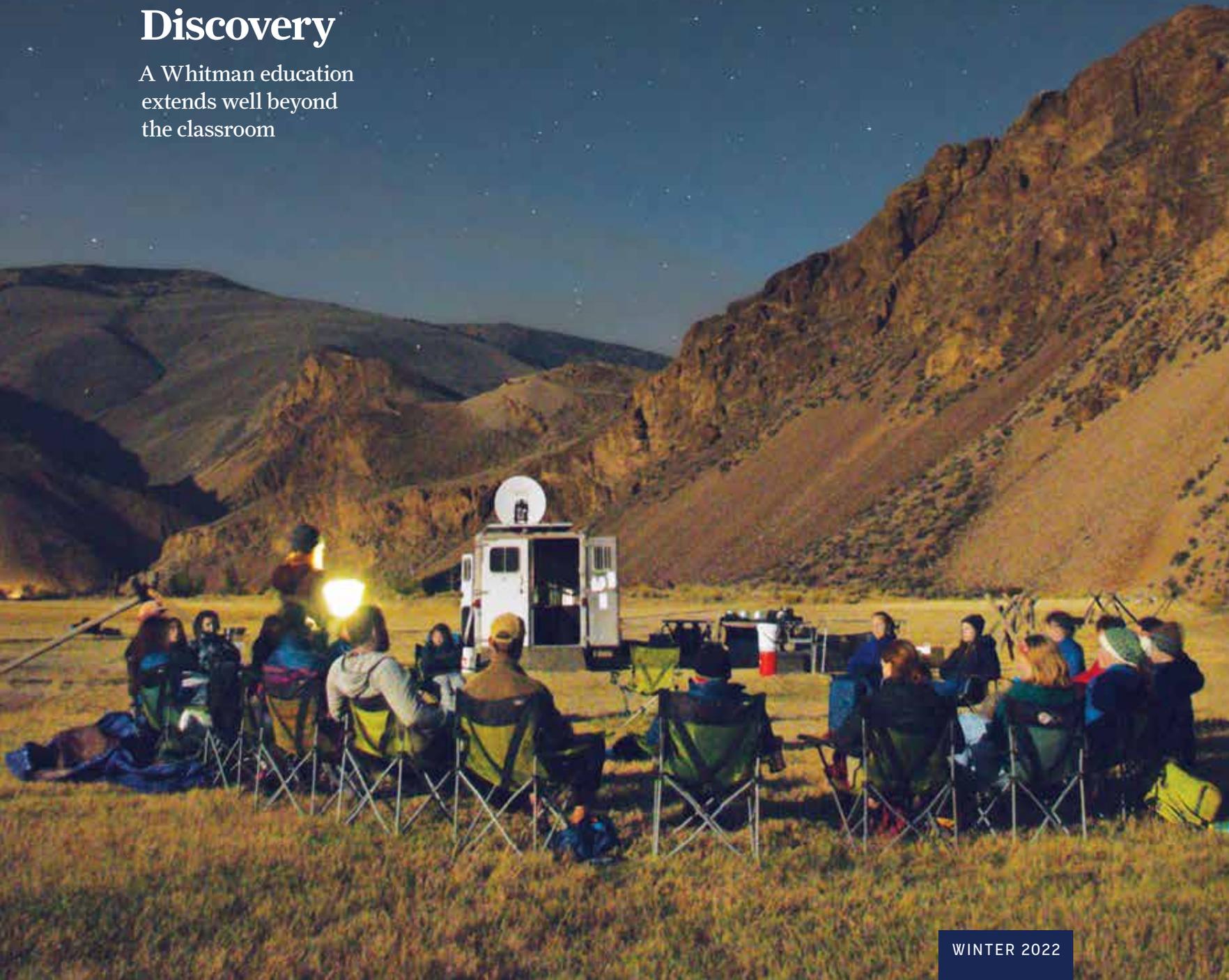


WHITMAN

MAGAZINE

Voyages of Discovery

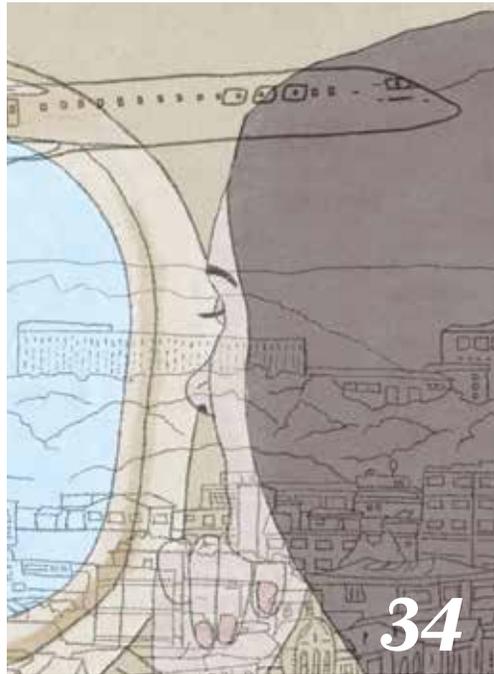
A Whitman education
extends well beyond
the classroom



WINTER 2022



First snow. Thomas McElfresh, a first-year from Sammamish, Washington, puts the frosty finishing touches on the snow pal he built on Dec. 16, 2021.



Inside

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MEET SARAH BOLTON

Get to know Whitman's 15th president: a scientist, teacher and leader who is a champion for students and the liberal arts.

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A GRAND FINALE

We take a close and personal look at the why behind perhaps the most challenging assignment of a Whittie's college career: the senior thesis.

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THE LONG JOURNEY HOME

After a canceled flight stranded 15 international students in Seattle, they set out on a great American tradition: the road trip.

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LEAVING AFGHANISTAN

For first-year Angela Eliacy, the journey to Whitman started with saying goodbye to a home she fears she may never see again.

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A RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Connecting at a Whitties Helping Whitties event paid off for Michelle Mathieu '92 and Sam Geschickter '20.

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Whitman College is located on the traditional Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla homelands. We pay our respect to tribal elders both past and present and extend our respect to all Indigenous people today. We honor their stewardship of the land and ecosystem and commit to continuing that important work.

ON THE COVER Starry skies above the Semester in the West program's campsite at White Clouds Preserve in central Idaho. Photo by Morgan Sharp, sophomore, from Seattle.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Community of Caring

WHAT AN EXCITING TIME in the history of Whitman College. In the fall of 2021, we had our first fully in-person semester since the COVID-19 pandemic became part of our everyday reality, and our community did a spectacular job of working together to keep everyone safe. Now, with Spring 2022 semester in full swing, this continues to be a community of caring.

In a few months, this wonderful community will welcome its 15th president. The Presidential Search Committee has worked since last spring to identify our next president, in a collaborative effort that involved trustees, faculty, staff and students under the extraordinary leadership of trustee Danielle Garbe Reser '97. Even with the restrictions of COVID-19 and the need for candidate privacy, they managed to bring all three very strong finalists to campus and ultimately selected a wonderful new leader for the college. You can read more about Sarah Bolton on page 18, and I know you will enjoy meeting her and getting to know her. I have known Sarah for many years now and have every confidence that she will move the college forward in very positive ways.

With 98% of our campus vaccinated and boosted and the extra protection of the N95 masks distributed to every member of our community, we are continuing to focus on our mission of in-person student learning both within and beyond our classrooms. I am enjoying every opportunity to be with our students during these final months of my presidency, whether at athletic events, plays, concerts or just hanging out in Cleveland Commons or the Reid Campus Center.

I know these next few months are going to go by very quickly, so I plan to relish every moment and hope to see as many of you as COVID-19 travel precautions allow.

Sincerely,



Kathleen M. Murray
President



“I am enjoying every opportunity to be with our students during these final months of my presidency.”

PRESIDENT

Kathleen M. Murray

INTERIM VICE PRESIDENT FOR COMMUNICATIONS

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To notify us of a change of mailing address or to opt out of receiving this magazine, please contact Sarah Jones at jonesst@whitman.edu.

CLASS NOTES

To submit, go online to whitman.edu/classnotes.

WHITMAN MAGAZINE

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NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

Whitman College has a strong commitment to the principle of nondiscrimination in all its forms. In its admission, educational and employment practices, programs and activities. Whitman College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex (including pregnancy and parenting status), gender, religion, age, marital status, national origin, disability, veteran's status, or any other basis prohibited by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and applicable federal, state or local laws.

On Boyer Avenue

NEWS FROM CAMPUS



PHOTO BY NATHANIEL MARTIN, SOPHOMORE, FROM HOUSTON, TEXAS

PERFORMING ARTS

It's Show Time

Live dance, theater and music performances return to Whitman stages

Artistic expression. Full faces emerged during the fall dance production, "Ghost Pixcells," thanks to an exception to Washington's mask mandate that allows vaccinated artists to be unmasked when actively engaged in a performance.

THERE WAS A BUZZ in the air on Oct. 24, 2021, as the audience took their seats for the Whitman Sampler, a taste of jazz, orchestra and chorale music from some of the college's ensembles.

The excitement was even more palpable behind the curtain. For some musicians, the Cordiner Hall event would be their first stage appearance in almost two years. "Performing live makes such a huge difference and it's a really special part of being a musician," says sophomore saxophonist Jonah Panzer from Tacoma, Washington.

Live performances resumed at Whitman during the Fall 2021 semester thanks to the college's strict adherence to safety precautions. In accordance with Washington state guidelines, fully vaccinated and masked audiences can, once again, enjoy music, dance and theater productions on campus.

"The absence was a reminder of how lucky we are when we can have those experiences as artists and audience members," says Laura Hope, associate professor of theater and dance.

She believes live shows offer something that screened performances can't. "The energy generated between performers, with each other and the audience, is a connection that goes beyond our ability to communicate with mere words," Hope says.

It's the unpredictable nature of live performances that gives Renée Archibald, associate professor of dance, a rush. "Live performance is exciting to me because it's a temporary situation of pure potential—so many things could happen," she says.

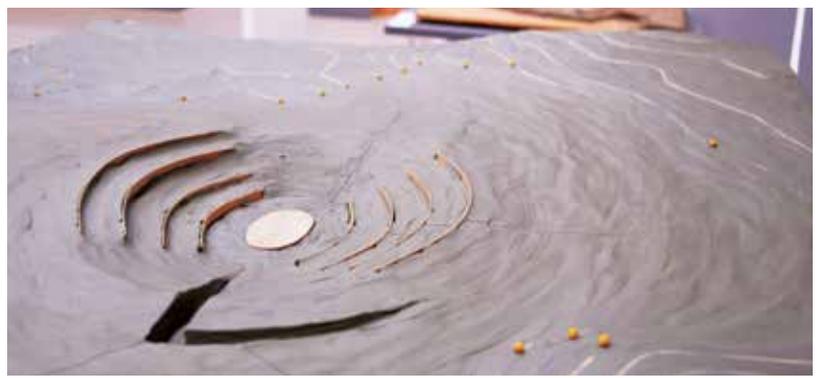


CAMPUS EXHIBIT

Maxey Museum Explores Confluence of Art and Archives

MORE THAN TWO YEARS in the making, Maxey Museum’s most recent exhibit, “Along the Columbia: Maya Lin and the Confluence Project,” explored the series of six earthworks by renowned sculptor and architect Maya Lin installed at historical locations on the Columbia River.

The public art project, commissioned by a group of arts patrons and tribal leaders of the Columbia River Plateau and the Pacific Northwest to commemorate the bicentennial of Lewis and Clark’s 1804–1806 journey to the Pacific Ocean, was a massive undertaking. Its archival materials — including blueprints, site surveys, models and maquettes, drawings and sketches by Lin and the artists, architects and engineers with whom she collaborated — which were donated to Whitman College in 2018, formed the core of the Maxey exhibit. “Along the Columbia” was created and curated by the museum’s director, Libby Miller, along with Penrose Library archivists Ben Murphy and Dana Bronson, and Matt Reynolds, associate professor of art history and visual culture studies, who is writing a book about Confluence. The physical exhibit, featured by The New York Times in April 2021, closed in December, but you can still explore it virtually at alongthecolumbiaconfluenceexhibit.com.



Along the river. The Maxey Museum exhibit featured archival materials related to the planning of the sites that make up artist Maya Lin’s Confluence Project, including these models of the Vancouver Land Bridge (middle) and of the “listening circle” amphitheater at Chief Timothy Park (bottom).

STUDENT LIFE

Living in Wellness

Whitman Awarded a Grant to Support Students in Recovery

ADJUSTING TO COLLEGE LIFE can be a challenge for any student, but perhaps especially so for those who are in recovery from substance misuse. With two new programs introduced in the 2021-2022 academic year, Whitman is actively creating a more supportive environment for those students.

Wellness House, the newest residence in Whitman's Interest House Community (IHC), created with the help of a \$60,000 grant from Washington State University's Collegiate Recovery Grant Program, is believed to be the first sober living house on a Washington state college campus. However, the programming doesn't focus on the absence of substances but centers around positive lifestyle elements instead.

Like Whitman's other Interest Houses, such as La Casa Hispana and the Fine Arts House, the Wellness House residents — aided by Resident Advisor Shemaya Griffin, a junior psychology major from Chicago — are responsible for hosting regular house programs. Past activities included a get-together where students were



supplied craft materials and encouraged to write love letters to themselves, which they could later look back at for affirmation.

“My goal for programing is to have a space where the students who live in the house and who visit can learn some daily wellness practices, but also just come to relax and take a break,” says Griffin.

The initial grant, supplemented by a subsequent \$20,000 award, has also helped establish a program of group meetings for students on campus facilitated by the Walla Walla-based organization Trilogy Recovery. The students-only meetings are based on the Self-Management and Recovery Training (SMART) program, which is designed to help participants feel empowered to change and to provide guidance toward leading fulfilling and balanced lives.

VISITING VOICES

Journalist Cecilia Kang '94 Shares 'Ugly Truth'



AS A TECHNOLOGY REPORTER for The New York Times, Cecilia Kang, a Whitman Class of 1994 graduate, has spent years investigating Facebook. Her book “An Ugly Truth,” cowritten with fellow NYT reporter Sheera Frenkel and published in June

2021, explores the deleterious effects the social media giant has had on society and on democracy itself.

Based on more than 400 interviews with high-level sources at Facebook, the exposé claims that despite the company's lip service to stamping out disinformation and dangerous rhetoric, it intentionally allows a platform for these due to company policies that place growth above all else.

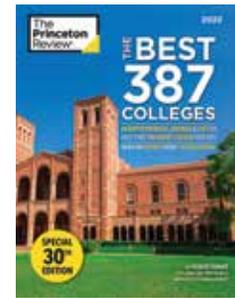
One piece of proof the book offers is a memo written by Facebook veteran Andrew Bosworth that inspired its title. “The ugly truth is that we believe anything that allows us to connect more people more often is de facto good ... Maybe it costs a life by exposing someone to bullies. Maybe someone dies in a terrorist attack coordinated by our tools. And still we connect people,” he wrote.

In September 2021, Kang returned to Whitman for a President's Advisory Board meeting and tacked on a speaking engagement, where she said one of the goals of the book was to show readers how Facebook's manipulation of data in turn manipulates users.

“If you understand how the machine works, you realize you have agency ... understanding the business is empowering,” Kang told the audience.

Watch the event at whitman.edu/magazine.

RANKINGS



Great Times Eight

WE KNEW it — and the Princeton Review has once again confirmed it: Whitman College is one of the country's best.

In addition to being included on Best Western Colleges and Best Value Colleges lists in the 2022 “The Best 387 Colleges” guide, Whitman also was ranked No. 2 on the list of Top 20 Best Schools for Making an Impact among private institutions and, for the fifth year in a row, placed No. 9 in Green Colleges.

The current guide — the 30th anniversary edition — also featured a special “Great Lists” section highlighting the schools that have consistently placed in their “Best of” rankings over the past three decades. Whitman College earned a spot on eight of those lists:

- Most Loved Colleges.
- Great Quality of Life.
- Great Classroom Experience.
- Great Professors.
- Great College Library.
- Great Health Services.
- Great Professor Accessibility.
- Great Intramural Sports.



SCIENCE TECH

Family Gift Creates ‘Game Changer’

Lab partners. A new learning space pairs classroom learning with high-tech computational tools.

WHITMAN STUDENTS NOW HAVE access to a state-of-the-art facility for computational science to help young scientists visualize their work and solve complex problems. The Wilke Family Computational Laboratory, opened in Fall 2021, was made possible by a \$1 million gift from Jeff and Liesl Wilke, parents of Taylor Wilke '18 and Julia Wilke '21.

This high-tech, multipurpose space supercharges curricular innovation with the ability to visualize and manipulate molecules in 3D.

“It’s exciting for students to observe what they’ve drawn on paper in a 3D space and rationalize their chemistry, gaining a whole new perspective about the stability or the reactivity of certain types of molecules,” says Associate Professor of Chemistry Dalia Biswas, who spearheaded the project with campus support from the chemistry and computer science departments, Whitman College Technology Services and others.

FLEXIBLE TECH

The new lab is available for faculty and students across departments to use for classes, running simulations and conducting research. It represents a major step forward in equipping students with both

“wet” and “dry” (computational) lab experience, essential for today’s scientists.

“Scientific discovery increasingly demands a hybrid of traditional wet labs and online environments,” says Jeff Wilke, who recently retired as CEO of Amazon Worldwide Consumer. He and wife Liesl, an author, screenwriter and playwright, are strong advocates for the role of tech in liberal arts. “We’re proud to support increased use of computer-aided design and simulation in Whitman’s terrific science curricula.”

DEEPER ENGAGEMENT

According to Associate Professor of Chemistry Nate Boland, the lab is making a big difference: “Having a dedicated computational space designed and equipped for chemical computation is a game-changer. The space is already facilitating students’ deeper engagement with computational tools in our chemistry courses.”

The lab features high-performance computers for 24 students and an instructor, with preinstalled chemistry software perfect for incorporating small-scale computational chemistry methods into introductory chemistry classes and more sophisticated theoretical approaches in upper-level classes.

“The programs we have used have given me multiple ‘aha!’ moments as something has clicked from lecture that I didn’t quite understand or that was hard to visualize,” says sophomore Andrew Harter, a biochemistry, biophysics, and molecular biology (BBMB) major from Liberty Lake, Washington.

EXPANDING THE CONVERSATION

Associate Professor of Chemistry and department chair Marion Götz teaches a course on drug design in the lab. She appreciates how the new technology drives home key lessons for students.

“Students learn how to develop a drug by using computational software that helps identify interactions between a drug and a target biomolecule,” she says. “This semester, for example, students are designing a Sars-CoV-2 main protease inhibitor to find a theoretical treatment for COVID-19.”

For senior BBMB major Lindsay Farr from Sacramento, California, the opening of the lab was especially fortuitous timing, as she is completing her thesis work. “I have a broader understanding of various computational tools, and I have a way of contextualizing the work I have done for my thesis into a larger scientific conversation.”

Whitties Become Schwarzman Scholars

Senior Salma Anguiano and Daniel Charlton '18 will join the prestigious program's Class of 2023

FROM AN INITIAL POOL of about 3,000, only 152 applicants were accepted into the next cohort of the prestigious Schwarzman Scholars program, China's answer to the Rhodes Scholarship. Two of them are Whitties.

Salma Anguiano, a Whitman College senior majoring in politics and Chinese, and Daniel Charlton '18, who earned his bachelor's in biochemistry, biophysics and molecular biology, are among only 60 awardees from the United States. As Schwarzman Scholars, they'll join a one-year, fully-funded master's program in global affairs at Tsinghua University in Beijing, starting in August 2022.

Charlton's road to China follows an evolving career centered on global health care issues and systems. After completing Projects for Peace and Princeton in Africa fellowships — both focusing on the HIV crisis in Africa — he took a job at JSI, a Boston-based public health



Salma Anguiano

management consulting firm. He is currently working with colleagues in war-torn Ethiopia — an experience that has shown him that the challenges facing health systems are interdisciplinary. He says he was drawn to Schwarzman because of the opportunity to collaborate with an international set of young leaders committed to addressing some of the world's most pressing and complex issues.



Daniel Charlton

The Schwarzman program won't be Anguiano's first time studying in China — she spent summer 2019 there through Whitman's Off-Campus Studies faculty-led Crossroads program. She is now working on the senior thesis for her politics major, which will focus on conditions for migrant and undocumented workers on a global spectrum, as well as the role personal narratives can play in shaping how these communities are perceived. She says the chance to hear diverse perspectives and learn from others' lived experiences is key to her interest in Schwarzman Scholars.



ALUMNI RELATIONS

Jennifer Northam '91 Named Director

WHITMAN'S OFFICE OF ALUMNI Relations has a new leader: Jennifer Dilworth Northam, a 1991 Whitman graduate, took over as the office's director in December 2021.

"Along with a depth of Whitman and Walla Walla experiences and relationships, Jennifer brings an exceptional energy and charisma to this important leadership role," says Steve Setchell, vice president for development and alumni relations.

Northam, who joined the staff in 2013, has worked closely with alumni volunteers through her work on reunions, and with the alumni association and W Club boards of directors. She has also worked closely with key campus partners, including the college's leadership, faculty and the Career and Community Engagement Center. Northam recently facilitated an expansion of virtual programs in response to the pandemic, attracting a significant number of first-time event attendees.

"Whitman is blessed with passionate alumni who truly want to be involved in the life of the college, and I am excited to enhance our current programs and create new opportunities for that engagement," she says. "I am honored to continue this meaningful work, for this place I love."

Northam replaces Nancy Mitchell, who spent her entire Whitman career — 36 years — in the Office of Alumni Relations, including eight years as director. Her decades of service touched generations of alumni through reunions, events across the nation and alumni trips spanning the globe.

"Nancy's depth of service to Whitman College is truly extraordinary," says Setchell. "We cannot thank her enough for forging and sustaining countless alumni relationships that have strengthened the college and advanced our work to change the lives of young people."

Going West

SEMESTER IN THE WEST (SITW) resumed in Fall 2021 after a year's delay due to the pandemic. Led by Miles C. Moore Professor of Politics Phil Brick, the unique program takes a group of Whitman students on a semester-long field program across the American West to learn about public lands conservation and the ecosystems of the region, including its social and political communities. Here are snapshots of some of the amazing stops and on-site lessons they had along the way.

Travel deeper with SITW. Read the Westies' epiphanies, listen to their podcast and meet guest presenters at semesterinthewest.org.



Dry times. Westies visited the Rio Grande (or Río Bravo, in Mexico) at the western edge of El Paso. The riverbed is dry because the Elephant Butte Dam upstream has cut off all flow to preserve it for U.S. irrigators — water from this river doesn't reach Mexico until the Río Conchos and springs replenish the flow southeast of El Paso. Students spent the week learning the history and politics of the while practicing creative nonfiction writing with local writer Victoria Blanco, whose family has lived in the region for generations.



Swimming with salmon. Kristen Kirkby '04, Semester in the West alum and fisheries biologist with Cascades Fisheries Enhancement Group, gave Westies the chance to swim with fish in the Methow River after a riverside lesson in salmon ecology and stream restoration. Students saw bull trout, mountain whitefish, Chinook salmon and Pacific lamprey juveniles, to name a few.



Wooded bliss. Westies started their ecology segment with botanist and activist Mary O'Brien in southern Utah. The students worked to collect data on the locations of willows, cottonwoods, cattails and Gambel oaks across the area. This data will be used to monitor how the plant communities change as invasive weeds are removed and new plants are put in the ground.



Changing landscape. Westies joined renowned Forest Service landscape ecology researcher Paul Hessburg for a day exploring Black Canyon in the southern Methow Valley. This area burned in 2014 in the Carlton Complex fire and then again in 2015 in the Okanogan Complex Fire, two of the largest fires in Washington state history. Dr. Hessburg talked with students about the megafires that have become increasingly more frequent in the American West and how these will change landscapes moving into the future.



Riverside writing. Sophomore Josh Matz writes a report on the riparian health of streams in the Monroe Mountain area of the Fishlake National Forest in Utah. Westies spent the day analyzing data they collected in the field over the previous few days and writing up their findings. Guest educator Mary O'Brien plans to submit these reports to the Forest Service as part of an environmental impact statement related to livestock management in the forest.



Ain't it grand? The Semester in the West crew stayed at one of Grand Canyon National Park's classic spots: the Grand Canyon Trust's Kane Ranch. Students learned about the conservation history of the canyon and its connection to resource extraction on the Navajo Nation.



Canoe for two. In Boquillas Canyon on the Rio Grande, Westies took a multiday canoe trip, where they moved back and forth imperceptibly between Big Bend National Park, Texas, on river left and Coahuila, Mexico, on river right. Unlike many sections of the border, this area is so remote there is no border wall, fence or even markings.



On the wall. Westies spent a few days with guest educators: artist and archaeology expert Joe Pachak and poet Ann Walka. Hikes to view incredible rock art panels and hours spent writing and contemplating made the days at Comb Ridge in southeastern Utah a special time.



Cabbage crew. In late August, the cook crew celebrated International Day of the Cabbage, a holiday coined by field manager Whitney Rich '20 to honor the vegetable she says comprises one of "the four major food groups on the road." Want a taste of Semester in the West? Visit whitman.com/magazine for some of the crew's favorite campsite recipes.

BY THE NUMBERS

Anything But Common

Whitman's dining hall puts sustainability on the menu

CLEVELAND COMMONS CATERS to the Whitman College campus community as a place to grab a quick bite to go, settle in and unwind with a coffee or a smoothie, or connect with friends over a meal.

Built in 2018 with a focus on sustainability, Cleveland, operated by management company Bon Appétit, also prioritizes using environmentally friendly resources and practices in creating the more than 1,550 scratch-made meals it serves each day.

More than 30% of the ingredients used are purchased through Bon Appétit's Farm to Fork program, which sources directly from small producers located within 150 miles of campus, including Frog Hollow, Hayshaker and Locati farms, and even the Whitman Organic Garden (see page 14).

In the 2021-2022 school year, Bon Appétit added a new student sustainability coordinator position, currently filled by junior psychology major Lucy Wood, who's also co-president of the organic garden. Wood's role includes helping to distribute post-consumer food waste to local farms to be used as feed for their animals, helping manage Whitman's reusable to-go container program, and creating programs to increase student awareness of the importance of composting and recycling.

CLEVELAND COMMONS, est. 2018

Built and operated with the environment in mind

30% 

minimum amount of meal ingredients that come directly from local food producers

50% 

percentage by which low-flow water fixtures reduce indoor water use

10% of building materials were sourced from recycled content

12% reduced energy use, thanks to energy-efficient design elements

100% amount of electricity use offset by renewable energy (including roughly 10% of the building's electricity that's produced onsite!)

50% amount of construction waste that was recycled or salvaged



FACULTY & STAFF NEWS

Álvaro Santana-Acuña, associate professor of sociology, was quoted in an El Mundo article about the social implications of Facebook's October 2021 outage. Santana-Acuña, who is working on a project on the politics of data, teaches the course Sociology of Big Data: Algorithms, Robots, and Digital Societies.

Neal Christopherson, director of Institutional Research, published, "Transformative Experiences in College: Connections and Community" (Rowman & Littlefield), which explores the intersection of students' transformative college experiences and the communities in which they learn. The book is based on a five-year interview study, which tracked 75 students through four years at Whitman College.

Alissa Corder, associate professor of sociology, continues to draw attention to the dangers of PFAS, persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic chemicals that are in the drinking water of an estimated 200 million U.S. residents. Recent publications featuring her research include an Environmental Health News article advocating for more medical screening and "The True Cost of PFAS and the Benefits of Acting Now" in Environmental Science & Technology.

Associate Professor of Politics **Jack Jackson's** book on the rule of law is featured in a new essay in Public Books. In "When the Law Attacks the Rule of Law," Stanford law professor Bernadette Meyler writes that "Jack Jackson's Law without Future eerily anticipated the 2020 election."

Kelsey Martin, community learning specialist, published an article, "Black and Indigenous Thought in Response to the COVID-19 Reality," in the Journal of Higher Education and Outreach. As COVID-19 and racial reckoning impact community-engaged learning, Martin discusses how scholars and practitioners must draw on the knowledge of Black and Indigenous thinkers for whom the intersection of pandemic and state violence is not new.

Xiaobo Yuan, assistant professor of anthropology and religion, published an article, "Infernal Aect: Christianity, Urbanization, and Economic Uncertainty in China," in the Journal of the American Academy of Religion. The piece examines Christian discourses that frame "real estate fever" in Chinese cities as "demonic" and explores how religious communities seek alternatives to neoliberal desires.

Zahi Zalloua, Cushing Eells Professor of Philosophy and Literature, and York University professor Ilan Kapoor published "Universal Politics" (Oxford University Press). The book is described as a first for its systematic examination of what a Zizekian conception of universality might look like in the context of current global politics, including climate change, the Palestinian question and Black Lives Matter.

2021 TENURE AND PROMOTION

Congratulations to the following Whitman College faculty members:

PROMOTED TO FULL PROFESSOR:

Timothy H. Parker, professor of biology

AWARDED TENURE AND PROMOTED TO ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR:

Eunice L. Blavascunas, associate professor of anthropology and environmental studies

Rachel L. George, associate professor of anthropology

Krista H. Gulbransen, associate professor of art history and visual culture studies

Britney L. Moss, associate professor of biology, biochemistry, biophysics and molecular biology

Lyman P. Persico, associate professor of geology and environmental studies

Álvaro Santana-Acuña, associate professor of sociology

PROMOTED TO SENIOR LECTURER:

Wencui Zhao, senior lecturer of Asian and Middle Eastern studies, Chinese

STAFF AWARDS

At an August 2021 event, President Kathleen Murray presented the Janice Abraham Awards, given to staff members who make significant contributions and provide outstanding service to Whitman College.

The 2021 award recipients are:

Stuart Chapin, assistant director for the Outdoor Program and senior adjunct instructor of sport studies, who was commended for 10 years of mentoring hundreds of students.

Sara Frey, executive assistant to the chief financial officer. Frey has worked at Whitman for three years and has played a key role in the college's COVID-19 testing logistics and operations.

Linc Nesheim, information security officer, who has worked at Whitman for four years, was called a "linchpin" in coordinating the work of the multiple subcommittees of the Coronavirus Task Force.

The presentation also recognized 2020 honorees **Juli Dunn**, senior associate dean of students, and **Janice King**, former acquisition specialist at the Whitman Bookstore, who could not be publicly honored last year due to the pandemic.

Exploring the History of Belonging

ANTHROPOLOGIST EUNICE BLAVASCUNAS' RESEARCH AND TEACHING ARE ROOTED IN CULTURE, PLACE AND JUSTICE

BY TARA ROBERTS

BIAŁOWIEŻA, POLAND, AND JOSEPH, Oregon, are more than 5,000 miles apart. Białowieża is surrounded by primeval forest, a mix of deciduous swamps and evergreen groves. Joseph is tucked among the vast stands of pine, spruce and fir in the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.

In Poland, communities remain marked by the traumas of World War II and ethnic violence between Poles and Belarusians. At the same time, marginalized Oregonians face legacies of settler colonialism, racial exclusion and broken treaties.

These two distinct forested settings unite in the research and teaching of Eunice Blavascunas, associate professor of anthropology and environmental studies at Whitman College.

Both are complex ecosystems, biologically and culturally. Residents wrestle with questions about logging, jobs, endangered species and how to pursue justice given these complex pasts.

“The borderlands of eastern Poland and what’s happening in eastern Washington or eastern Oregon are very far apart, but there are ways in which we see similar processes of who belongs in a landscape,” Blavascunas says. “What is that history of belonging?”

Blavascunas is a cultural anthropologist who studies land and conservation conflicts

in relation to parks and protected areas and has spent more than 20 years researching and writing about Eastern Europe.

Her 2020 book, “Foresters, Borders, and Bark Beetles: The Future of Europe’s Last Primeval Forest” (Indiana University Press), is the result of her decades of research about the people and culture of the Białowieża Forest.

In the spring of 2022, Blavascunas will turn her attention to the Western United States with the introduction of a special class. She and other Whitman professors will lead an immersive field course that takes students to Joseph and other locations across the Inland Northwest. “Land Water Justice: Envisioning the Next West” will connect students with westerners who are both enmeshed in experiences of racial and climate injustice and seeking solutions.

‘COMPLEX AND MESSY’

Fittingly, Blavascunas began her career with the U.S. Forest Service. As a college student, she was fascinated by revolutions in Eastern Europe and learned about the Białowieża Forest from Polish foresters she met while working on the Olympic Peninsula.

She received grants to conduct research in Białowieża throughout her time earning

a master’s in geography at the University of Texas at Austin and a doctorate in cultural anthropology at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

In 2015, she returned to the Pacific Northwest and began her professorship at Whitman. Her commitment to cross-discipline scholarship was an ideal fit for Whitman’s Environmental Studies Program, which requires students to take courses in the natural sciences, social sciences and humanities.

“I think environmental studies is one of the only fields that really asks you to try to hold all of those things, and it shows you how complex and messy that is,” she says.

And the interplay across those disciplines does lead to complex, and sometimes challenging, conversations, Blavascunas says — but it’s critical to conducting research that not only sounds the alarm about environmental problems, but also leads to action.

ENVISIONING THE ‘NEXT WEST’

“Land Water Justice,” a tuition-free course, is part of the Pacific Northwest Just Futures Institute for Racial and Climate Justice, a multi-university partnership funded by a \$4.5 million Andrew W.

“No place is without a human narrative about its past.”

— Eunice Blavascunas, from her book *Foresters, Borders, and Bark Beetles: The Future of Europe's Last Primeval Forest*

Mellon Foundation grant. Phil Brick, Whitman's Miles C. Moore Professor of Political Science, and Stan Thayne, a visiting assistant professor of anthropology and religion, will join Blavascunas in teaching the course.

Students will meet with community partners, including Indigenous, Black and Latinx leaders who are doing on-the-ground work related to climate and racial justice. The students will create podcasts from their conversations, which Blavascunas says will allow them to learn to deeply listen to people's stories and meaningfully retell them with consideration for who the stories belong to.

In the process, they'll explore how what they learn could transform the region into the 'Next West,' a place that remembers its past, for better or worse, while imagining a just future.

In Joseph, for example, they will learn about the town's namesake, Chief Joseph, and the Nez Perce Wallowa Homeland project's efforts to return land to the tribe. They'll also be collaborating with Gwen Trice, founder of the Maxville Heritage Interpretive Center, which tells the stories of African American families who lived in Maxville—once a 1920s and '30s timber town, now a ghost town.



KIM FETROW '96 OF KIM FETROW PHOTOGRAPHY

“I see my role in this course not in the traditional professorial sense of I am using my expertise on a subject matter, but rather as an animator and a facilitator between students and community partners, community partners who are doing the grounded and challenging work of being people of color and living in majority white rural areas,” Blavascunas says.

FORGING AHEAD

Though her field course will focus on the Pacific Northwest, Blavascunas' research

remains unbounded by region or discipline.

She's exploring topics such as the effects of “rewilding” animals in Europe and in North America, the impacts of a dredging project near Chernobyl, and how people across the globe think about the movements of wild animals and their kinship to them.

Blavascunas seeks to reach beyond an audience of scholars and show people—whether in an ancient Polish forest, the mountains of the Inland Northwest or the campus of Whitman College—that another world is possible. **W**

Matters of the place. Eunice Blavascunas helps her students explore issues related to environmental and racial justice.



Whitman College Organic Garden

As we say goodbye to winter in Walla Walla, we explore a special space that will soon come alive with promise. It won't be long before rows of seasonal vegetables and herbs greet visitors to the Whitman College Organic Garden. This fertile location is also home to a small chicken yard and coop, as well as a shady spot for student workers and volunteers to relax and enjoy the garden. Located at the corner of Pacific Street and Penrose Avenue, the garden was established in 1997 and is tended by members of the Organic Garden Club, an Associated Students of Whitman College-funded organization. In addition to growing produce shared with the campus community through the Whitman Food Pantry, in meals at Cleveland Commons and at "open garden" events, the garden also plays a role in composting campus food waste, and serves as a fresh-air lab for some student science projects. 







‘This Experience Is for You’

WAKO SOMA '23 PROMOTES INCLUSIVITY AS STUDENT LEADER IN WHITMAN'S OUTDOOR PROGRAM

BY GENEVIEVE VOGEL '24

ON HER FIRST OUTDOOR Program (OP) trip — a multiday whitewater rafting excursion friends talked her into in the fall of her first year at Whitman — Wako Soma felt weighed down both physically and emotionally by the overstuffed backpack she brought along. Packed with clothes poorly suited to the adventure, the pack served as a reminder of her lack of familiarity with “outdoorsy” culture and she carried the added burden of feeling out of place.

Growing up in Hawaii and California, Soma had what she now describes as a not-very-outdoorsy childhood. Although she remembers occasional camping trips and hikes, outdoor recreation wasn't a big part of her life.

“I didn't know that rafting was a sport, or even climbing, so it was really new to me coming to Whitman,” says Soma, who is now a junior majoring in psychology.

Arriving at Whitman she found that outdoor recreation was a go-to social opportunity and outlet for many of her new friends. Soma was open to trying new things — so despite the lack of confidence she felt on that first outing, she decided to explore another popular OP activity: climbing.

“Because all of my closest friends were involved with the climbing team, I started to join them in their practices,” says Soma.

Yet even as she found her footing on the climbing wall, she still felt like she was out of step in the greater outdoor recreation community. That’s when she decided to do something about it — for herself and for others like her.

“I didn’t want other students who were new to the outdoor culture to feel invisible or incompetent and find themselves in the same unfortunate situation I was in,” says Soma.

With that in mind, she had conversations with others about how to help, including Stuart Chapin, assistant director of outdoor programs, who eventually hired her as one of the OP outreach coordinators.

REACHING OUT & GUIDING THE WAY

In her role, Soma schedules meetings with the leaders of affinity groups, such as the Men of Color Association, to gauge what resources they need. This could look like organizing affinity group-dedicated events or sharing information on OP opportunities and upcoming trips.

During the Spring 2021 semester, Soma played an active role in kickstarting the Whitman BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) Outdoors Club and in organizing climbing wall sessions for members to ensure they felt welcomed. She feels it’s especially important to offer spaces where curious students can talk about their worries and frustrations.

“Being part of the outreach team enables me to help create a more inclusive and welcoming outdoors community for all.”

In the cultural awareness training she offers her team members, Soma stresses creating an environment where students feel comfortable asking questions too. When she talks to new OP hires about how to be more inclusive and welcoming, she frequently shares the motto she uses in her own outreach efforts: “This experience is for you.”

“There’s a difference between that wording and saying ‘everyone is welcome,’” Soma says. “The phrase ‘everyone is welcome’ seems almost performative, whereas ‘this experience is for you’ invites people in.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF WAKO SOMA

On board for adventure. Soma wants all Whitman students who are interested in outdoor recreation to feel welcomed and confident participating.

Recently, Soma’s inclusivity practice in the OP has included researching ways in which local Indigenous history and location names can be integrated into materials and programming.

LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

Empathy informs Soma’s approach to her OP outreach work on every level. It helps her create ways to make people feel more comfortable about joining OP programs — and also to accept that not everyone will be interested.

“I’ve been questioning the assumption that everyone wants to be outdoors. I hope my work with the OP can provide fun and comfortable opportunities for newcomers to give outdoor recreation a try by allowing them to decide for themselves if they want to be a part of it.”

Working as a student outreach coordinator has led to many personal lessons, Soma says. “One that sticks out to me is learning to be OK with feeling uncomfortable sometimes ... I have to really put myself out there.”

Looking forward, Soma says she hopes to take Whitman’s for-credit Outdoor Leadership and/or Climbing Wall Instructor course, if her schedule allows. Eventually, she’d like to lead her own multiday OP trip, like the one that first introduced her to outdoor programs at the beginning of her first year. This time, she’ll be equipped with the skills and experience to help everyone feel they belong — not to mention a lighter backpack. **W**

WHAT A TRIP!

Wako Soma shares her favorite Outdoor Program experiences.

1. Climbing at Wallula Gap.

“The first time I did it was with my friends on a beautiful sunny day and the view at the top was breathtaking. Whitman’s unique and special location with so many outdoor hidden gems is something that I appreciate more each day.”

2. Snowshoeing at Andies Prairie in the Blue Mountains.

“My first year was full of new outdoor activities like snowshoeing. It was fun getting off-campus with friends and discovering the Walla Walla region. I didn’t grow up with snow so I deeply cherish these memories and I’m looking forward to making more.”

3. Cross-country skiing on Ankeny Field.

“This Spring 2021 pop-up OP event during the strict campus COVID-19 restrictions was a nice break from my school work and it was a great way to spend time with friends outside on Anki!”

Meet Sarah Bolton

Whitman College's 15th President

SCIENTIST. TEACHER. LEADER.
A CHAMPION FOR STUDENTS AND THE LIBERAL ARTS.
COLLABORATIVE. CARING. COMMITTED.

BY MARGIE REECE '93

IN JULY 2022, just weeks before the newest Whitties arrive on campus, there will be another momentous move-in day on Boyer Avenue. Dr. Sarah Bolton will officially take office, becoming Whitman College's 15th president.

After a nationwide search, she was the unanimous choice of the college's Board of Trustees from what was a deep and diverse pool of highly regarded leaders. Bolton is currently the president of The College of Wooster in Ohio and will succeed President Kathleen Murray, who retires at the end of the school year after seven years of leadership of the college.

Prior to her presidency at Wooster, Bolton spent more than 20 years at Williams College in Massachusetts, first as a professor of physics and then as Dean of the College.

Who Is Sarah Bolton?

To say she's someone who is deeply curious and enthusiastic—fascinated by discovery and the world around her—might explain Bolton's scholastic path in the sciences. She earned her Bachelor of Science in physics and biophysics from Brown University, in Providence, Rhode Island, followed by a Master of Arts as well as a Ph.D. in physics from the University of California, Berkeley.

As a young science student, Bolton often found she stood out in a way that wasn't necessarily about the work. "I made my way through middle school, high school and college, and



I was the only girl on the bus ... the only girl on the math team, the only woman in the physics class,” she says.

Those early experiences shaped the teacher she became and still influence her work and values today, Bolton says. Being different from her peers in the classroom, she began to notice “whose voices are in the room and whose are not, who automatically imagines themselves as belonging and who doesn’t ... and what kinds of roles do teaching and leadership play in creating a truly inclusive environment.”

As Whitman’s 2021 Presidential Search Committee considered candidates, many members noted Bolton’s passion for opening doors for all students and her commitment to the liberal arts as giving them great confidence in her ability to lead the college forward.

“Sarah believes a great liberal arts education like Whitman’s is more important than ever — preparing students to impact the world in ways that are so greatly needed at this moment,” says Joe Davis, chair of the Board of Trustees.

In Her Own Words ...

WHITMAN’S 15TH PRESIDENT shares more about herself, her thoughts on higher education and what makes her excited about the future.

BOLTON ON HER LOVE OF SCIENCE ...

“I liked science even when I was a little kid. But I think I was really inspired to do it by a teacher in middle school. Mr. Messersmith: If you’re out there, big shout out. He let me do science in an exploratory way. He let me do the experiment that he planned on my own, at my own pace and after school. He really let me engage and take it on as my own project.”

BOLTON ON WHAT’S CRITICAL ABOUT A LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION ...

“Learning broadly ... understanding science, human experience, artistic expression, literature and the world ... understanding yourself and people who are different from you in a deep way—that is hugely important in every field of endeavor. When I talk to alumni, no matter what kind of work they’re doing, they’re so often talking about their experiences learning outside of their major and how powerful that’s been in their lives, both personally and professionally. I hear it from alumni of liberal arts colleges who graduated two weeks ago, and I hear it from alumni of liberal arts colleges who graduated 60 years ago.”

“I love this work. I love the young people ... It’s just such a deep pleasure to be part of this moment in their lives.”

— Sarah Bolton

BOLTON ON WHAT CAPTIVATED HER ABOUT TEACHING ...

“I was at UC Berkeley and I could see what the faculty got to do at the front of the classroom, which was exciting. But I actually thought what I got to do as a graduate teaching assistant, which was meeting individually with students, helping them get unstuck on their homework or the laboratory experiment they were doing, helping them find ways that they could solve tough problems — I thought I was having all the fun!”

BOLTON ON WHAT’S AT THE HEART OF THE WHITMAN EXPERIENCE ...

“Whitman’s values are a really big piece of why I chose to make this move to lead and steward this amazing community. I see how Whitman is living its deepest values, including the central values around exploration of ideas and connection of people. The way that students and faculty work together to create a community of learners ... that vibrant classroom experience, the extraordinary liberal arts learning that students are doing inside the classroom. And then the way that’s embedded in this beautifully collaborative, connected community of care, where people are paying attention to one another, where they’re learning from one another and also supporting one another’s learning.”

BOLTON ON HER PROFESSIONAL SUPERPOWER ...

“Joy. I love this work. I love the young people ... the students I met at Whitman, the ways they envision the world and the

work they want to do. It's just such a deep pleasure to be part of this moment in their lives and building something for them, for their futures and for the students that will follow them."

BOLTON ON WHITMAN STUDENTS ...

"Whitman students are brilliant. They are curious, they are kind, they are intentional in their relationships with one another and with their learning. They're ambitious in the best sense. Ambitious not in the sense of 'we all want to be famous' or 'we all want to be wealthy,' but ambitious in the sense that 'we want to make a difference.'"

BOLTON ON WHAT TODAY'S STUDENTS NEED AND DESERVE ...

"As we move forward, it's absolutely necessary that colleges become places that are genuinely welcoming and fully meet what we promise for every student — and that includes intentional career exploration and career planning. They will have this extraordinary Whitman education. They should study what they love and be excited about it. And at the same time, we are assuring students that we're going to help them build a path to lifelong work that they care about and also to a strong launch right out of college."

BOLTON ON WHAT SHE'S MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO BEING PART OF ...

"The most exciting thing for me is the impact that Whitman makes in the lives of its students. I had a great opportunity in the course of the interviews to hear from everyone from current students to recent graduates to people who had graduated decades ago, and they all spoke about the transformative power of their Whitman education. They described the ways their Whitman education had influenced their path, had opened doors for them, had changed their sense of themselves and what they could do."

An Historic Moment

"This is the first time that Whitman has recruited a sitting president to the job," says Trustee Danielle Garbe Reser '97, chair of the Presidential Search Committee, "I believe that's a testimony to the current strength of the college and the result of decades of exceptional stewardship of the institution and its resources."

Bolton plans to move to Walla Walla with her husband this summer. You can learn more about Whitman College's 15th president and post your own welcome message for Bolton at whitman.edu/magazine. 

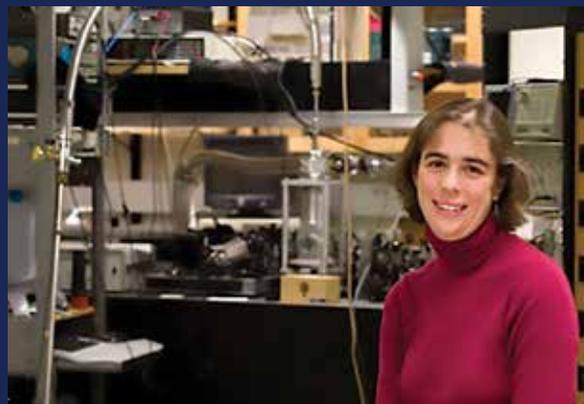


PHOTO COURTESY OF WILLIAMS COLLEGE ARCHIVES

Sarah Bolton in her research lab at Williams College.

The Bolton Way— from Williams to Wooster to Whitman

1995

Sarah Bolton joined the faculty at Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts.

Scientist and scholar As a professor, Bolton earned multiple teaching awards and National Science Foundation grants, authored articles in science journals and presented at conferences across the country.

2007

Promoted to full professor at Williams, the first woman to reach this milestone in physics at the college.

A Whittie connection At Williams, Bolton fondly recalls working with renowned economics scholar, Gordon Winston, Whitman College alumni, Class of 1950.

2010

Named Williams' Dean of the College, responsible for student development, including support for first-generation and international students, academic advising and fellowships.

2016

Became the first woman president at The College of Wooster in Ohio. In her first year as president, Bolton collaborated with faculty, staff and students to create the college's first-ever diversity, equity and inclusion strategic plan.

Noteworthy Under Bolton's leadership, Wooster's endowment performance soared, growing from \$263 million to more than \$431 million.

2022

Named Whitman College's 15th president

ARNETT

TATTOOS, BODY PIERCINGS, AND A MODIFIED CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY

2017

ARMSTRONG

DISLOCATING DISASTER
FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS AND FINE MAPPING ...

2006

ARGO

BOTSWANA'S HOPE FOR A HEALTHY FUTURE

2004

ARIAL

A DEATH IN THE FAMILY: MENTAL HEALTH
IMPACTS OF KLAMATH RIVER SALMON ...

1977

APPLEWHITE

COMPOUND 23: A FICTION NOVEL

2008

2001

APPLETON

DECOLONIZING MINDS: A SOCIO-HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF MALCOLM X'S...

2007

ANTILL

IMAGINING FAITH AND NATION

2001

ANTONE THE EARLY AMERICAN ECONOMY, 1768-1790: A LOOK AT LEVELS ...

ANGUS

THERE AND BACK AGAIN: ENCHANTMENT, MYTHOPOEIA, AND FAIRY TALE...

2001

ANGLIN

THE ROLE OF THE SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM IN BLOOD PRESSURE REGULATION...

2001

Through the decades. Bound
copies of honors theses line
the walls of the Allen Reading
Room in Penrose Library.

A GRAND FINALE

The why behind perhaps the most challenging assignment
of a Whittie's college career: the senior thesis

BY JODIE NICOTRA

Collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, research, analytical skills and writing, writing, writing.

It might sound like a rundown of the top human skills demanded by the 21st-century workplace. But these elements are also at the heart of Whitman College students' most challenging assignment of their college careers: the senior thesis.

More than two-thirds of academic departments at Whitman require seniors to complete thesis projects. Some, like history, require the thesis only of honors students. (Other history students complete a shorter paper that serves as a capstone.) Students typically take a thesis-oriented course or independent study, where they get support for the process from faculty and other students.

Beyond the written thesis, senior projects can vary markedly by major. For instance, seniors in the sciences typically expand on research they've done with a Whitman professor or as part of a summer research internship at another institution. Music performance majors participate in a senior recital. Computer science majors work as a team to design and implement an integrative project. Art majors create a work to be presented in the Sheehan Gallery Senior Thesis Art Exhibition. A thesis isn't required for English majors; those who choose to write one might elect to write an analytic

study of literary work or craft a work of poetry, fiction or creative nonfiction. Many majors require oral and/or written exams as part of or instead of the thesis.

But no matter the student's major, one thing everyone agrees on is that the thesis is a challenging endeavor. Even faculty are awed by how much students accomplish in a short period of time.

"From my perspective, I couldn't believe it was possible — that everyone is completing an empirical study in one year," says Tom Armstrong, associate professor of psychology.

Senior psychology students typically design their thesis study and write up the introduction and methods in the fall, says Armstrong. That leaves only a few months to collect and analyze data and write up the results, since they need to submit the thesis 10 days after spring break. "It's a really condensed time frame for doing a lot of work," he says.

Mentoring thesis projects can also be time-intensive for faculty, though it's deeply rewarding work, says Sarah Davies, associate professor of history.

"The reward is to see things in new ways — to see through the students seeing things in new ways. Each one of these thesis projects has changed how I





Scholar show and tell. Left: A look back at a past Whitman Undergraduate Conference. The 2020 and 2021 events were virtual due to the pandemic. Above: Works by art majors Bailey Finn '21 and Hannah Herrgesell '21 on exhibit in the Sheehan Gallery as part of "STILL LIFE: Senior Thesis 2021."

ART EXHIBITION PHOTOS BY TARA GRANES

approach my research and teaching. So on that level I'm being selfish, because I'm learning something incredible, and they're teaching me that."

A Rigorous Road

Most generally, the senior thesis helps students develop the ability to see a large, complex project through to completion.

The academic rigor is almost on par with that required to earn a master's degree, says Brit Moss, associate professor of biology. "They do an intensive research experience, they write a thesis and give a presentation on it, and they also do oral exams as part of their Whitman education in biology."

The project also teaches students to ask good questions. Many struggle at first with how to ask a meaningful thesis question, or derive a hypothesis from a theory, or identify a gap in the literature. In psychology, the ability to ask good questions is where the proverbial rubber meets the road, says Armstrong.

For students who complete their theses as part of a group, collaborating toward a common goal is a critical skill, though not always an easy one. But as Armstrong points out, even when team dynamics on projects are less than harmonious, students are gaining important human skills.

"The thesis class is someplace where students can learn what can go wrong in the context of collaborative settings and develop interpersonal skills like being able to maintain relationships while still being assertive about their needs," Armstrong says.

He and his fellow thesis mentors agree another key learning experience for the senior project is learning to grapple with failure. Except for the type of failure that might result from not putting enough effort into a class project or test, students typically don't encounter real failure in a classroom or lab setting, where projects are artificially designed to succeed.

"An important part of the scientific process is grappling with negative results. How do you interpret that, how do you

write about it, how do you think through 'OK, based on this data, what would these next steps be?'" Moss says. "I spend a lot of my time with students thinking through, if they are going to carry this project forward, what would they say the next steps would be, and how would they write about that in detail in their thesis."

The Afterlife of the Senior Thesis

Seniors can showcase their thesis work for other students and faculty in the annual Whitman Undergraduate Conference (WUC). Over the course of a day, more than 100 students, mostly seniors, present their work as part of panels and poster sessions. No classes are held during the WUC so all students have the opportunity to participate.

Further afield, while students can tout their thesis experience in their graduate school applications or to employers, these projects often have surprising afterlives in other ways.

For example, one thesis project that Armstrong mentored ended up becoming part of a paper with other experiments from his Whitman psychology lab. The paradigm developed by the student was also picked up and used by another lab, in a pharmacological study.

"Sometimes these thesis projects end up having a real impact," Armstrong says.

Likewise, Moss says her thesis students genuinely contribute to her own work. She's published with student co-authors who have been involved in different aspects of an ongoing plant synthetic biology project.

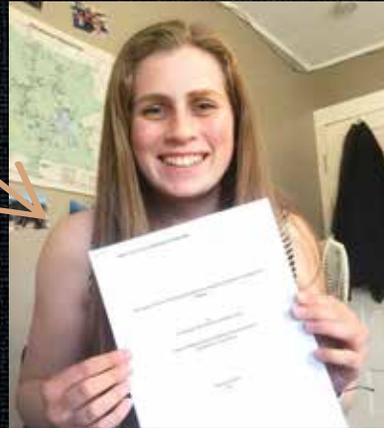
"It's so fun over the years to see where students are ending up and what kind of projects they're working on," she says. "Especially when I might be scanning the literature and come across a former student who's an author on a paper."

For Davies, the thesis experience has an emotional component too.

"Personally, it's always bittersweet bidding farewell to seniors. It's so great to see them grow, and then it's so hard to say goodbye." **W**

DIARY OF A THESIS

In 2020 and 2021, **Emily Solomon '21**, a psychology major, recounted her thesis experience. With the guidance of professors, collaboration with peers and the support of classmates, step-by-step, word-by-word, the thesis begins to form, becoming a point of accomplishment and pride.



COURTESY OF EMILY SOLOMON '21

AUGUST 2020

Hearing From the Experts

8/26 First day of thesis class! To start things off, I met with the rest of the senior psych students and the faculty. It was different being on Zoom instead of all being in person together, but I guess it's something I'll get used to. The faculty members told us about their areas of expertise and what kinds of theses they can best help with. I'm not too stressed out yet because I know I want to do something related to emotions and mental health, so after hearing the faculty members speak, I have a better understanding of what direction I can go from here.

that we'll be conducting our study online next semester because of COVID-19, so we've been on the lookout for study designs that we could carry out online.

OCTOBER 2020

Research and Writing

10/2 It took us a while to dial in on what exactly we want our area of research to be, but now we can focus our search for articles that are more applicable to our thesis. I've learned that narrowing down a topic is one of the most time-consuming parts of the process, especially when working in a group of three because we're all trying to tie our specific interests into one project.

At the beginning of the school year, we all knew we were interested in researching something related to mental health, and I knew I wanted to research emotional intelligence (EI). We then decided that mental health was too broad so we ultimately agreed on anxiety and depression, two of the most common mental health conditions. Our research helped us figure out that EI and depression are both interesting to all of us!

NOVEMBER 2020

Trekking Along ...

11/13 Today we made a lot of progress on the introductions section of our thesis! That and the methods section are due at the beginning of December, so we get most of the writing out of the way before we

What's next?



Research topic? check.



writing, writing and more writing!

actually start collecting data. At first, I was nervous writing a paper with other people, but I've learned a lot from this process. Sometimes I miss things or make little mistakes that I don't even notice because I've been staring at the document for so long, so it's helpful to have three sets of eyes to make edits.

DECEMBER 2020

Submitting and Celebrating

12/4 We just turned in our introductions and methods sections, and also received word that our project has been approved by the IRB! The Institutional Review Board, which is made up of Whitman faculty members, is the board that reviews all Whitman-affiliated research for any major that involves human participants. Since our study involves real people (Whitman students!), we had to submit a proposal to the IRB so they could review it to ensure that risks for participants are minimized as much as possible.

JANUARY 2021

Preparing Our Study

1/25 Luckily, we got to relax our brains over winter break. It feels like we've been going at this for so long that my brain is fried! Also, looking at screens for literally 14 hours a day doesn't get any easier on the eyes.

1/29 We decided to present at the Whitman Undergraduate Conference (WUC), so we'll start preparing for that soon. As we got WUC figured out, we also got our study up and running. We had to get it approved to distribute it to the subject pool, which consists of all the Whitman students taking Intro Psych. Each student in the class needs four credits of participation to pass (30 minutes of participation in a psych study = one credit). Senior thesis students send out information about their studies to the subject pool in a Google Doc with a sign-up or survey link so they can participate and earn their four research credits. We sent our survey via email about a week ago and we already have almost 70 responses, so we're off to a great start!

FEBRUARY 2021

Senior Seminar

2/24 This week we presented our thesis to our psych seminar class! We went during the second week of presentations, which was good and bad. On one hand, we had to prepare our PowerPoint and review details way earlier than we expected. On the other hand, if we presented any later in the semester, we would have had to present our results, and this way we didn't have to! We just presented our preliminary results based on what we expect to find once we finish collecting data.

MARCH 2021

Final Data Collection and Analysis

3/22 It's almost the end of March and we have finished up most of our data analyses! Yesterday we spent about four hours on Zoom with our advisor, professor Tom Armstrong, running statistical tests on Jamovi (a software program for statistical analyses). It was kind of unfortunate because yesterday was technically a spring break day but we spent a good portion of it working on our thesis. (Side note: Spring break 2021 was split up into one day off every two weeks to prevent students from traveling due to COVID-19.) Our group was pretty happy though because we accomplished so much yesterday and feel a lot better equipped to start writing the rest of our paper!

APRIL 2021

The Final Countdown

4/6 We submitted our final draft! First, we sent our thesis to professor Armstrong and then immediately after that submitted our poster for the WUC—so it was a very successful day. In fact, I think it was the most relieving day of this entire year and it felt so good to be done with it. We might have to make a few edits in a few weeks after our advisor and design consultant read over it again, but that is something for future Emily to worry about.

4/13 This year's WUC presentations were virtual, hosted on a social sharing platform called Gathertown. During our hourlong slot, audience members' avatars could "stop by" to view our poster and chat with us about our research. We got a lot of questions like: "What was your favorite part of your thesis?" or "What was the hardest part?" or "If you were to do this research project again, what would you change and what would you keep?" It was really fun showing off all of our hard work this year!

4/21 Today I passed my oral exam! It was a conversation with my thesis advisor and our design consultant. They asked me questions related to my thesis, related it back to different courses in psychology I've taken over the years, and talked about my favorite, least-favorite and most challenging parts of the whole thesis process. It lasted an hour and then they put me in a Zoom waiting room while they discussed whether I passed.

Coming back into the main Zoom room and hearing professor Armstrong say "Emily Solomon, congrats! You've passed your oral exam in psychology!" had to be one of the best feelings. When I hung up the call I immediately burst into happy tears, which was definitely not the reaction I was expecting to have. I couldn't do anything but stare at my bedroom wall for a few minutes after the oral because I couldn't even process how excited I was to be done.

Project approved 😊

Let's say we're pretty psyched!

Buh-bye, spring break



it's a BIG day!





Quiet, please. Students read surrounded by senior theses in Penrose Library's Quiet Room.

HONOR BOUND

Tiptoe into the Allen Reading Room (a.k.a. the Quiet Room) in Penrose Library and you'll see shelves lined with slim black volumes. These are the honors theses from Whitties going back to the Class of 1948, bound and displayed not just for posterity, but so they might inspire current students.

In some disciplines, students are required to file an application to pursue honors in their major, which must be approved by their supervising professor, before they can register for honors

thesis. Qualifying students in majors that don't require an application are automatically registered for honors after confirmation it's been earned.

The criteria for earning honors in major study — something roughly 20% of Whitman students do — include a cumulative GPA of at least 3.3 on all credits earned at Whitman, a major GPA of at least 3.5, a pass with distinction on the senior assessment and an A- or higher on the senior thesis.

Dig deeper:

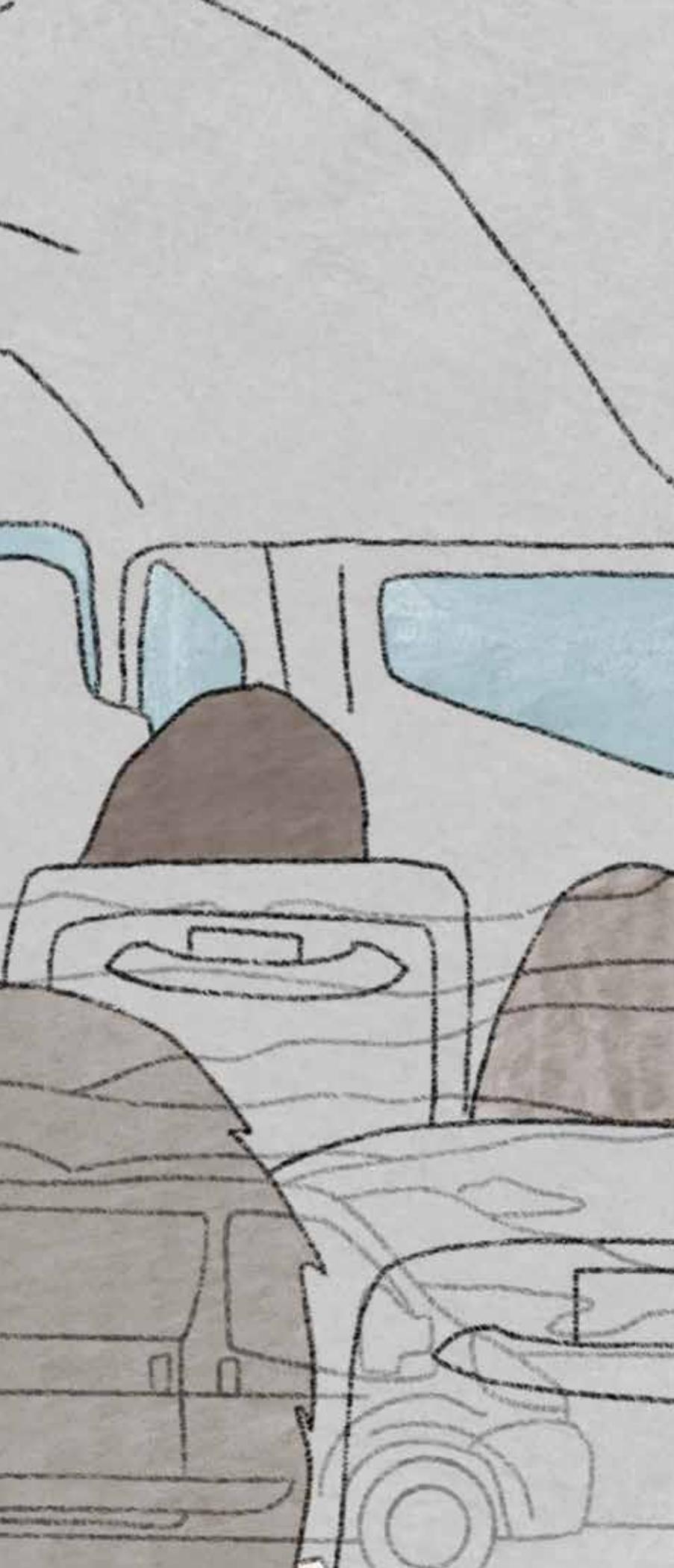
To read honors theses, virtually explore the senior thesis art exhibition, watch videos of WUC presentations and more, visit whitman.edu/magazine.



The Long Journey Home

When a canceled flight stranded 15 international students in Seattle, Whitman College Head Baseball Coach Brian Kitamura and Associate Professor of Religion Lauren Osborne introduced them to a great American tradition: the road trip

BY HEIDI PITTS '01
ILLUSTRATIONS BY MADI WELCH '22



Delayed. Delayed. Gate changed. Delayed. Gate changed. Delayed. Flight canceled.

Dealing with flight drama creates frustration even in the shortest of journeys, but for a group of international students — many of whom had already been traveling for 48 hours or more — the midnight cancellation of their Seattle to Walla Walla flight on the evening before move-in day at Whitman College seemed, in the words of first-year student Bright Surit, “a catastrophe.”

Traveling from Thailand, Surit had already endured more than 20 hours of flying and one flight delay that left him arriving into Seattle after the Walla Walla flight’s original departure time, so the initial delays were actually a blessing for him. However, hearing that the Walla Walla flight was canceled when he was so hungry, tired, cold and jetlagged, Surit experienced “all the worst feelings accumulated into one place.”

Other students were having similarly frustrating travel experiences. Multiple delays along the way had left Mavie Pham, a first-year from Vietnam, nervous that she was going to miss the connection in Seattle. Angela Eliacy, coming from Afghanistan, had 17-plus hours of flying, with a 21-hour layover in Dubai followed by more than five hours getting through customs and immigration at the SeaTac airport.

Airport Connections

Through a group chat for incoming international students, Pham knew there would be two other Whitman students, Mwamba Mutanga from Zambia and David Wang from Taiwan, on her flight from Doha, Qatar, to Seattle. They texted each other their school colors and managed to meet up in the Doha airport. She says, “I was so happy to meet someone along the way!” In Seattle, they met another two students, and eventually, as they waited through the numerous delays and gate changes in Seattle, more than a dozen students who were supposed to be on the flight to Walla Walla gathered together.

Eliacy remembers the ups and downs of that evening. “In the process of waiting we found each other, and we were so happy. We were so close to Whitman! But then the flight was canceled and no one knew what to do.”

In a different SeaTac terminal, Eyleen Menchu Tuy had just heard of the cancellation and started making her way

to the Alaska Airlines customer service counter. Menchu Tuy left her home in Guatemala at 3 a.m. and ended up not eating anything until after 5 p.m. due to concerns about removing her face mask and possibly contracting COVID-19, so she was not feeling very well. But as she arrived at customer service, she saw someone wearing a United World Colleges (UWC) sweatshirt. Menchu Tuy, a UWC alum also wearing a school hoodie, went up to the person and discovered they were a Whitman student. Suddenly being with others in this difficult situation was very reassuring.

Comfort in Numbers

Now numbering 15, the stranded students were split, with some waiting in the gate area and others joining the very long line at customer service. Some were texting with Greg Lecki, associate director for international student support services, who had been monitoring the flight delays all evening. Suddenly one student said, “It looks like there is a teacher from Whitman in line at customer service.” It was Head Baseball Coach Brian Kitamura, who was also supposed to be on the canceled flight.

At the same time, Associate Professor of Religion Lauren Osborne, also stranded by the canceled flight, was in the gate area deciding what she would do when she noticed two young women and started chatting with them. Discovering they were international students coming to Whitman, Osborne thought perhaps she could arrange hotel rooms for herself and the two of them. The surprise of learning that there was an entire group of stranded students led Osborne to get in touch with Lecki, who told her about Kitamura connecting with other students at customer service.

Now that Kitamura, Lecki and Osborne were in touch with each other and all the students, they kicked into high gear trying to find a solution for the exhausted students, calling customer service, waiting in line to talk to an airport representative, calling hotels in the area, all to frustrating results. There were no hotels with available rooms anywhere. Customer service could not rebook the students onto any flights for several days.

Remembering the energy of this time, Pham appreciates how Osborne and Kitamura handled the situation. “Lauren and Brian were calm even though they had lost the flight too, and that helped us a lot. They were worried but they helped us to not feel lost and sad.”

Hitting the Road

After several hours of standing in line and waiting on hold, Kitamura, Lecki and Osborne decided that the best option would be to drive to Walla Walla. However, it was now well past midnight, only one car rental company at the airport was open and, with Kitamura and Osborne the only licensed drivers, they needed two very large vehicles. After talking with the rental company staff, they discovered that there was a large SUV and a 15-passenger van available, which would provide enough seating for 17 people — but would it offer enough storage space?

The task of fitting 17 people and more than 50 pieces of luggage into two vehicles took an hour and some clever organization. Most of the students had two large suitcases, plus a carry-on or two. And because of the late hour, all those checked bags were locked in the airport’s baggage claim area. While Kitamura went to ensure that the vehicles promised were actually available, Osborne and the students pleaded with airport staff, who opened a warehouse-like room where the students searched through piles and stacks of suitcases and boxes for their items. Eventually, all except one suitcase were found and the group made their way out to the curb to begin the hour-long process of figuring out how to fit 33 very big suitcases, more than 20 carry-ons and 17 people into two vehicles.

Eliacy remembers how crowded it was. “Some people had to sit with their legs up on the seats.” Still, Pham recalls the moment all the people and luggage were in the vehicles as the happiest moment of the trip. Sometime around 3 a.m. they left SeaTac, finally starting the last leg of their journey to Whitman.

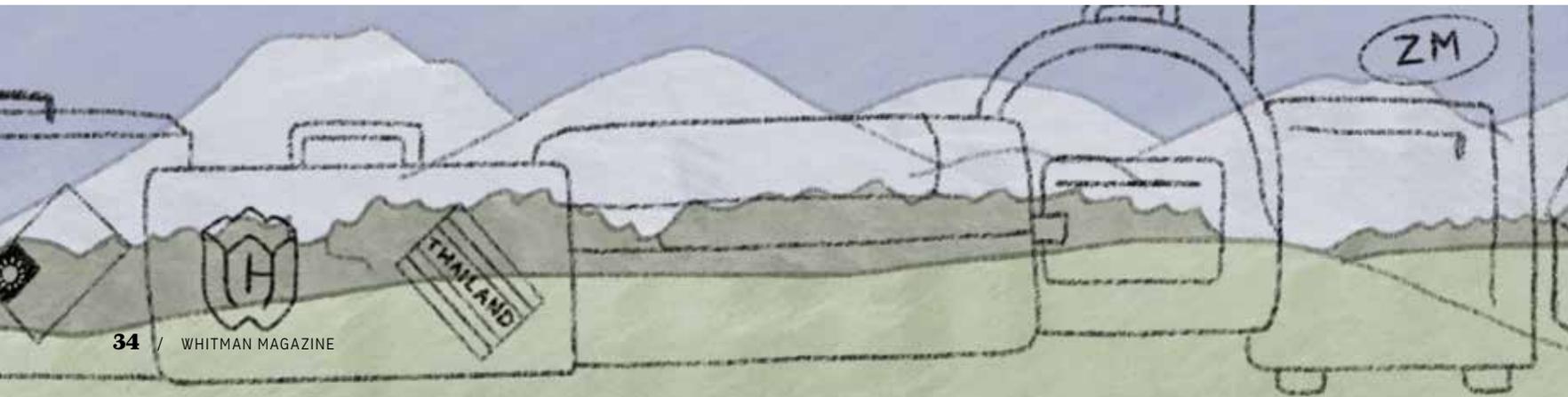
Within minutes of leaving the airport, most of the exhausted students were asleep in whatever cramped position they could manage. Some of the students were extremely hungry, but their attempts to find a nearby fast-food restaurant that was serving were unsuccessful, so Kitamura and Osborne drove on to Cle Elum, stopping around 5 a.m. at a gas station. Watching the students enter an American convenience store for the first time, Kitamura enjoyed seeing their snack selections. “They were trying things they’d always wanted to try: Oreos, hot chocolate from a machine. It was a deep dive into America.”

Leaving the gas station, spirits lifted as students observed the unfamiliar landscape of the Yakima Valley.

“Lauren and Brian were calm even though they had lost the flight too, and that helped us a lot. They were worried but they helped us to not feel lost and sad.”

—Mavie Pham,
first-year from
Hanoi, Vietnam

PHOTO BY CALLAY BOIRE-SHEED, SENIOR FROM PORT TOWNSEND, WASHINGTON





Together again. International students from "The Long Journey Home" met up for a mini reunion with Osborne, Kitamura and Lecki during fall semester.

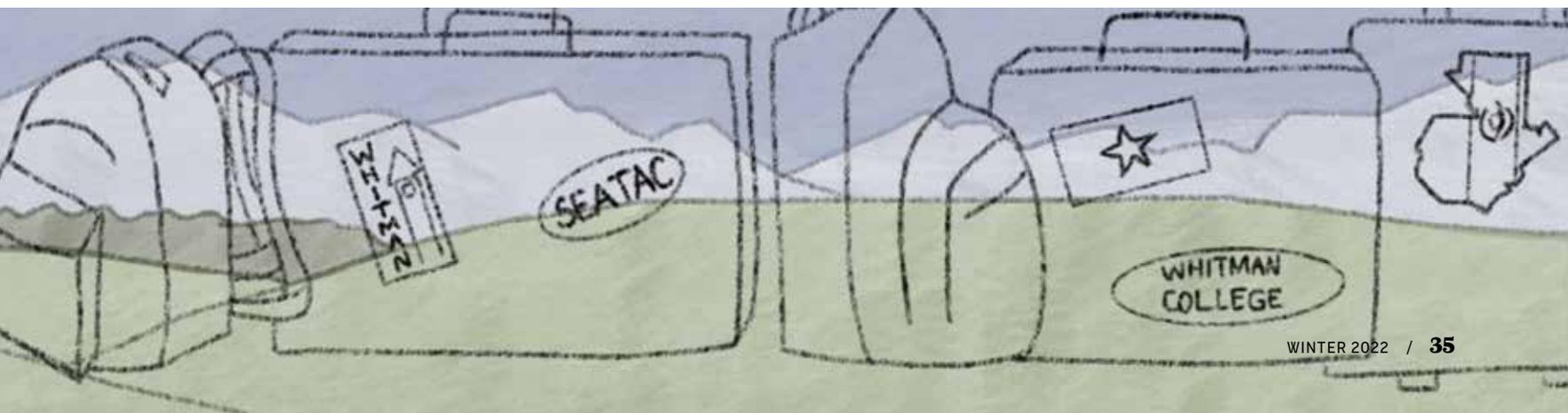
Stopping again when they reached Prosser, the group found an accommodating McDonald's where they were finally able to get some food, ordering from a touch screen and comparing the menu items to what McDonald's offers in international locations.

Welcome Home

As they entered Walla Walla, Kitamura and Osborne drove through downtown. Menchu Tuy says, "We were really excited so we had our phones and were filming everything because we were so excited and happy!" None of the students had ever been to Walla

Walla or Whitman before, and Osborne recalls how lovely it was to see their enthusiasm as they pulled into campus and found Lecki awaiting them outside a residence hall.

Thinking back, Surit knows that this "catastrophe" was actually a defining experience that brought him and the other international students together, sharing many good moments throughout the dramatic journey. The students also expressed deep gratitude to Lecki, Kitamura and Osborne for their heroic efforts. Eliacy sums up the entire experience, reflecting, "It feels like we are supported here, and it feels like we arrived home when we met them." 





Leaving Afghanistan

For first-year Angela Eliacy, the journey to Whitman started with saying goodbye to a home she fears she may never see again

BY BHAVESH GULRAJANI '23 | ILLUSTRATION BY MADI WELCH '22

ANGELA ELIACY IS A FIRST-YEAR Whitman College student, an undeclared intended economics-math major. She was born and raised in Afghanistan — first in the countryside, then in Kabul — before spending three years of high school in Japan. She enjoys boxing and says she’s pretty good at it. And, she left for the United States from Afghanistan just two days before the Taliban took over her country. Her parents and nine of her 10 siblings remain in Afghanistan, laboring through visa applications.

Afghanistan spent the 1980s engulfed in a war with the Soviet Union, and at its conclusion were left without a central government. Civil war ensued. The Taliban took over in 1996

and held power until 2001. “Those [five years] were some of the darkest days in Afghanistan, especially for women,” Eliacy says.

The U.S. intervened in October 2001, nearly two decades ago, bringing about a trillion-dollar war along with a dollop of improved living standards: particularly for Afghan youth. “Women could study,” Eliacy says. “I could go to school, I could go study abroad.” Her generation could afford to live differently, and more modernly — outside the narrow scope of the ‘traditional’ Afghan child.

However, Professor of History Elyse Semerdjian says, the U.S. installed in Afghanistan “one of the most corrupt governments on the planet.”

“I sat beside the window, and I was looking down, and I was crying. I felt like everyone in Kabul was saying bye to me.”

— Angela Eliacy

Semerdjian also believes that the war in Afghanistan could have concluded in two or three years. In 2003, the Taliban were offering to hand over Osama bin Laden to the U.S. But the U.S. refused, because they wanted “blood” and “vengeance.” “Although [the U.S.] said they were not into state-building, there was clearly a larger design of what they wanted to do in Afghanistan,” Semerdjian says.

An Unwelcome Return

Eliacy was born in 2003, and the following year, Afghanistan held its very first direct democratic elections.

Nevertheless, Eliacy grew up fearing the Taliban and their frequent attacks.

She graduated from high school in Japan this past spring but was unsure of whether to return to Kabul or not. Her family was scared, aware that the Taliban could come at any moment. Missing her family, she decided to fly home. Once there, her parents kept her inside, as the Taliban were known for attacking public areas.

“No one goes out of their house without thinking about whether they will be alive when they come back,” Eliacy says. “Wives are worried about their husbands when they go out; parents are worried about their children when they go out. I don’t remember a week where I didn’t hear the word ‘Taliban’ or ‘suicide attacks.’ That’s pretty much how everyone lives there.”

Eliacy ultimately left for Whitman on Aug. 13, 2021. In Seattle, on Aug. 15, she received a text from her sister stating that the Taliban had arrived.

“I was crying; even my sister was crying. We were so scared. We thought they would just start killing everyone. That’s how scared everyone is of them,” she says.

“When the flight took off from Kabul, I kind of had the feeling that I wouldn’t be able to come back home,” she says. “I sat beside the window, and I was looking down, and I was crying. I felt like everyone in Kabul was saying bye to me. I was looking at every mountain there, everything, like ‘this is gonna be my last time.’ With how I grew up, I would think the Taliban wouldn’t allow me to go in the country anymore.”

Although the Taliban claim that they’ve changed their ways, Afghans are doubtful. “No one is happy when we don’t trust them,” she says. Women are forced to wear burqas once again, hiding their faces and bodies. “You’re in your prison — they just tie you in clothes.”

Her brother’s restaurant is shut because people don’t dine out anymore. Her two sisters, ages 13 and 17, are stuck at home, unable to attend school. Their family shares one burqa, and they take turns wearing it.

Semerdjian laments Eliacy’s generation of Afghan youths, who had opportunities to get educated and participate, but are now being closed out of society or running for their lives.

“I feel horrible for all these Afghans whose lives were built up, through occupation and through the installment of a U.S.-allied government. Now, we are responsible for taking care of those people,” she says. Xenophobia, a brutal immigration system, and Biden’s unwillingness to undo some of Trump’s foreign policies were listed by Semerdjian as barriers for embracing refugees.

Eliacy revealed that in some provinces, women and girls — some as young as 12 — have been taken as sex slaves. “It’s just too much to take,” Eliacy says. “Anytime something can happen, and I don’t want to receive a call from my family saying something horrible happened to them.”

Fears that the Taliban would overtake the airport circulated among their household. Though The New York Times reported on Aug. 12 that the U.S. expected Kabul to withstand pressure for at least another month, that month became three days. Eliacy’s family is under additional threat because her brother works for the United Nations, several of her siblings are associated with the U.S., and they identify as Hazaras, as well as Shia Muslims: ethnic and religious minorities, respectively, that have historically been oppressed by the Pashtun/Sunni majority.

Semerdjian explains that the Taliban’s particular brand of Islam is called “Pashtunwali.” “It’s actually a Pashtun tribal law, and it’s informed as much by tribal conceptions as it is by Islam,” she says. “It’s a puritanical movement.”

Hope and Help

Despite the ample criticism directed toward the U.S.’s 20-year occupation, Eliacy still views their actions positively. “That’s when human rights came to Afghanistan; women’s rights came to Afghanistan,” she says. “And I could go to school. My brother got a job. When my brother got a job, that’s when everything changed for our family.” Eliacy recalls taking care of cows and sheep when she was just 7 years old. Living in the village, she would spend two hours every morning walking to school. They were able to move to Kabul, where school was a comfortable five minutes away. “I had so much of a better chance to study.”

But like many others, she agrees that America’s exit was unacceptable.

Semerdjian cites that, of the two-plus trillion American dollars poured into the war in Afghanistan, only two percent had even reached the Afghan people. “They were still living in poverty ... I know some people saw improvement, but 98% of the money we had given was just staying within the Afghan and U.S. militaries, not trickling down to the people,” she says.

Eliacy’s family has applied for Indian, Pakistani, and even American visas. “Any option that can take them out of Afghanistan,” she says.

Eliacy is doubtful that she will return to Afghanistan for the time being. “That’s why I’m trying to somehow at least get part of my family out, especially those who are endangered now, so I can go visit them somewhere else. I’m sure I can’t go if the Taliban are there,” she says.

Eliacy explains how touched she was by all of the donations made via an online fundraising campaign she established to help her family escape, mentioning one specific comment left for her: a Japanese woman had recounted how Eliacy and her classmates helped her in 2019, following a typhoon in their region. Eliacy calls this a great lesson, and says with confidence, “that if you help people, you will receive their help.” 

“Leaving Afghanistan” originally ran in the Sept. 16, 2021, issue of The Whitman Wire.



Return on Investment

CONNECTING AT A WHITMAN
EVENT PAID OFF FOR
MICHELLE MATHIEU '92
AND SAM GESCHICKTER '20

BY PAM MOORE

TJMA WITHERSPON/TSPON PHOTO

WHEN MICHELLE MATHIEU '92 was approved to join the Clubhouse networking app by Sam Geschickter '20 in January 2021, she was pleased — and slightly perplexed. Mathieu, the chief executive officer of Fulcrum Capital, had been wanting access to the then invite-only platform, but Geschickter's name didn't ring any bells — which is understandable, given the timing.

Not long after the two met at a 2020 Seattle Whitties Helping Whitties event, the pandemic brought the world to a grinding stop. "COVID-19 put a halt to any momentum from that event," Mathieu says. With a little LinkedIn sleuthing, Mathieu connected the dots and when Geschickter followed up to ask if she'd be willing to offer him career advice, she asked if he was interested in applying for an open position at her company.

He was. And the interest turned out to be mutual: In May 2021, Geschickter joined Fulcrum as an investment operations analyst.

GROWTH OPPORTUNITY

Geschickter's and Mathieu's story isn't unique. Since it was established in 2013, Whitties Helping Whitties has been a launchpad for connections between Whitman students, new graduates, parents and alumni. As a collaboration between the Office of Alumni Relations and the Career and Community Engagement Center, the program helps undergraduates enhance their knowledge, develop their networks and identify professional opportunities. Since 2015, more than 2,000 Whitman alumni, parents and guests have attended, says Kim Rolfe, director for career development, adding that the events have been growing consistently from year to year.

Whitties Helping Whitties events traditionally happen every January while students are on winter break in Seattle, Portland and San Francisco areas — cities with the highest concentrations of Whitman students and alumni, according to Jennifer Northam, director of alumni relations. There is typically an annual on-campus event over reunion weekend in the fall too.

AN INVITATION TO CONNECT

While Mathieu was thrilled to welcome Geschickter to the Fulcrum Capital team, she never saw Whitties Helping Whitties as a recruitment fair. The night she and Geschickter met, she had three objectives:



Make the connection. Whitties Helping Whitties flagship events in Portland, San Francisco, Seattle and Walla Walla connect current students with alumni to help share valuable experience, build strong networks and find career opportunities.

to have a good time, connect with other Whitties and promote her industry. Mathieu recalls going out that blustery January evening on a mission to let Whitties know, "Finance isn't what you read about in the media: that investing or rich people are all evil." Rather, she wanted them to know, "We're doing some amazing, really positive things and we can be a catalyst for change."

Geschickter arrived at the event hoping to "meet people who might inspire my career path" and ideally, make a connection that could lead to a job. As a religion major who grew up in Brookline, Massachusetts, he'd attended a small, Boston-area business college before transferring to Whitman his sophomore year in search of a liberal arts education that emphasized critical thinking. Almost immediately, he knew he was in the right place. When he got to campus, he joined The Whitman Investment Company; there he learned about sustainable investing, a concept he found deeply resonant.

Upon meeting Mathieu, Geschickter thought, "Here's someone who is a top-of-the-top professional, spends a lot of time thinking about these things, knows all the research and knows all the best practices." He asked Mathieu whether Fulcrum had any openings. At the time they didn't, but she encouraged him to stay in touch. Following the event, he sent her an email and invited her to connect on LinkedIn. Months later, he received a notification from the Clubhouse app: Someone in his contacts, Michelle Mathieu, was requesting an invitation to the platform. He didn't think twice about extending one — much less anticipate that a social media connection would lead to a major career opportunity.

After thanking him for the invitation, Mathieu extended an invitation of her own — to apply for an open position at Fulcrum. After submitting the new grad's resume to the hiring team, Mathieu "stayed out of the picture" while the company sifted through a highly competitive pool of applicants. "We had a dozen great candidates," she says.

Though the Whitman connection played a role in Geschickter's decision to apply, Fulcrum's offer was a reflection of his unique strengths and experiences. "He earned it 100% on his own," says Mathieu.

A SHARED EXPERIENCE

Both Geschickter and Mathieu say they enjoyed the atmosphere of the Whitties Helping Whitties event. Whereas other networking events may be "super intimidating" to undergraduates, Geschickter says Whitman offered a space where he felt comfortable being himself. Now, as he prepares to attend his next Whitties Helping Whitties event as an alum, he hopes to offer students that same opportunity. He wants to help them see how they might blend their passion and their profession, but also assure them it's okay if they don't "have it all figured out."

Mathieu credits the welcoming nature of Whitties Helping Whitties events to the "magic elixir" of the shared Whitman experience. The main ingredients, she says, are intellectual curiosity, an experiential approach to learning, connection with others, and the open-minded culture that is Whitman. 

Learn how you can get involved at whitman.edu/whitties-helping-whitties.

The Award Goes to ...

Nominate a Whittie for an Alumni Association Recognition Award!

We're seeking the unsung heroes, the behind-the-scenes orchestrators, the motivational and the inspirational!

Do you know a Whittie making the world a better place? Or a classmate who has given countless volunteer hours to a cause? Or a friend who has made outstanding achievements in their career?

Help Us Honor Excellence!



There are multiple categories for recognition:

- Pete Reid Award for young alumni of the last 10 years.
- Gordon Scribner Award for distinguished service to the college.
- Sally Rodgers Award for lifetime achievement of alumni graduating 50 or more years ago.
- Trailblazer Award for alumni whose work exemplifies inclusion, promotes equity and values and reflects the diversity of our world.
- Alumna or Alumnus of Merit Award, the highest honor the Alumni Association gives.

Tell us about an outstanding Whittie and learn more at whitman.edu/alumni-awards.

Nominations are due by Friday, March 25, 2022.



WHITMAN COLLEGE

Class Notes



Blues All-Star. Makana Stone '20 was named Northwest Conference Player of the Year in her senior year.

Three-Point Play

Makana Stone '20 plays pro basketball in England — and the sport's ambassador off the court

When former Blues forward and biology major Makana Stone '20 graduated from Whitman, she wasn't ready to throw in the towel on her basketball career or her education. She reached out to a sports agency and with their help soon found the perfect solution: playing ball and pursuing a master's degree in exercise physiology at Loughborough University in England.

"I thought that was the best route for me because, as well as wanting to continue being an athlete myself, at some point I also want to coach and I really want to understand athletes and the way their bodies function," Stone says.

It was the right call: In 2021, Stone not only earned her graduate degree, she also signed a contract to play professionally for the Leicester Riders. Now, as a Women's British Basketball League (WBBL) player, she's more than a team forward.

"My position is threefold: I'm playing ball, I'm also working for the club in a community involvement role, organizing and running community basketball events and managing some of the team's social media, and I'm also coaching Loughborough's tier-three BUCs

(British Universities and Colleges League) team," she says.

Professional basketball is still relatively new to Great Britain, where it's easily eclipsed by soccer, cricket and rugby. The British Basketball League, the country's highest level of play, was only formed in 1987 — and it wasn't until 2014 that the WBBL was launched. "But there's definitely a growing interest," says Stone. "And part of my job with the Riders is to facilitate that interest with younger members of the community."

Playing abroad also gives Stone the chance to see more of Europe — something she's wanted to do since she caught the travel bug on her first trip overseas, studying pollination biology in Sweden as part of Whitman's Crossroads faculty-led summer program.

The biggest culture shock of moving to England? "I think oddly enough, the language," Stone says. "I mean, we all speak English, but the differences really hit me when I first got here. Especially when I started working with the kids — a lot of them would come up to me and ask me how I pronounce certain words and giggle at the way I said them."

"My plan is to play for as long as I possibly can and then get into a coaching position."

— Makana Stone '20

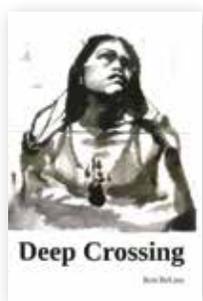
1950s

Junius Rochester '57 continues to write stories for the Seattle-based website, Post Alley. His most recent contributions, "The Pacific Northwest Through the Eyes of Paul Bunyan," "Who Tells Your Story: Junius Rochester's Honor Roll of Northwest Historians" and "How Tennis Came to the Pacific Northwest," plus an archive of past articles, are online at postalley.org/author/rochester.

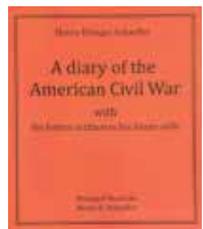


Shirley Ruble '57 was a featured speaker at the dedication of a newly refurbished fountain at Pioneer Park in Walla Walla. She was instrumental in securing the last piece of state funding for the restoration project. Ruble has a photo of her parents posed in front of the fountain in 1931, so the project was very personal. She lives just a few blocks away, at the Odd Fellows Home adjacent to campus.

1960s

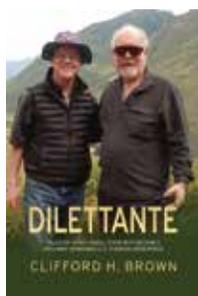


Ken BeLieu '63 self-published a novel, "Deep Crossing," about a young man's journey toward faith. It is also about hunting, fishing, boxing and, most especially, basketball. BeLieu lives with his wife, Ruth, in Trout Lake, Washington.



Vicki Durham Knostman '64 has collected and self-published her great-grandfather's letters to her great-grandmother in "Henry Ellinger Schaeffer: A diary of the American Civil War with his letters written to his future wife." Schaeffer was principal musician (fifer) of the 103rd Infantry Regiment, Illinois volunteers, of the 2nd Brigade of the 1st Division of the 15th Army Corps. Knostman took on this

1970s



Clifford Brown '71, who retired to Maryland near Washington, D.C., in 2017, has

project to keep the memory of her great-grandparents alive and to record the lives and hardships of those involved in the Civil War.

published "Dilettante: Tales of How a Small-Town Boy Became a Diplomat Managing U.S. Foreign Assistance" (Dorrance Publishing Co.), a collection of tales which led to his career in the foreign service. It was written over a period of 30 years, mainly for his kids and grandkids, but both Whitman College and Alpha Theta Chapter of Tau Kappa Epsilon figure prominently in some of the chapters.

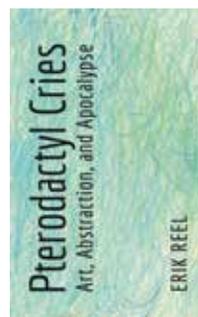
Deberah Samples Simon '72 has retired after 31 years of teaching, 26 of those in the chemistry department at Whitman. Husband **Dick '72** followed directly behind, retiring from practicing medicine at the



Jim Whiting '65 has written more than 300 nonfiction books for young readers. His subjects run the gamut from A(ristotle) to Z(ionism). His first book, published in 2001, was a biography of Charles Schulz. His most recent publications are descriptions of two dog breeds: pugs and dalmatians. Whiting's favorite series was biographies of more than a dozen classical music composers. He regards himself as a walking advertisement for a liberal arts education. Before turning his hand to KidLit, Jim published "Northwest Runner" magazine, voted as the country's best regional running magazine by panels of professional journalists.

end of 2021. They will spend more time with their children and grandchildren, and work on finding better ways to keep the deer from eating all of their grapes.

Lisa Abrahams '73 has retired from private medical practice, most recently in Brainerd, Minnesota. She and her husband, **Andrew Niemyer '73** now reside in Fargo, North Dakota, where Abrahams has accepted an appointment to serve the Veterans Administration (VA) as a clinical cardiologist at the Fargo VA Medical Center.

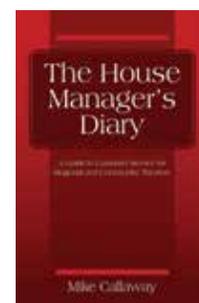


Erik "Gary" Reel '75 published "Pterodactyl Cries: Art, Abstraction, and Apocalypse" (Centaur) in September, 2021. Pointing out that the long arc of human intellectual history has been toward greater abstraction, Reel develops a wide-ranging discourse on abstraction in visual art and its relationships to referentiality, internality, history, oppression, and apocalypse. He and his wife, Rhonda, live in Portland, Oregon.



Susan Sample '76 published "Voices of Teenage Transplant Survivors: Miracle-Like" (Emerald Publishing), a collection of patient narratives from poetry workshops she held for more than 10 years for adolescent recipients of heart, liver and kidney transplants. With honesty and hope, the teens explore physical, psychological, and existential issues surrounding body image, independence, identity, survival, and mortality. Included are stories about the teens, as well as close readings and analyses of their writing. Sample directs the Initiative in Narrative, Medicine, and Writing at University of Utah Health Science's new Center for Health Ethics, Arts, and Humanities and serves as the writer-in-residence at Huntsman Cancer Institute.

1980s



Mike Callaway '81 has written a book about customer service for live theatre called "The House Manager's Diary: A Guide to Customer Service for Regional and Community Theaters." Often dismissed by senior management and regarded as tangential, superfluous or even obstructive to artistic impulses,



John Nicon '61 shared a new Whitman acronym: WAWA, the Whitman Alumni Association of Wallingford. WAWA was established on Aug. 12, 2021, at the University House retirement community in Seattle. Originally built for University of Washington retired faculty and staff, University House now is home to five Whitman alumni from classes 1950 through 1964: **Barbara Garrison Denis '50, Natalie Jahraus Cowan '52, Pat Guffey Thibaudeau '54, Nicon and Susan Carter Sever '64.** "It is rumored that the Whitman football team beat the UW in the late 1800s, but even if not true, it's a good fable. Regardless, this fearsome five provide significant competition for those UW folks in other ways." Pictured, left to right: Denis, Cowan, Thibaudeau, Nicon and Sever.

the work of house managers, ushers and other front-of-house staff is critical to the pleasant experience of every theatre patron. This book serves as a roadmap to effective patron services for theatre. Callaway assures his brothers at the Phi House that this is not a memoir of his days as house manager at 715 Estrella.

Carolyn Jensen Dwyer '82 retired from teaching in Atlanta, Georgia, at the end of the 2019-2020 school year. She has relocated to Tucson, Arizona, to be with her dad and is enjoying time to hike, garden and exercise.

Wendy Wendlandt '83 was recently promoted to president of Environment America,



Carolyn Dvorak Nielsen '71 enjoyed a week with a number of members of the Whitman community rafting on Oregon's Rogue River in July of 2021. Pictured left to right: Mike Lynch, assistant professor of sociology, retired; Bob Carson, professor emeritus of geology and environmental studies; **Jaimes Valdez '03**; Nielsen; Clare Carson, associate dean of students, retired; **Phil Fenner '78**; and **Sue Skillman '78.**

one of the country's leading environmental advocacy groups. It's a natural fit, given her love of the great outdoors. Environment America is part of the Public Interest Network, which also includes about two dozen state groups, including Environment Washington and WashPIRG, where she started in 1984. In addition to her new responsibilities, Wendlandt is The Public Interest Network's senior vice president and political director.

Kirby Gould Mason '86 was recognized as one of The Best Lawyers in America 2022, based on confidential peer review. Mason practices medical malpractice law at HunterMaclean in Savannah, Georgia.



Monica Chandler Hardie '89 has self-published "The Thorn," a retelling of the story of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ following the scriptures and additional fictional viewpoints. Hardie practiced internal medicine in Walla Walla and Spokane, Washington, before a chronic illness threatened her life. This is the latest of several books she has published.

1990s

Kate Laddish '92 has been appointed to the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services Alert & Warning Specialist Committee. She was previously recognized by Congressman John Garamendi as Woman of the Year for California's 3rd District in recognition of her volunteerism and community engagement. Laddish lives in Winters, California.



Stephanie Renée dos Santos '94 self-published "Cut From the Earth" in May 2021. The art-inspired historical novel, which centers around a successful tile-maker harboring a secret during an especially tumultuous period in 18th-century Portugal, is the first of a series.

Andrea Beaudreau Disordi '95 completed a Master of Information degree with an emphasis in Library and Information Sciences at Rutgers University in Brunswick, New Jersey, in May of 2021. She is now head of youth services at the Delafield Public Library in Delafield, Wisconsin.



Tom Gustafson '83 shared photos from his annual trip with **Craig Kelly '83, Russ Fagg '83, Peter Lewis '81** and **John Williams '83.** Last June, they booked a guided fly-fishing trip with Minam Outfitters in Wallowa, Oregon, owned by **Grant Richie '03.** Two other Whitties were guides on the trip: **Jeff Northam '88** and **Cam Scott '00.** Scott is a guide, teacher and writer, while Northam, Whitman's director of tennis and head men's tennis coach, took the summer to enjoy time on the river while lending a hand to Richie. First photo, left to right: Gustafson, Kelly, Fagg, Northam, Scott, Lewis, Williams. Second photo, left to right: Richie, Scott, Northam.

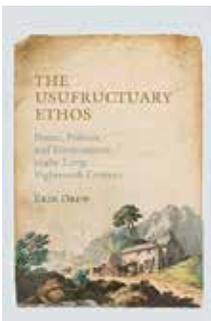
Tim Scudder '97 earned a master's degree in professional counseling from Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, Arizona. He splits his time between a private practice and a mental health institution.

2000s

Laurence '00 and **Sonya Hess Chamberlain '00** have relocated to Wenatchee, Washington, after 16 years in the Midwest. She joins a small out-of-hospital midwife practice and he continues legal work with a small private firm.

Richelle Little '01 started a new job as an assistant attorney general at the Washington State Office of the Attorney General, Government Compliance and Enforcement Division in Olympia, Washington. As a member of the health team, she litigates on behalf of the boards and commissions that regulate health care professions.

Maureece Levin '03 accepted a position as lecturer of anthropology at Valdosta State University in Valdosta, Georgia. She was previously a postdoctoral scholar at the Stanford Archaeology Center.



Erin Drew '04 has published "The Usufructuary Ethos: Power, Politics, and Environment in the Long Eighteenth Century" (University of Virginia Press). The book examines an overlooked thread of 17th- and 18th-century environmental thought, that human beings had only the "usufruct" of the earth: temporary possession, use or enjoyment of the world without causing damage. This



Matt '99 and **Ali Dornsife Nelson '02** moved to Saipan (the largest of the Northern Mariana Islands, a commonwealth of the U.S.) in spring of 2020 where Matt works as an ER physician and Ali works as an assistant attorney general. **John Wiseley '99** and **Steve Lewis '99** each arrived in early 2021, and stayed until jobs and master's programs made them return to Washington. The Nelsons plan to remain in Saipan indefinitely and would love to hear from anyone interested in visiting or relocating. Left to right: Wiseley, Lewis, Nelson and Nelson.

belief had ethical implications for the ways in which the English conceived of the ethics of power and use, and Drew traces the various forces that shaped, transformed and ultimately sidelined it. She is an associate professor of English at the University of Mississippi.

Nicole Comferto '04 published an essay in the Aug. 6, 2021 New York Times "Modern Love" column on the important topic of mental health in relationships. She considers it a great honor as a longtime fan of the column. To read the column search Comferto's name at nytimes.com.

Andrea Miller Williams '09 was named deputy CEO at Oregon Food Bank. Williams was previously partnerships manager for the Portland Office of Community and Civic Life. She was executive director of Causa, Oregon's immigrant rights organization, for six years and has served on philanthropic and health service boards. Williams lives in Oregon City, Oregon, with her husband, Marcus, and their toddler son.

2010s



Colleen Bell '14, earned her M.D. from the University of Minnesota Medical School in May of 2021. She was inducted into the Gold Humanism Honor Society by her peers, and she received the Rubin Award as well as the Terese Zink Narrative Medicine Award, each given to one graduating student annually. She recently moved to Austin, Texas, to pursue a three-year residency training program in Pediatrics.



Lee Mills '09 conducted the Seattle Symphony along with Seattle-based singer-songwriter and guitarist, Whitney Mongé, for a recording released in August 2021. Originally recorded in October of 2020, the album features 12 of Mongé's songs, orchestrated by composer Andrew Joslyn, performed by the symphony. Mills is the Douglas F. King Associate Conductor for the Seattle Symphony.



Colton Malesovas '15, **John Naylor '84** and **Laura Valaas '06** were the attending physician (Naylor) and residents working the ICU at Deaconess Hospital in Spokane, Washington, at the height of the pandemic in March of 2020. Valaas has since moved on to a residency in dermatology at the University of Washington in Seattle, and Malesovas is at the University of Colorado Medical School in Denver for his residency in physical medicine and rehabilitation. Left to right: Malesovas, Naylor, Valaas.

Happily Ever After



To **Jeanne Sharp '98** to Steven Harris, Nov. 6, 2020, at the DeGrazia Mission in the Sun in Tucson, Arizona.



To **Todd Trzcinski '82** to Lana Kim, May 26, 2020, in Portland, Oregon, and on Zoom. Whitties in attendance included Todd's cousin, **Priscilla Graham Wyckoff '67**, and her husband, **David '67**; and brother, **Dave Trzcinski '80**, online. The couple will live in Manhattan.

Little Whitties



To **Elizabeth Hawkins '05** and Eder Campos, a daughter, Bianca Lenora Campos Hawkins, born June 7, 2021.



To **Matthew '07** and **Shirley Lou-Magnuson '08**, a daughter, Alisa Jinxiu Lou-Magnuson, born March 16, 2021.



To **Sarah Beth Roberts '07** and Stakely McConnell, a son, William Paul McConnell, born Feb. 17, 2021. He joins brothers, Quinn, 8; Colt, 6; and Andrew, 3.



To Ellis and **Kimberly "Kiki" Brennan Langford '09**, a daughter, Martha Amelia Langford, born April 3, 2021.



To **Hannah Payne '11** and **John Hodges '11**, twins, George and Matilda, born in December 2019.



To **Zach Rosenberg '11** and Lindsay Rosenberg, a daughter, Zoe Leigh Rosenberg, born June 6, 2021.

To **Lisa Taylor '08** and Josh Stickler, a daughter, Marian Charlotte Stickler, born Aug. 3, 2021.



In Memoriam

1940s

John Frank '43, June 11, 2021, in Claremont, California. After Whitman, he attended Elmhurst College in Elmhurst, Illinois. He earned a masters' degree in divinity from Eden Theological Seminary in Webster Grove, Missouri. Frank married Dorothy Jean Weygandt in 1945 and they raised two children. He was a pastor in Minnesota, Wyoming and California, then began a second career as high school teacher in 1960. Frank was predeceased by his wife of 72 years and all eight of his siblings, including **Harold Frank '45**. Survivors include his children, four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

J. Leland Daniel '46, June 21, 2021, in Richland, Washington. After Whitman, he earned his B.S. in chemistry at the

University of Washington in Seattle and completed officer training for the U.S. Navy. Daniel worked as an analytical chemist at the Hanford nuclear site, where he met Eunice Olund. They were married in 1949 and raised three children in Richland. He earned his Ph.D. in electron microscopy at Oregon State University and spent most of his career working in that field for Battelle Northwest. Daniel and his family supported the J. Leland Daniel Scholarship Endowment, established in honor of his parents, James Leland and Lillian "Arla" Daniel, to provide assistance to students who demonstrate a financial need while attending Whitman College. Survivors include his wife of 72 years; his children, including **Linda Daniel Post '75**, son-in-law **Stephen Post '70** and **Jim Daniel '77**;

a sister, **Arla Daniel Mock '56** and brother-in-law, **Dean Mock '57**; six grandchildren, including **Annalisa Post '05**; and nine great-grandchildren.

Patty O'Connell McLaughlin '46, July 30, 2021, in Meridian, Idaho. After Whitman, she attended the University of Idaho in Moscow. She married Robert McLaughlin in 1946 and they settled in Mountain Home, Idaho, and raised five children together. McLaughlin was a member of P.E.O., the Elmore Memorial Hospital Auxiliary and the local library board. The couple moved to Meridian after retirement to be closer to family. Predeceased by her husband of 55 years, McLaughlin's survivors include her children, eight grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

Shirley Anderson Peringer '46, March 18, 2021, in Seattle. While at Whitman, she was an accompanist for many vocal students including baritone **John Peringer '48**. They married in 1947, settling in Seattle to raise four children.

They were married for 35 years before his passing in 1982. After Whitman, Peringer taught piano lessons and had a thriving studio while raising her family. She was also the organist and choir director for Columbia Congregational Church for many years. A teacher for over 62 years, she finally retired in 2020, at the age of 96. Peringer was inducted in the Hall of Fame for the Washington State Music Teachers Association in 2001, for "outstanding musicianship, dedication and leadership." In her later years she was an accomplished watercolor artist and the author and illustrator of several children's picture books. A longtime supporter of the college, Peringer was a class representative for the Office of Annual Giving for most of a decade, almost always including some type of artistic illustration in her letters to classmates. Survivors include her four children; 11 grandchildren, including **Eric Schmidt '13**; and 12 great-grandchildren.

Jacqueline Lamoreux Frailey '49, June 19, 2021, in Tumwater,

Washington. She married Richard Frailey in 1949, raising three children together. They were married 71 years until his death in March of 2021. Frailey was predeceased by her sister, **Joyce Lamoreaux Gibbs '44**. Survivors include her children, seven grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Harold "Shug" Haupt '49, Jan. 13, 2021, in Union, Washington. At Whitman, he met and married **Clara Rich '49** and they had two children. They were married for 68 years until her death in 2017. Haupt had a career in the auto sales industry. Survivors include his children, five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Rose-Marie Jaynes McEntire '49, Feb. 3, 2020, in Redmond, Washington. She married Jack McEntire in 1952 and together they raised five children. They were married for 62 years until his death in 2014. After Whitman, McEntire attended Barnes Hospital School of Medical Technology in St. Louis, Missouri. She continued to work

as a medical technologist part-time, both before and after she had children.

1950s

Janet Oakley Barclay '51, Feb. 1, 2020, in Puyallup, Washington. She attended Whitman for one year. Barclay worked in administration for several public institutions over her career, including the Port of Seattle, the Issaquah School District, the Issaquah District Court and the Renton Police Department. Barclay's survivors include four children.

Charles "Chuck" Hunter '51, May 2, 2021, in Corvallis, Oregon. Hunter had a career in sales, most notably with IBM. He was predeceased by his nephew, **Lars Hunter Johnson '75**.

Marolyn Hedrick Lauderdale '51, April 26, 2021, in Sonora, California. She attended Whitman for one year and was a member of Alpha Phi, going on to graduate from the University of California, Berkeley, in

1951. She married Robert Lauderdale in 1984.

Mildred Douglas Read '51, March 27, 2021, in Renton, Washington. The daughter of Supreme Court Justice **William O. Douglas, Class of 1920**, she earned her B.A. in economics, later becoming a school teacher. After Whitman, she married Frank Wells and they had three children. That marriage ended and she later married Norman Read. They combined households in Sunningdale, Berkshire, England. In retirement, the couple moved to Lostwithiel, Cornwall, where Read's childhood interest in horses was reawakened. Following her husband's death, she moved back to the U.S. and settled on a ranch in Wallowa, Oregon, and raised Morgan horses. Read was predeceased by a daughter. Her survivors include two children, three stepchildren, and numerous grandchildren.

Ralph "Doc" Eddings '52, May 28, 2021, in North Bend, Washington. He earned his M.D. from the University of

Washington Medical School in Seattle, completing his medical internship at Harborview Medical Center and residency at Veterans Hospital in Seattle. He married **Toinette Stallings '53** in 1953; together they raised three children. Eddings spent his entire professional life in the Snoqualmie Valley, serving the surrounding community for 60 years at Nelems Memorial Hospital. After retirement, he worked with his youngest son maintaining the Twin Star Carwash in Snoqualmie. He served as co-chair for his 40th reunion. He is survived by his wife of 68 years; three children, including **Mitch '79**; three grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

Phyllis Harrington Fisher '52, April 1, 2021, in Vancouver, Washington. She attended Whitman for one year, and later married Lee Fisher. The family settled in Anchorage, Alaska. Fisher published a cookbook for Alaskan wild game in 1961, and volunteered for the Providence Hospital Auxiliary. Predeceased by her husband, Fisher's survivors include her three children.

Barbara Ostgren Orth '52, June 20, 2021, in San Diego, California. She married **Rodney Orth '51** in 1952 and together they raised two children, **Catherine '79** and **Craig '82**. The family settled in San Diego and Orth was involved in many volunteer activities, including many years in the PTA and four years as an admissions representative for Whitman. Upon her husband's retirement from medical practice, the couple traveled extensively. Predeceased by her son, Orth is survived by her husband, daughter and a granddaughter.

George Seebart '52, June 20, 2021, in San Jose, California. Seebart had a successful business career, notably his long association with Farmers Insurance, where he served as an officer and executive. In retirement, he pursued a passion for travel, venturing from the Arctic Circle to the Antarctic and visiting every continent on the planet. Seebart was predeceased by his wife of 60 years, Carol Holston Seebart. Survivors include his longtime companion, Joan Wiseman; his

brother, **Don '48**, and sister-in-law, **Joyce Mulhair Seebart '49**; two children; and four grandchildren.

Donald Biersner '54, June 18, 2021, in Moses Lake, Washington. At Whitman, he met **Jane MacFaydean '54**; they were married in 1956 and had three children. They were married for 62 years until her death in 2018. Biersner spent his career at The Boeing Company, retiring after 33 years. In retirement, he and his wife started the Bowser Biscuit Company. Survivors include his three children and their families.

Betty Lu Kiesling Kulp '55, July 19, 2021, in Bellevue, Washington. At Whitman, she was a member of Alpha Phi and was homecoming queen. She married **Jack Kulp '54** in 1955; together they raised two children and enjoyed 39 years of marriage until his death in 1994. Kulp worked teaching elementary school children to read, and traveled around the world. She volunteered for her church, served on the committee for her 50th reunion

Whitman Leader

John Henkels III, Sept. 2, 2021, in Salt Lake City, Utah. Henkels served in the U.S. Army in the European Theater of Operations, an experience later documented in his published memoir, "They Also Served." He and his wife, Jean Merkl Henkels, established their family in Pennsylvania. Henkels worked for the family's utility construction business, Henkels & McCoy, Inc. and when he was appointed executive vice president-west, the family moved to Salt Lake City, Utah. He enjoyed a successful business career, retiring as chairman of Henkels & McCoy, Inc.

Henkels returned to school in his mid-60s and earned a degree in British history, writing his

thesis on the subject of Sino-British relations in the 19th century.

Henkels served on the Board of Overseers at Whitman College for 15 years and was named Overseer Emeritus in 2001. Three of his children attended Whitman: **Mark '80**; **Diane '86**; and Richard, who attended from 1979 to 1981. In 1987, Henkels and his wife established The John and Jean Henkels Endowed Chair of Chinese Language, providing the foundation of the Chinese major. The endowment, which funds a full-time faculty member to teach modern spoken and written Chinese and other China-related courses, is designed to promote Asian

Studies at Whitman. They also contributed to the rocks and minerals collection in Natural Science.

Associate Professor of Chinese Donghui He notes: "Although I never met John and Jean in person, I have remained in contact with their daughter Diane, who calls me whenever she comes to Whitman and expresses the family's continuing interest in the Chinese program their parents endowed. We cherish John Henkels' legacy and his commitment to liberal arts education."

He was predeceased by his wife, Jean, in 2019. His survivors include 12 children and many grandchildren, including **Max '12**.

and had lunch with a group of Whitman friends once a month. Survivors include her children and three grandchildren.

Bette Waterland Vielbig '55, March 24, 2021, in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. After Whitman, she married **Klindt Vielbig '53**; they later divorced. For a time, the couple owned and operated Cloud Cap Chalet, one of the largest outdoor equipment stores in the Portland, Oregon, area. Skiing was a focus of both Vielbig's business and volunteer service, including the Oregon Nordic Club, the National Sporting Goods Association and the Ski Retailers International. Survivors include three sons and three granddaughters.

Ann Livingston Stewart Skoglund '55, Aug. 9, 2021, in Walla Walla. After graduation, she flew to England and married **David Stewart '53**, who was stationed there with the U.S. Army. Upon his discharge, the couple returned to the U.S., living in various cities in the Pacific Northwest and eventually returning to Walla Walla. Following Stewart's death in 2006, she reconnected with a childhood friend, Al Skoglund, and they married in 2008. Skoglund had a busy life raising two daughters and volunteering for Girl Scouts, the Red Cross, the Master Gardeners and Kappa Kappa Gamma. Survivors include her husband, two daughters, four stepdaughters and family across the country.

Nancy Huff Wolfe '56, Aug. 11, 2021, in Walla Walla. After Whitman, she earned a master's in education from California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, California. Wolfe taught for the Puyallup School District and at the Annie Wright School in Seattle, and was director of youth ministries for the Diocese of Olympia for

12 years. She also assisted with women's prison ministry. Her love of theater and music, solidified during her time at Whitman, accompanied her throughout her life. Wolfe played piano and led choirs wherever she lived, singing with the Northwest Inland Musicians in Hermiston, Oregon, as well as organizing hymn singing for local nursing homes. She directed numerous theatrical productions and used her musical and theatrical talents to bring communities together to fundraise for causes such as a church in Puyallup and a new library in Milton-Freewater. Wolfe was awarded the Bishop's Cross by the Diocese of Olympia in 1988 and was honored by the City of Milton-Freewater for her dedication and tireless efforts to improve the public library. She was honored with the 2016 Sally Rodgers Award for Lifelong Achievement by the Whitman College Alumni Association. Survivors include her husband, Reverend V. Eugene Wolfe; her daughter, Amy Guy; and her son, **Griff Trotter '80**.

Gerald "Jerry" Anhorn '59, Sept. 3, 2021, in Walla Walla. Anhorn earned a master's degree in education from Eastern Washington University in Ellensburg, and a doctoral degree in education from Washington State University. He married Janice Ottevaere in 1959; together they raised five children. In addition to teaching positions at Dixie Grade School, DeSales High School and Walla Walla Community College, Anhorn worked at Whitman as an assistant football coach. He served for 32 years in the U.S. Army Reserve, and was a stalwart volunteer for Walla Walla Catholic Schools and St. Vincent de Paul. Survivors include his wife, five children and 12 grandchildren.

1960s

William Stockwell '63, May 26, 2021, in Portland, Oregon. He attended Whitman for one year, then went to Lewis & Clark College. He joined the Air National Guard in 1964 and served for six years, then started an industrial and marine supply business, In-Mar Sales, Inc., from which he retired after 42 years. Survivors include his wife of 55 years, LoAnn, two children and three grandchildren.

Mary Lee Mantz Doran '64, May 22, 2021, in Auburn, Washington. After graduation, she lived in Anchorage, Alaska, where she married Gerald Doran in 1968. They had three daughters before divorcing in 1988. The family settled in Puyallup, Washington, where Doran lived for the next 51 years. She earned a master's degree from the University of Washington School of Librarianship in 1981 and later a master's degree from the University of Washington School of Social Work. She worked for the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services for 25 years, retiring in 2008. Doran was predeceased by her parents, **William Mantz '37** and **Margaret Kelly Mantz '37**. Survivors include her sisters, **Sarah Mantz '73** and **Jennifer Mantz '67**; three daughters; and three grandchildren.

James Knowles '64, July 14, 2021, in Everett, Washington. After graduation, he served as an officer in the U.S. Navy, diving for the explosive ordinance disposal division. Knowles spent his career in business, starting at IBM and retiring upon the sale of his AM/PM Mini-Mart in 2003. Retirement was spent cruising Puget Sound with his wife and their dogs on his boat, PortFolio. He was a lifelong supporter of

Beta Theta Pi and served as co-chair for his 50th reunion. Survivors include his wife; five children including **Mary Ann Knowles LeGore '94**; and 13 grandchildren.

Charles "Chuck" Butler '67, Jan. 12, 2021, in Nantucket, Massachusetts. After Whitman, he earned a master's degree in psychology from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. Butler taught sailing and racing for the Northwestern PE department and by 1975, had left academia for life on and under the water in Nantucket. He founded Merlin Fisheries, Inc. and spent half the year as a lobsterman and the other half traveling. Butler married Cindy Collins in 1991 and they had a daughter together.

Richard Kelley '67, Apr. 25, 2021, in Chelan, Washington. After Whitman, he earned his law degree from the University of Washington Law School in Seattle. Kelley had a private practice in Olympia and was elected to the Washington State House of Representatives. An early proponent of solar energy, he started a solar company in 1988 and drove a solar-powered Volkswagen Bug. Kelley was a published author and finished a sequel to his 2013 sci-fi novel "Deathstroke" (Pear Press) in 2020. Survivors include his wife, Loretta, two daughters and four grandchildren.

Dan MacKenzie '67, July 6, 2021, in Hermiston, Oregon. He attended Whitman for one year, then graduated from the University of Washington in Seattle. MacKenzie earned his degree in divinity from Phillips Seminary in Enid, Oklahoma, and was a pastor in Othello, Washington, and Myrtle Creek and Springfield, Oregon. He later earned a master's degree in library sciences and was a librarian in the Hermiston School District, retiring in 2009.

Survivors include his wife of 51 years, Vicki; two sons; and a granddaughter.

Barbara Lawrence Maurer '67, July 15, 2021, in Seattle. After Whitman, she graduated from the University of Idaho in Moscow, later earning a master's degree in education administration from the University of Washington in Seattle. She married Gerry Maurer in 1984. Maurer taught at Gatewood Elementary School in Seattle and worked for Highline Public Schools specializing in programs for high-achieving children. Survivors include her husband, four children and seven grandchildren.

D. Elliot Parks '67, June 11, 2021, in Las Vegas, Nevada. He earned a Ph.D. in immunology from the University of Washington Medical School in Seattle. Parks served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War to perform epidemiological surveillance and vaccine development, setting the stage for the rest of his biomedical career. Parks worked in biotechnology for the Scripps Institute and Johnson & Johnson Biotechnology Center, eventually serving in various roles on the funding side of biotech. He retired after a decade as president and CEO of Hawaii Biotech Inc. While living in Del Mar, California, he served four years on the local planning commission and eight years on the city council, including two terms as mayor. Survivors include his wife, Michele Ylmene; four children; and five grandchildren.

David Pinkham '68, July 30, 2021, in Stanwood, Washington. After Whitman, he earned a master's degree in modern European history from Columbia University in New York. Pinkham committed 40 years of his professional life to

newspapers. He reported local news in Long Island, New York; San Juan County, Washington; Island County, Washington; and finally, the Stanwood/Camano community, where he was publisher and owner of the Stanwood/Camano News for 25 years. Pinkham was active in the Washington Newspaper Publishers Association, a founding member of the Stanwood Rotary, and served as board president of both the Rotary and the local Chamber of Commerce. He was predeceased by his son Andrew. Survivors include his wife of 47 years, Pam; his son, **Michael '06**; and a large extended family.

1970s

Adair Van Sant New '70, June 13, 2021, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. After Whitman, she earned a master's degree in education from the University of San Francisco, working as a special education teacher for more than 30 years. She married Kurt New in 1972 and they raised a son together, living in Plant City, Florida, for 18 years, then in Minnesota. New volunteered with Amnesty International and was an avid environmentalist. Survivors include her husband, her son and a grandson.

Stephen Lowery '71, July 23, 2021, in San Luis Obispo, California. At Whitman, he was a sociology major and a member of Delta Tau Delta.

William Nash '77, May 15, 2021, in Sparks, Nevada. He married his wife, Holly, in 1979, spending most of their lives together in Santa Paula, California. The couple relocated to Sparks in 2020. Nash spent the majority of his professional career in advertising at Seminis Seeds in Oxnard and in government communications in Ventura County. He was a volunteer firefighter and wrote satirical articles for the Santa Paula Chronicle/Times and Ventura County Star. Nash wrote and published four books, a historical accounting of the Santa Paula Fire Department and three murder mystery novels, with another underway at the time of his passing. Survivors include his wife, two children and six grandchildren.

Bruce Boyington '79, June 15, 2021, in Walla Walla. After Whitman he earned a master's degree in Asian studies from the University of Washington in Seattle. Boyington married Julianne Lincoln in 1981 and they raised a son. He worked in business management and collections. Survivors include

his wife, his son and three grandsons.

Randy Robison '79, Dec. 22, 2020, in Seattle. After graduation, he began his long banking career with Old National Bank in Spokane, Washington. In 1987, when U.S. Bank acquired Old National, Robison began the work that would engage and inspire him for the rest of his career: working on the preservation and creation of affordable housing programs and projects through a number of banks in the Pacific Northwest. He served on many boards, including HomeSight and Impact Capital, and as a Commissioner for the Washington State Housing Finance Commission. Robison served as an associate class representative for the Office of Annual Giving and was on the committee for his 25th reunion. Survivors include his wife, Lauren Jassny; a brother; and sister **Vicki Robison Shepherd '72** and brother-in-law **Ron Shepherd '72**.

1980s

Michelle Keith '85, March 30, 2021, in Seattle. She earned her M.B.A. from the University of San Francisco and had a career in business that led her around

the country, even back to Walla Walla to open Knitochet, a shop that offered classes and tools for knitting. After the shop closed in 2013, Keith settled in Seattle as a procurement specialist, securing multimillion-dollar contracts. Survivors include her mother, a sister, a niece and two nephews.

1990s

Lauren Morgan Tweedale '95, April 6, 2021, in Portland, Oregon. She married **Matt Tweedale '95** in 1997 and the couple settled in Portland to raise their family. Tweedale earned a master's degree in human resources from Portland State University and spent most of her career as a recruiter and talent acquisitions specialist. Her two most significant and longterm employers were PacifiCorp and Providence Health & Services (IBM). She was a devoted mother to Drew, a first-year at the University of Oregon, and Lydia, a high school sophomore, and truly a "people-person." Survivors include her husband, her children, a brother and her parents.

Christopher Allen '97, May 23, 2021, in Fort Collins, Colorado. Prior to attending Whitman, he earned a degree in music

education from the Berklee College of Music in Boston, Massachusetts. He earned his B.S. in biochemistry and a Ph.D. in biomedical research from the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, specializing in DNA and cancer research. A highlight of his scientific career was a two-year span of time featuring multiple trips to Japan where he conducted basic cell research using carbon-ion radiation. Survivors include a brother and a sister.

2000s

Kelly Peach '06, April 13, 2021, in Bellingham, Washington. After Whitman, she earned a Ph.D. in chemistry from the University of California, Santa Cruz. As a part of her research into marine bacteria that could be used to treat infectious diseases, she learned how to scuba dive and became a master diver. Peach taught high school science at The Bay School of San Francisco and sought to inspire creativity and wonder through that lens. Survivors include her parents, a brother and a sister.

Class Notes Policy

Whitman College is happy to highlight the achievements and milestones of our alumni. To have your item appear in Class Notes, fill out the form at whitman.edu/classnotes, email alumni@whitman.edu or mail a note to Whitman College, Office of Alumni Relations, 345 Boyer Ave., Walla Walla, WA 99362. Class Note submissions are limited to 50 words and should include updates from the past calendar year. Class Note submissions may include career updates; publications; honors, awards or appointments; or other significant life

changes you would like to share with the Whitman community. Any photographic submissions for Class Notes, marriages/unions or births/adoptions should include the identities of all people pictured, as well as alumni relatives for births/adoptions. It is the responsibility of the submitter to obtain consent from others pictured or mentioned in the submission.

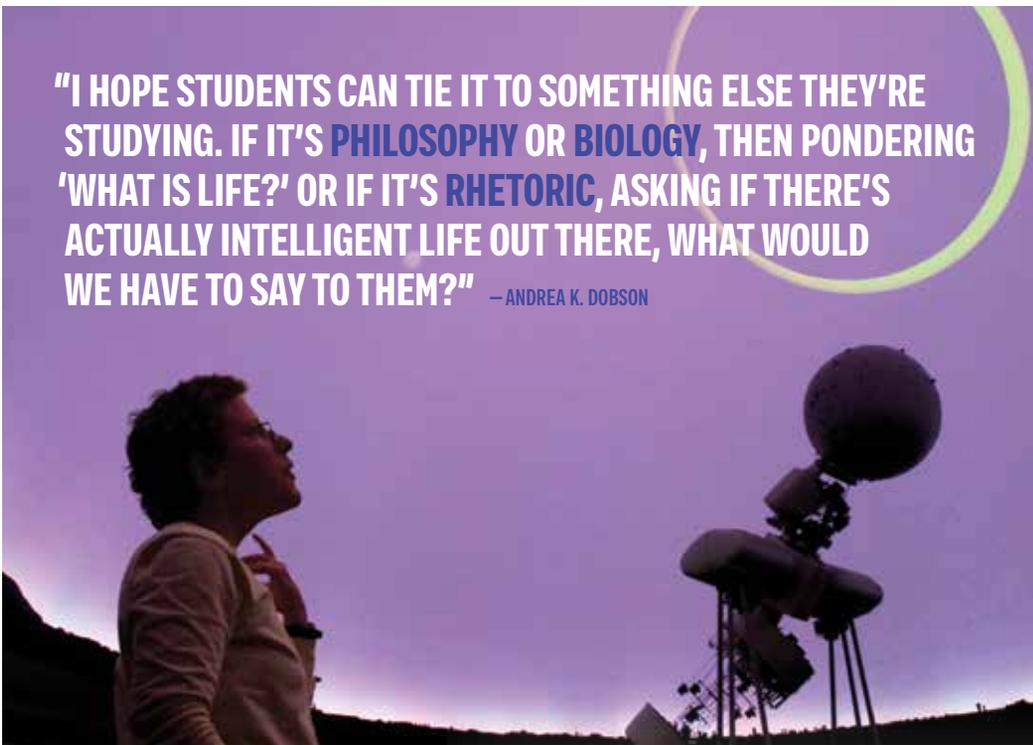
For In Memoriams, Whitman College runs the name of the deceased, their graduate year and major, and the date and place of death, when available,

we will include career information, survivors and other highlights of their life, including recorded service to the college or honors received from the college. Photographs for obituaries are run at the discretion of the Office of Alumni Relations for those designated "Whitman Leaders." The college makes a good faith effort to confirm the information submitted with the concerned parties. All submissions are subject to editing for style, content, length and clarity. Address questions to Jennifer Dilworth Northam '91, Class Notes editor, at northajl@whitman.edu or call 509-526-4794.

ASTR 228

Exoplanets and the Search for Life in the Universe

3 CREDITS | A. DOBSON



Course Description:

*A survey of planetary systems around other stars and current **research into the possibilities for life elsewhere in the universe.***

Coursework includes problem sets and exams, a short research paper, an oral presentation and occasional outdoor labs.



PROFESSOR BIO

Andrea K. Dobson, associate professor of astronomy and general studies and astronomy department chair. Her interests include solar-type stars, the history of cosmology, gender and science, and public outreach. **She believes any extraterrestrial life is likely to be microbial** but, "It doesn't keep me from wondering what it would be like if it were possible for somebody to show up here and want to communicate?"

Some topics the course covers include:

- » The evolution of the universe and origin of the elements.
- » The origins of life on Earth.
- » The evolution and effects of life on Earth.
- » Methods of detecting planets around other stars.
- » Potentially habitable locations in the solar system.

Scientists believe Mars has the greatest potential to have life or to have had it in the past. As chief engineer for NASA's Jet Propulsion Lab, **Rob Manning '80 plays a major role in that search. His team designs the rovers that explore the surface of the Red Planet, including **Perseverance**, which touched down in February 2021. Hear him talk about it at whitman.edu/magazine.**



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Introducing Whitman's 15th President



A NEW ERA. Sarah Bolton will be Whitman College's 15th president, beginning in July 2022. A respected physicist, scholar and administrator, Bolton brings more than 25 years of experience in higher education and a long-standing commitment to the liberal arts. See inside (page 18) to get to know Bolton and watch a video introduction at whitman.edu/magazine.

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