

WHITMAN

MAGAZINE / SPRING 2019



Conserving the Confluence Project

Whitman archivists and art historians work together to save architectural history

WHITMAN

MAGAZINE

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star
with V

On the cover: Matt Reynolds, associate professor of art history and visual culture studies, and research assistant Laura Rivale '19 examine a model of the Sandy River Delta Bird Blind, one of several earthworks comprising the Confluence Project. This object and others are now part of an exciting new collection housed at the Whitman College Northwest Archives. Photo by Greg Lehman

This page: Longtime Walla Walla Public Schools educator Mira Gobel presents her workshop, "Building Your Why Statement," to participants of the first Sophomore Summit, held Jan. 11-12, 2019. A new program piloted for the 2018-2019 school year, Sophomore Summit is a sophomore-only experience. Participating students critically examined their leadership identity, developed skills for narrating their academic life and academic choices, and made connections within the Walla Walla community. Photo by Greg Lehman



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Commitment to Resilience

You may have heard how the Whitman Blues women swam to the 2019 Northwest Conference Championship this past February, coming from behind on the last day of the meet. Or about the group of students whose dedication to the environment convinced the Board of Trustees to begin the process of divesting from fossil fuels. Or about the first-generation/working-class students who journeyed to Walla Walla for our first Summer Fly-In Program four years ago, and this spring are proudly receiving their degrees.

I've come to expect this sort of resilience from our Whitties. But more often than not, I hear about the lack of it in today's young people. I read about coddled kids and "snowflakes," students who can't deal with failure or even adversity. And I worry about our young people and the world they will inhabit if these concerns are real. And then I worry that I've become my parents, generationally separated from and unable to understand our current students.

However, if my worries about this generation of students are warranted, then it is our responsibility to help them prepare, as our mission statement says, for ethical and meaningful lives of purpose beyond Whitman.

I am reassured, and want all of you to be reassured, by what I see happening in the academic programs at Whitman and in many of our co-curricular offerings. Our faculty members push our students with academically rigorous programs. They offer the support students may need in order to succeed, but the students must do the work. And it's not enough for them to do the work in a series of disconnected courses and then forget about it. They must retain and integrate what they have learned in order to tackle their required senior comprehensive exams.

This kind of academic work demands resilience.

Our scholar-athletes are students first, and I am convinced that the resilience they learn in our classrooms is enhanced by their experiences on our courts, on our fields and in our pool. They win a lot, and that's really fun, but they also deal with team and personal adversity, and they still show up for the next contest and give it their all. Hats off to our great coaching staff for encouraging that spirit of resilience in our scholar-athletes.

Every Friday at noon, students, staff and faculty gather in the Glover Alston Center for our "Continuing the Conversation" program, designed to create space for people to engage in difficult conversations around topics like race, religion, politics or sexuality. Participants are encouraged to extend grace to each other as they learn to navigate these difficult dialogues. Another approach to building resilience.

I am proud of this work that I see in action at Whitman, but I will never be satisfied or believe that it is sufficient. The complexities of our local, national and global landscapes demand the mental strength of healthy resilience. I believe you will see some extraordinary results of that resilience in the stories of students, faculty, staff and alumni that fill the pages of this magazine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathleen M. Murray". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Kathleen M. Murray
President

Campus News



Photo courtesy of Whitman Swimming

Women's Swimming Team Claims Third Straight NWC Championship

The Whitman College women's swimming team rallied on the final day of the Northwest Conference Championships to win their third straight league title in February. Trailing in the team standings for nearly the entire event, the Blues came through on the final day to swim past Linfield by a 559-521 margin.


"There was a lot of uncertainty about the meet from the beginning, but they were adaptable and resilient," said head coach Jenn Blomme. "I'm so proud of who we are as a team."

With only three women's events remaining, **Miranda Williams '21** won the 200-meter breast stroke with a time of 2:20.94 and in the process

posted an NCAA qualifying time. Whitman capped the win on the final event — the 400-yard freestyle relay — with the team of **Mara Selznick '20, Gaby Thomas '19, Ashley Joe '22** and **Zoe Hill '21**, winning by nearly two full seconds. The breast stroke and relay wins were the only wins of the week, a

testament to the team's resilience.

"When things didn't go as hoped, they shook it off as if the setback never happened," Blomme said. "This is a win of depth, of a team working together with a common purpose."

Visit athletics.whitman.edu to catch up on the latest videos and social media feeds from Whitman's 16 varsity sports. 



First-graders at Edison Elementary in Walla Walla learned the story of Ruby Bridges during the 2019 Whitman Teaches the Movement program.

Right: Maddy Gold '19 accepts the 2019 IMPACT Service Program of the Year Award on behalf of Whitman Teaches the Movement.



bring back these topics and ways to make change at our school.”

As part of the four-day conference, Gold, a theatre major, gave a presentation titled “Changing the World through Socially Engaged Theatre.” Her talk was based in large part on her experiences participating in “Because You Are Here,” a devised play based on interviews with immigrant and first-generation members of the Walla Walla community.

“There’s an aspect of mutual transformation in the work we do engaging with others,” Gold said. “You go into the community and share something you’ve learned, but you’re also gaining something in return. That’s why I don’t like the term ‘helping others.’ We’re here to grow with others.” **W**



WATCH THE STORY
See how Whitman Teaches the Movement teaches empathy and compassion to first-graders.
whitman.edu/magazine

Whitman Teaches the Movement Wins IMPACT Service Program of the Year Award

Whitman Teaches the Movement (WTTM) — Whitman College’s student-led program that brings civil rights lessons to Walla Walla public schools every January and February — received the Service Program of the Year award at the IMPACT Conference, held Feb. 21-24, 2019, at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Virginia.

The Service Program of the Year Award recognizes a campus-based program that models student-led direct community service, which has in some way contributed to making its campus and communities better places for everyone.

WTTM was founded in 2011 in partnership with the Southern Poverty Law Center’s Teaching Tolerance project and Walla

Walla Public Schools. This year, the program gave 85 Whitman student volunteers the opportunity to converse about civil rights and social justice with an estimated 1,200 students in the Walla Walla community. Before going into the schools, Whitman volunteers attended trainings to prepare for their roles as educators and to learn the curriculum, with lessons and activities varying by grade level.

“It’s a team effort with WTTM,” said Susan Prudente, assistant director of community engagement for the Student Engagement Center and the program’s advisor. “Thanks to our partnerships with the Southern Poverty Law Center, the Walla Walla School District Administration, local teachers and passionate college students, we are able to en-

gage in the community and share these lessons that hopefully will bring us all closer to a more kind, just, inclusive society.”

The IMPACT Conference is the largest annual conference focused on the civic engagement of college students in community service, service-learning, community-based research, advocacy and other forms of social action.

Maddy Gold '19, social justice coordinator for the 2019 WTTM program, presented at the conference and accepted the award.

“Attending IMPACT was a life-changing experience for me,” Gold said. “The conference brings people from schools across the nation together to engage in conversations of oppression and structural marginalization, and it provides a way to



Alumnus Returns to Explore Latinx Migrant Narrative

Study of the Latinx migrant narrative is very topical and present in the ways students engage with the world today. Helping lead those discussions on Whitman’s campus is Assistant Professor of Spanish **Aaron Aguilar-Ramirez '12**, who joined Whitman’s faculty in 2017 after earning his doctorate in Spanish and Portuguese at Northwestern University in Chicago. Go to whitman.edu/magazine to watch a video about the new perspectives he brings to the Hispanic Studies Department.

Kazi Joshua Named Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students

In January, Whitman College named Kazi Joshua the vice president for student affairs and dean of students. Joshua has been serving as the interim dean since June 2018. He has led the college's diversity, equity and inclusion efforts since 2015.

"I am delighted that Kazi will continue to play such a key role in the lives of our students," President Kathleen M. Murray said. "In his tenure here, he has demonstrated principled leadership, integrity and compassion and has become a beloved figure on campus. Not only has he earned the trust of our students but the broader campus community as well."

Known for his signature bow ties and open-door policy, Joshua arrived at Whitman from Allegheny College, where he served as associate dean and director of the Center for Intercultural Advancement and Student Success. A theologian who studied at Yale University and the University of

Chicago, Joshua was born in the southeast African nation of Malawi. He estimates he has spent roughly half his life in the United States and half in Africa, equipping him to easily relate to students from diverse backgrounds.

"I want to be a dean who is consistently visible, accessible and listening," Joshua said. "I consider this an amazing opportunity to contribute to the education of some of the most promising students I have worked with in my 25 years in higher education. I am particularly excited to be part of the unfolding of the implementation of the strategic plan, and to transform our aspirations into the everyday lived experiences of our students, both inside and outside the classroom."

Whitman is in the process of a nationwide search for a new vice president for diversity, equity and inclusion. Until that person is named, sociology Professor Helen Kim will continue to serve as the interim vice president, a role she assumed in July 2018. **W**



Beckman Scholars Award Expands Summer Research Focus

Starting this summer, students will benefit from an expanded vision for summer research in the chemistry and life sciences departments at Whitman College, thanks to a Beckman Scholars Award from the Arnold and Mabel Beckman Foundation.

This is the first time the college has received the prestigious Beckman Scholars Award. Worth \$104,000 over three years, the award is part of an invitation-only program that supports undergraduate research in chemistry, biochemistry and medicine. The award will support four students over three years in mentored research projects.

The first two scholars were selected in March 2019. **Silas Miller '21** will spend the summer working with Assistant Professor Brit Moss assisting her research on how hormones shape plant growth. **Alexandra Moore '20** will work with Assistant Professor Michael Coronado and his research on

mitochondrial fission in health and disease. Read more about Coronado's research starting on Page 20.

Faculty members from the departments of chemistry, biology, and biochemistry, biophysics and molecular biology (BBMB) will serve as scholar mentors. Beckman Scholars will work full time for two summers with their mentor, as well as 10 hours a week during the academic year. The Beckman Scholars Award provides each student with \$21,000 in funding over the course of the program.

As part of the grant, the selected Beckman Scholars will create opportunities for all student researchers to receive more professional development and chances to collaborate with each other. Activities may include organizing weekly gatherings, assisting with outreach or organizing a summer research seminar.

The length of the Beckman Scholar Award is also a huge benefit for students. Most students are only able to work on a research project for perhaps 10 weeks in the summer. By working on a project for 15 months, students are able to work on more complex topics, and they are more likely to contribute to a published journal article. **W**

Nina Finley '17 finds a nest of snow goose goslings in July 2018 in Queen Maude Gulf Bird Sanctuary in Nunavut, Canada. Photo by Kayla Buhler

Whitman Fellows Create Paths to the Future

Alumni and students are using prestigious fellowship programs to pursue knowledge and build their best life

By Savannah Tranchell





W

hen she was 9 years old, **Nina Finley '17** fell in love with dairy cows.

Already passionate about the outdoors and animals, Finley took a trip to the Evergreen State Fair that sealed the deal.

“I wanted to be a farmer. I made this urban farm in Seattle with gardens and fruit trees,” said Finley, who was active in 4-H and even founded Seattle’s first urban farming 4-H club.

As a young adult, Finley became a scholar and researcher in the fields of biodiversity, health and ecology. She transferred to Whitman College as a sophomore after spending a year at The Ohio State University — an experience that helped her realize industrial agriculture and veterinary medicine didn’t engage her as much as ecology.

Finley received six prestigious honors during her time at Whitman, including a Hollings Scholarship through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; two awards from the Udall Foundation, which rewards commitment to environmental issues; a Goldwater Scholarship; and a Fulbright award, which she declined in favor of a fellowship from the Watson Foundation.

This year, Finley added another honor to her already distinguished list when she was named one of 48 recipients of the 2019 Marshall Scholarship. She is the first student to receive the honor in Whitman history.

Finley isn’t the only Whitman alumna or student to receive a significant award this year: **Samuel Curtis '16** became the first Whitman graduate to receive a Schwarzman Scholarship, a new program at one

of China’s most renowned research universities.

Finley and Curtis are in good company. Since 2004, 434 Whitman alumni or students have received fellowships and grants from 70 of the world’s most competitive scholarly programs.

A Path Toward Excellence

“Applying for and receiving a prestigious award is a journey of self-exploration,” said Keith Raether, director of the Office of Fellowships and Grants. Each year, Raether advises around 300 students and eligible alumni interested in pursuing a fellowship, scholarship or grant.

“Typically, about half of those finish the process of applying, which can take months,” Raether said. Many programs, such as the Marshall Scholarship, require that applicants be nominated by their institution, which involves a rigorous internal process.

It’s a process that offers more than a brag point for a resume or some money to travel the world. The fellowships offer real pathways to careers.

The path taken by **Danielle Garbe Reser '97**, for instance, launched her career in international relations as a recipient of a Thomas R. Pickering Graduate Foreign Affairs Fellowship. Sponsored by the U.S. Department of State and the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, the Pickering Fellows receive funding for graduate work and summer internships in exchange for a commitment to serve in the Foreign Service for at least three years. Garbe Reser earned her graduate degree in public administration from Columbia University, then began a nearly 14-year diplomatic career, including time as a staff assistant to then-Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and two stints at the White House under President Barack Obama.

“The fellowship was a huge head

start,” said Garbe Reser, who is now CEO of the Sherwood Trust in Walla Walla after leaving the Foreign Service in 2015. “I met a lot of people in those early internships. It reaffirmed that it was a career I wanted, too. It just made the sequencing that much easier — to go to graduate school knowing that you have a job lined up afterward.”

The Office of Fellowships and Grants promotes about 75 major programs around the globe, and Raether can help students find programs that fit any major or interest area. Programs can provide funds for graduate school, international travel, independent travel or career-oriented internships.

“Receiving an award positions those students in a very important transitional time — especially if they’re graduating seniors. It’s their rite of passage, and it’s a giant step toward a career,” Raether said. “Employers across sectors are looking for these sorts of scholars and fellows.”

Pursuing a New Program

Originally from Corvallis, Oregon, Curtis earned his degree in biochemistry, biophysics and molecular biology. This fall, he will study at Tsinghua University in Beijing as part of the Schwarzman Scholars accelerated master’s program in global affairs. Participants can choose to focus on public policy, international relations, or business and economics.



Read more about Danielle Garbe Reser’s journey from Walla Walla to the White House — and back again — at whitman.edu/magazine.



“It forces you to make a blueprint for your life. I had to take my jumbled life story and frame it into a narrative about ecology.” — Nina Finley '17

Nina Finley '17 talks with Bella Jovita, an Indonesian medical student from Jakarta, in Sukadana, West Kalimantan in April 2018. Finley was studying the connection between the health of the mangrove forest and the people in the region.

Like Finley, Curtis also received other awards during his time at Whitman. He traveled to South Korea as a Gilman Scholar and earned a Princeton in Asia Fellowship to teach English in Kazakhstan — an experience that grew his interest in international relations, economics and nuclear weapon policies. He worked as a research and communications assistant for Chan Young Bang, president of the Kazakhstan Institute of Management, Economics and Strategic Research.

“I’ve developed an interest in the science behind modern weapons of mass destruction and the policies governing their development and use. It’s a field that fascinates me and I want to find a way to study that further,” Curtis said. “The key players are the U.S., China and Russia. I began learning about Russian culture and language during my time in Kazakhstan. The Schwarzman Scholarship will allow me to study policy and familiar-

ize myself with Chinese culture and language. It’s an ambitious collaborative program focused on preparing students to solve global issues.”

The Schwarzman Scholars program began in 2016. The 147 students in the Class of 2020 represent 119 universities and 38 countries; only 40 percent of recipients are from the United States — and more than 2,800 people applied.

The Princeton in Asia Fellowship helped him narrow his interests and develop his career path, Curtis said.

“As I was graduating from Whitman, most of my friends were looking toward entering medical school, and I had a bit of a crisis, feeling that I wasn’t ready to make that commitment — it didn’t quite feel like the right fit,” he said. “Earlier in college, I’d spent a semester abroad in South Korea, and I wanted to return to Asia to learn about another culture

and language. The Princeton in Asia program provided a rewarding opportunity to spend time figuring out the next steps in my career. Now I’m more confident in and excited by the path that I’m on.”

Solving Problems Through the Details

Thanks to the Marshall Scholarship, Finley will spend two years in the United Kingdom working toward two master’s degrees. In her first year, she’ll study in a joint program of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the Royal Veterinary College to pursue a Master of Science in One Health. The “one health” paradigm focuses on the intersection of human, animal and environmental health. It’s a concept she began studying during her Watson Fellowship. During her second year, she plans to read for a Master of Research in evolution, biodiversity and conservation at the University

College London. Specifically, she wants to study chytrid fungus, a pathogen that’s causing the decline of frog populations around the globe.

As a Watson Fellow, Finley spent 12 months studying in Brazil, Madagascar, Malaysia, Indonesia, the United Kingdom and the Canadian Arctic. Each location had Finley looking at different biodiversity and ecosystem health issues, such as studying virus transfer from domestic dogs to wild cats in Brazil’s tropical dry forest.

“I was trying to get the idea of a location through this microbe,” she said. “How do I understand this part of Brazil in the way that canine distemper virus understands it?”

In Indonesia, Finley connected with Health in Harmony, a planetary health organization that provides human health care and farming training to protect Bornean rainforest. The group holds “radical listening” meetings — extensive conversations with communities



During his time as a Princeton in Asia Fellow, Samuel Curtis '16, second from right, visited Mynzhylky Plateau in Kazakhstan in October 2017.

to understand what people want to conserve and what challenges they face. Health in Harmony then implements the solutions proposed by communities. Over the past 10 years, their approach has led to health clinics, a teaching farm, and an 88 percent decrease in deforestation in Gunung Palung National Park. The holistic approach appealed to Finley.

“They were going to communities surrounding rainforests, and their method of conversation was to ask the communities, ‘Do you want to be logging this land? And if not, what support do you need to be able to stop?’ It was a respectful and ethical way to go about conservation,” she said. It was also the solution-focused approach she was looking for.

“Everywhere I’d been through the Watson until then was problem-focused. Forest fragmentation in Madagascar, and viruses in Brazil, and coral bleaching in Malaysia — and I’m learning about all the things that are wrong,” she said. “We know that the planet is stressed. But the science stopped there — what science was doing was just understanding problems. Solutions were vague and didn’t have teeth.”

While waiting to move to London to begin her Marshall program, Finley and her partner, Collin Smith ’15, went to Indonesia

to work more with Health in Harmony. But she’s looking forward to returning to academia in the fall.

“I’m really excited to be in London and becoming more of an expert in something,” she said.

Summoning the Courage to Try

Students like Finley who receive multiple awards in consecutive years are rare, Raether said. But it isn’t uncommon for awards to build on each other in a smaller way, like Curtis’ experience.

“One network kind of leads to another network,” Raether said. “But I’d also say that the identification of the award as an ideal fit is also very important — Nina’s Marshall is an example of that. Every piece of her application fits perfectly, and it’s all intentional.”

Regardless of whether they receive an award, Raether said the application process provides valuable personal insights.

“The experience that the student has through this process is to gain a fuller understanding of self. There’s this whole internal excavation process of doing these applications,” he said.

The students build personal narratives that are useful in many other aspects of their lives.

“It forces you to make a blueprint for your life,” Finley said. “I had to take my jumbled life story

and frame it into a narrative about ecology. Getting the fellowships is a lot less important than going through the process of determining what you’d do if you got it.”

For Curtis, the most valuable part of the fellowship was refining his career path.

“I’m glad that I took some time to think about what I’d like to do in the future,” he said. “Overseas programs that send you to different parts of the world do more than just immerse you in other cultures — you can have a life-changing experience by trying something outside of your comfort zone.”

The only mistake a student can make when it comes to the awards is not applying at all.

“If it lights a passion, if it makes you excited, just go through the whole process and try for it,” Finley said. “The only way you’re definitely not going to get is if you don’t apply.” **W**

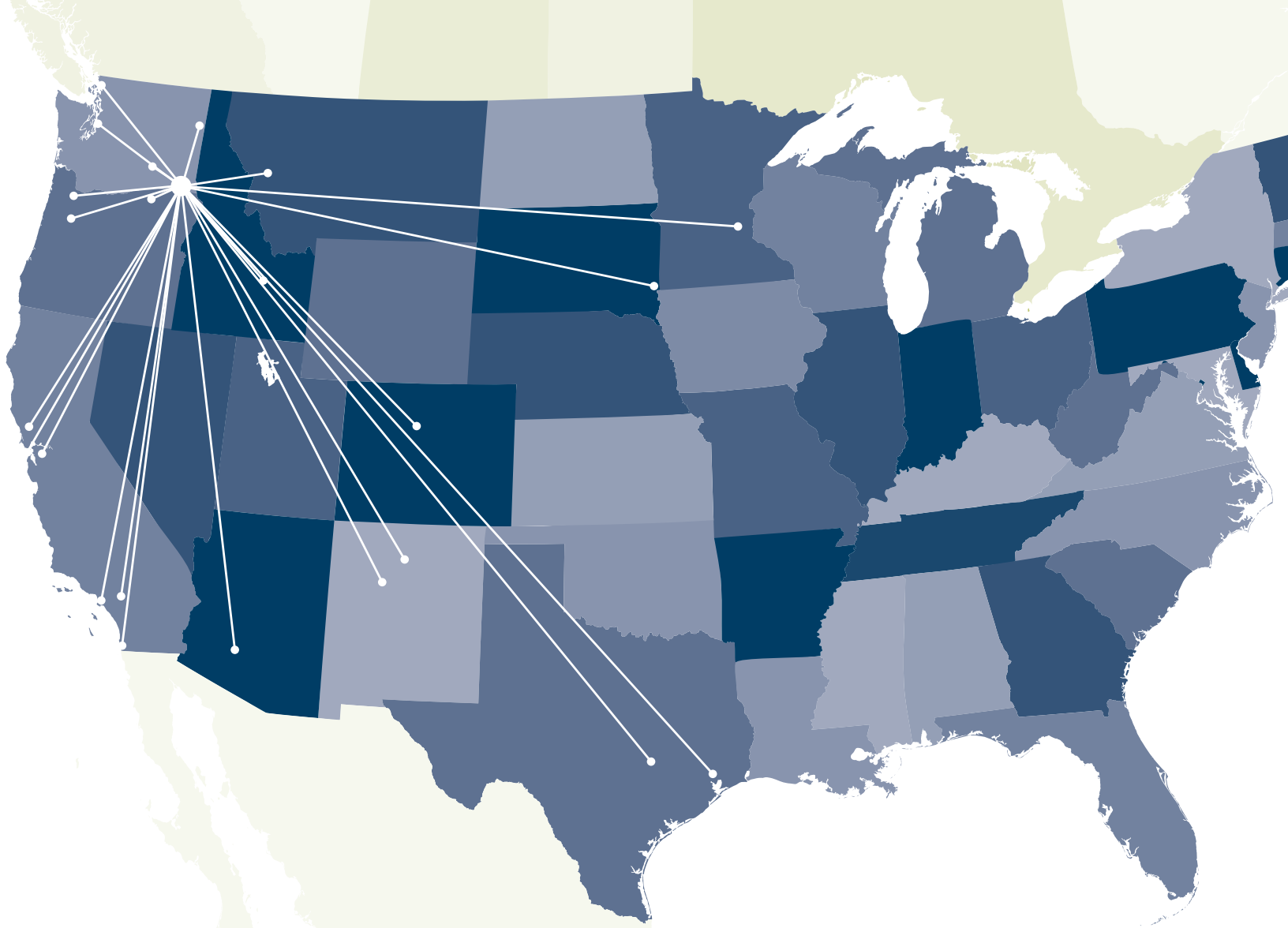
To support fellowship and grant opportunities for students at Whitman College, go to whitman.edu/giving.

Who is Eligible for Fellowships?

The Office of Fellowships and Grants works with any Whitman students or alumni interested in applying for a fellowship, scholarship or grant. Each program has different eligibility requirements, including age, academic achievement, public service and demonstrated leadership. Program Director Keith Raether is available by appointment to help students and alumni identify programs in their interest areas and work through the application process. For information, contact Raether at 509-527-5184, raethekr@whitman.edu or go to whitman.edu/after-whitman/fellowships-and-grants.

“The Schwarzman Scholarship will allow me to study policy and familiarize myself with Chinese culture and language. It’s an ambitious and collaborative program focused on preparing students to solve global issues.” – Samuel Curtis ’16

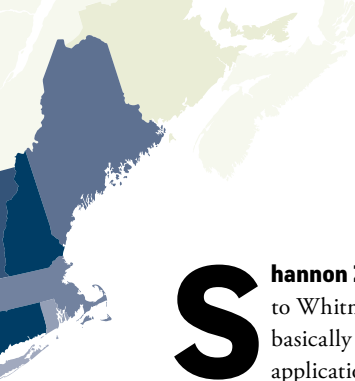




FINDING THEIR WINGS

Four years after it was launched, the Summer Fly-In Program continues to help first-generation/working-class students navigate the path to success

By Savannah Tranchell
Illustration by Matthew McKern



Shannon Zander '19 applied to Whitman College for basically one reason: the application was free.

"My mother was very much stressing out about college applications — they were \$50 apiece. So, the evening of the deadline for the fee waiver, I sat down and power-wrote my essays predominantly as a way to say, 'Look, Mom, I applied to a place. It'll be fine,'" said Zander, who is now a senior studying classics and philosophy. "And lo and behold, I got in."

Raised by a working-class single mom, the first-generation student accepted her place at Whitman sight unseen.

"I was terrified. I had never been to Whitman before I accepted," said Zander, who is from Colorado Springs, Colorado.

It was spring 2015, and unknown to Zander, a team of people at Whitman College were preparing to launch the Summer Fly-In Program, an initiative that would change the trajectory of her college experience and that of other first-generation/working-class (FGWC) students like her.

The college held its first Summer Fly-In in July 2015. The program went from idea to execution in just months, said Associate Dean of Students Juli Dunn. This May, the first cohort of Fly-In students will graduate.

CREATING THE SUMMER FLY-IN

In the spring of 2015, Dunn and Associate Dean of Students Barbara Maxwell, who oversees orientation and student activities, were already talking with members of the college's FGWC Club about the best ways to help FGWC students connect with resources. Coincidentally, a donor approached Whitman about providing funding for programming geared toward under-represented students. One idea for those funds was to provide scholarships to help students participate in the existing Scrambles pre-orientation adventures. But the students wanted something else.

"Essentially, the first-gen students said, 'Here's what we need: We need an opportunity for students like us to come to Whitman and really get their bearings

and grounding in advance of coming to Whitman,'" Dunn said. "So, we started to think about what a pre-orientation program would look like. I was really concerned about making people choose between a program and a Scramble. Then the students said, 'Well, what if it wasn't August? What if it was July?'"

The donor liked the idea, and the Summer Fly-In Program took off in May 2015.

The team worked with Financial Aid and Admission to identify students who were first-generation or eligible for Pell Grants — one indicator that a student comes from a working-class family. Shortly thereafter, students like Zander received a letter inviting them to campus. Fly-In provides round-trip airfare to Walla Walla, transportation to campus, food and accommodations.

For Zander, Fly-In changed everything.

"I remember there was someone with a sign with my name on it to greet me when I got off the plane," Zander said. "It was this anxiety-discharging moment — that this is the kind of welcome that they were willing to give me."

LEARNING THE ROPES

The college hopes that Fly-In levels the playing field for Whitman students.

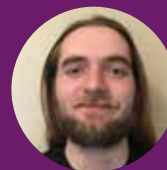
"Research shows that first-generation/working-class students arrive to college without the social capital and the knowledge of how to access resources," said **Maggi Banderas '05**, associate director of the Intercultural Center. Banderas organizes the student leadership and identity aspects of the Fly-In experience. "They don't have someone in their family who has gone to college, who knows where to go if they're struggling. They often face a lot of difficulty accessing resources that are specifically there for them."

Maxwell recalls the FGWC Club members saying, "Whitman is resource-rich, but if you don't know what you don't know, it's the same as Whitman having no resources at all."

"All I could picture was that we were the wizard behind the curtain, and unless we

WORDS OF SUPPORT

What would you say to a first-generation/working-class student who has been invited to Fly-In, and wondering whether it's for them?



"There's not a reason why you shouldn't go to Fly-In. It's a worthwhile experience for everyone, whether that's gaining the feeling of community and acceptance before school,

or just getting the chance to be on campus for an extra amount of time." — **Cory Cogley '19, music theory, Spokane, Washington**



"It will make it just so much of a more relaxing and fun time when other students are coming in and they're panicking about how are they going to make friends and how will they find certain things and where do they go? It is a very good investment, for all years on campus, to come in with a group of friends and with a set of knowledge. It's well worth it."

— **Grant Traynor '19, environmental studies-biology, Hermiston, Oregon**



"It's important because many, if not all, first-generation students struggle a lot with not even understanding what resources are there, or what questions they should be asking

in college, because they don't have the guidance from their parents. They need the extra help and guidance from people who already know the campus — older students, staff and faculty. I think the Fly-In helps bridge some of that gap."

— **Ye Rim Cho '19, sociology, Los Angeles**



"Chances are, nearly every single other person on the program feels nervous, too. The tremendous community that you'll find going on this program will be well worth the anxiety."

— **Shannon Zander '19, classics and philosophy, Colorado Springs, Colorado**

Top, near right: Daphne Gallegos '19 (left) gets climbing pointers from Brien Sheedy, director of outdoor programs, during the 2015 Summer Fly-In Program.



Bottom, near right: Antonio Tharp '19 explores Penrose Library as part of a scavenger hunt during the 2015 Summer Fly-In Program.



Far right: Shannon Zander '19 participates in a cyanotype art project during the 2015 Summer Fly-In Program with instructor Charly Bloomquist.

Photos by Matt Banderas '04



could figure out how to pull the curtain open, then it didn't matter that we had the resources," Maxwell said.

Summer Fly-In aims to pull back that curtain. During the welcoming stay, students visit various offices on campus and discover whom to ask for help — as well as how.

"They visit 16 offices over three days, and we work with the offices to not be a dog-and-pony show, and do bare-bones introductions," Dunn said. "The goal is that students start to get comfortable asking questions of people who they don't know, so if they get to a place where they're like, 'I need to go to Financial Aid, but I don't know what to say,' they've already done that once."

For some FGWC students, Summer Fly-In may be the first time they've stepped on Whitman's campus — or any college campus. The structure of academia can be intimidating, and some struggle with feelings that they don't belong among a community of peers who seem to know where to go and what to do. As part of the program, Banderas and Intercultural Center program advisor **Jennifer Lopez '13** lead the students in discussions about identity.

"Being a first-generation or working-class

student is an accomplishment they should be proud of. If they had certain obstacles that others did not have, and they are here and are successful, that's something to celebrate," Banderas said.

DEVELOPING LEADERS

Thirty-two students attended the first Summer Fly-In in 2015. This May, 27 are graduating — that's a four-year graduation rate of nearly 85 percent, or 5 percentage points *higher* than the overall Class of 2019! Over the past four years, 183 students have participated in the program.

The organizers have found program participants naturally rise as leaders among their peers, often returning to serve as mentors for future Summer Fly-Ins.

Sociology major **Ye Rim Cho '19** served as a student leader for Summer Fly-In for two years. A working-class student from Los Angeles, Cho said the resources she learned about during Fly-In helped her transition to the college environment.

"We talked to one of the counselors in the counseling center, and she told us specifically about how many first-generation

students struggle in college and the transition of being away from your family can be a very intimidating," Cho said. "I guess I really didn't think that would apply to me until I started at Whitman — and then realized this transition is really tough. But I knew I could go to the counseling center and use those resources. It helped me out a ton."

Cho also served as co-president of the FGWC Club, participated in Greek Life, held on-campus jobs in Admission, Financial Aid and the Reid Campus Center, and participated in two off-campus internships. This year, she was vice president of Diversity and Inclusion for the Associated Students of Whitman College.

"I didn't realize it then that it would affect me this much, but all the knowledge and social capital that I earned going to the Fly-In, it



FLYING-IN TO ACADEMICS

In addition to learning about the resources available at Whitman and how to navigate academia, participants in the Summer Fly-In also get an introduction to academic expectations. Students take a mock-Encounters class, become familiar with the college's art program and science offerings, and learn tips for working with their faculty advisor. Read more about the academic side of Fly-In at whitman.edu/magazine.

helped me jump-start experiences and leadership skills," Cho said.

Grant Traynor '19 also gave back to Fly-In as a student leader. Traynor was raised in a wealthy family in Portland, but his life changed when his parents divorced. He moved with his mom into a motor home, and eventually a small house in Hermiston, Oregon.

He was grateful for the opportunity to participate in Summer Fly-In. The environmental studies-biology major credits the program with helping him face his own privilege and identity.

"It was a really hard experience for me, kind of facing these things, about how maybe I have more opportunities that could be related to my previous wealth or to race," Traynor said. "That was really hard for me to learn. It was not graceful. I still keep that in mind, how lucky I am and

how differences in cultural experiences might affect people's outlooks and opportunities in life."

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE


Since the program's launch and the initial donation, 16 alumni, parents and friends have given support to Summer Fly-In. Thanks to their generosity, the program costs the students nothing.

"I want every single student who this would be a good program for to be able to come and feel comfortable," Dunn said.

In addition to the FGWC Club, Whitman also offers a mentorship program for FGWC students that connects them with a staff or faculty member. Creating community for underrepresented students further supports the vision of the donor whose gift launched the program.

"I love the program. It makes college accessible to those who don't have the financial means," said the donor, who wishes to remain anonymous. "It's a unique and creative way to integrate people into the community. I like it a lot."

Like many of the other students, Zander credits the program with giving her the courage to step outside her comfort zone and excel.

"I cannot understate how wonderful it was just being shown around and saying, 'Here's this resource. Here's this one. Here's the ASWC Office,'" said Zander, who served as a senator as a first-year student. "I genuinely believe the Fly-In program set me up to hit the ground running." 

To support programs like Summer Fly-In, go to whitman.edu/giving.



MAKING BUDDIES IS HER GOAL

Psychology major Leah Shaffner '19 wins grants to support passion for working with individuals with disabilities

By Peter Szymczak

Leah Shaffner '19 suffers from no lack of energy. Whether playing tennis, skiing or camping, Shaffner loves leading an active lifestyle — almost as much as she loves helping others join in on the fun.

“I really love to ski, but that’s just half the fun,” the Conifer, Colorado native said. “You get to hang out on the lift and get in some nice chatting time. It’s just a lot of fun to get to hang out with everyone and really cool to be doing something that really is an energetic, exciting experience.”

In addition to pursuing a major in psychology, Shaffner won a Special Olympics Youth Innovation Grant in 2018 to jump-start the unified Special Olympics soccer team, picking up where **Jeanette Schwensen '18** left off in 2016. That year, Schwensen captained a team of five Whitman students and

five young adults with disabilities. The team played in the Special Olympics Unified Soccer Tournament in Seattle, and won their division. Play stopped, however, when Schwensen graduated. Shaffner hopes the new grant will keep the soccer team active long after she graduates this spring.

“The grant is really exciting because we are going to be able to get our own equipment — jerseys and soccer balls and shin guards and everything to make it more sustainable,” she said.

Shaffner has also played a vital role with the Buddy Program during her four years at Whitman. Sponsored by the Student Engagement Center, the program fosters one-on-one relationships between Whitman students and adults in the Walla Walla area who have intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. Program participants

— 25 Whitties matched with 25 community members — meet every other week and spend time playing games, creating crafts and forging friendships.

“The Buddy Program helps connect students to this culture of different abilities, which is a diversity we don’t have as much on campus,” Shaffner said. “I don’t really like to use the word ‘volunteer’ because it implies this power dynamic between the students and the participants with disabilities. It’s really more just about building relationships between people.”

Shaffner has been involved in similar programs since her teen years, first participating in her high school’s adapted physical education program.

“Students with and without disabilities played together, so that means adapting the activities to any level of ability that participants may have,” she said. “We were athletes and coaches — that was the terminology we used for students with and without disabilities. So, everyone had a buddy and we would participate in the PE program together. It was so much fun.”

Building on that positive experience, Shaffner explored other opportunities with community programs aiding adults and children with disabilities. She volunteered with her local parks and recreation

district, working in a summer camp for children with severe developmental disabilities.

“Those experiences were so interesting to me — they put me on the path of psychology,” Shaffner said. “I came into Whitman knowing I wanted to do something within the disability realm of things.”

The drive to help others runs in her family. Shaffner’s mother, a retired teacher, tutors children with learning disabilities.

Shaffner joined the Buddy Program during her first year at Whitman, which led to her involvement with Special Olympics. The father of the buddy she was paired with ran the Special Olympics Skiing Program for Walla Walla. Through him, she got connected to local programming activities, first with skiing, then track and field, bowling and now soccer.

As if that weren’t enough, last summer Shaffner received another grant to work at the Walla Walla Valley Disability Network. Executive Director Cyndy Knight said Shaffner has worked on a long list of projects since joining the network: updating a database of over 300 people; arranging the Adventures in July program, including coordinating all volunteers; writing two grants, both of which were awarded; and leading peer mentor training for middle school and



“ THE BUDDY PROGRAM HELPS CONNECT STUDENTS TO THIS CULTURE OF DIFFERENT ABILITIES. ”

— LEAH SHAFFNER '19



The Buddy Program pairs Whitman students with community members who have intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. Photo by Shane Prudente

high schoolers on myths and truths about disabilities and how to interact with someone with a disability.


“I learn from her as much as she does for us,” Knight said. “Leah just never fails to impress with her intuition and professionalism. Her planner is one to copy and paste. She fits in all she does because of how organized she is.”

Shaffner said her work for the disability network has made her feel much more grounded in the Walla Walla community and provided inspiration for her life after Whitman.

“Cyndy has been a really great mentor for me, just really willing to show me the inner workings of

what it takes to run a nonprofit,” Shaffner said.

Shaffner said spending time with individuals who have special needs has enriched her life in immeasurable ways.

“We have this expectation that everything functions in a certain way and that there are these processes that we have to go through, but really there are so many different ways of doing things and different ways of being,” she said. “I think that mindset applies generally to everybody — that everyone has their own strengths and their own passions and things that they care about.” 

A Passion for PURPOSE

Alumnus Phil Gardner '69 has devoted his career to helping liberal arts students and graduates develop a purpose for their passion

By Peter Szymczak
Illustration by Matthew McKern



One of the leading consultants on academic student success and professional development, **Phil Gardner '69** believes purpose is the key to pursuing one's passion throughout life.

"Many students who seek a liberal arts degree are driven by their passion for a field of study," Gardner said. "But, when it comes to linking college and career, there is a big difference between having passion and having purpose. While students often pick a major because they are really excited about it, they don't always understand how it could connect to a future career. Having purpose is important because it helps students identify how their passions could provide direction for their future career and/or life goals. Purpose is passion with a plan."

In developmental psychology, purpose is often defined as a far-reaching goal that is both personally meaningful and socially beneficial. A person's purpose encompasses their passions, but directs those passions toward achieving goals that will make a positive difference in the world.

"Said more simply, we can think about purpose as a person's passion with a goal," Gardner said.

Whitman College is recognizing Gardner's dedication to helping students transform their passion into purpose with the 2019 Gordon Scribner Award for Distinguished Service. The award will be presented to Gardner during the Class of 1969's 50th Reunion luncheon on May 17, 2019. The award, which was created to honor **Gordon Scribner '42**, former dean of students and director of alumni, is given to an individual who has made a major contribution of volunteer time and effort to Whitman College over an extended period of time and possesses the ability to inspire.

FINDING LIFE'S PURPOSE

Gardner certainly fits that description. As director of the Career Services Network and Collegiate Employment Research Institute at Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan, Gardner has been recognized over the past 35 years as a national expert on important issues for college graduates. His forte is helping academic institutions better prepare graduates for success in today's workforce. Gardner has shared his expertise with Whitman by leading workshops, hosting Google hangouts and consulting on the college's strategic planning process.

"It's hard to overstate Phil's influence on Whitman and so many other higher education institutions. The work that he has done as director of the Collegiate Employment Research Institute has had a huge impact nationally on how colleges and universities fundamentally think about preparing students for life after graduation," Whitman Provost and Dean of Faculty Alzada J. Tipton said. "His guidance was particularly helpful to the work of the Life After Whitman strategic planning group. He really pushed us to keep thinking about the whole person and the trajectory of their whole career."

Liberal arts colleges like Whitman prepare students for a wide variety of careers — a big advantage in today's tumultuous jobs economy, according to Gardner. Empowered with a defined purpose, graduates can achieve things that are not only meaningful to themselves in whatever line of work they pursue, but also make a difference in the world at-large.

"For instance, a liberal arts graduate can go into business or finance. They can look at new ways to provide credit to low-income

families or to reduce student loans. There's a way they can apply their liberal arts learning that doesn't just make money — they have a broader purpose," Gardner said.

To find purpose, Gardner recommends that students go beyond just attending classes, and even beyond engaging in campus activities they are passionate about. He stresses the importance of mentoring and study-abroad experiences as vital to making students aware of the professional and personal opportunities — and pitfalls — that lie ahead.

"We've got to find creative ways to get students engaged off campus," Gardner said. "Making sure that they get professional experience in the workplace is important. They need internships. Community engagement is great, and it's rewarding. Study abroad is a foundation piece. Research with the faculty is another foundation piece."

These experiences provide real-life perspective on how and why things are done, and to what end. They propel students forward, toward finding their purpose.

"When you look at professional development, it comes back to the same three things: purpose, confidence and awareness," Gardner said. "The greater students are aware of the resources, the greater they can shape how they approach school. The same applies on the career side. Once you have confidence, then you begin to have an overriding purpose."

THE VALUE OF LIBERAL ARTS

Gardner majored in chemistry at Whitman, then earned his master's in environmental chemistry at Michigan State. After serving in the U.S. Army, he returned to Michigan State and earned his doctorate in public policy.


Following stints with Thailand's Ministry of Agriculture's Land Reform Office and a faculty position at the University of California, Riverside, Gardner returned to Michigan State to lead the research efforts for the Collegiate Employment Research Institute, where he has worked for the past three decades.

"Building on my experience at Whitman, I have been able to do cross-disciplinary work with multiple teams of researchers," Gardner said. "Is it chemistry? No, but I use it, although I probably use Whitman more every day."

As Gardner's own multifaceted career shows, an academic major is less important than some might think. Just as his liberal arts education prepared him for change 50 years ago, today's liberal arts students are preparing for a future where job requirements are morphing and mutating in increasingly unpredictable ways.

"You have to reinvent yourself continually. If you don't adjust, there's somebody else who's going to come in and replace you, because you're not learning," he said. "Many alumni, particularly those who are still under the age of 50, are going to see it on a more regular basis. It's often going to be harder for those in the senior part of their career, but it's a boon for alumni who can flex their retirement and really reinvent themselves."

A liberal arts education is a long-term investment, Gardner said. One that he feels remains well worth it.

"Whitman should give you the courage to try things and not worry about failing. You shouldn't worry about whether you're going to make a lot of money initially, but you've got to go out there and try," he said. "If something doesn't work, have the confidence to go on and put it together in a different way." 



Service Is the Rent You Pay for Living

Alumnus finds purpose in guiding youth toward promising futures

By Stacie Jones

Photo by Matt Hagen

For Fred Capestany '86, serving others is more than a feel-good deed, it's a basic living expense.

"I always had a sense from my parents that service is sort of the rent you pay for living," Capestany said. "There was a strong belief that it's just what you have to do, and that we all must do our part to help confront injustices and inequalities to help make the world a better place."

This "rent for living" concept — attributed to the famous quote: "Service is the rent we pay for the privilege of living on this earth," by Shirley Chisholm, the first black woman elected to the U.S. Congress — was instilled in Capestany and his seven brothers and sisters throughout their childhood in South Seattle. They watched their parents, both Cuban immigrants,

stretch their limited income to house other Cuban refugees, serve in their church and travel around Washington state advocating for the rights of migrant workers.

"Even though my parents were poor, they always found a way to make a difference," he said.

This deep-seated sense of social responsibility shaped who Capestany is today. The lifelong Seattle resident has dedicated his career to helping others, working mostly in higher education and for nonprofits that serve teens and young adults. As the director of college support at Rainier Scholars, a college-access organization, he guides low-income students of color toward top-tier college degrees.

"Most of the scholars are the first in their families to go to college; they don't know what to expect or what's required to get there," he

said. "We help them figure out their path and provide support to help them achieve their goals."

His service extends far beyond his day job. He also works as a sexuality educator for Great Conversations, teaching the facts of life to preteen boys, and he supports the Seattle-based nonprofit organization Powerful Voices, a program that helps adolescent girls of color — often from low-income, troubled homes — find their voice and overcome injustices.

The missions of these organizations resonate for Capestany, who is dad to three teenagers (two daughters and a son).

FINDING HIS WAY

"The quality of my Whitman education was unparalleled, and the faculty were amazing," said Capestany, who majored in psychology. "It was an experience I could not have gotten anywhere else."

While grateful for his Whitman experience, he said it wasn't always easy.

"When I first showed up at Whitman, I felt like a fish out of water. Even though I'm a light-skinned man and could have blended in as any other Whitman student, I felt completely different culturally as a poor, urban kid who grew up around cultural and economic diversity," he said.

He considered transferring after his first semester. But instead, he got involved — really involved. He gave campus tours to new students, served as a resident advisor in Anderson Hall and coordinated campus activities for National Hispanic Heritage Month.

"I found my place and was doing something meaningful," he said. "This sparked a desire to help people like me — students of color from low-income backgrounds — navigate their path and be successful."

Today, he draws on his Whitman experience as he counsels Rainier Scholars who

To get involved in the Whitman College Students & Alumni of Color Coalition, request to join the group on Facebook at "Whitman College Alumni of Color" or email fredcapestany@gmail.com.

face similar struggles.

"A lot has improved over the years, but the reality is, the scholars are going to face challenges wherever they go," he said. "I encourage them to not give up too quickly and to get involved. I tell them they might feel out of place culturally, but they deserve an excellent education just as much as anyone else."

CONNECTING WHITTIES

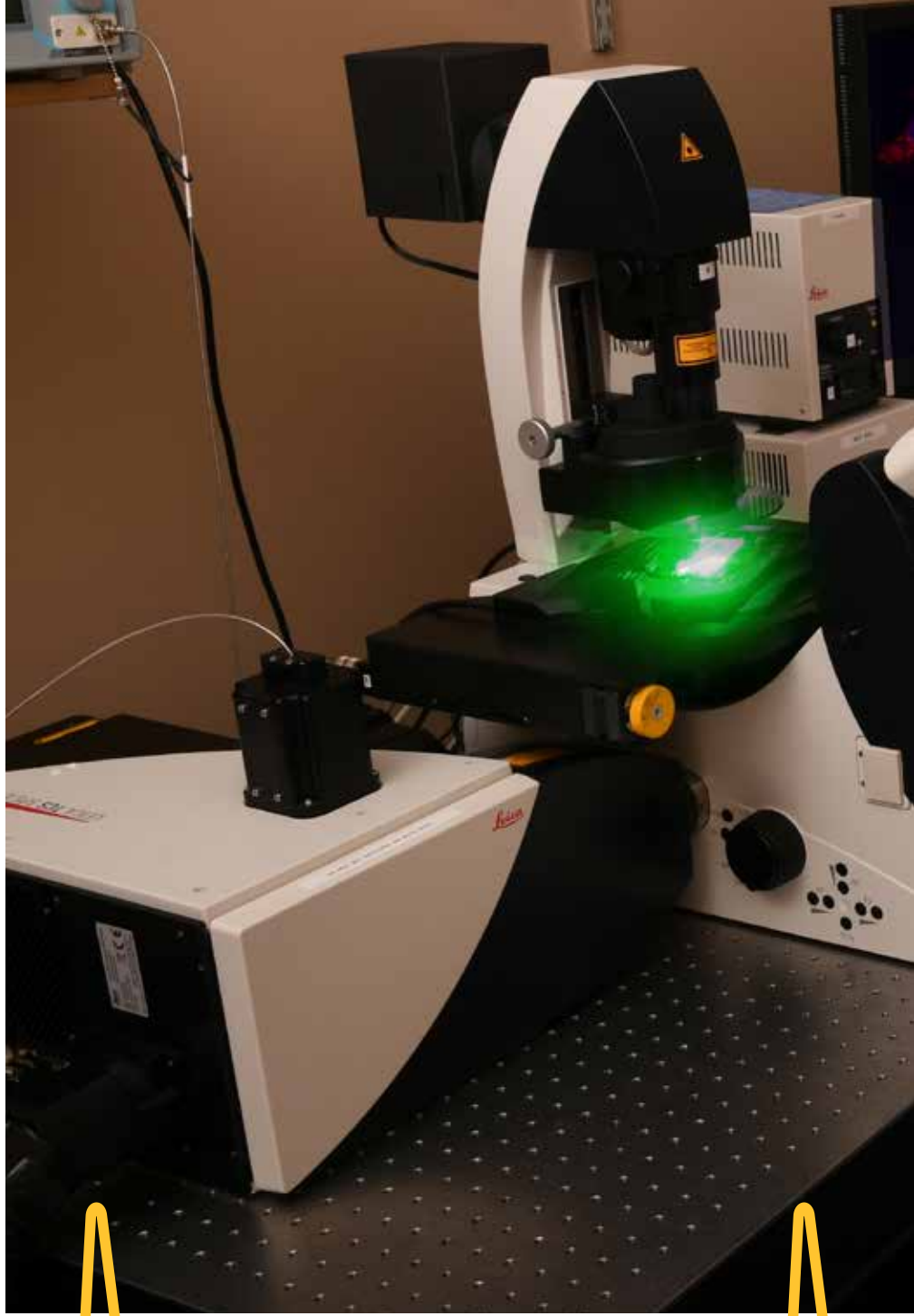
Capestany continues to advance Whitman's culture of diversity and inclusion as a founding member of the Whitman College Student Alumni of Color Association. The group hopes to increase involvement by connecting graduates directly with current students of color through reunion events and mentorship programs.

"There's a rich network of alumni who want to help students and graduates be successful," he said. "Our goal is to show current students of color they aren't alone, and to provide ongoing support to Whitman alumni of color as they go out into the world."

Capestany said the "rent for living" he's invested has paid him and others back in numerous ways.

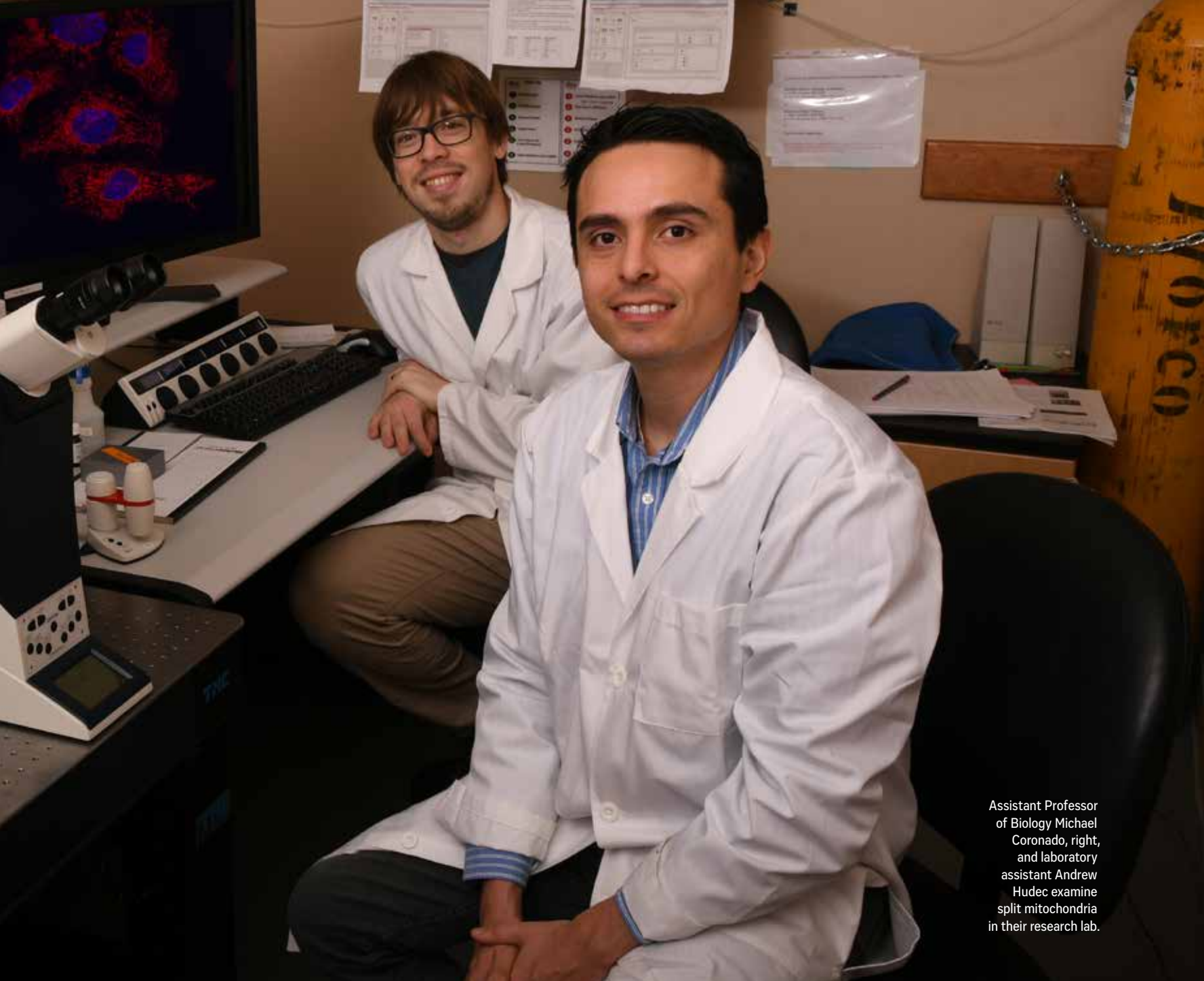
"Everybody needs meaning in their life. For me, that's doing something that serves a larger purpose besides making money and having fun," he said. "There's a huge reward and pride that comes with making a difference in someone's life. That's something I started at Whitman, and it feels good to help this next generation of Whitties coming up." **W**

GETTING TO THE HEART OF HEART HEALTH



**Whitman biology professor
brings new blood to cardiac
research with student help**

By Tara Roberts
Photos by Shane Prudente



Assistant Professor of Biology Michael Coronado, right, and laboratory assistant Andrew Hudec examine split mitochondria in their research lab.

Imagine two human hearts. The first belongs to a 70-year-old man with a blocked artery. As the flow of oxygen-carrying blood slows, his heart strains. Inside the cells of his heart muscle, mitochondria — the organelles responsible for using oxygen to produce energy — split, changing from rod-shaped to ball-shaped. The cells struggle and die. Soon, the man collapses.

The second heart belongs to a 30-year-old woman training for her first 5K race. As she pushes herself to the top of a hill, her heart

pumps hard. She breathes deeply, oxygen rushing into her blood. Inside the cells of her heart muscle, mitochondria split. The run is tough, but her heart works to keep her going.

For years, scientists observing a heart cell with split mitochondria would think the cause was disease. The split, or mitochondrial fission, was considered a sign of pathological stress on the heart.

But Michael Coronado, an assistant professor of biology at Whitman College, has challenged this assumption. Last year, Coronado published groundbreaking

research demonstrating how fission can be a response to high energy demands on the heart in normal physiological conditions as well as pathological ones. Split mitochondria could appear in the heart of the new runner in training, not just the dying man.

The questions now are how this process works, and how understanding it could change how medicine treats hearts, healthy or sick.

Coronado and his team are ready to answer them.

PRESENTING A NEW VIEW ON CARDIO

A healthy heart needs energy, especially when it's working hard.

"When you exercise, your heart rate goes up — you've probably felt that if you've ever gone for a run or even walked up a flight of stairs," Coronado said. "Every time it goes up in rate or the force of that contraction, more energy is needed."

Coronado's research focuses on the mechanisms that direct and control how the heart makes energy, but with a new twist.

After earning his doctorate in toxicology from Johns Hopkins University in 2012, Coronado knew he wanted to study the heart. He headed to Stanford University to work as a postdoctoral researcher with Daniel Bernstein, a renowned pediatric cardiologist.

There, Coronado first dug into mitochondrial fission. His studies included an externship with Douglas Wallace, one of the world's top mitochondrial biologists at the University of Pennsylvania.

In a paper published last year in the journal *Circulation Research*, Coronado and his co-researchers demonstrated that split and fragmented mitochondria can be a sign of a well-functioning heart. They also identified a signal — the hormone epinephrine — that triggers the process and binds to certain receptors in the membrane of cardiac cells, sparking a series of events inside the cell that results in fission.

Since arriving at Whitman in July 2017, Coronado has continued this research and

started a new phase examining exactly what happens on the path from epinephrine signal to mitochondrial fission, and what consequences it has for the heart.

FINDING A HOME FOR HEART RESEARCH

Coronado has found Whitman to be the perfect place to build his lab and research team — and it's thanks in large part to a Whittie.

When he was applying for faculty positions, Coronado pursued an opening at Whitman based on a recommendation from his doctoral mentor at Johns Hopkins, **DeLisa Fairweather '87**. She felt Whitman would be a good fit for him because she knew he wanted to facilitate undergraduate research, but more importantly, she knew Whitman offered much more.

"I told him how great the environment was. Getting a liberal arts education at Whitman taught me how to write well and how to present, which are important when you're applying for grants and funding, and also to move up into a faculty position," Fairweather said. "Creativity also comes from a liberal arts environment, and what gets funded in science is not what everybody else is doing — to be a leader in science is to have the idea no one else has."

With experience at some of the nation's top scientific institutions, Coronado knew he wanted an academic home that valued high-quality research, but one that also afforded him time to teach undergraduates, which would be unlikely at a large university. He also sought a place where he and his wife could raise their two little girls.

"Whitman is a strong academic institution, and the community allows the quality of life that I was searching for, the balance I was seeking," he said. "I think I really got it here."

As soon as he came to Whitman, Coronado went to work putting together a world-class research lab.

While he was at Stanford, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) awarded him the first two years of a grant to support researchers as they transition from postdoctoral positions to tenure-track faculty roles. He was eligible for another three years of funding, and he wanted to prove his work at Whitman was worth NIH's investment.

It helped that Whitman was investing in Coronado, too. Startup funding from the college helped him renovate his lab space and purchase high-tech tools, such as a special system that can simulate a heart attack in human cells.

His teaching lab, just down the hall from his main lab, includes treadmills for humans and mice, allowing students to conduct experiments right in the classroom.

In March 2018, the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute awarded Coronado \$750,000 as part of an NIH grant.

"I think one of the big things that helped was when I talked to them about the role of research at Whitman," Coronado said. "Research is an integral component of the Whitman experience for the faculty and for the students. Yes, I'm teaching, but research is a major component of that teaching. That's one of the reasons why I'm here."

BUILDING A TEAM WITH HEART

A world-class lab needs dedicated researchers. Coronado's grant pays for a full-time technician, and he often collaborates with his colleagues at Whitman and across the nation, but most of the people working in his lab are students.

Coronado has been impressed by Whitman students' academic abilities, creative drive and curious, independent spirit.

"The biggest thing for me is that they are just eager to work," he said. "They just keep wanting to go further."

Coronado took on three senior thesis students as soon as he began teaching at Whitman, in part to show the NIH what Whitman student-researchers are capable of. He's since mentored 14 students, a mix of seniors, juniors and

"RESEARCH IS AN INTEGRAL COMPONENT OF THE WHITMAN EXPERIENCE FOR THE FACULTY AND FOR THE STUDENTS."

— MICHAEL CORONADO

sophomores. Several of these students were introduced to Coronado's research in his classes, which inspired them to pursue it further.

Undergraduate research involves learning the basics of laboratory science, like how to pose questions, design experiments and be precise. Having enthusiastic, intelligent student-researchers makes the lab more productive. As a result, Coronado is optimistic that his research will address an array of questions about mitochondria's role in the heart, as well as related questions, such as what roles they play in brain function.

"My students are not just relying on me to ask the questions. They can help generate the questions, and they can add to some of the intellectual development that goes into research," he said. "Once I teach them, they're sprinting."

UNLOCKING THE KEY TO HEART HEALTH

Coronado is driven to change the world with his research. Scientists are just starting to unlock how important mitochondria are, he said. Studying how they and their related signaling pathways work — in healthy cells and in sick ones — has major medical implications.


His research could lead to a better understanding of how athletes' hearts adapt to repeated exercise, and how people could develop better exercise capacity.

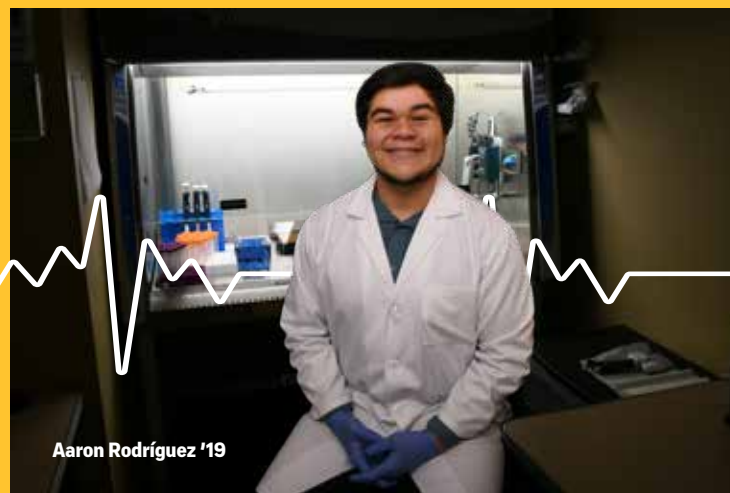
Exercise helps alleviate all sorts of problems, but not everyone is physically able to do it. Increased knowledge of the cellular-level pathways that exercise triggers could help scientists harness those pathways to give people with limited mobility some of the benefits of exercise.

Beyond that, being able to control small-scale processes in the heart and other organs has the potential to treat major diseases long before dire symptoms start.

"My dad had a heart attack, and my grandfather died of a heart attack. My father-in-law had Parkinson's disease. All of these have a root cause in the mitochondria and bioenergetics," Coronado said. "We're just now being able to develop mechanisms to detect them early, but what I'm trying to do is figure out how you can prevent them from happening in the first place."

At Whitman, Coronado has found the right place and the right people to work toward these new discoveries.

"I'm trying to do research here that will have a big impact on the biomedical community," he said. "And I want to have Whitman students on the forefront of it." 



Aaron Rodríguez '19

DISCOVERING A CAREER AND A MENTOR

When **Aaron Rodríguez '19** took Michael Coronado's exercise physiology class in spring 2018, he quickly caught on to his professor's enthusiasm for research.

That summer, Rodríguez made the leap from classroom to lab, assisting Coronado's studies of mitochondrial biology. He picked up new skills — from learning how to image heart cells under a microscope, to mastering the art of closing a test tube with one hand — and discovered his own passion for biomedicine.

"I really liked the independence that I had in Professor Coronado's lab," Rodríguez said. "This was my first research experience, and it opened my eyes."

Coronado and Rodríguez also bonded over their shared Mexican heritage. Rodríguez, originally from Pomona, California, is active in Whitman's Club Latinx and was excited to find a role model with a similar background.

"Professor Coronado knows the experience that I've gone through being a Latino in STEM," he said. "I know I can go to him whenever I have problems or whenever I have questions."

There are few Latinx role models in STEM for students to emulate. According to a report by the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, less than 2 percent of the STEM workforce is Latinx, and only 9 percent of STEM degrees and certificates were earned by Latinx in 2013.

"When I was in grad school, I was the only Hispanic person from the U.S.," Coronado said. "Now I'm in a position where I can provide mentorship in terms of what to expect, what challenges he'll face and most importantly, what resources are available to him — that's a big thing! There are a lot of opportunities for grant funding and enrichment available to underrepresented populations."

Rodríguez's current research in Coronado's lab includes examining how mitochondria behave in cells that have been specially treated to imitate Parkinson's disease. After commencement, he plans to begin a career that reflects the experience he's had at Whitman.

"I would love to keep doing research in relation to biomedical sciences and keep working with pathological diseases," he said. "I'd like to be a professor at a college or a small university similar to Whitman, so I can foster mentor relationships like I've had with Professor Coronado."

CONSERVING THE CONFLUENCE PROJECT

Whitman archivists and art historians work together to save architectural history

By Peter Szymczak





Over 200 years ago, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark traversed the land and waterways of the Pacific Northwest. They mapped rivers and documented animal species. Their work is credited with opening up the West for settlement by white pioneers.

For the past 20 years, another group has been traversing the Columbia River — with a vastly different goal. The Confluence Project has used art to bring together multiple narratives: it interweaves the culture and language of Native peoples with the indigenous flora and fauna species that have co-existed for millennia, and puts new perspective on the past two centuries of agricultural and industrial development of the western United States, specifically the environmental impact of human-engineered climate change and habitat loss.

“For generations, the story has been one about discovery and, essentially, Lewis and Clark discovered this place and the pioneers settled it. That’s an overly simplistic story,” said Colin Fogarty, executive director of the nonprofit known simply as Confluence. “Confluence is an effort to broaden people’s understanding of what this place is all about, and our contention is that the fundamentals, the story of the Pacific Northwest and the American West, is really one about confluence.”

Confluence is a series of public art installations, or earthworks, situated at six geographically and historically significant sites along the Columbia River, from Eastern

Washington to the Pacific Coast.

As part of the effort, the project amassed a huge collection of research materials, architectural models, survey maps and other artifacts. Thanks to a partnership with the Whitman College and Northwest Archives, those materials are now accessible for researchers, students and the general public here on campus.

A PROJECT OF IMPORTANCE

Whitman College and Confluence first came together in 2015, when Matt Reynolds, associate professor in the Department of Art History and Visual Culture Studies, attended the dedication ceremony of the site at Chief Timothy Park, at the confluence of the Clearwater and Snake rivers in Clarkston, Washington.

Chief Timothy Park is the only Confluence site that looks today like it would have when Lewis and Clark first encountered it. The earthwork here is a “listening circle,” an amphitheater-like structure made of concentric rings of basalt, inspired by a Nez Perce blessing ceremony that was performed at the site in 2005.

This site and five others that comprise the project were designed primarily by renowned architect Maya Lin, famous for designing the Vietnam Veteran’s Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., the Civil Rights Memorial at the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Alabama, and the Women’s Table on the campus of Yale University.

“It is my belief that Lin’s Confluence Project



Left: Laura Rivale '19 and Associate Professor of Art History and Visual Culture Studies Matt Reynolds examine an architectural model of the listening circle at Chief Timothy Park. Photo by Greg Lehman

Above: Chief Timothy Park is located on an island at the confluence of the Clearwater and Snake rivers in Clarkston, Washington. Here, renowned architect Maya Lin designed a stone-rimmed earthwork sculpted out of a natural amphitheater located at the top of the island. Photo courtesy of Confluence

offers a poignant recognition of the interconnectedness of ‘negative’ and ‘positive,’ urban and rural, humanity and environment, past and present,” Reynolds said. “It has much to tell us at this particular historical moment — a moment in which large-scale ecological disaster can no longer be denied, but also a moment in which we cannot collectively seem to find the will or the way to address it.”

Reynolds, whose academic focus is on the intersection of art and the environment, visited the Confluence’s headquarters in Vancouver, Washington, and got to talking with Fogarty.

“Colin was saying, ‘We have all this stuff,’” Reynolds recalled. “I thought that Whitman could be a really great home for this material.”

“We knew that this was important stuff, but in order to really kind of sift through and figure that out, we would have had to spend a lot of time and energy, and as a small nonprofit, we just did not have that time,” Fogarty said. “Whitman has been a real lifesaver for us.”

ORGANIZING THE ARCHIVE

The “stuff” that comprises the Confluence collection included administrative records, blueprints, site models and media in various formats.

“We’re still not even sure what’s all there: audio recordings, videos, VHS tapes. ... It’s a ton of stuff,” Reynolds said. There’s a multitude of paper documents as well, board meeting notes, press clippings, public relations documents, government documents and site surveys.

Some of the most important documents are related to lists of all the species of birds, fish and plants that Lewis and Clark cataloged on their westward journey.

“If you take their journals of 1805 and consider what they saw as a baseline of what the environment looked like along the Columbia River, where are we now in relation to that?” Fogarty asked.

A tremendous amount of research went into finding out what the status of those species is today. Some were

found to be threatened, some are species of concern, and some are extinct.

“A lot of this research happened before the digital age, before the internet was readily available, so the only record of this research is on paper,” Fogarty said. “We felt that that was important research that went into creating this project, and not just for the project, but for the issue itself, the lesson.”

Reynolds knew that cataloging the project’s paper trail would take a team effort, so he enlisted the aid of Whitman’s archivists, along with art history and visual culture studies major **Laura Rivale ’19**, whose work organizing the project was underwritten by a Mellon grant for community-based learning.

Rivale first became interested in the project during the spring of 2018, when she was taking Reynolds’ Art/Environment class, which included the Confluence Project. Later that summer, she started working hands-on to process the collection.

“Everything arrived in file boxes, but they weren’t organized at all,” Rivale said. “The first couple of weeks were spent mainly organizing them into broad categories.”

Working primarily with Associate Archivist Dana Bronson, Rivale cataloged thousands of folders originally housed in 41 boxes. Processing the archive has given her an appreciation of the project’s epic scope, as well as the human aspect of the effort that went into creating it.

“Projects like this that go on for 20 years, they’re long, and they really get done because of relationships that you create with other people,” Rivale said.

Between organizing the collection and visiting some of the Confluence sites, Rivale has developed a deep sense of place for the Pacific Northwest, and much more.

“I think we’re standing at a crossroads, a confluence of a lot of things,” Rivale said. “I think that people are going to be interested in looking back at what was happening now. From the early ’90s to now, so much has changed in the world. That is fascinating.”



Vancouver Land Bridge.
Photo courtesy of Confluence



The Baker Bay Overlook at
Cape Disappointment State Park.
Photo courtesy of Confluence

1999

1999
A group of arts patrons working in collaboration with Native tribes of the Plateau, Columbia River Basin and Pacific Northwest asked architect Maya Lin to create a series of earthworks to commemorate the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Called the Confluence Project, the collective works consist of public art installations at historical points along the Columbia River.

2000

2001

Cape Disappointment State Park, Dedicated May 2006
Located at the confluence of the Columbia River and Pacific Ocean, the installation draws together the site’s bay and ocean sides, interweaving the stories of the Lewis and Clark expedition and the Chinook people.

2002

2003

Vancouver Land Bridge, Dedicated August 2008
Lin partnered with Native American architect Johnpaul Jones to reunite the Klickitat Trail with the banks of the Columbia in the form of a land bridge over Washington’s Highway 14. The bridge features indigenous plants, circular walkways, tribal ideograms and a view of the multi-lane highway and railroad tracks below.

2004

2005

Sandy River Delta, Dedicated August 2008
The bird blind constructed at this site in Troutdale, Oregon, about a 20-minute drive from downtown Portland, includes an index of animal species documented by Lewis and Clark that have vanished or are threatened with extinction.

2006

2007

Sacajawea State Park, Dedicated August 2010
The names of indigenous fish, wildlife, plants and Native tribes are etched into the interior of seven story circles, each approximately 10 feet in diameter and clustered along a man-made jetty where the Snake and Columbia rivers meet.

2008

20



Archivist/Head of Digital Services Ben Murphy, left, and Associate Archivist Dana Bronson of the Whitman College Northwest Archives stand beside boxes of documents belonging to the Confluence Project archive. Photo by Shane Prudente

09 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019

Chief Timothy Park, Dedicated May 2015

Curved structures are carved from basalt and etched with quotes from William Clark's description of the locations and his taxonomies of peoples and species encountered in the 1805 expedition. The circles take the form of an amphitheater located on a spectacular bluff overlooking the Columbia.

April 2018

The Confluence Project board passes a resolution granting Whitman College the archival documents and project art models. At the time, these materials were stored in facilities that were not climate-controlled or organized in a way that can be useful to researchers in the future. "Whitman has committed to organizing these documents for us, storing them responsibly and allowing access to us whenever we need it," the resolution stated.

June 2018

Boxed materials are transported from the Confluence offices in Vancouver, Washington, to the Whitman College Northwest Archives in Walla Walla.

July 2018

Student-researcher Laura Rivale, under the guidance of archivists Ben Murphy and Dana Bronson, begins processing the archive.

January 2019

The Confluence collection is completed, and the finding aid is published online as a digital reference tool for researchers.

CONFLUENCE IN THE FUTURE

In its organized state, the collection takes up nearly 60 linear feet of archive shelf room.

“That’s a large collection for us,” said Ben Murphy, archivist and head of Digital Services in the Penrose Library. “We spent more time on this collection processing it to the file level, more than typically we do for some collections, just because of the high interest in this collection and the demonstrated teaching interest around it.”

Reynolds is currently writing a book documenting his study of the project, and he continues to incorporate his research into his curriculum.


“I taught a class for the first time last spring called Art/Environment. It’s about the ways in which mostly contemporary art engages with issues of climate change,” he said. “Confluence looks backwards seven generations and it looks forward to kind of think about what’s the world going to look like seven generations from now?”

With five of the six sites built, the project is now entering a new phase of educational outreach, in addition to ongoing ecological restoration projects.

“Most Americans don’t know much at all about tribal history, and it represents a real challenge,” Fogarty said. “The artwork can only reach its full potential if people understand the context that they’re looking at.”

Confluence in the Classroom connects Native artists and tradition-keepers with K-12 classrooms to create projects about the Columbia River system, while Confluence in the Community brings together civic organizations, environmental groups and education partners to keep Confluence sites as thriving hubs of activity. A summer institute for teachers in Washington and Oregon is also in the works.

“It’s not just one little corner of history. Tribal history is an integral part of our nation’s history,” Fogarty said. “Confluence artworks are examples of how we can create public artwork that is inclusive of people’s stories, that honors multiple voices and perspectives.”

Reynolds sorted out the project’s imperative this way: “How can Lin’s art, and the work of contemporary artists more generally, help us re-perceive our shared surroundings and the long-term effects of climate change?” 

EXPLORE THE ARCHIVES Interested in learning more about how the Confluence collection was organized and who processed the project? Go online at whitman.edu/magazine and go behind the scenes at the Whitman College and Northwest Archives with Archivist/Head of Digital Services Ben Murphy and Associate Archivist Dana Bronson.



Above: Archivists Ben Murphy, left, and Dana Bronson preserve the architectural model of the Confluence Project site at Sandy River Delta. Photo by Greg Lehman

Below: The Bird Blind at Sandy River Delta offers visitors a tranquil spot to view the flora and fauna that inhabit the area today. Photo courtesy of Confluence



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WHITMAN COLLEGE

ANIMAL ADVOCACY

By highlighting the plight of endangered animals and ecosystems, alumni Samantha Arthur '07, Jason Colby '97 and Sarah Koenigsberg '02 are showing the human side of environmental efforts

By Kathleen Bauer





An author who wrote about his family's and our region's unique relationship with killer whales.

A trained biologist who used her savvy in public policy to protect an endangered native bird.

A filmmaker who documented a grassroots movement to restore beaver habitats.

What these three alumni have in common — aside from graduating from Whitman College — is dedication, not just to the animals that inspire their work but more so to the activists who devote themselves to protecting the natural world.

Samantha Arthur '07 scouts for tricolored blackbird nests in the threatened species' native wetland habitat. Photo courtesy of Audubon California



PROTECTING NATIVE BIRDS

When she joined Audubon California as conservation project director, **Samantha Arthur '07** didn't have any specific background in birds. She was hired, she said, because of her experience finding common ground around shared concerns.

"I do a lot of coalition building and working with people who are across the political aisle," Arthur said. "People who are different than the environmental groups that I work with."

Arthur has put her ability to

forge agreements to work for the tricolored blackbird, a native species in steep decline in California. Thanks to her efforts, on April 19, 2018, the California Fish and Game Commission voted 4-0 to list the tricolored blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*) as a threatened species.

Statewide surveys measured a 44 percent population decline between 2011 and 2014 alone. Much of her work has focused on helping farmers comply with the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, which prohibited the killing of migratory, non-game birds, such as bald eagles and owls.

Arthur said the tricolored

blackbird, which nests in huge colonies of 10,000 to 20,000 birds, has lost much of its wetland habitat to agriculture and urban uses, as well as the impact of climate change. To adapt, the birds have taken to nesting in wheat fields on dairy farms.

"At these dairies they also have piles of grain that attract the birds. They have water. They have insects. They have all the components that the birds are looking for," Arthur said.

Unfortunately, the tricolored blackbird lays eggs and raises its young at exactly the time that dairy farmers harvest their wheat. The

harvesters move slowly enough that the adults can fly off, but the eggs and young are defenseless.

In 2016, Arthur advocated for California to list the tricolored blackbird under the Endangered Species Act. She spurred into action when the Trump administration moved to reinterpret the 100-year-old Migratory Bird Act, saying that the act's protections only apply to activities that purposefully kill birds, meaning that predictable and avoidable take (killing) is now allowed.

Arthur successfully brokered a partnership between Western United Dairymen and the Natural

Resources Conservation Service on a \$1.8 million grant to compensate farmers for losses incurred by not harvesting fields occupied by tricolored blackbirds and to create natural areas for the birds to nest in.

“I think that it speaks to the transparent partnership for us to be able to oppose each other politically, but then still come back together to work with each other functionally,” Arthur said.

Being a good listener and being curious are two of the most important skills for building consensus, Arthur said, and she traces learning those skills to her time as a student at Whitman.

“A lot of the classes were about really understanding local and regional resource issues in an in-depth way,” Arthur said. “Not just the biology or the science, but really understanding the people issues.”

An environmental studies-

biology major, she said the combination of a quantitative, rigorous science focus and well-rounded study of environmental policy has provided a strong foundation for her work protecting wildlife and solving natural resource problems.

Hailing from the San Francisco Bay Area, Arthur’s family made a pilgrimage to a rural area in Colorado every year. She said it was Whitman’s rural setting, sense of community and environmental studies program that drew her to choose it over other schools.

After Whitman, Arthur first taught high school biology, then worked for the Big Sur Land Trust, a nonprofit that helps private landowners obtain conservation easements on their property to prevent development. In 2014, she earned a master’s degree at the Bren School of Environmental Science

& Management at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

One of the things Arthur loves about her current job is how entrepreneurial it is.

“I get a lot of freedom to work on new issues,” Arthur said. “It really reflects exactly what my major was at Whitman. It’s really the combination of the science, the politics and the policy.”

SAVING THE ORCAS

There’s a saying that goes, “To go against nature is part of nature, too.” Embodying that phrase is **Jason Colby '97**, the son of a whale catcher who has shed new light on his father’s former vocation.

In his new book “Orca: How We Came to Know and Love the Ocean’s Greatest Predator” (Oxford

University Press, June 2018), Colby documents the era when live orcas were captured in the Pacific Northwest. During the 20th century, thousands of orcas were killed by fishermen and scientists around the world, and beginning in the 1960s, dozens in the Northwest were sold into captivity, decimating the local orca population.

During the 1970s, his father, John Colby, was curator of Sealand of the Pacific, a small oceanarium near Victoria, British Columbia, and later worked at the Seattle Marine Aquarium and Seaworld. “He helped capture killer whales for sale and display — or, as he darkly joked, ‘for fun and profit,’” Colby wrote in the book.

But rather than focusing on the evils of captivity and profiting off animal suffering, Colby’s book posits that their capture may have inadvertently led to their salvation.

Jason Colby '97 examines whale specimens at the Royal British Columbia Museum. Photo courtesy of the University of Victoria



Orcas performing in Seattle and Vancouver, as well as at SeaWorld, helped to transform whale research and to generate public affection for the animals once referred to as “killer” whales.

“It’s a story about how people change and the quirkiness of people,” he said. “If you look at all the problems today, they’re ultimately human problems. You can’t really understand them or change them without understanding people.”

Now an associate professor of history at the University of Victoria, Colby majored in history at Whitman. He said his professors made him realize how fascinating people are and why they make the decisions they do.

“I found that my future was really as a student of people,” he said. “Taking those history classes really opened my eyes to that.”

That realization included making sense of his own family history and his father’s deep regret about his role in the orca trade, Colby said.

“I wouldn’t say I’m trying to celebrate or even apologize for the role that he and others played, so

much as contextualize it and help us understand how we got here.”

Colby said there were moments when he broke down crying as he was writing. He said it gives the book a heart that he may never find again because it was so personal and painful to write.

The current state of the southern resident orcas in the Salish Sea is dire, he said. The population recovered to nearly 100 whales from the live capture era, but in the 20 years since then they’ve crashed — the current population is 76 — due to starvation from a lack of Chinook salmon, their primary food source, and the toxicity of the water from human activity.

“There’s lots of short-term and long-term solutions here,” he said. “But obviously you’re looking at a population that, because of choices we’ve made, or the hard choices we haven’t made, are headed toward extinction.”

One possibility is to stop trying to rescue or rehabilitate any more orcas — to let nature take its course. To which Colby responds, “Where exactly is nature now? We have de-natured profoundly the Salish Sea and the ecosystem. So to

remake it, to drain all the food, to poison it, to pollute it acoustically, and then say, ‘Let nature take its course,’ is an astonishing abdication of responsibility.”

BELIEVING IN BEAVERS

Like her industrious subjects, filmmaker **Sarah Koenigsberg '02** knows that big projects are easier to build with help.

She produced her first feature-length documentary film, “The Beaver Believers,” with the help of the Whitman community.

She employed several students as paid interns through Whitman’s Environmental Studies Summer Internship Program, and they became an enthusiastic part of the production.

“We had to really work as a team,” Koenigsberg said, noting that filming the easily spooked animals in their natural habitat was a real challenge. “We had to learn to intuitively sense each other’s movements. It was a really cool little dance that we ended up working out.”

But there’s a reason why the film is not called “The Beavers,” she said. “It’s not just like a PBS or nature documentary just about the animal. It’s about the people. It’s about the beaver believers.”

The documentary focuses on activists who are trying to restore the American beaver to its former habitats and range. These advocates champion the beaver as a keystone species, that its near-demise at the hands of fur traders of yore — and land engineers of the last century — caused much of the American West to become arid land, and that returning the beaver to healthy population levels would restore ecosystems, creating the biodiversity, complexity and resiliency watersheds need to absorb the impacts of climate change.



SEE THE TRAILER
Watch the trailer for
“The Beaver Believers” at
thebeaverbelievers.com.

Already well-received at the Banff Mountain Film Festival, the film is a finalist in the prestigious Vancouver International Mountain Film Festival and a winner at the Portland EcoFilm Festival. Several years in the making, the film was shot in eight western states as well as Mexico and Canada.

Koenigsberg came to the subject of beavers and their ardent believers over several serendipitous years, during which time she met four women, each of whom was working in her own way with beavers as they relate to climate change and water preparedness.

“It’s usually old white dudes, and suddenly, it’s like, ‘What? There are these women presenting this different kind of paradigm of restoration. What’s going on here?’”

Equally serendipitous was the path she took to becoming a filmmaker. Like many young people, it took time to find her calling.

Arriving in Walla Walla from her hometown of Ashland, Oregon, Koenigsberg was intrigued as a first-year student by her introductory classes in environmental studies and geology, which exposed her to the issues of pollution and climate change. But her lightbulb moment happened during the Intro to Film class taught by film and media studies Professor Robert Sickels.

“He announced on day one that we were going to have to make a short film,” she said. “The first



time I put some clips together in a timeline and saw what happens when clips go together with music, I just locked onto it.”

Political and environmental philosophy classes with professors Gus diZerega and Julia Ireland pushed Koenigsberg to think critically about environmental issues.


“My thesis work was very driven by my work with those two professors,” she said. “Thinking about why do we think humans have a place in nature, or that everything humans do is bad.”

Taking her multidisciplinary degree in environmental studies and politics to New York City, Koenigsberg apprenticed on film crews, including one impactful storytelling experience documenting life in Ecuador.

“Being in the field, collecting stories of a community that had no voice in the world, but they were trying to have more sustainable agriculture to lead to better lives for their kids. It all just resonated,” Koenigsberg said.

She returned to Walla Walla in 2005 and started her own film company, Tensegrity Productions. Soon thereafter, Whitman politics Professor Philip Brick recruited her to create the curriculum and teach the media and storytelling component of Whitman’s Semester in the West program from 2008 to 2016.

The key to solving complex social and ecological issues, Koenigsberg said, is what she calls thinking like a beaver.

“It’s really the whole question of, how do we humans want to live on the planet? Are we living in a way where we feel like for us to get ahead we have to cut other things down? Or are we living in a way that really encourages and uplifts and assists everything around us? It might be better to listen to each other and work collaboratively toward a better future for all.” 

Sarah Koenigsberg '02, shown here filming in Washington, shot her documentary in eight western states as well as Mexico and Canada. Photo courtesy of Tensegrity Productions



The Voice of the Town

Jennifer Dilworth
Northam '91 thrives on
sparking conversation
between people

By Peter Szymczak
Photo by Melissa McFadden

Walking down Main Street in downtown Walla Walla with **Jennifer Dilworth Northam '91** requires patience

— not because she walks slowly, but because everyone wants to stop her in her tracks and say “Hi!” As assistant director in Whitman’s Office of Alumni Relations, Northam thrives on sparking conversations between people.

“I have a friend who calls me ‘The Pollinator’ because I go, ‘Here, I think you should talk to this person, and you should talk to this person,’” Northam said. “Building connections is important to me. Broadening and deepening the engagement of our alumni to the college can only help our students.”

Born and raised just north of Seattle in the suburban enclave of Shoreline, Washington, Northam intended to go to the University of Washington but ended up at Whitman as a transfer student in 1987 after receiving encouragement from peers and mentors. The first person to suggest Whitman was her high school English teacher, Roberta Hawkins, who received Whitman’s outstanding high school educator recognition. A second recommendation came from her fellow student council leader, **Craig Connors '89**, who had already enrolled at Whitman.

“Craig said, ‘It’s a cool place and you should totally check it out.’ So, I did and it appealed greatly,” Northam said. “Back in the day, there was no internet, no online tour. It was talking to friends.”

But what really clinched it for her was talking to **Shauna Lilly Bogley '83**, who at the time was the Seattle-area representative for the Office of Admission.

“Talking to Shauna about the opportunities here, the fact that it was a small student body, just over 1,200 students, which was the same size as my high school. That comfort factor of knowing you’re going to recognize just about everybody who you see, know their name, even if you don’t know them well personally, that was

appealing, too,” Northam said.

During her junior and senior years at Whitman, Northam worked in the office of then-President David Maxwell. She helped prepare for the governing board meetings, for commencement and other campuswide events. Getting to work with just about every constituency on campus turned out to be the perfect job for the people person.

“I decided the one office, the one position, the one job I would want if I could ever come back to be an employee at Whitman was to work in the Alumni Relations Office and to be the assistant director,” Northam said. “After five years, it’s still my dream job.”

Since graduating, Northam has rarely been far from campus.

After marrying **Jeff Northam '88**, she worked for the Downtown Walla Walla Foundation, where she helped manage the Thursday afternoon Downtown Summer Concert Series.

“Walla Walla was a very different place in the early '90s,” she recalled. “We had to work really hard to try to keep businesses going, so that they had some sort of events and activities that would pull people downtown.”

The Northams moved to Boise, Idaho, while Jeff earned his master’s degree at Boise State University, then to Bozeman, Montana, where Jeff coached tennis at Montana State University.

“We lived in Bozeman for nine months, and it was the longest three years of my life,” Northam joked. “I am not a huge fan of snow, and that was the snowiest winter on record — 186 inches!”

On May 1, a fresh foot of snow fell.

“I cried all day and told Jeff that if he wanted to stay in Montana, he was going to do it by himself, but I was going home. And by home, I totally meant Walla Walla,” she said.

Jeff became head coach of Whitman’s men’s tennis team in the fall of 1997. Now in his 21st season, Jeff has been honored multiple times as Northwest Conference Coach of the Year and netted numerous conference titles. The couple has two children, Benjamin and Anna.

After returning to Walla Walla, Northam worked for the Development Office and the Office of Admission before rejoining the Downtown Walla Walla Foundation, where she coordinated community events, such as Feast Walla Walla, the Wheelin’ Walla Walla Weekend car show and Macy’s Parade of Lights. She left the Foundation for her position in the Office of Alumni Relations in 2013.

Northam takes great pride in her role in growing downtown Walla Walla.

“I really feel like we’re on the cusp. People talk about how Walla Walla will be the new Napa,” she said. “I’m still incredibly devoted to our downtown and always will be.”

Many people also know Northam for her singing. She developed her voice with the Whitman chorus, and also sung with the Sweet Adelines for about 15 years, as well as other groups. She often accompanies singer-songwriter Mark Brown on gigs.

“After five years, it’s still my dream job.”

— JENNIFER DILWORTH NORTHAM '91

“We sing everything. Sometimes it’s jazzy, sometimes it’s country, sometimes it’s folkish, pop songs. Mark writes original songs, and we do some tight harmony,” she said.

They key to singing in perfect harmony?

“You always have to be the support. You always have to be carefully listening, responding, but the main piece is to support the melody line, what’s happening. I feel like that’s a pretty good little metaphor for my life,” she said. **W**

Awards & Honors



Adjunct Assistant Professor **Devon Wootten** was awarded a Fulbright Scholar Grant to teach and conduct research in Ireland during the spring of 2020. While in Ireland, Wootten will teach in the English Department at the National University in Galway and begin a manuscript of place-based poetry. Wootten's project, titled "Writing the Tribes: County Galway and the Poetics of Place," will investigate the linguistic, geographic and economic construction of County Galway.

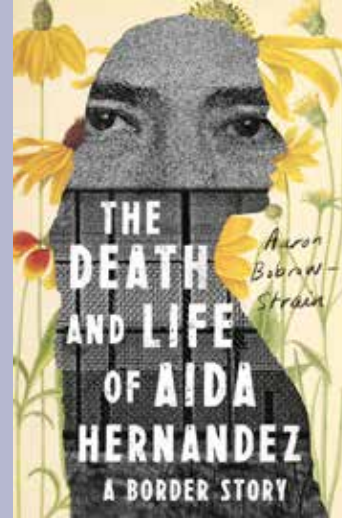


Professor and Carl E. Peterson Endowed Chair of Sciences Emeritus **Paul Yancey** completed a successful exploration of the South Sandwich Trench off Antarctica. As part of a Five Deeps Expedition series on the Discovery Channel next fall, Yancey will next embark on a month-long Antarctic segment of the expedition.



Associate Professor and Microsoft Chair of Computer Science **Janet Davis** received a grant for her students to create community-engaged capstone projects, including developing a warehouse database for Blue Mountain Action Council's food bank and an online registration system for the American Association of University Women.

Books



"The Death and Life of Aida Hernandez" (Farrar, Straus and Giroux)

Politics Professor **Aaron Bobrow-Strain** details the detention centers, immigration courts and human consequences of militarizing what was once a more forgiving U.S.-Mexico border. He presents the people affected by the current immigration debate as complex human beings who deserve justice and empathy.



"The Blues: Natural History of the Blue Mountains of Northeastern Oregon and Southeastern Washington" (Keokee Books)

Combining scholarly writings and photography from more than a dozen contributors, geologist and Professor Emeritus **Bob Carson** documents the creation and history of one of the Pacific Northwest's most iconic mountain ranges, stretching south of Walla Walla into central Oregon. Proceeds from sales will benefit the Blue Mountain Land Trust in its efforts to protect and preserve the natural areas in the Blue Mountain region.

Retirement

Grounds supervisor **Bob Biles '74** retired on Feb. 1, 2019. He spent 23 years beautifying the college's gardens and landscape.



Whitman Magazine is pleased to recognize the achievements of our employees. Faculty and staff members can submit achievements for consideration by emailing Managing Editor Peter Szymczak at szymczp@whitman.edu.

Class Notes

Virginia Valentine Hailey '40 celebrated her 100th birthday last fall. She attributes her longevity, at least in part, to the two years she spent at Whitman, which gave her the view that life can be exciting and useful.

Steve Windell '62 served as master of ceremonies at the 60th reunion of Seattle Preparatory Academy and led a singalong for classmates. From his home base in Blaine, Washington, Windell's recent travels included trips to New Orleans, Louisiana; the island of South Georgia, off the eastern coast of Argentina; and Montreal, Canada. He has now visited all 50 states and seven continents, including Antarctica. When he isn't traveling, Windell serves on boards for Childhaven, The Little School and University Preparatory Academy. He mentors senior business

the 2019 Lifetime Contribution Award by the Country Dance and Song Society. In addition to her work as a teacher and psychologist, Songer has been a national leader in the traditional folk music and contra dance scene. She learned to play the fiddle in the '80s and started to transcribe songs, which have been compiled in "The Portland Collection," the worldwide-selling series of tune books and CDs. Songer continues to play and teach around the country. "I'm very proud of my mom for choosing this as her life's work," said her daughter, **Katie Songer '00**.

Greg Kafoury '68 was selected by the executive committee of the Oregon Trial Lawyers Association as Distinguished Trial Lawyer of the Year for 2018. Kafoury lives and practices in his firm, Kafoury & McDougal, in Portland, Oregon.

Claudia Minium Smay '68 and **Mickey Chenault '70**.

Lynn Brokaw Lichtenberg '71 of Everett, Washington, retired after 27 years as senior counsel at the Washington State Office of the Attorney General. Her leisure time includes hiking, skiing and playing with grandkids, while volunteer time is devoted to restoring the health of the environment and to the League of Women Voters.

Blaine Metting '72 and his wife Ann moved to the Palouse hills above Mica, Washington. Their new home is on 10 acres of mature *Pinus ponderosa* woodland.

The University of Washington Press published "Art in Seattle's Public Spaces: From SoDo to South Lake Union" by **Jim Rupp '74**. Rupp interviewed and corresponded with more than 90 artists to tell the stories of those who commissioned and created these artworks. The book, his second on this subject, features photographs by Miguel Edwards and is organized by downtown neighborhood.

Steve Fisher '75 joined seven colleagues to open a new Seattle office for Polsinelli PC, a law firm with 830 lawyers and offices in 22 U.S. cities.



Karin Langlie Glass '78

celebrated 10 years of business ownership at Serenity Cafe & Tea Room in Zionsville, Indiana. The cafe serves lunch and English tea in a historic house built in 1868.

Roger Amerman '80 has high praise for **Janna Privette '11**, who teaches science and coaches cross country for Kamiah High School and Clearwater Valley High School on the Nez Perce Reservation in Idaho. Athletes on her team went to state competition this season with four Nez Perce youth, including Amerman's son. Amerman commended Privette for the discipline and structure of her practices, and the support and encouragement she provides to her athletes.

Russ Fagg '83 is planning his next trip with a group of Whittie friends that has been meeting regularly for more than 20 years. Past activities have included skiing, backpacking, tennis, mountain biking, rafting and skeet shooting, throughout Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington. Left to right: **Tom Gustafson '83, Joe Kaplan '83, Fagg, Tom Henderson '83, Peter Lewis '81, Tom Skalley '81, Dan Snare '83, John Williams '83, Jon Purnell '82, Brian Purnell '80, Craig Kelly '83** and **Dave Thomas '82** at Sunriver, Oregon.



majors at Western Washington University and is a consultant in economic and risk management and an executive committee member for BIS Consulting.

Roger '64 and **Carolyn Ashby von Gohren '67** celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. The couple spent a week at Seattle's Fairmont Olympic Hotel and will make a trip to New England in the fall. The von Gohrens live in Olympia, Washington.

Sue Martin Songer '67 of Portland, Oregon, was awarded

Jane Ryan Koler '70 celebrated her 70th birthday in Gig Harbor, Washington, with Whittie friends. Left to right: **Carolyn Findlay Kiefer '70, Koler, Judy Minium '70,**





Sonya Christianson Campion '83 and friends gathered together in the Methow Valley to see **Deanne Meek '83** sing at the Methow Chamber Music Festival. From left to right: Campion, **Ann Soule '83**, **Lydia Miner '83**, Meek, **Anne Stoltz '82**, **Ann LaRose Christianson '83** and **Amy Larson Pilichowski '83**.

The University of California Press published “Islamic Shangri-La: Inter-Asian Relations and Lhasa’s Muslim Communities, 1600 to 1960” by **David Atwill '89**. The book traces a forgotten Muslim thread through the knot of identity, subjecthood and citizenship in 20th century Tibet, offering a fresh perspective on the region’s tumultuous modern history. Atwill is an associate professor of history and Asian studies at Pennsylvania State University in State College, Pennsylvania.

Black Rose Writing, an independent publisher in Texas, published “The Changeling’s Daughter,” the first novel by **R. Chris Reeder '93**. The young adult fantasy book was inspired by Welsh mythology and Reeder’s reflections on parenting. Reeder, a theatre major, spent two decades working across the country in professional theatre and turned to writing for a creative outlet when he and his wife had children.

Jason Colby '97 (profiled in this issue in the article “Animal Advocacy” on Page 33), an associate professor of history at the University

of Victoria in British Columbia, Canada, provided details for a Seattle Times series on orca whales, “Hostile Waters: Orcas in Peril.” Colby has researched the issue of orcas in captivity extensively, culminating in the book, “Orca: How We Came to Know and Love the Ocean’s Greatest Predator” published by Oxford University Press.

David Gilbert '97 was nominated for a Grammy in the category “Best Album Notes” for the album “The Product of Our Souls: The Sound and Sway of James Reese Europe’s Society Orchestra.” The album is a companion to Gilbert’s book “The Product of Our Souls: Ragtime, Race, and the Birth of the Manhattan Music Marketplace.”

Jesse Kiehl '98

was elected to the Alaska State Senate representing Juneau, Haines, Skagway, Klukwan and Gustavus. He stepped down from a third term on the City and Borough of Juneau Assembly to begin his four-year term in January 2019.



Morgan Kohler '98 instructs and guides scuba diving in Khao Lak, Thailand. Current student



Genean Wrisley '19 and her family joined Kohler on a live-aboard dive adventure. Wrisley became quite good at spotting the brightly colored sea slugs called nudibranch.

Dan Moore '99 is director of engineering at Culture Foundry, a digital agency that builds websites, mobile applications and analytic dashboards. He lives in Boulder, Colorado, with his wife, kids and backyard chickens.

Neil Kornze '00

is the new CEO of the Campion Foundation and Campion Advocacy Fund. He served in the Obama administration from 2014 to 2017 as director of the Bureau of Land Management within the U.S. Department of the Interior. The foundation, based in Seattle, has directed substantial support to the protection of vital landscapes and wild places throughout the western United States and Canada. A second major focus for the foundation and fund is working to end homelessness in Washington state and across the country. The founding trustees of the foundation and fund are Tom and **Sonya Christianson Campion '83**.



Laura Krantz '00

launched a podcast called “Wild Thing” about the people who are searching for sasquatch and why this mythical creature continues to fascinate us,



even if we don’t believe. She lives in Denver, Colorado, doing freelance editing, writing and production.

Elise Schumock '00 opened Rose City Book Pub, a bookstore/bar in Portland, Oregon. **Beth Wood '01** designed the logo and **Pablo Rivarola '15** works next door.

Andy Dawes '02, a

professor of physics at Pacific University in Forest Grove, Oregon, received a \$69,000 National Science Foundation grant for collaborative research with undergraduate students.



Washington Gov. Jay Inslee presented the Young Arts Leader Award to **Leah Wilson-Velasco '03** in recognition of her leadership of the Walla Walla Symphony. The award is part of the annual Governor’s Arts & Heritage Awards, recognizing outstanding individuals and organizations for significant contributions to the arts and cultural development of Washington state. Wilson-Velasco lives in Walla Walla with her husband **Michael Simon '02**, a senior adjunct instructor of music at Whitman, and their two daughters.

Michelle Wong

Young '03 served on the 2018 Caldecott Award Committee that selected “Wolf in the Snow” by Matthew Cordell as the most distinguished American picture book published in the previous year. Young is the branch manager at the Waimea Public Library in Waimea, Hawaii.



Elizabeth Hawkins '05 was appointed as an Institute of Current World Affairs (ICWA) fellow in El Salvador from June 2019 through June 2021. An attorney in the Seattle area, Hawkins focuses on removal defense, family-based immigration, asylum and other forms of humanitarian relief. ICWA fellows are immersed in regions around the world to focus on global issues, then they put that knowledge and experience to work back home.

Princeton University Press published "Making Motherhood Work: How Women Manage Careers and Caregiving" by **Caity Collins '08**. The book draws on interviews that Collins conducted over five years with 135 middle-class working mothers in Sweden, Germany, Italy and the United States. It explores how women navigate work and family given the different policy supports available in each country. Collins is an associate professor of sociology at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri.

Katherine Davies '10 earned her doctorate at Emory University and has accepted a tenure-track appointment as an assistant professor in philosophy. She will be researching and teaching in the undergraduate and graduate programs in the School of Arts and Humanities at the University of Texas at Dallas in continental philosophy, ethics and feminist theory.

Jane Lutken '10 received a National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Award to pursue her research

project on "Cross-Linguistic Investigations of Syntactic Creativity Errors in Children's Questions" in Germany next year. Her project will investigate children's errors during production and comprehension of questions with multiple clauses.

Katie Lien '12 earned her doctorate in molecular and cell biology from the University of California, Berkeley. Her thesis research focused on nanocompartments of tuberculosis bacteria. Lien has accepted a post-doctoral position at UC Berkeley.



Shyam Das-Toké '17 worked with the U.S. Department of Energy in Washington, D.C., and briefed several senators, including Oregon Sen. Jeff Merkley. This picture was taken after a briefing on geothermal research projects in the Newberry Volcanic Zone in Oregon. Das-Toké also researched other potential sites for geothermal and carbon capture pilot projects. He is pursuing a master's degree at Oregon State University in Corvallis.

Ensign **Gabby McGann '17** joined the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Officer Corps. She has been assigned to the NOAA's Rainier out of Newport, Oregon, a hydrographic vessel doing survey projects near Alaska and in Southern California.



Marriages/Unions

Howard Jensen '91 to Nicole DeCario, April 12, 2018, in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii. The couple welcomed a daughter, Lilah Mae Jensen, born Aug. 18, 2018. She joins brothers Noah and Eli, and sister Stella.



Dancing with Bigfoot, **Teal Greyhavens '08** to Ruth Stockl, June 9, 2018, in Ardbrecknish, Scotland, with a second ceremony stateside, Sept. 22, 2018.



Amy Strauss '09 to Kevin Dugan, July 21, 2018, in Santa Cruz, California. Left to right: **Onon Bayasgalan '09**, **Caitlin Schoenfelder '09**, Strauss, Dugan, **Caitlin Tortorici '09** and **Julia Nelson '09**.



Claire Darby '05 to Mike Jensen, July 14, 2018, in Fairfield, California. Left to right: Olivia Fredstrom, **Michelle Fredstrom '04**, **Eric Fredstrom '05**, **Ella Braden '04**, Helen Hill, **Faith Kelly '05**, **Nancy Day '05**, Darby, Jensen, **Laura Bakkensen '05**, **Morgan Agnew '05**, Riley Agnew, **Kristina Richter '05** and **Miles Barrett '05**.

Whitman College is pleased to highlight the accomplishments and updates of our alumni. Submissions to Class Notes are limited to 50 words. Updates should highlight news from the past calendar year and may include career updates; publications; honors, awards or appointments; or other significant life changes you would like to share with the Whittie community. Send your submission to alumni@whitman.edu, mail to Whitman College, Office of Alumni Relations, 345 Boyer Ave., Walla Walla, WA 99362, or submit online at whitman.edu/classnotes. All submissions will be edited for content, length and style.

Class Notes



Gabrielle Boisrame '10 to Kirt Siders '10, June 30, 2018, in Winters, California. Pictured are: **Jane Lutken '10**, who served as officiant, **Julianne Graper '10**, **Lani Rosenthal '10**, **Sarah Judkins '10**, who provided the ceremony music, Boisrame, Siders, **Marie Westover '10**, **Nina Trotto '11**, **Raisa Stebbins '11**, **Emily Fassler '09**, **Adam Caniparoli '10** and **Burke Gardner '07**.

Michelle Saperstein '10 to Ian Martinez, Sept. 1, 2018, on Whidbey Island, Washington. Left to right: **Seth Bergeson '10**, **Rebecca Morse**, **Tim Shadix '09**, **Elena Gustafson '10**, **Jamesha Fisher**, **Saperstein**, **Martinez**, **Josiah Hanson '09**, **Taylor Hubbard '10**, **Kaley Lane Eaton**

'10, Emily Percival '10 and Grace Harnois '09.

Ellie Klein '10 to Nicholas Rodman, June 2, 2018, in Washington, D.C. Back row, from left: **Greg Hansen '08**, **Justin Liberman '08**, **Laura Powell Hansen '10**, **Maryn Juergens '10**, **Hayley Beckett '13**, **Sarah Deming '10**, **Kristen Coverdale '11**, **Ken Anderson '08** and **Juliet D'Alessandro '10**. Front row: **Rodman**, **Klein**, **Hong-Nhi Do '10**.

Hannah Payne '11 to John Hodges '11, May 5, 2018, on Whidbey Island, Washington. Front row, left to right: **Katie Richards '11**, **Addison Magness '12**, **Carson Burns '11**, **Julie Irvine '11**, **Courtney Sanford**



'12, Torey Anderson '12, Hannah Ory '12, Leah Wheeler Elstrott '11, Payne, Ilona Davis '11, Lyndsey Wilson '12, Katelyn Sorensen '12, Kristen Coverdale '11, Alice MacLean '11, Katie Barich '11, Gretchen Swanson '11 and Liz Gossard Coleman

'11. Back row, left to right: Emily Nickels '11, Chris Hansman '11, Andrew Terrell '13, Chris Machesney '12, Jenna Fritz '13, Ben Elstrott '12, Daniel Luecke '11, Hodges, Cameron Callaghan '11, John Callow '11, Nick Moyer '11, Matt MacQuivey '11, Dan



Oschrin '10, Ken Anderson '08, Todd Sigley '11, Cooper Crosby '11, Ian Coleman '11, Dave Wallace '10 and Nate Rankin '11.

Claire Oatey '11 to Cameron Deamer-Phillips '11, Oct. 6, 2018, in Leavenworth, Washington. On the bench: Oatey and Deamer-Phillips. First row, left to right: **Alicia LeClair '11, Carter Timbel '11, Ilona Davis '11, Gretchen Swanson '11, Caroline Koehler '12, Kai Tamulonis '11, Zack Blanc '11, Courtney Sanford '12**, Oatey, **Mara Chang-Northway '11, Cindy Chen '12, Alice MacLean '11, Brigitte Meyer '11 and Kate Newman '11.** Second row, left to right: **Jen Kagan '11, Ben Elstrott '12, Leah Wheeler Elstrott '11, Katie Miller '12, Kayla Chory '11, Ben Gourlay '11, Noah Jolley '11, Brian Oringdulph '11, Sammy Sidoine '11, John David Davidson '11, Carson Burns '11, Julie Irvine '11 and Natalie Fowler '11.** Back row, left to right: **Emily Nickels '11, Chris Hansman '11, Jeff Hopfenbeck '11, Linnea Rudeen '11, Abby Neel '12, Joe Wheeler '11, Andrew Matschiner '11 and Will Falltrick '11.**

Maggie Allen '12 to Matt Shaw, Dec. 22, 2018, in Tasmania, Australia. From left to right: Tom Shaw, Erin Bosetti, **Eric Nickeson-Mendheim '13**, Allen, Shaw, **Claire Snyder '12**, Maitland Cameron and Andy Shaw.

Marika Lou '14 to Ethan Parrish '14, June 8, 2018, in Salem, Oregon. Pictured are: **Kerry Streiff '14, Lauren Elgee '14, Sam Kirsch '14, Kari Paustian '14, Nathan Liechty '14, Tanner Bowersox '14, Katie Gorman '14, Austin Easter '14, Natalie Pond '14, Claire Martini '14, Michaela Lambert '14, Tia Herdman '14, Chase Martin '14, Molly Hayes '14, Monica Simmons '14, Alex Bailey '15, Grady Olson '14, Kemper Brightman '14, Keiler Beers '14 and Meg Robinson '14.**

Births/ Adoptions



To **Tracy Dahl '01** and Keith Knipling, a son, Knute Edward Knipling, born Sept. 2, 2018.



To Robert and **Laura Applegate Heinse '01**, a daughter, Reija Heinse, and a son, Otto Heinse, born Feb. 15, 2018.



To Ashley and **Nick Davis '04**, a son, Blake Davis, born Jan. 5, 2018.

To Cullen and **Emily Johnson Brain '05**, a son, Theodore William Brain, born July 8, 2018.



To Brett and **Jeannie Tucker Henkle '06**, a daughter, Rosalind Mary Henkle, born Dec. 26, 2018.



To Erik and **Jane Boman Hammerstrom '07**, a daughter, Maeve Nora Hammerstrom, born Aug. 22, 2018.

To Andrew and **Rose Jepson-Sullivan '07**, a son, Thomas Charles Jepson-Sullivan, born Nov. 10, 2018. He joins brother Owen George, 2.

To **Michael '08** and **Haley Revak Albertine '08**, a son, Ames Theodore Albertine, born Aug. 16, 2018.



To Paul and **Hannah Main Da Rosa '10**, a son, Antonio Theo Da Rosa, born March 13, 2018.



To **Julia Schneider '12** and **Jason Sease '10**, a daughter, Josephine Hyun Ah Sease, born Oct. 23, 2018.



We love to celebrate with you! Submit a photo of your ceremony or newborn to be featured in Whitman Magazine. Announcements can be submitted to alumni@whitman.edu, mail to Whitman College, Office of Alumni Relations, 345 Boyer Ave., Walla Walla, WA 99362, or submit online at whitman.edu/classnotes. Be sure to identify everyone in the photograph, as well as alumni relatives for birth announcements.

In Memoriam

1930s

Mary Ainslie Hoesly '34, Oct. 26, 2018, in Spokane, Washington. She attended the University of Washington in Seattle, then worked for the U.S. government in an administrative position in Washington, D.C. Hoesly returned to Spokane and worked for Pacific Northwest Bell. In 1940, she married Wendell Hoesly, and they were married for 29 years until his death in 1969. Hoesly was a member of Kappa Kappa Gamma, the Eastern Star, Women's College Association, and a volunteer for the American Red Cross. She is survived by two children. She was preceded in death by a cousin, **John Ainslie '46**.

1940s

Roberta Fleming Miller '40, Sept. 2, 2018, in Walla Walla. She married Halford Miller in 1942, and they raised a son and two daughters. They were married for 50 years.

Frances Rosenzweig Ross '41, Aug. 17, 2018, in Chandler, Arizona. She attended Central Washington College of Education in Ellensburg, taught elementary school, and served as a school librarian for more than 40 years. She married Frank Ross, an elementary school principal, in 1960. Survivors include a son and a nephew, **George Pollock, Jr. '64**.

Martha Edmonds Fairbank '42, Sept. 27, 2018, in Durham, North Carolina. She finished her degree at the University of Washington,

then married **Henry Fairbank '40** in 1943. The couple started their family in Los Alamos, New Mexico, while he worked on the Manhattan Project. They settled in Durham, North Carolina, where her husband was on the physics faculty at Duke University. Fairbank served as choir director and organist of her church and was named Minister of Music. Although she only attended Whitman for two years, Fairbank was a dedicated volunteer, serving as class representative for the Office of Annual Giving, and the couple regularly came back to campus for Senior Alumni College. She received the Gordon Scribner Award for Distinguished Service in 2001. She was preceded in death by her husband of 67 years. She is survived by four children.

Sara Baker Schwager '43, Jan. 7, 2019, in Akron, Ohio. She married **William Schwager '44** in 1943 and settled in Long Beach, California. The family moved to Akron when her husband accepted a position at the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company. Schwager was active in her church and the Delta Gamma sorority. She was a loyal donor to Whitman during her lifetime, giving yearly for more than 50 years and supporting the Annual Fund, Penrose Library and projects named for members of the Baker Family, including the Baker Ferguson Fitness Center and the D.F. Baker Endowment. Schwager was preceded in death by her husband; a sister, **Ruth Baker Kimball '31**; a brother, **Charles Baker '29**; a cousin, **Elizabeth Kennedy McFarland '45**; and a nephew, **Frank Kimball '56**. Survivors include two daughters, a son, and a niece, **Susan Baker '63**.

Sturgis Bodine '44, Feb. 5, 2018, in Federal Way, Washington.

Betty Price Liekhus '45, Aug. 12, 2017, in Sammamish, Washington. She married Eugene Liekhus in 1948, and they raised two sons and a daughter.

Carolee Brown Twining '45, Dec. 29, 2017, in Carmichael, California. After finishing her undergraduate degree at Pomona College in Claremont, California, she earned her teaching certification at the University of California, Los Angeles, and taught school for 15 years. Twining earned a master's degree at the University of Southern California and worked part time as a therapist for children with learning problems. She tutored students at home until her retirement. She was preceded in death by her husband. Survivors include a son and a daughter.

Robert "Bud" Elkins '46, Sept. 25, 2018, in Long Beach, California. He was part of the U.S. Naval V-12 training program at Whitman for one year. He served in the U.S. Navy during World War II, in Korea and Vietnam, retiring in 1971 with the rank of commander. His second career brought him to St. Anthony's High School in Long Beach as chief business administrator; he retired at age 70. He was preceded in death by his first wife, Dorothy. Survivors include wife Elise and two children.

Jean Schumacher McClelland '47, Dec. 11, 2018, in Seattle. She finished her degree at the University of Washington and moved to Ketchikan, Alaska, to teach piano. She married Charles McClelland, a pilot, and his career took them

around the world, including Bangkok, Thailand; Buenos Aires, Argentina; and Lima, Peru. When they returned to the United States, McClelland earned her master's in music at UW, then joined the staff, working some of that time for then-President Charles Odegaard. Wherever the family traveled, McClelland played piano. She was preceded in death by her husband. She is survived by her children, including **Scott McClelland '85**.

Emily Stanton Schue '47, Sept. 15, 2018, in Salem, Oregon. She taught English in a small town on the Oregon Coast and married Warren Schue in 1948. They lived most of their married life in Eugene, Oregon. Schue served three terms on the Eugene City Council, participated in the League of Women Voters and helped raise funds for new library development. The couple served on committees to help low-income families with housing issues in Eugene and nearby Springfield. She spent her final years in Salem. She was preceded in death by her husband. Survivors include her four children.

Maynard Cutler '48, Dec. 3, 2018, in Spokane, Washington. He met his wife **Mary Peringer '48** at Whitman. He earned a master's degree in physics from the University of Wisconsin at Madison, then returned to Orchard Prairie near Spokane to farm with his father. The Cutlers raised six children and eventually moved near Nine Mile Falls, where he developed a successful wheat and bluegrass seed farm. He also helped develop a residential neighborhood along the Spokane River. He was preceded in death by his wife of 67 years and a brother, **Royal '41**.

Survivors include his six children: Maynard Jr., **Dan '73, Kit '74,** Robert, Judy Cutler Milliette and **Katie Cutler Talbott '88.**

Donnabelle Mahan Aiton '49, Oct. 26, 2018, in Tulalip, Washington. She studied at Washington State University and the University of Puget Sound. She married **Clinton Aiton '47** in 1948, and they raised four children. Aiton was a homemaker and worked as a secretary in support of her husband's ministry. She was preceded in death by her husband. Her brother, **Loyd Mahan '51,** passed soon after her death. Survivors include four children, two sisters and a sister-in-law, **Virginia Herring Mahan '55.**

1950s

Calvin Boyes '51, Nov. 13, 2018, in Sacramento, California. Following graduation, he married **Eileen Golden '52.** Boyes served in the U.S. Coast Guard and Coast Guard Reserve, retiring with the rank of commander in 1977. In 1956, he started as an assistant baseball and football coach at Sacramento State University. Boyes served many roles at the school: head baseball coach for 17 years, backfield football coach, professor and physical education department chair, director of university development, vice president and

athletic director. A three-sport athlete, he was inducted into the Whitman Hall of Fame in 2006. Survivors include his wife, two daughters and a son.

Marilyn Griffin Gunning '51, Nov. 7, 2018, in Bellingham, Washington. She married **John Gunning '52** in 1951, and they raised three children. A passion for antiques led her to the Whatcom Museum, where Gunning volunteered for museum docent field trips and tours of the region and fought to save the Old City Hall from demolition. She was preceded in death by her husband and daughter. She is survived by two sons.

Loyd Mahan '51, Dec. 16, 2018, in Walla Walla. Following graduation, he was drafted into the U.S. Army and served in Korea. Mahan returned to Walla Walla and joined the family fuel business. He married **Virginia Herring '55** in 1957, and they had three children. Mahan was a member of several service clubs, including the Exchange Club. He was instrumental in the selection of the Alumni House on Marcus Street and would often stop by to be sure it was being well maintained. Mahan served as co-chair of his 20th and 40th class reunions and served on the alumni board from 1980 to 1986. In 1993, Mahan received the Gordon Scribner Award for Distinguished Service. He was preceded in death

by a sister, **Donnabelle Mahan Aiton '49.** He is survived by his wife, two sons and a daughter.

William McKay '51, Aug. 27, 2018, in Los Altos, California. He worked most of his career at Lockheed Missiles and Space Company, where he met his wife of 59 years, Joan Kaar. A varsity tennis student-athlete, McKay played competitive league tennis for most of his life. Survivors include his wife and three children.

Mary Newton Norseth '51, Sept. 16, 2018, in Portland, Oregon. She met **Palmer Norseth '51** while taking prerequisites for nursing school, and they maintained their relationship once she transferred to the University of Oregon. The couple married in 1952, settled in Portland and raised three children. Norseth worked as a newborn nursery registered nurse at Oregon Health and Science University, and Providence St. Vincent Medical Center. Survivors include her husband, a daughter and two sons.

David Beale '52, Sept. 9, 2018, in Topeka, Kansas. He earned his doctorate at the University of Washington Medical School and became interested in the treatment of inmates. Beale served in the U.S. Army and worked with inmates at Spandau Prison in Germany. He came to Topeka and worked at the Kansas State Reception and Diagnostic Center for Prisoners. He attended the Menninger School of

Psychiatry and the Topeka Institute for Psychoanalysis. Beale married Estela Martin in 1964; they had two children and divorced in 1974. He worked at the Menninger School until his retirement in 1996, then traveled and filled in for physicians around the country. Survivors include his son and daughter.

Richard "Dick" Morrison '52, Dec. 28, 2018, in Dallas, Texas. He had a long career in industrial sales. Survivors include wife Nancy and three children.

Charles Simon '52, Nov. 8, 2018, in Walla Walla. Before Whitman, he enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps and trained as a cryptographer. Part of his training took place at the airbase in Walla Walla, where he met and married Evelyn Archer. Simon served in China and Southeast Asia. The couple eventually settled in Walla Walla and purchased Tommy's Dutch Lunch, later operating Tommy's at the Airport. He was active with the local Republican Party and served a term as a county commissioner. Simon was preceded in death by his wife and daughter.

E. Joan "Joanie" Miller Stevens '52, Nov. 9, 2018, in Walla Walla. She married **Robert "Spud" Stevens '50** in 1952, and they raised three children in Walla Walla. Stevens taught elementary school, retiring as a fourth-grade teacher from Prospect Point Elementary

Whitman Leaders

Phelps Gose '58, Nov. 12, 2018, in Kihei on Maui, Hawaii. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1951 to 1954 as a petty officer third class. He returned to Walla Walla and attended Whitman. Gose married **Mary-Jean Woolsey-Lee '56** in 1956. In 1962, he earned his law degree from Gonzaga University School of Law in Spokane and began his legal career as a deputy prosecuting attorney in Spokane County. In 1965, Gose returned to Walla Walla to practice law with his father. He also served as a Superior Court judge in Walla Walla County and helped establish a statewide legal aid office in Washington. In 1991, he worked to set up the Federal Defenders of Eastern Washington and Idaho, a public defender's office. Gose served on the Board of Overseers from 1971 to 1986, when he was named Overseer Emeritus. Survivors include his wife of 62 years and his four children: Mary Beth, Tom, Jane and **George '86.** Donations in his memory may be made to Whitman College, 345 Boyer Ave., Walla Walla, WA 99362.



School. Her passion was theater and she performed in numerous productions at the outdoor amphitheater, the Little Theatre of Walla Walla, and for the Sweet Adelines. She was preceded in death by her husband. Survivors include a son, two daughters, including **Leslie Stevens Phillips '79**, and six grandchildren, including **Hunter Benedict '06**.

James Updegraff '52, Sept. 21, 2018, in Sacramento, California. Updegraff served in the U.S. Army in Korea, then finished his undergraduate degree at the University of California, Berkeley. He earned a Master of Business Administration and a Master of Public Administration from Golden Gate University in San Francisco. Updegraff had a long career in banking, including a term as deputy superintendent of banks for the state. After the death of his first wife, Helyn, he married Kristin Towe Hartley. Survivors include his wife and six children.

Denis Knowles '53, Nov. 24, 2018, in Prescott, Arizona. He earned his Master of Business Administration from Harvard, then served in the U.S. Army at the Presidio in San Francisco. Upon discharge, Knowles worked for Del Monte Corporation/RJR Nabisco. He retired in 1987 as vice president of business planning and development. Early in retirement, Knowles traveled with his wife Virginia, until her passing in 2010. He tutored for an English as a second language class and was active in his church. Survivors include two children and his companion, Isabel Benell.

Richard "Dick" Neher '53, Nov. 28, 2018, in Walla Walla. He earned his master's degree in education, then spent two years in the U.S. Army. Neher returned to Walla Walla, spending 34 years in secondary education as a teacher, coach and administrator. He was the principal of Walla Walla High

School, his alma mater, for 20 years and was named "Outstanding Educator" and "Secondary Principal of the Year," among other accolades. He served on countless boards and associations for secondary education and the greater Walla Walla community. After retiring in 1990, Neher spent two years in Olympia as state representative from the 16th Legislative District. He was married for 56 years to Marilyn Love. Neher served Whitman as co-chair of the 15th, 25th and 65th reunions of his class. He received the Gordon Scribner Award for Distinguished Service in 2018. Survivors include his two sons.

Barbara House Lienhard '55, Aug. 3, 2018, in Reno, Nevada. On graduation day, she married **Fredric Lienhard '55**. After his military service in Fort Knox, Kentucky, the couple settled in Reno, Nevada. Lienhard worked as a teacher's assistant, retiring in 1998 from Washoe County School District. Physically active, she swam more than 4,400 miles over the years and won many race-walking competitions. Lienhard sang with the Sierra Nevada MasterWorks Chorale for nearly 35 years. Survivors include her husband, a son, a daughter and her sister, **Marilyn House Pewitt '56**.

Dawn Lawrence Kindred '59, June 4, 2017, in Bremerton, Washington. She was married to **Jack Kindred '57** until his passing in 2008. Survivors include four children.

1960s

C. Holden Brink '60, Sept. 5, 2018, in Orangevale, California. He earned advanced degrees in fish, game and wildlife management, including a master's degree from the University of Alaska Anchorage

and a doctorate from Utah State University in Logan, Utah. Brink had a long career with the Bureau of Land Management, the highlight of which was as preserve manager at the Cosumnes River Preserve in Sacramento County, California. Survivors include his wife of 50 years, Launna Christensen, and their four children.

Jarrell Landau '60, March 26, 2017, in Longview, Washington. He completed his undergraduate degree at Portland State University, then worked for Longview Fibre Company as a shift chemist, stock foreman and eventually retired from the sales department. Landau married **Joan Bickel '59** in 1961 and they raised two children. He was involved in Boy Scouts, the Masonic and Elks lodges, and the Longview Community Church. Survivors include his wife, a son, a daughter and four grandsons, including **Tyler '19**.

William Hartwell III '61, Dec. 15, 2018, in Lubbock, Texas. He earned a Master of Music in voice and pedagogy from Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. He was an instructor, director or assistant professor of music at institutions in Eastern Washington, Indiana and Michigan before settling in Lubbock as associate professor of music at Texas Tech University. Hartwell taught from 1973 to 2004, receiving emeritus status in 2005. Hartwell is survived by his wife of 36 years, Janis Quier Hartwell, her three sons, and two children from a previous marriage.

Carol Markewitz '61, Nov. 14, 2018, in Portland, Oregon. She earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Oregon in Eugene. Markewitz was a high school English teacher, an executive secretary to the president of U.S. Bank in Portland, and a technical and human resources policy writer. She actively supported animal protection,

the environment, humanitarian causes and social justice organizations. Survivors include her brother, **Milton Markewitz '62**; cousins; nieces and nephews, including **John Markewitz '93**.

Bertha "Bebe" Thompson '62, April 8, 2018, in Ephrata, Washington. Thompson earned a doctorate in mathematics from the University of Washington and taught at the University of Seattle for seven years. She earned her CPA certification and returned to her hometown of Ephrata to care for family. Thompson worked for the accounting firm Sutter, Kunkle & Thompson in Ephrata and Moses Lake, Washington.

Barbara Babler Wood '63, Oct. 31, 2018, in Boise, Idaho. She married **David Wood '62** and they lived in Green Bay, Wisconsin, for 36 years. The couple moved to Boise in 2005 to be closer to their two daughters. Wood was at home with their children until 1982, when she joined her husband at his advertising agency, where she worked as bookkeeper and manager. In retirement, she enjoyed quilting and gardening. Survivors include her husband and daughters.

Stephen Ronfeldt '64, Dec. 1, 2018, in Berkeley, California. He married **Suzanne "Suzy" Muldown '64**, and they raised three children. After earning his law degree from the University of California, Berkeley, Ronfeldt received a poverty law fellowship, which allowed him to combine law and social justice. He eventually established a nonprofit to continue representing the poor after federal funding was cut. Ronfeldt received the Alumnus of Merit Award in 1996. A tennis standout as a student, he was inducted into the Whitman Athletics Hall of Fame in 2004, and was still playing competitively, nationally ranked just a

year ago. Survivors include his wife, two daughters and a son.

Robert "Bob" Tenold '64, Dec. 15, 2018, in Spokane, Washington. Tenold left Whitman and earned his bachelor's degree in metallurgical engineering. Following a short stint at The Boeing Company in Seattle, he returned to his hometown to work for the family business, Spokane Industries. Tenold served on several local boards and was involved in the Rotary Club of Spokane, and played saxophone and clarinet. Survivors include his wife Debbie; two daughters from a previous marriage; brothers **John '68** and **Greg '70**; and sister-in-law **Janet Dvorak Tenold '70**.

Mary Jo Jepsen Toivola '64, Oct. 29, 2018, in Lacey, Washington. She married Pertti Toivo Kalevi Toivola in 1973. Toivola worked as a medical technologist, most recently at the University of Washington Medical Center. Survivors include her husband and a niece, **Kara Jepsen Gladstone '97**.

Dean Lambe '65, Sept. 14, 2018, in Teaneck, New Jersey. Lambe earned his doctorate in biopsychology from Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. After teaching psychology at Marietta College in Marietta, Ohio, he began a long career in the pharmaceutical industry. Lambe was also a writer, published in scientific journals and magazines as well as fiction magazines and books. He married Laurie Haldeman in 1997. Lambe served as class representative for the Office of Annual Giving and as co-chair of his 15th reunion. He is survived by his wife and extended family.

Susan Hill Kasson '67, March 7, 2018, in Portland, Oregon. She

married David Bottemiller and they later divorced. She married Richard Kasson in 1976 and they had a daughter. The family lived in Tigard and Pendleton, Oregon, and Kasson balanced motherhood, caring for ageing parents, part-time employment and volunteer work. In 1990, she became the office manager for her husband's law firm, Kasson & Associates. They worked together until retirement in 2011. She assisted with her daughter and son-in-law's bakery, Waves of Grain, in Cannon Beach, Oregon. She was an associate class representative for the Office of Annual Giving for 10 years and served on the Alumni Association Board. She was preceded in death by her husband. Survivors include her daughter and a brother, **Tim Hill '69**.

1970s

Judy Bordeaux '70, Nov. 19, 2018, in Carnation, Washington. Bordeaux earned her teaching certificate at the University of Washington in Seattle and worked for Bellevue Public Schools for many years as a teacher, librarian and curriculum developer. She married Robert Spayde, they had two children and later divorced. Survivors include her daughter and son.

Cathy Powers Strombom '72, Dec. 1, 2018, in Seattle. She met **David Strombom '72** at Whitman and they married following graduation. The couple had multiple work and travel assignments overseas including Morocco, Iran, India, Turkey and Pakistan. Strombom worked 34 years with the Seattle office of Parsons Brinckerhoff as a vice president and head of the planning team that did early work on major transportation structures and systems on the West Coast and in Hawaii. Survivors include her

husband, her son and a brother-in-law, **Doug Strombom '80**.

Christine Jacobi McDade '74, Sept. 18, 2018, in Seattle. She married **Sandy McDade '74** after graduation and earned her master's degree in special education from the University of Washington. McDade spent her career teaching in the Issaquah School District, most recently at Liberty High School. She was a volunteer for the offices of Annual Giving and Alumni Relations. The McDades traveled with Whitman's Alumni Association. Survivors include her husband, two daughters and a brother, **Michael Jacobi '78**.

Ramona Ralston '77, June 11, 2018, in Madrid, New York. She earned her doctorate in English literature from the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. Ralston married Sidney Sondergard in 1986 and the couple moved to Canton, New York, where she taught at the State University of New York (SUNY) at the Canon and Potsdam campuses. She later worked in administration at SUNY Potsdam, retiring after 28 years. Survivors include her husband.

William Wallace '78, Nov. 9, 2018, in Alexandria, Virginia. He joined the Peace Corps after graduation and was stationed for four years in Cameroon, Africa, teaching English. His passion for Cameroon and its people lasted the rest of his life. Wallace worked the remainder of his career as an information technology specialist at the Pentagon. His late grandfather, an Episcopal

bishop, performed a partnership ceremony in 1989 for Wallace and his longtime partner, Tom Suydam. Survivors include his partner; brother **Richard Wallace '74**; sister-in-law **Janet White Wallace '74**; niece **Erin Wallace '03**; sister **Jenny Wallace '73**; and brother-in-law **Blake Nakanishi '72**.

1980s

David Welts '87, Oct. 27, 2018, in San Diego, California.

1990s

Jack Young '96, July 30, 2018, in Yakima, Washington.

2000s

Cheryl Kinne Bench '02, May 29, 2018, in Santa Barbara, California. She married Billy Bench and they later divorced. The couple moved from Southern California to Pendleton, Oregon, where she commuted to Walla Walla to attend Whitman, and later, to College Place, where she earned her master's degree in social work. The family settled in Santa Barbara, and Bench worked in hospice care. She earned her doctorate from Pacifica Graduate Institute in Carpinteria, California. Survivors include her son, David.

Cory Franklin '02, Oct. 14, 2018, in Snoqualmie, Washington.

Whitman College offers its condolences to the family and friends of our departed Whitties. Obituary information can be submitted to alumni@whitman.edu, mail to Whitman College, Office of Alumni Relations, 345 Boyer Ave., Walla Walla, WA 99362, or submit online at whitman.edu/classnotes. Abbreviated obituaries are run in the magazine. Links to a full obituary can be found at whitman.edu/magazine.

BALLOT READABILITY:

America's Sneaky Form of Voter Suppression

By Sarah Bosworth '21

Nine months have passed since the last general election, and most Americans still don't understand what they voted for.

Beyond voting for their Congressional representatives, the midterm ballots gave Americans the opportunity to approve or vote down hot-button issues, such as whether to raise the minimum wage, lower taxes, impose new laws or discard old ones. The ballots presented information in a concise, easy-to-read format, allowing voters to easily decide which measures they support.

At least, ballots should do this.

In fact, the average American ballot in the 2018 midterm elections had a readability score of 19-20, according to the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level (FKGL) readability test. This test measures how many years of education are required to read a piece of text. On the FKGL scale, a score of 5 would mean a fifth-grader could understand it, while a score of 20 means that a person would need 20 years of formal education.

Twenty years of formal education puts a person in graduate school, a level which only about 9 percent of Americans over the age of 25 have. The National Center for Education Statistics

measures the average reading level of people in the United States at eighth grade. This number drops for people who did not attend college, finish high school, have English as their second language or who are not fluent in English.

Only one-third of Americans today have a bachelor's degree. Although more people of color are graduating from college with a four-year degree, the racial gap in education continues to be a trend. According to the 2015 census of Educational Attainment in the United States, only 23 percent of African-Americans have a bachelor's degree, while only 8 percent hold an advanced degree. Among Hispanics age 25 and older, 15.5 percent hold bachelor's degrees, while less than 5 percent have advanced degrees.

Everybody should be able to read their ballot. Right now, a majority of Americans cannot, putting American democracy in jeopardy.

Studies have found that when Americans do not understand a ballot measure, they are more likely to just skip it. According to a University of Virginia study, more than 30 percent of Americans do not complete their ballot, and when less than half the population votes, these incomplete ballots



hurt the ability of Americans to exercise their right to vote.

So, where do we go from here? The situation is a bit ironic: in order to change how ballots are written, a measure would have to be voted on by ballot. This is a ballot battle worth waging.

We must hold our representatives accountable for making sure ballots can be read by as many people as possible. Voters can also use websites like Vote.org, Ballotpedia.org, Vote411.org and HeadCount.org, among others, which promote participation in democracy. We can organize community efforts around election time that will encourage voting and explain the measures in a non-partisan manner.

Voting is not a privilege, it is a right of every American citizen. Their ballot should be the means by which they exercise that right — not the very thing stopping them from doing so. **W**

Last fall, students in Assistant Professor Álvaro Santana-Acuña's political sociology class learned a style of communicating that isn't often practiced in academic settings: Writing for a general audience.

The project had students translating peer-reviewed research and facts about current political issues not into another academic paper, but instead into an opinion piece, or op-ed, targeted at a newspaper audience.

"Pivotal to a liberal arts education is being able to think critically about statements of fact, which is a new concept for many students who have come of age in this era of so-called 'fake news' and 'post-truth,'" said Santana-Acuña, who has published pieces in *The New York Times* and Spain's *El País*. "Op-eds are an excellent way to teach students how to construct a powerful argument on a current topic that may differ from general consensus, how to support one's argument with concise language and reliable data, and how to make it accessible to large audiences."

Politics major **Sarah Bosworth '21** chose to write her piece on ballot readability after participating as a voter for the first time in the midterm elections of 2018.

"After carefully reading through my ballot, I found the phrasing of many initiatives confusing," Bosworth said. "I wondered if most Americans, especially those who are not native English speakers or did not have the opportunity to go to college, were able to fully comprehend their ballots. I believe ballots should be written so that voting is more accessible to all Americans." Bosworth's piece is printed here.

SUPPORT OUR students

“I hope that when I leave Whitman I can pursue a career in forest ecology and sustainable forest management. I am so grateful for the financial help my Whitman scholarship has given me in setting me on that path.”

— Sienna Rahe '19

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2019 NWC CHAMPIONS The Whitman College men's basketball team claimed the Northwest Conference Tournament title on Feb. 23, 2019, at the Sherwood Center. The Blues took down Whitworth University in the tournament final by a score of 107-102. Winning the title gave the Blues the league's automatic qualifier into the NCAA Tournament. The Blues won their first and second round match-ups, but were upset by Williams College 84-81 in the Sweet 16 sectional semifinal.